

THE MEMON



Save the
ROHINGYA

THE MEMON

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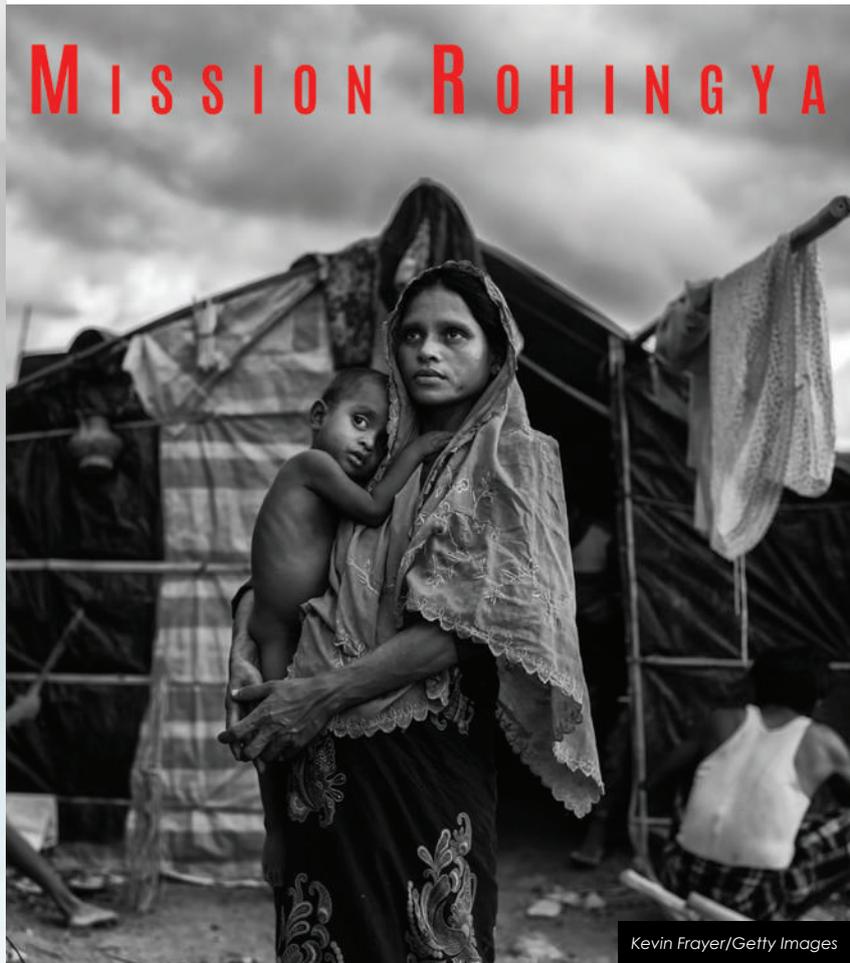
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Dr. Taheera Hassim is the Regional Secretary General of the World Memon Organisation, Africa Chapter. She spent 10 days at the Refugee Camps in Bangladesh to address the medical needs of the Rohingya in her capacity as a Doctor and a Humanitarian.

This is the journey that changed her life..



Kevin Frayer/Getty Images

“We hope and pray that the Almighty bring an end to the violence, hatred and discord. Help us accomplish the goals, we set out to achieve. Grant us Peace which is True, Perfect and Everlasting.

Ameen!”

Dr Taheera Hassim
Obstetrician/Gynaecologist

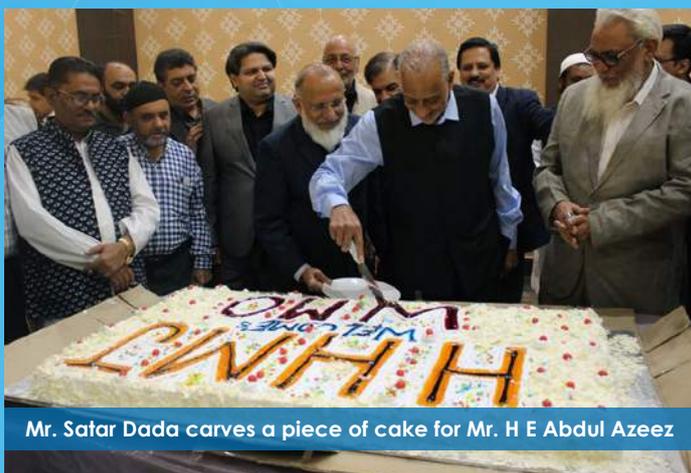
Hyderabad Memon Convention



Mr. Ashraf Sattar shares the floor with Mr. Iqbal Memon Officer.



Mr. Feizul Ayob is the Man of the Moment



Mr. Satar Dada carves a piece of cake for Mr. H E Abdul Azeez

Under the able leadership of **Mr. H. E. Abdul Azeez** (VP - WMO South India Chapter) and **Mr. Adil Azeez** (Regional Secretary General - South India Chapter), WMO organised a **Memon Convention** in the vibrant city of **Hyderabad**, in association with the **Hyderabad Halai Memon Jamat** on Thursday, 28th December 2017.

An elaborate presentation was delivered to a sizeable audience comprising of the crème de la crème of the Hyderabad Memon Community, encompassing the broad spectrum of humanitarian services rendered by WMO in its 7 chapters of India, Pakistan, Middle East, Far East, Africa, Europe and North America. It was followed by a series of motivational talks from **Mr Satar Dada** (former President of WMO), **Mr. Ashraf Sattar** (Deputy Chairman - WMO Board of Trustees), Mr. H E Abdul Azeez, **Mr Shabbir Bhojani** (President - Hyderabad Halai Memon Jamat) and **Mr Iqbal Memon Officer** (President - All India Memon Jamat Federation) encouraging the audience to partake in the thoughtful initiatives undertaken by WMO and the Jamaat for the betterment of Humanity.

The stand out moment was an eloquent and inspired speech delivered by **Mr. Feizul Ayob**, VP - WMO Africa Chapter and former Secretary General of the organisation. The convention hall resounded with the thunderous applause as the WMO stalwart underlined that **the World Memon Organisation was indeed the glue that held the Global Memon Community together.**

It was a memorable evening to initiate the **WMO South India Membership Drive** in a city renowned for its immaculate pearls, divine biryani and the majestic Charminar. The lavish spread, warm hospitality, palpable excitement and the extraordinary fervour witnessed at the Hyderabad Convention were ample proof that WMO had left its indelible mark on the land of the Nizams.

WMO ASHIYAANA

HOUSING PROJECTS

31st December 2017 marked the **foundation stone laying ceremony of WMO Ashiyaana** in **Akola**, a housing project which will be home to **24** marginalised families of the Indian Memon Community. Akola is a town situated in the state of Maharashtra in Central India with a sizeable Memon population. The ceremony was attended by prominent members of the Indian Memon Community such as **Mr. Iqbal Memon Officer** (President – All India Memon Jamat Federation) and political heavyweights including the Honourable Minister of State – **Dr. Ranjit Patil**.

Mr. Majid Ranani, President of Welfare Memon Organisation and a WMO stalwart is the driving force behind the project.

WMO Ashiyaana marks the first of the **Legacy Projects** envisioned by **WMO President, Mr. Solly Noor**. **“The goal isn’t to live forever, it is to create something that will, hence we continue our endeavours to build a habitat for humanity. We firmly believe that a simple, decent shelter is a basic human right and a primary need for all,”** asserts the WMO President.



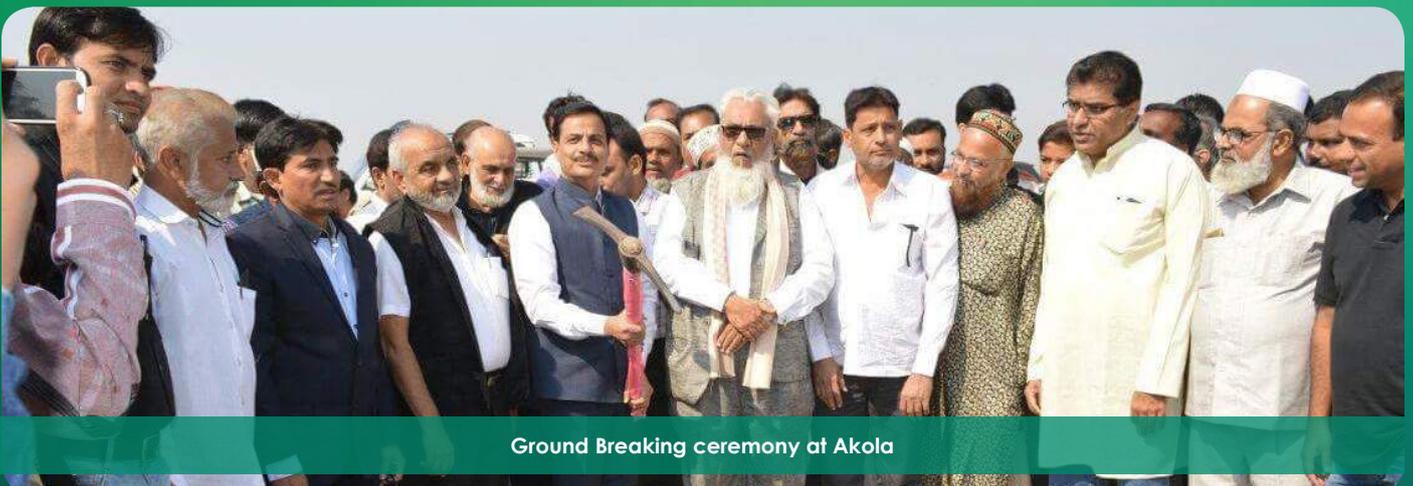
Mr. Majid Ranani

The construction of the **second** legacy and housing project consisting of **18** homes was initiated in **Malegaon** by Mr. Majid Ranani on the **15th of January 2018**. Malegaon is another town in the state of Maharashtra with a sizeable Muslim population. The housing project shares the same name - WMO Ashiyaana.

The word '**Ashiyaana**' means a nest. A most enduring legacy - a roof over the heads of the underprivileged families of the Memon Community - **a nest for all to come home to**.



Ground Breaking ceremony at Malegaon



Ground Breaking ceremony at Akola

THE INDIA VISIT

On the 3rd of January, 2018 the World Memon Organisation North India Chapter (NIC) Office was inaugurated by visiting WMO International delegation of **Mr. Solly Noor (President - WMO)**, **Mr. Nowsad Gani (Deputy President - WMO)** and **Mr Ashraf Sattar (Deputy Chairman - WMO Board of Trustees)** accompanied by **Mr. Feizul Ayob (VP - WMO Africa Chapter)**, **Mr. Yousuf Kamdar (Trustee - WMO Africa Chapter)**, **Mr Haroon Mohammed (Trustee - WMO Middle East Chapter)**, **Mr. Moosa Carrim (Patron Member - WMO Africa Chapter)**, **Mr Shahid Sangani (COO -WMO)** and other respected stalwarts of the organisation from across the globe.

The inaugural ceremony was hosted by **Mr. Ehsan Gadawala (VP - WMO North India Chapter)** , **Mr. Shabbir Patca (Regional General Secretary)**, **Mr. Hasin Aghadi (Regional Treasurer)** and **Mr. Suhail Khandwani (Patron Member - WMO India Chapter)** at the office site in Mumbai and was attended by several prominent members of the Indian Memon Community.



Its difficult to describe **humanitarian, businessman, recycler and avid cricketer - Ehsan Gadawala** to those who don't know him. "**Force of Nature**" is the best we can do. His indefatigable spirit and infectious enthusiasm epitomize the Gadawala brand of joie de vivre. Recently appointed as the **VP of WMO North India Chapter**, Ehsan has taken the organisation to unprecedented heights in just a matter of months. After serving innumerable worthy causes under his personal Charity - **Haji Amin Gadawala Trust** and more recently under the banner of the World Memon Organisation, Ehsan Gadawala is a man on a mission and showed no signs of slowing down with an unending list of events, supporting many pertinent causes, scheduled in Mumbai and Surat to honour the large international WMO delegation, visiting India in the first week of January.



Mr. Solly Noor inaugurates the WMO NIC office

WMO NIC is eternally grateful to **Mr. Razzaq Supariwala** for providing the office space and has appointed **Mr. Salim Bandhukia** as the Executive Officer to run the day to day affairs of the organisation in North India.



JOB FAIR



World Memon Organization North India Chapter (WMO NIC) collaborated with Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP) and F. Gheewala HR consultants to organise a Mega WMO-AMP Job Fair in Mumbai and launched the Job Portal - memonjobs.com

The sole purpose being to assist the unemployed and under employed youngsters in receiving job placements at mainstream Corporate Entities and to provide job opportunities for the deserving.



On the **4th of January, 2018** the job fair was inaugurated by **Mr. Suliman Noor Mahomed (Solly Noor) - President of WMO** at the sprawling venue of Rail Nikunj Hall. While speaking on the occasion, the President stated, **"Although WMO was originally created to uphold, uplift and unite the Memon Community, its primary purpose remains to Serve all Mankind. These job fairs serve as the perfect platform to empower all communities by enabling the marginalised to earn a livelihood, provide for their families and live with dignity. It is indeed a great service to the community and the nation."**

Mr. Solly Noor went on to appreciate and congratulated the entire team of WMO NIC & AMP for organizing an extremely successful event and welcomed the participating **56** corporate entities. **1800** candidates attended the Job Fair, **310** received job offers and another **643** were shortlisted for the next round of selection.

The job portal - www.memonjobs.com was launched by **Mr. Nowsad Gani (Deputy President of WMO)**. He stated that the website was created with a vision to **eradicate unemployment** and that all jobseekers would be provided with ample opportunities to work, irrespective of caste, creed or community.

Amongst the WMO dignitaries present on the dias were **Mr. Haroon Karim (Chairman-Board of Trustees -WMO)**, **Mr. Ashraf Sattar (Deputy Chairman, Board of Trustees)**, **Mr. Abdul Satar Dada, (Past-President - WMO)**, **Sir Iqbal Sacrairie (Former Senior Deputy President - WMO)** and **Mr. Shahid Sangani (COO-WMO)**. They applauded the initiative undertaken by the Chapter to provide job opportunities for youngsters of the community and the country. Mr. Haroon Karim asserted, **"Jobs are the greatest weapon in our armoury to fight poverty. Empowering the Youth is Empowering the Nation."**

Sir Iqbal Sacrairie emphasised, **"It is the Endeavour of WMO that not a single person in our localities, in our**

cities, in our country and the world remains without an opportunity to work."

Mr. Ehsan Gadawala (President WMO North India Chapter) said, **"We resolve to conduct many such events in the future through AMP's Employment Cell and collaborate with other similar Organisations to serve our fellow countrymen."**

Mr. Suhail Khandwani (Patron WMO North India Chapter) added, **"We need to create Institutions that will provide sustenance to our youngsters and their families by giving them meaningful jobs."**

Mr. Aamir Edresy (President, AMP) elaborated, **"AMP has relentlessly worked to empower the Indian Youth over the past 5 years by inviting and prodding Corporates and HR Consultants to offer them work opportunities at our Job Fairs. We are now entering into Partnerships & Collaborations with like-minded organisations such as WMO and various Government agencies, including District Skill Development, Employment & Entrepreneurship (DSDE&E) and Maharashtra State Skill Development Society (MSSDS) to provide the perfect platform for our youngsters to transform their lives - for the better and significantly contribute to India's growth story. We seek to bridge the gap between the Corporates, Government agencies and the Unemployed & Underemployed youth. We firmly believe in the ideology of Economic Empowerment through creation of job opportunities."**

Mr. Razak Shaikh (Head-AMP Employment Cell) emphasised that India, being a country with **the largest demographic of youngsters** had vast potential to become the **Employment Factory to the World**. He stated that **since its 5 years in existence, AMP had thus far organized 20 Mega Job Fairs and hundreds of Job Drives, across 80 AMP chapters in all corners of the country with more than 12,000 candidates receiving jobs.**

The event was a roaring success thanks to the dedicated hardwork put in by WMO, AMP and DSDE&E teams including **Mr. Salim Bandhukia, (Executive Officer WMO NIC)**, **Mr. Soheb Selia (AMP's Organizing Secretary)**, **Mr. Razak Shaikh** and **Mr. Iftekhar Shaikh (Team Lead, AMP Employment Cell)** under whose guidance, the Job Fair Project was organised.

It was indeed **"A Job Well Done"!**



The MemonID

Every Memon is Unique!

Promoted by
Mr Suhail Khandwani
Mr Tanveer Merchant

Conceptualized by
Mr Rubaid (Ali) Bhojani

Memons are the latest entrants to join communities from across the globe that empower themselves with community cards. At the recently concluded **AGM of the World Memon Organisation (WMO) in Ras Al Khaimah**, representatives from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Europe, Middle East, Africa and North America decided that all community members should be issued **unique IDs** to enable themselves to share their individual and professional information with others.

"The cards will allow members to access schemes and programmes being run for our community's benefit. It is a gateway which will open doors to a lot of fascinating possibilities for the worldwide Memon Community," states **Mr Suhail Khandwani**.



Mr. Khandwani, a prominent Mumbai businessmen & philanthropist, WMO Patron Member & Vice President of the All India Memon Jamat Federation has initiated this noteworthy project which endorses the vision and objectives of WMO to create a single, common platform for Memons across the Globe.



This idea is the brain child of **Rubaid (Ali) Rasheed Bhojani**, who is pursuing the global implementation of the Memon Online program.

"MemonID.com will be an active online portal by January 2018 and will serve as an interactive platform for the Worldwide Memon Community, enabling us to stay connected with one another. We intend to register each and every member of the Memon community, from new-borns to the oldest living individuals which would then permit us to conduct a Census of the members belonging to our community.

This Census further qualifies us to compile a database comprising of a wealth of information such as educational, professional, business details of each individual. Leading to the final step, a **Unique Identity Number** being allotted to each member registered on the portal.

Information collected through the census shall be segregated into various categories and will be further used for networking, promoting business ties and forging cross border alliances, between members of the Memon Community.

Based on the information collected, various initiatives and programs shall be implemented to cultivate productive partnerships within the community.

MemonID.com can serve as:

- » An Information Centre
- » A Business Forum
- » An Education Forum
- » A Professional Forum
- » A Sports Forum
- » A Matrimonial Site
- » A Job Portal

I am much more excited with what the Future holds for this Unique Project and with its unlimited possibilities, the sky is the limit!" exults an exuberant Ali Bhojani.

We Concur..



MemonID.com – One Community One ID Campaign was launched by Advocate Zubaida Khandwani at a glittering ceremony attended by prominent members of the Global Memon Community and other dignitaries on the 5th of January 2018 at the Krishna palace hotel in Mumbai.

The World's first six MemonID cards have been assigned to distinguished personalities of the Memon Community:

- » **Mr Solly Noor** (World Memon Organisation President)
- » **Mr Iqbal Memon Officer** (All India Memon Jamat Federation President)
- » **Mr Ehsan Haji Amin Gadawala** (WMO North India Chapter President)
- » **Mr H E Abdul Aziz** (WMO South India Chapter President)
- » **Mr Suhail Khandwani** (Founder – MemonID, Patron Member WMO)
- » **Mr Tanveer Merchant** (Founder – MemonID, Trustee WMO)



The Flood Victims of Dhanera

WMO has always answered the call of the unfortunate victims of a human tragedy or a natural calamity in any part of the World. The organisation has been on the forefront and contributed in every possible way to alleviate the pain and suffering of those who seek refuge under these trying circumstances.

Dhanera, a town located in **Northern Gujarat** was ravaged by devastating floods due to the incessant rains of July 2017, heaping widespread damage across the State. Fields and streets lay submerged as the heavy rainfall triggered landslides that engulfed entire villages, buried families and homes. The torrential rains left in its wake, total devastation, affecting thousands, displacing hundreds from the comfort of their homes as the death toll kept rising in the following weeks and months.

WMO North India Chapter donated **Five Hundred Thousand Rupees (Rs. 500,000)** to **Dhanera Memon Jamat** towards the flood victims of Gujarat. The cheque was handed over by **Mr. Solly Noor (President of WMO)** to **Mr. Mohamed Yusuf (President - Dhanera Memon Jamat)** at a ceremony in Mumbai on the 5th of January, 2018.

Empowering Gujarat

The World Memon Organisation firmly believes that if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day ; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

Empowerment of men and women belonging to the marginalised sections of society has been one of the most essential humanitarian services provided by WMO over the years. Hundreds of **auto rickshaws** and thousands of **sewing machines** have been distributed to enable families to earn a livelihood, provide their children with an education and ensure they live with dignity.

Micro Finance, an endeavour initiated by WMO Far East Chapter whereby interest free loans are sanctioned to enable the deserving to stand on their feet has been a much appreciated gesture by upcoming, struggling entrepreneurs within our community.

Along the same lines, WMO North India Chapter (NIC) distributed **11 auto rickshaws** on Micro Finance in Surat, Gujarat. The visiting WMO International Delegation, WMO NIC Members & Members Of **ASMA** (All Surat Memon Association) handed over the keys to **6 deserving families of Saurashtra Halai Memon Jamat** and **5 families of Dhoraji Memon Jamat** at the **Saurashtra Halai Memon Jamat Khaana**.

Special thanks to **Mr. Farouk Chandiwala (WMO NIC RMC Member)** , **Mr. Bilal Tinwala (Patron Member WMO NIC)** and **ASMA** for organising a flawless event.





In the Name of Education

Education is the bedrock on which communities and nations rise and stand. It is the birth right of every child. And it is on this firm belief that Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the World, that a record **11,000** deprived students received an education in the year 2017, courtesy the World Memon Organisation.

In the bustling city of **Surat** in Gujarat stands a pre primary school for **1500** children between the ages of three and five. It is an educational establishment and learning space offering early childhood education and development for children, thus preparing them for primary school.

Mr. Nowsad Gani (Deputy President of WMO) named the school - **Basri Bai Haji Yunus Aghadi** at a ceremony hosted by prominent members of the Gujarat Memon Community to welcome the visiting International WMO delegation to Surat. Basri bai is the mother of **Mr. Hasin Aghadi (Regional Treasurer - WMO NIC North India Chapter)**

The World Memon Organization North India Chapter will also provide education to around **5000** students enrolled at the Surat District Muslim Education's - Anglo Urdu English School. Henceforth, the school will be renamed - **World Memon Organisation Anglo Urdu English School**. **Mr. Haroon Karim (Chairman - WMO Board of Trustees)** did the honours at the grand naming ceremony, attended and applauded by the Trustees and Management Committee of the school.

ICU Inauguration

When it comes to medical aid, the World Memon Organisation have established themselves as Caretakers of Humanity, **"We support Life. We strongly believe that every human being has the right to quality medical care. Our vision is a World without suffering,"** asserted **Mr. Nowsad Gani (Deputy President of WMO)** as he inaugurated the newly established **ICU (Intensive Care Unit) of Zainab Hospital in Surat**.

On the 6th of January 2018, **Mr. Nowsad Gani**, accompanied by **Mr. Haroon Karim (Chairman of WMO Board of Trustees)**, **Mr. Ashraf Sattar (Deputy Chairman - WMO Board of Trustees)**, **Sir Iqbal Sacranie (Former Deputy President - WMO)** and **Mr. Shahid Sangani (COO - WMO)** visited Zainab Hospital in Surat. **Mr. Tufail Noorani (Trustee - Zainab Hospital)** felicitated Mr. Nowsad Gani and the visiting International WMO delegation for their extensive, global endeavours towards Serving Mankind.





THERE ain't no **POWER** LIKE THE **POWER OF** **YOUTH!**

WMO Memon Premier League - India is the brainchild of **Mr Mateen Ali Mohammed Mojawala**. He has always nurtured a dream to create a platform for young memon cricketers to showcase their talent. With steadfast support from **Mr. Ehsan Gadawala** (VP-WMO North India Chapter) and the WMO NIC youth wing, the dream has finally become a reality for Mateen.

With a vision to forge the Memon Premier League - India into an annual sports bonanza and to shape it into an even bigger and better event, the sophomore season began with a bang on the 2nd of January with a record 12 teams from across the length and breadth of India participating in the marquee event at Surat, Gujarat. MPL- India continues to serve as an ideal platform to bring Memon youngsters together and bridge a network across state lines for the Indian youth.

The match between the local **Dissotto Dynamite** team and the unbeaten **Mumbai Lions** was truly worthy of the finals. A record 1500 spectators had gathered to witness the cricketing spectacle, each run, every boundary, and all wickets were cheered ; the noise was deafening and all were on the edge of the seat till the last ball was bowled.

Mumbai Lions were the side to beat and Dissotto Dynamites won the toss and chose to field. A competitive score of 160 was made by the Lions for the loss of 4 wickets in their allotted 20 overs and the local team were up for the chase. The last over saw a flurry of sixes and the Dynamites were on the verge of a historic win when the Lions snatched victory from the jaws of defeat by restricting the local team to 158.



The visiting WMO International Delegation, WMO NIC members and heads of the local Surat Jamats made the presentations. The members on the dias at the Closing Ceremony included :

- Mr Newsad Gani, Deputy President WMO
- Mr Haroon Karim, Chairman WMO Board of Trustees
- Mr Ehsan Gadawala, President WMO NIC
- Mr Haseen Aghadi, Treasurer WMO NIC
- Mr Bilal Tinwala, President ASMA
- Mr Juned Chotani, President Dhoraji Memon Jamat

Award Ceremony

WMO MPL SEASON II WINNING TEAM AWARD



Mr. Newsad Gani & Mr. Haroon Karim presented the Winners Trophy to Mr. Mohsin Mojawala, Captain of Mumbai Lions.

“**MAN OF THE MATCH**” trophy was presented by Mr. Haroon Karim to Mr. Ramiz Darvesh, Mumbai Lions

“**ORANGE CAP**” for Most Runs Scored in the tournament

“ORANGE CAP” was presented by Mr. Bilal Tinwala, to Mr. Sarfaraz Halari, Dissotto Dynamites.

“**PURPLE CAP**” for Most Wickets in the tournament

“PURPLE CAP” was presented by Mr. Ehsan Gadawala to Mr. Fazil Mukadam, Mumbai Lions.

“**THE FASTEST FIFTY**” Trophy was presented by Mr. Juned Chotani to Mr. Abu Pothiyawala, Lalaji's Lions.

“**MASTER BLASTER**” The Most Number of Sixes in the Tournament.

“MASTER BLASTER” trophy was presented by Mr. Haseen Aghadi, Treasurer, WMO NIC to Asif Mamu, Dissotto Dynamites.

“**THE MAN OF THE SERIES**” trophy was presented by Mr. Newsad Gani to Mr. Ramiz Darvesh, Mumbai Lions.

“**RUNNERS UP**” trophy was presented by Mr. Newsad Gani to the Nouman Noorani, Captain of Dissotto Dynamites.

A few other local sportsmen and women who had made a mark in their respective fields were also felicitated that night.

Felicitation of **Mr. Arshiyhan Memon** for winning the bronze Medal at the Asian Kickboxing Championships, held at Turkmenistan in 2017 by Sir Iqbal Sacranie (Former Deputy President of WMO)



Felicitation of **Miss Muskan Sadik Kaliwala** for participating in the Gujarat State Basketball Championship, 2016 by Sir Iqbal Sacranie.



Felicitation of **Miss Mahek Sadik Kaliwala** for being selected in the Under Sixteen Gujarat Cricket Team by Mrs. Asfana Ehsan Gadawala (better half of Mr. Ehsan Gadawala - VP WMO North India Chapter)



It was a fitting finale to their India visit. A momentous trip, wonderful teamwork, warm camaraderie and the biggest winner that evening was the spirit of brotherhood amongst members of the Memon Community.

May Allah Swt keep us all united to uplift and uphold our community and humanity.



Save the Rohingya



Kevin Frayer/Getty Images

Dr. Taheera Hassim is a well established, young and successful obstetrician/gynaecologist practicing in Johannesburg, South Africa. She is a very active member of the Memon Community, involved with numerous charities, serving innumerable worthy causes across the globe. Taheera is the Regional Secretary General of the World Memon Organisation (Africa Chapter) and has recently visited the Refugee Camps in Bangladesh to address the medical needs of the Rohingya in her capacity as a Doctor and a Humanitarian.

This is the journey that changed her life..

It was the last week of November, I was looking forward to my annual break over the festive period and preparing to shut my practice for the holiday season, when a WhatsApp message popped up in my phone. It was a message, requesting doctors, social workers and nurses to join Al Quds, a charitable organization on a humanitarian trip to Bangladesh to assist the Rohingya refugees in December.

I did not know much about the plight of the Rohingya refugees, so I started googling to gather some information. I was quite horrified at some of the disturbing articles describing the genocide that led to this alarming refugee crisis. My mind was made up, I volunteered to join the group. I arranged for two of my colleagues to attend to my patients whilst I was away. I did not know what to expect, nor was I acquainted with any of the other volunteers. We conversed on the "Bangladesh Aid " group on WhatsApp over the subsequent weeks. All volunteers had to fund their own flight tickets, accommodation and meals. The mission was to provide medical care in the camps, put up shelters, boreholes, tube wells, toilets and distribute food. Budgets were calculated and donation requests were sent out on all social media platforms.

As the days drew closer, our passports were sent to the Bangladesh embassy, there was palpable excitement and anxiety. I notified the board members of the World Memon Organization of our mission and

the members generously donated towards my travel costs. I personally took care of the rest.

I began reading more and more about the plight of the Rohingya people. The D day was arriving. Six days before departure, we received a message from the Al Quds organisation that the trip was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. A container filled with Relief Aid was unable to reach Bangladesh on time.

Despite numerous efforts to convince the organisation that we could still initiate the mission without the container as we could purchase medication and all other material for the project, locally in Bangladesh, the organisation remained adamant on cancelling the trip.

We were heartbroken and very disappointed as we were holding Amanah and were accountable to a lot of donors. People had trusted us and contributed



A **journey** of a life time

Kevin Frayer/Getty Images

generously towards the organisation without an ounce of doubt. We felt obligated to them and answerable in the court of Allah Swt so we decided to go ahead in our personal capacities to fulfil our niyah.

But we were now apprehensive and worried about this mission because we would be completely on our own. We requested the organisation to refund the donations and then set out to fulfil the mission.

Our team comprised of myself and three others. Zakira Hayat is a 53 year old business woman from Lichtenburg. She runs a successful linen business and has her own non-profit organization that funds a madressa and also runs a feeding scheme. She had a contact at the Bangladesh refugee camp through whom she had been donating funds to construct toilets and tube wells. It put us at ease, knowing that we had at least one local contact in Bangladesh. Zakira's twenty year old son Goolam Husein was also to accompany us. He is pursuing his Bachelor's in Commerce from Cape Town and sacrificed his holidays to volunteer alongside his mother.

Aziza Allie is a 58 year old practicing educational psychologist from Cape Town. She left behind her husband and two sons to volunteer for this mission. I, an Obstetrician / Gynaecologist, could not have been amongst better people.



Al Quds didn't assist us with arranging permissions for carrying out medical work at the camps. We contacted a Bangladeshi medical team to try and join them but they asked for R 15,500 a day as donation. We didn't have that kind of funds. I was anxious and didn't know what to do. Dr Yakub Essack, from the Islamic Medical Association heard about our plight and assisted us immediately. He promptly made arrangements with an international,

partnering medical team who were working on the ground at the camps in Bangladesh.

I met my 3 member team for the first time at the OR Tambo International airport (Johannesburg) about 90 minutes before take off. I felt as though I had known them for years and was very comfortable. Zakira and Aziza were managing the funds and had Alhamdulillah collected R 230,000. The night of 20th December changed our lives..... our journey had begun...

We arrived in Dhaka after flying for almost 13 hours. We were already tired and it didn't help that the passport control in Dhaka was not a seamless process. After



a good night's rest in Dhaka, we flew to Cox Bazar in the afternoon. We prayed Jumma Salaah at the airport, asked Allah Swt to protect us and make our mission successful.

The flight was short and comfortable. As we landed, I witnessed pristine, golden sandy beaches next to the calm, shimmering turquoise waters of the Bay of Bengal. It was hard for me to connect the horrific stories of the refugee crisis with this placid, balmy beach town of Cox's Bazar. I felt at peace. A wry smile escaped my lips. Who would have thought that we would find peace in this part of the World - filled with torment, sorrow and eternal suffering but the Lord works in mysterious ways. Having to collect my luggage on the runway was a first for me..... it finally dawned upon me that I was firmly in the middle of a third world country.

After checking in at our simple hotel, Zakira's contact came to meet us so that we could plan the rehabilitation project. We went to a restaurant and shared a meal. Our aim was to complete our mission on a shoe string budget. While continuing our

discussions, we noticed a large group of Doctors from the Physicians Across Continents (PAC) organisation. Zakira and Aziza prompted me to go and network with them and extract some vital information as to how the medical camps function and the costs to volunteer. I was a bit apprehensive but I had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Dr Jamal Ghosheh, a neurosurgeon originally from Syria was the founder of PAC. He immediately put me at ease and offered me to join his clinic - obligation free! The all-male team comprising of 10 doctors and my team of 4 mingled freely; we became one, big family in that very first meeting. He arranged with his team to collect us the next morning. This would also give us the opportunity to survey the camps and the needs. We were not prepared to just hand out donations without assessment of the needs and supervising the funds. I could not wait for next morning.

Day 1 : 23RD DECEMBER 2017

PHYSICIANS ACROSS CONTINENTS CLINIC

I woke up early, packed a little bag with my stethoscope, a snack and some water. My team sat in the hotel foyer for over 90 pensive minutes waiting for the PAC team. I kept checking if the Wi-Fi was working so that we didn't miss any messages from them. The anxiety made my heart beat faster....what a build up!

We started feeling uncertain and were now unsure as to whether they would turn up. A million thoughts raced through my mind. A silver grey minibus finally arrived filled with the doctors dressed in light blue scrubs. It put a big smile of relief on our faces. The team comprised of doctors from Palestine, Jordan, Sudan, Mecca and our South African team.

The journey began with a few short stories and a detailed commentary of each bit of the drive to the camp. We drove for approximately 90 minutes and got to Thengkali refugee camp. I saw an elderly, frail man carrying a 25 kg food hamper on his back, it made my heart ache. We then passed by a group of around 8 children who were completely naked sitting on the side of the road in the sand. I was getting more and more anxious. There was an unending stack of bamboo shelters before we finally arrived at the clinic. There was a long queue of patients sitting on the dusty ground under the hot sun.

We saw many patients especially women

and children. It was an emotional day. Many had psychological issues and post traumatic stress. Numerous mini surgical procedures were performed under local anaesthesia. Patients that needed major surgery were noted for referral to the Cox Bazar Hospital where the same team would perform the more complicated surgeries.

The conditions of the refugees were indescribable. I was overwhelmed by their poverty and suffering. I found myself asking each patient about their families and circumstances. Their horrific tales of deprivation, torture and despair broke my heart.

I had never seen so many patients with goitres (non cancerous growths on the neck due to iodine deficiency) in a single day. Iodine deficiency remains a nutritional problem amongst the Rohingya with consequences that persist from birth till early childhood years through their adult lives. I also witnessed some rare conditions that I had only read about in my medical journals on that fateful day in that clinic.

While we consulted and attended to the needs of over a hundred patients, Zakira and Goolam went on to buy 30 chairs for the patients so that they were comfortably seated, awaiting their turn, instead of squatting on the simmering sand. They also planted a shade over the waiting area of the clinic to shield the suffering from the scorching sun. Aziza found time in between to buy some sweets and popsicles for the children. Aziza presented the children with the delicacies but they didn't seem to know what they were. They remained emotionless and blank..

The children were so deprived and depressed, they didn't seem to know what normal is. Their days comprised of just sitting in the sand - no schools, no supervision, no facial expressions, no laughter, just blank faces with hollow eyes...

I tried to put a smile on their face but did not get a response, just the same blank stare - child after child. Initially I thought it was because of the language barrier but my interpreter suffered the same fate. I guess the most profound moment in someone's life is when they are watching their whole world fall apart, and all they can do is stare blankly. This was a nation in shock!



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The army doesn't allow any foreigners to remain at the camp after 4pm, so at 3 pm we took a quick walk through the camp to get a feel of the needs. It was a long walk through an uneven terrain with no walking path. We passed shelter after shelter, each identical to the next. Shelters were constructed with bamboo frames and covered with plastic sheets. The floor was just sand. There were no possessions. Some had a few cooking utensils, the rest were empty.

All they had and held onto was their steadfast faith in Islam and unwavering trust in the Almighty Allah Swt to take them through this difficult phase of their lives. I was overwhelmed, I had never witnessed such resilience, resolute and absolute faith under duress. While we walked towards our transport, multiple Azaans went off. Amongst all the hardships and pain, the faithful gathered to offer Salaah, a nation that firmly believed in Islam held fast to their faith.



An inspired sermon was delivered by an elderly gentleman to the gathering and interpreted by my interpreter. He looked like a picture of calm in the chaos and he spoke articulately with conviction.

“It is by faith that we pray and receive answers for our prayers. Without faith, the word of the Almighty will have no effect in our life. The only thing that Allah Swt requires of us, is faith. He is pleased, when we are able to trust Him fully and take His word as true. He has no pleasure in those who fail to trust Him. Nothing is impossible with the one who believes in Him. The righteous shall live by their faith!

This is our trial by fire. He puts us here, He will take us home.

Often we fail to fathom such tests of faith. Nevertheless, one thing is certain, God in His sovereign will and wisdom does try the faith of even the saints, and it's for our good. By faith alone we are forgiven, saved, justified and given eternal life.”

Tears rolled down my cheeks as he concluded. This was a moment of hope for me.

As we rounded up our team at the clinic, a young 5 year old came running in, carrying her little brother in her tiny arms. Her brother was about a year old but looked like he was still a 6 month old baby. He had a rash on his head, was severely malnourished and dehydrated. We inquired about her family, she said that her parents were killed. She was her brother's sole caregiver and caretaker. We were astounded. At such an innocent age, having to endure so much pain. We gave him treatment and she disappeared into the darkness of the camp...



We left the camp with heavy hearts and sat in silence on our way back. I reached the hotel with my team and we went for a light supper. I wondered about that little girl. Which child has the burden of the world on her frail shoulders at the tender age of 5!! Being the sole provider for herself and guardian of another young life. Yet, there she was; doing all she could to enable them to achieve their tall ambitions of staying alive, through yet another day of their eventful life.

Aziza and I were sharing a room and when we went to bed, we spoke about the little girl again.

PHYSICIANS ACROSS CONTINENTS CLINIC

We were up early, it was a beautiful day. I could see the clear blue sea from the hotel window. I felt optimistic, today would be a better day. I still wondered about the girl though, from the day before.

Our silver grey minibus arrived. The 90 minute journey began once again. We stopped on the way for coconut water. This was a treat for us from the PAC team. They said that the refugees called it a "rich man's" drink. Today it was just Aziza and I, Zakira and Goolam went to the Bhalukhali camp to assess the land for the erection of shelters as well as to negotiate prices for the building material.

We started our clinic, the queues were endless. I paired up with Fuad, a second year dental student. He was a Rohingya refugee but had escaped, years back to a foreign land. He interpreted for me. I saw many women for antenatal care. Many were pregnant and recently widowed from the attacks. They had crossed over the border, into the camps to seek refuge.

I came across a 30 year old man that had been burnt extensively. It disturbed me. On enquiry, he elaborated that he was burnt by the soldiers at the age of ten. The scars were not fresh but they were for life. How does a human being attack a helpless ten year old child. The realities of this situation struck a nerve, I realized that this oppression faced by the Rohingyas was not a new phenomenon. It was an ongoing process for decades, a systematic ethnic cleansing, a well thought out and planned genocide ...I lost hope once again.

The cases of skin diseases, dehydration, malnutrition, rape, dental problems, worms, scabies and trauma from attacks were endless. The 12 year old that was raped all night by six

army officials horrified me. An innocent life ruined forever. Aziza, in the meanwhile tried to experiment with the children's emotions to elicit some smiles or a positive response. She pulled out a packet of the Manhattan gummy bears that I had asked to keep in her bag. She offered it to each child. They reluctantly took it and stared at it, unsure what to do with it.

And no matter, how long the children looked at it, they felt nothing. They had all died when their parents did, tortured, raped and murdered in the fields of Myanmar by the soldiers. And now they had no soul left to be shattered.A lost childhood...

Aziza finally demonstrated that the gummy bears were meant to be eaten. They did eventually put it into their mouths but even the sugar rush mounted to a zero response.

Zakira and Goolam met us at the end of the clinic. We all took a group photo because it was the last day of the PAC clinic. A founder member of the Al Markazul Islami foundation had heard that we had arrived for South Africa to assist. He volunteered at the end of the PAC clinic to take my team to see the labour unit in the Tengkali camp. I was excited, finally I would be seeing something in my speciality. The drive to the camp was unnerving, the road was narrow and the terrain was rough. There was absolute chaos on the roads. We were living on a wing and a prayer with the primary goal to just reach the destination alive.



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AL MARKAZUL ISLAMI MATERNITY UNIT IN THENGGKALI

And my transport arrived, another 90 minute journey, still not enough time to process my thoughts. The vehicle was comfortable but I was on pins and needles at the thought of those pregnant women having to walk miles – hungry, barefoot, ailing, exhausted and dehydrated just to see a doctor.

As I arrived, a serpentine queue of pregnant women were patiently waiting. All the women wore cloaks but underneath, was a simple cotton wrap-around called a Thami. They were all barefoot and calm, awaiting their turn.

The maternity team consisted of 2 nursing sisters, a midwife and a newly qualified Doctor. This maternity unit had one bed that was used for birthing and 5 other beds for pre and post delivery. On a busy day, up to 11 babies were delivered. In November itself,

The conditions under which these women deliver is unimaginable - a simple plastic table cloth on a hard delivery bed. There is no mattress or linen. There is no incubator or even a baby crib. If a baby needs to be resuscitated, it's done on the floor in a silver tray lined with material. They feel no joy nor do they ever complain. It's just a silent process, they don't even look at their babies. The babies have no napkins or clothes. They are wrapped in their mother's Thamis. Some women have not eaten since they went into labour or even thereafter. They just lie there after delivering their new borns – numb and dispassionate!

I guess they know being numb was worse but it felt better. Better than crying themselves to sleep all those nights. Better than feeling crushed under the weight of their burdening life. Better than confronting their problems, only to fail. I guess they felt better to feel nothing, to fight nothing

To be Nothing!



During the examination at the clinic a woman brought her two month old to show Sitara that the baby had survived. The baby was born at 1.5 kg and sent home the same day. The babies of that weight in my part of the world go to ICU. It is a miracle. Allah is Merciful.

In this unit, upon discharge the women get a hamper that will suffice for a month. It comprises a food hamper, paracetamol, milk powder, baby clothes, a mosquito net and a packet of sanitary towels. They also get 2000 Takkas (local currency). The women then return to their barren shelters, the cold floor, no possessions, no warmth....probably

there were over a hundred births but September witnessed a record 200 births.

Sitara is the midwife from Burma. Being a refugee herself, with 8 children of her own. Her youngest child is 6 months old and she delivered her baby, all by herself ! She assists all the pregnant women that go into labour. I witnessed her even giving the patients some of her own food. She has a heart of gold.

the worst conditions to return to, after having a baby.

After I had attended to more than 30 pregnant women, Sitara brought me fresh coconut water, it was her way of saying "Thank you". It certainly made me smile although my heart was aching looking at the dismal provisions for pregnant women. The drive back was in complete silence. I was both physically and mentally drained!

CSBD MEDICAL CAMP

The Charity Society of Bangladeshi Doctors is an organisation that is affiliated with the Islamic Medical Association of South Africa. They collected us for a clinic in an area that was not accessible by road. I asked myself if this was going to be another day of heartbreak. As we drove to the camp, a majestic elephant walked past our vehicle. These elephants were part of the forest which were now occupied with the refugees hence the mighty mammal was intruding upon the roads, frequently used by his usurpers.

The Doctors from the Islamic Medical Association of North America joined us at the camp. We didn't know what to expect. It was a very long hike to the top of the hill. The narrow uneven pathway was a challenge. All the medications and equipment were carried up by the team. We walked past small children sitting under the harsh sun, next to the bamboo shoots that will soon be used to build shelters. They were hoping to have a roof over their head by the end of the day and were patiently awaiting their turn. Some children were trying to have a bucket bath at the tube well.

The walk was endless, I never thought I would get there. It was hot and everyone was sweating profusely. The air was suffocating and the smell of decomposition made me nauseous. The occasional breeze carried the stench of human faeces, unwashed skin, stale food and death. There were flies everywhere. The refugees were always ailing and in need of constant medical attention due to the squalid and subhuman living conditions.

This clinic was the first one in this camp since August 2017. The queues stretched up to the moon. The patients were malnourished and dehydrated. Constant coughing, skin diseases and high fevers formed the majority of complaints.

I was horrified that most 25 year olds were on their seventh or eighth pregnancies. These young women looked older than they were. Was this because they were adults who had lost out on their childhood? The average weight of these highly pregnant women were between 35 and 45 kg. I have never witnessed this in my several years of practice.

On prodding a few locals, we realised that frequent pregnancies were a contingency plan to increase their population and avoid the tribe from being wiped out due to the systematic genocide being carried out by the forces in Myanmar against the Rohingyas. A pregnant woman had the added advantage of not being subject to rape and were allowed to cross the borders without questioning.

We worked hard and made sure that every patient was treated to the best of our ability. Aziza helped with measuring blood pressures. The clinic was congested, claustrophobic, scorching and patients were precariously perched on the edge of the hill, awaiting their turn. They stood in the heat for hours, waiting to be seen. I examined every patient on the wooden rickety bed, luckily the women were skinny so the bed didn't give way.

A young girl complained of unbearable pain in her left ear and neck for the past month. She struggled to even walk. I don't have paediatric skills but decided to follow the basics that I learnt at medical school and examined her ear. She had an insect lodged into the ear canal so we carefully removed it. She felt instant relief; it was our one bright spot of the day. An



Kevin Frayer/Getty Images

act of kindness on a day of despair.

The elderly waited patiently to be seen, sitting on the hard, cold, dusty floor with despair in their hollow eyes...They didn't say much but their eyes cried for help. We saw many babies on the verge of death purely from malnutrition and dehydration. My emotions didn't cope with this. How can an entire nation be displaced and we do nothing to give them hope.

443 patients later, our stint ended. No patients were turned away. I created hand written antenatal cards for the 43 pregnant women that I had attended to, so that they could carry it along to any other medical camp for some sort of follow up. 360 patients for the day were only women and children. As we walked back to the vehicles, we came across children that made a seating device out of empty plastic oil bottles. They flattened it out and used it to slide down in the sand while the others attached a string to pull the younger siblings in it, just like a sly. Innovation in the most difficult of times.

Zakira and Goolam were at Balukhali camp - Block E, the site where a new batch of refugees had just arrived. The shelters were being put up there, along with conducting a survey, as well as buying of raw materials for the same.

AL MARKAZUL ISLAMI LABOUR UNIT

The early morning drive to the camp was an optimistic one. I was going to my happy place, the labour ward. Birthing is a happy moment, I wondered whether I would make a mother smile at her new born baby today. We stopped to buy towels, baby blankets and clothes for the maternity unit. Aziza and Goolam bought soccer balls for the children. They wanted to teach the older children to play. Our excitement built up and we couldn't wait to reach the camp. Zakira was negotiating prices for the rehabilitation project.



The long queue of antenatal patients were waiting since early morning. There were no complaints, just patient faces. Many pregnant women came with their small children to the clinic. The tiny tots hung on to their skinny mothers, all stark naked....they didn't even have napkins to cover their essentials. Again many skin diseases and unexplained fevers. I worked with sister Hafisa, a lady from Dhaka, she will be stationed at the camps for four months while her husband toils in Dhaka.

Most patients were clinically assessed, I didn't have an ultrasound machine to assist. Most women were so traumatized that they didn't know when their last menstrual cycles were nor did they know their current dates. By the time some patients got to the clinic, they could barely stand from exhaustion and dehydration. They didn't know when they had eaten their last meal or where the next one would come from. At times we had to mix oral rehydration solution to provide them with just enough energy, to enable them to stand up.

The patients that delivered their babies were quite exhausted and anhedonic. The husbands waited outside, they were not allowed into the clinic due to lack of privacy between the women in the unit. Sometimes the fathers were shown the new baby from a side door.

As I watched through the window, I saw small children running home with heavy bags of food rations. Their malnourished, blistered bodies carrying the 25 kg

bags of meals that would last them for a month. It was survival of the fittest.



I then saw a distraught woman walking into the clinic, she was turned away from another facility. She was exhausted and dehydrated. As she entered, I examined her. She was ready to give birth but was completely dehydrated. We gave her rehydration solution, after which she delivered a 3 kg healthy baby. This was her fourth child. Not a single moan escaped her lips during her delivery. She grabbed my hand in silence and gratitude after the delivery. She said she prayed for me. We tried to help her bond with the baby and breast feed. She was blank and expressionless. She went home within fifteen minutes of the delivery to her cold, empty shelter. In my world, patients are kept for a minimum of two nights post delivery to monitor for bleeding and also to rest. These women are not so privileged.

It was an emotional goodbye to that unit. I felt sad and incomplete, yet my new patients remained emotionless. As we got into the vehicle to leave for home, Aziza gave out balloons to the children standing around. They didn't know what it was and bit on them....they thought it was some kind of food. Which child doesn't know what a balloon is? I questioned their morbid life in Myanmar...



Day 6 : 28TH DECEMBER 2017

BHALUKHALI CAMP 2

The monotonous 90 minute drive brought us to our camp. We walked for about 40 minutes, deep into the camp. The medications were carried up by our team. While walking, I noticed a little girl relieving herself in the sand. The lack of sanitation has increased the risk of disease because the children play in the sand and eat in the same sand as well. The children also splash around in the stagnant sewerage water which brought even greater misery in the form of rampant skin diseases.

There was a long queue of women sitting under the hot sun, in the small gap between the tin wall of the hutment and floor. They came in hundreds, waiting patiently. Many young orphans brought their even younger siblings for treatment. I saw a severely malnourished one year old that weighed just two kilograms. It no longer shocked me!! Was I too becoming numb?

A total of 536 patients were examined. 45 were pregnant. Many were critical and on the verge of death. Many children with old infected, gunshot wounds were treated. It was another busy day at the clinic with the patients here, suffering much more than the other camps.

We drove past the Naf on the way back, the river of blood. Most of the refugees waded and swam across this river from Myanmar into Bangladesh. The river looks peaceful and tranquil, a true paradox to the upheavals on its banks and the tumultuous journeys undertaken by the thousands who were fortunate enough to traverse it. My heart still dies each time I hear a new story. There are hundreds of them, one more horrific than the other.....one more tragic than the other....

We were invited by the North American team of doctors for supper. It was another sad goodbye. We had become a big, united family. I will never forget the team comprising of doctors Khalique, Ismail, Shazia and Mohsin



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Day 7 : 29TH DECEMBER 2017

THE CAMPS OF BALUKHALI

Today was my last day at the medical camp with the Charity Society of Bangladeshi Doctors. It was an emotional day. Zakira, Aziza and Goolam were not with me. They had left to handover the finished shelters and distribute hygiene hampers. I wished there were 2 of me so that one could have accompanied them while the other attended to the refugees' medical needs. I had developed a high fever and intense joint pain. My body was aching, but I soldiered on. I had responsibilities and miles to go before I sleep... and miles to go before I sleep..

We examined around 600 patients and ran out of medication. While waiting for the team to pack up, I tried to put a smile on the faces of the children outside. I made some funny faces, yet only 2 children responded. The rest stared anxiously. I felt sad and uneasy to leave these children. I took out my packet of biscuits and gave each child a piece. The biscuits vanished in no time. Hunger remained their one, true companion through all the hardships!!

We were all exhausted. It had been a tough week. We literally had 3 hours of sleep, every night since we landed. Every night we sat down and planned; calculated funds and recalculated over and over again, so that every cent is spent wisely. We would budget and try to get the most out of the funds without compromising on quality! Zakira Hayat and

Goolam were at the camp site from dawn till dusk supervising and attending to the shelters and food distribution projects. They went to great lengths, even personally attending to the purchasing and distribution of fish to families - a much needed protein to their poor diets. Aziza was also involved in the medical camps and often assisted Zakira Hayat. These were women who were taking multi tasking to another level.



Day 8 : 30TH DECEMBER 2017

BALUKHALI CAMP

It was our last day here. I wish I could have stayed longer. We didn't get much sleep the night before because we were arranging food hampers for the occupants of the shelters we had built. There were last minute logistics that needed to be sorted out. We were calculating our last remaining funds, to assess if we could slaughter a cow and distribute the meat - a much needed protein supplement. We still had a lot more to see, to do. The families needed the protein to fight disease and build their immunity in these squalid conditions. If they were indeed fortunate to have a proper meal, it was usually sullied rice.

Our 90 minute journey began and off we went to the camp. It had been a very tiring week. I was mentally and emotionally fatigued. It was scorching



hot, I felt ill. The air reeked of rotting waste. The dismal conditions breed disease, there is no sewage system, no fresh running water.....My head was spinning and my throat was on fire but my pain was nothing compared to the suffering that engulfed the people of Rohingya.



The skinny little children that came to collect the family ration never ceased to amaze me. Those tiny bodies with wiry frames lifted more than 25 kg of food, effortlessly with no complaints. They were weak yet so strong.



We got to the camp after a bit of a hike. We got to our newly constructed shelters, they were up, it was a moment of elation. But then I heard some shuffling sounds and came across these two brothers sitting in the dirt smiling at us. They were unable to walk and had severe leg deformities, yet had broad smiles plastered across their faces. We found their mother, a young widow, a mother of five. Although she looked distraught, she welcomed us into her empty, tattered shelter. She offered us 2 little plastic stools to sit on. As we listened to her horrific tale, I wished that we could help the boys. I took down the shelter location and other details to pass on to a palliative care team. No child should be left unassisted and every child however disadvantaged enjoys the right to play with his or her friends. I prayed and wished the siblings would be up and running soon, matching steps with their little friends.

Most of the young girls had very short tresses. I wondered about this and was explained that in order for them to avoid being raped, the parents dressed them as boys and gave them short haircuts so that they could go unnoticed, give the slip to the Myanmar soldiers and get safely across the border.

The day soon ended, it was too short. We walked back to our transport and saw many little toddlers carrying fire wood in anticipation of supper. These children become adults overnight. The vicious cycle of poverty continues and so does child labour. I left with tears in my eyes. I had never witnessed or imagined such extensive and ruthless poverty. It was 4 pm and the camps closed off to the world. The Rohingya refugees were not allowed to leave the camps. I often wondered what went on in the camps at night. The mortifying thoughts still come back to haunt me.

We checked our recently dug tube wells, boreholes and newly constructed toilets. We were satisfied. The project was reaching completion. Zakira, Aziza and Goolam made sure that no stone was left unturned and that every penny spent was accounted for. Our team went up to the Mazi's (camp leader or head) dwelling and awaited the truck that were delivering our food hampers. Each hamper contained 15 kg rice, 3 kg lentils, 1 kg salt, 1.5 litres of oil and 3kg of sugar. In addition to the hampers, we personally distributed a kilogram of fresh beef to the refugees. Every shelter we put up, included several amenities such as a gas stove, gas cylinder, pots, plates, cutlery, a bucket, a jug and a solar panel. The widows cried out of sheer happiness when they received these home utility items.

Day 9 : 31ST DECEMBER 2017

Goodbye Cox Bazar

It was time to pack up and go back home. I was returning empty handed but with an experience of a lifetime. The bittersweet emotions set my mind into turmoil. I had forged lifelong friendships and was thankful to the Almighty for all the little comforts in life that I had taken for granted over the years.

Despite the obstacles at the beginning of our journey, Allah Swt protected us and Alhamdulillah we fulfilled our first mission. Our total collection amounted to R820,000. We constructed 100 shelters, provided a sizeable number of utensils and solar panels, dug 4 boreholes, 1 tube well, erected 5 toilets, 5 bathrooms, distributed 100 food hampers, 100 hygiene packs, 160 kilograms of meat, set up 30 chairs, a shade for the clinic, 2 madressahs with flooring mats, fans, solar panels and cupboards.

Alhamdulillah.



HOMECOMING

I have reached home safely. The stories of the forlorn 5 year old child that witnessed her parents being killed by Myanmar soldiers and the countless other gruesome stories of death and destruction have left an indelible mark on my mind and soul.

Something in me died at Cox Bazaar. Perhaps it was the childish innocence that I accepted as faith - the claim that Man is basically good.

My wish is to go back and continue the mission ; long term solutions must be provided. The Rohingyas, imprisoned in the subhuman conditions of the

Refugee Camps of Bangladesh which are akin to concentration camps, is not acceptable to me in today's day and age. They must return to Myanmar, to their own country, to their own lands, to their rightful homes - as free people with their dignity and basic human rights to peace and security, fully restored.

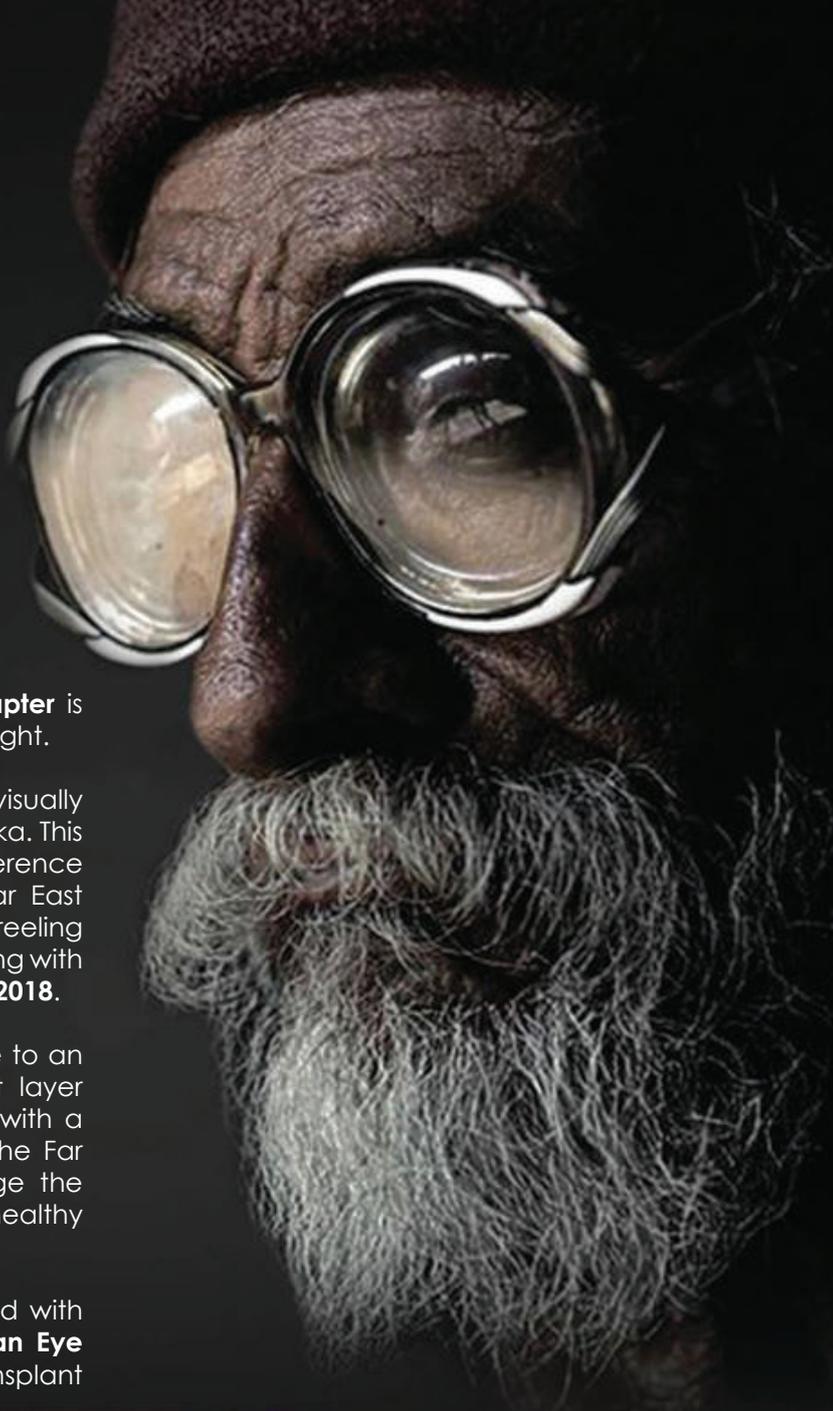
I come back – stronger , more resolute in faith and with a firm belief that we need to be the change that we expect to see in the World.

My name is Dr. Taheera Hassim. I am a member of the World Memon Organisation. **We Serve Mankind.**

Kevin Frayer/Getty Images

[DONATE](#)

The Gift *of* Sight



The **World Memon Organisation Far East Chapter** is spreading the light with the invaluable gift of sight.

Healthy corneas are being delivered to the visually impaired in all corners of the World from Sri Lanka. This worthy project will soon make a tangible difference to hundreds across the globe. The WMO Far East Chapter will donate eyes to countries that are reeling under the onslaught of curable blindness, starting with **delivering 200 corneas to Pakistan in the year 2018.**

In a majority of these cases, the sight lost due to an opaque cornea (the outermost, transparent layer of the eye) can be restored by replacing it with a clear one. This remarkable endeavour that the Far East Chapter has embarked upon will bridge the gap between availability and requirement of healthy corneas.

The World Memon Organisation has partnered with the **Hashmanis Foundation** and the **Sri Lankan Eye Bank Society** to provide free Corneal Transplant services to the Memons of Pakistan.

Under the agreement, the Sri Lankan Eye Bank Society will provide the donated healthy corneas to the World Memon Organisation Far East Chapter at cost which will be sent to WMO Pakistan Chapter. The surgeries will be performed at Hashmanis Hospital and the surgical expenses will be borne by the World Memon Organisation and the Hashmanis Foundation.

An agreement to transplant 200 corneas has been signed. Each surgery costs north of Rs.150,000 but through this thoughtful initiative, underprivileged patients can have their vision restored at zero expense. They have been provided with the perfect opportunity to lead a normal life by replacing their damaged corneas with healthy ones.



HASHMANIS
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Sri Lanka Eye Donation Society

For further details, contact us at:

UAN: 111-142-273

or visit

www.hashmanis.com.pk | [/Hashmanis](https://www.facebook.com/Hashmanis)

Six successful surgeries have been performed thus far by the Grace of the Almighty.

A few words of gratitude from a 72 year old recipient who has recently undergone a successful transplant – Mr Muhammad Sumar.

“I was struggling with my vision for the last four years. I would experience pain, bouts of redness, irritation and a marked decrease in visibility so I went to different Doctors but the suggested treatment would cost me a fortune so I lost all hope.

One day, a friend of mine told me about Hashmanis Foundation, who would not only treat the patient but also take care of their expenses, irrespective of their caste and community.

I rushed to this foundation, where I was examined by top Ophthalmologists, received Corneal Transplant in both my eyes and was sent home in a week's time, without being charged a single penny.

After the surgery, my world has changed. I can see everything clearer, better than ever before. My family and I are eternally grateful to the Hashmanis Foundation and World Memon Organisation.”

As WMO continues it's journey of touching and changing lives of thousands across the globe, the GIFT OF SIGHT project marks a significant milestone in that all important journey to change the World.



Mr. Muhammad Sumar - recipient of a healthy cornea





Wings of Hope



On 9th January 2018, the **Ladies Wing of WMO Pakistan Chapter** set out to visit **Imran Rehabilitation Centre (IRC)**, an institute for the mentally and physically challenged children with special and complex needs. Under the umbrella of the “**Living Life**” project, the ladies donated **15 wheelchairs** on behalf of WMO to children with disabilities from disadvantaged families.



The wheelchairs will enable the children to move freely and escape the confined spaces of their homes and schools. They will finally have the freedom to absorb the beautiful sights and sounds of mother nature, breathe the fresh air, enjoy their day in the sun and spend quality time in an environment more conducive for their emotional and physical well being.



The distinguished ladies wing of Pakistan has always been on the forefront and has donated towards innumerable worthy causes over the years. As these incredible ladies of the World Memon Organisation continue their humanitarian endeavours to Serve Mankind, we pray that the Almighty accept their humble efforts and reward everyone who are working together to bring a smile on the faces of these little angels by giving them wings.

Contributing Editor: Ms. Reeda Sheikhani

WMO AFRICA CHAPTER BRINGS HOPE TO THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED.



A simple call for assistance from the Gardens Social Services to the leaders of the World Memon Organisation was answered by an overwhelming response from the entire WMO Africa family.

Within a week, 15 braille machines at a total cost of R 220,000 were ordered and delivered. Not only did WMO rise to the occasion but went a step further by providing walking canes for the visually impaired.

The Gardens Social Services, a Non Profit Organisation servicing the medical and hospital sectors, who also manage an “assisted living home” catering for the frail, old, disabled and visually impaired, hosted the executive members of the WMO at an official handing over ceremony on the 20th of November 2017.

The event was attended by the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs (South Africa) - Mrs Fatima Chohan, students of the Princehoff School for the blind and many visually impaired individuals from the neighbouring informal settlements of Tshwane. The Honourable Minister wished the WMO well, thanked the members for their generous contributions to the community and for their



selfless work towards humanity.

WMO has been instrumental in assisting the Gardens in its mission to make a difference to those who are visually impaired.

A special acknowledgement to Zafreen Feizul Ayob - member of the WMO Africa Chapter Ladies Wing for facilitating the entire initiative. We are eternally grateful to our donors for their invaluable contributions towards this pertinent cause. May Allah Swt reward them for their generosity.



In Honour Of Dr. Miftah Ismail

On the eve of 27th January 2018, the **World Memon Organisation Pakistan Chapter** and the **All Pakistan Memon Federation** jointly hosted a dinner reception to honour **Dr. Miftah Ismail (Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan for Finance, Revenue & Economic Affairs with the status of a Federal Minister)**.

It is a matter of great pride for the Memon community that the distinguished Dr. Ismail, an illustrious Memon has been appointed to a position of such great honour!



Miftah, received his **Ph.D degree in public finance and political economy** from the **Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania**, in 1990, whereafter Ismail worked with the **International Monetary Fund** as an economist based in Washington, D.C. in the early nineties.

Prominent members of the Memon community attended this grand event and were mesmerized by Miftah's eloquence as he cast a spell on the audience with his scintillating oration. In his articulate address, **Dr. Ismail identified that Memoni language and culture needs to be preserved** and requested both the organisations to join hands and work for its preservation as it is our identity!

He stressed the importance of languages and was of the view that if Memoni language is not preserved it will die down in the future. He applauded the work being carried out by both organisations and thanked them for honouring him. He endorsed the fact that both organisations had collaborated to host the event and **emphasised that uniting the community was vital for the progress of its people.**

The office bearers of both the organisations jointly presented a shield to Dr. Miftah as the felicitation ceremony marked the end of this wonderful event.

Contributing Editor: Ms. Reeda Sheikhan

Dial M for Marriage



Memon Connections - the matrimonial service provided by the **International Ladies Wing of WMO** is a much needed platform to find suitable matches within the Memon Community, spearheaded by senior members of the global Memon community who personally facilitate marriage alliances between eligible Memon families, diligently overseen by our veteran **Mrs. Raziya Bai Chashmawala**.

“What would we be without an identity?” states an emphatic Raziya Chashmawala.

As she continues in the same vein, “We are living in a multi racial , multi cultural and multi religious environment - it is only natural for those with foresight to realise the importance of cultural and language preservation.

By creating platforms where a Memon boy is introduced to a Memon girl, it encourages interaction

within ones own community and enables the first choice to be from ones own culture , religion , language - its merely an attempt at preservation of culture in the world that we live in!”

Concludes Raziya bai as she continues her endeavours to make the heavenly-bond of marriage, in essence, a celestial one.

Upon receiving several requests to publish the names of the ladies who facilitate these alliances in all corners of the World, we are providing the details.



Following are the Names, Email IDs & Mobile Numbers of the Global Representatives of “MEMON CONNECTIONS”

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Head of Committee
Raziya Chasmawala

Overseen by
Fazila AK Ismail



MEMON

SPORTS FESTIVAL 2017

The Memon Sports Festival 2017 concluded on Friday 8th December 2017 with a grand presentation ceremony. **The organisers and all participants have hailed it as the best ever.** The Festival took place at various venues and locations spread across Leicester, between Sunday 5th November and Friday 8th December.

This year the festival organisers introduced **'Walking Football'** due to its surging popularity. Some older men are now discovering the joys of football by playing it at a more leisurely pace. The organisers ensured that the players did not get too excited and break into a run! It will hopefully attract many enthusiasts back into game due to its health and fitness benefits and all round sense of fun and enjoyment.

Shabir Jakhura, Chair of Memon Youth Association, stated *"The festival has been in existence for many years now but there is no doubt in my mind that this has been the best so far. Participation is on the rise with new people joining, with each passing year and feedback has been overwhelming."*

Shabir continued: *"There were over 10 different sports events taking place across Leicester and I would like to thank all the individuals, volunteers and groups that have been involved with the Sports Festival for all their hard work and untiring efforts – you have been amazing. I am eternally grateful to our sponsors and promoters"*.

Nazir Okhai, Main Memon Committee member, said *"The Memon Sports Festival is now an established and much sought after event on our Memon annual calendar, I am thrilled it continues to draw new participants every year"*.

Nazir continued: *"We are building a new sports centre which is an exciting opportunity for us all – and particularly for the community who would*

benefit greatly from this modern facility that is widely supported by everyone. The Main Committee is working hard to raise funds to build the hall which is currently in its second phase, Inshallah with your support we can have the hall ready for next year's sports tournament, saving our Youth Community significant costs spent on venues for their sports tournament".



If you are interested in being involved with the 'Memon Sports Tournament' in 2018 or intend to donate to the 'Memon Sports Hall' please email shabir@jakstationers.co.uk or call +447908 333786

Follow us on:
facebook 'Memon Youth Association Leicester'
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Join our 'Whatsapp' group contact Ashfaq +447713 646499



Global Youth Wing

A P P O I N T M E N T S

In the Name of Allah SWT The Most Beneficent The Most Merciful

Dear Fellow Memon's - Assalaamu-Alaykum

All praise and gratitude are for Allah SWT our Creator, Sustainer and Guide.

Since our last AGM in Ras Al Khaimah on 7th October 2017 I have had both the pleasure and daunting task of devising and implementing a selection criteria and procedure to ensure as far as possible, those appointed to office are able to hold, honour and implement the values and vision of the WMO and it's Global Youth Wing ["GYW"].

These appointees were selected after a rigorous 7-week recruitment drive and process. Alhamdulillah, we are delighted to present a new and dynamic team of professionals and entrepreneurs to lay the foundations for a structured, vibrant and productive GYW Inshallah.

The regions not yet appointed shall be done once the Vice-Presidents and Regional Management Committees for the remaining regions are able to fully participate in a second recruitment drive and process to be implemented in the new year Inshallah.

Alhumdolillah the standard of the 37 applications was very high and whilst I could not select all applicants to the available positions, I have personally assured and received commitments from them all without exception that we will work as an extended team on the GYW platform.

Unity and hard selfless efforts are paramount as part of our commitments to our beautiful deen, without which we can never succeed in delivering anything of sustainable value to our Global Memon Community.

I am delighted to introduce what is a great team in the making Inshallah. May Allah SWT guide us on the straight path. Aameen.

Mr Bashir Sattar

WMO Founding Trustee & Chairman Global Youth Wing



Mr BASHIR SATTAR
Chairman, Global Youth Wing

Bashir is an e-commerce and marketing entrepreneur with a career stretching over 4 decades. Originally destined for a profession in medicine at University College London, he changed direction whilst at university after developing an insatiable interest in consumer electronics.

Having set up several successful retail brands over his career, Bashir is now focused on consumer goods manufacturing and retail distribution. Working from his office in UK & China he relishes the challenge to exploit the numerous opportunities in this globally expanding marketplace.

Some of Bashir's notable voluntary work over the past 37 years includes;

- » 6-year term as Trustee & Chairman of one of the largest mosques in North London
- » Trustee and Former President of the Memon Association UK
- » Managing Director of Peace TV for 5 years from 2006-2011 launching Peace TV in UK, Europe and US
- » Founding Trustee & Former Assistant Secretary Board of Trustees World Memon Organization ["WMO"]
- » WMO Global Youth Chairman 2017-2020
- » Bashir was awarded for services to the community by HRH Prince of Wales in 2001

Married with 5 daughters [4 of whom are Aalimas], 2 sons and 3 grandchildren, Bashir's interests include his voluntary and commercial work, cricket, football, travel, and above all...his family!



Ms REEDA SHEIKHANI
Secretary, Global Youth Wing

Reeda Sheikhani is the Unit Head for Digital Banking at MCB Bank Pakistan Ltd and has also been associated with the Standard Chartered Bank during the early years of her career.

Driven with the passion to serve the community, she has been actively involved with the WMO Pakistan Chapter Youth Wing since 2010. Being an integral team member of the WMO Youth Wing, Reeda has played an instrumental role in churning out various projects for the development of the youth of the community in Pakistan.

Currently, she is also serving as a Management Committee member of the WMO Pakistan Chapter. She is also an active member of the Pak US Alumni Network and was one of the 8 females from Pakistan to be selected for the prestigious US State Department's Leadership Program titled "Emerging Women Leaders of Pakistan".

Reeda, holds an MBA from the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi.



Mr MUHAMMAD ARSALAN TABANI
Treasurer, Global Youth Wing

Arsalan Tabani, Pakistani aged 33, was born and raised in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. By the age of 21, Arsalan had graduated as BBA from University of Wollongong Specializing in Accountancy, BSc Oxford Brookes (Hons) Program and Association of Certified Chartered Accountants qualifications achieving these qualifications simultaneously over a period of three years. By the Grace of God, he was awarded Outstanding Academic Performance Award from ACCA. Arsalan is actively involved in the family group business, with his personal involvement in Property Network (Real Estate Brokerage and Development) and Cotton and Silk (Retail and E-Commerce Business). Along with the efforts of his brothers, Property Network has achieved several milestones including prestigious awards from almost all well-known Property Developers in the UAE.

He brings forward his diverse business experience, academic achievements and keen interest in social work and hopes to contribute to the outstanding milestones achieved by the elders of WMO.



Mr ARSALAN HASHMANI
Regional Youth Vice Chairman - Pakistan Chapter

The youngest CEO of a hospital in Pakistan, Mr. Arsalan Hashmani is a Certified Financial Analyst (CFA). A graduate of the Karachi American School, he has an undergraduate degree in Accounting and Finance, and a Master's degree in Accounting from the University of Waterloo, Canada. Mr. Arsalan has experience working with several international organizations such as the Scotiabank, Intercontinental Hotels Group, Capgemini Consulting, Phillip Morris International and the Government of Canada eHealth Initiative. He has experience managing projects worth of \$200MM USD. He is a proven entrepreneur and is currently serving as the Founder and CEO of a residential construction firm in Toronto. He is also the CEO of a commercial construction firm in Pakistan and the CEO of the Hashmanis Group of Hospitals.

Mr. Arsalan is active in philanthropic work and organizes medical camps across Pakistan. His Foundation screens and treats thousands of patients on a monthly basis.



Mr KAMRAN GHANI
Regional Youth Vice Chairman - Middle East Chapter

Mr Gani holds an MBA from the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, UK. He is the Chairman/Co-Founder of Uride Network (Pvt.) Ltd Pakistan - A private auto contracting administration, and Chairman of Plazzo Development Real Estate LLC, Dubai - which Offer the most extreme solace and extravagance to its inhabitants in Jumeirah village. Mr. Gani is a Partner at Best Home Real Estate Ajman – a pioneer in property development in UAE, and also a Partner at Colombia Used Cars Sharjah, UAE.

Mr. Kamran Gani is enthusiastic about making new and energizing open doors in Pakistan and UAE, and also constantly investigating new pursuits that will better serve the Pakistan market. While keeping up changeless living arrangement in the UAE, he has figured out how to keep up effective organizations both in UAE and Pakistan

Mr. Kamran is an Active member in the Pakistan Business Council, World Memon Organization, and Karachi Club.



Mr ARSHAD GANI
Regional Youth Vice Chairman - Europe Chapter

Mr Arshad will be the youngest member of the Global Youth Wing Team. He brings an exciting and fresh approach to this emerging strategic enhancement of the WMO.

Having completed his higher education in Economics, Psychology and Geography, is currently working within his family's very successful real estate development and management business as Property Manager.

His experiences include: tutoring, undertaking architectural projects and working in the British Charity sector for which he received the Duke of Edinburgh Gold award.

Arshad's interests includes badminton & tennis, debating, travelling and participating in voluntary work for the WMO.

Arshad says he is honoured and excited to have been selected as the Global Youth Vice Chairman for the Europe chapter and will endeavour and pledges to fulfil this position to the best of his ability.



Mr KHURRAM KALIA
Advisor to Global Youth Chairman
Dubai, UAE

Khurram H. Kalia, a leader and top executive par excellence is recently taken the helm of affairs as the Group CEO of Kalia Group, a multifaceted group of companies with special focus on IT, Capital and Financial Markets and Real Estate Development with a rich history spanning over 4 decades. He is also Founding President and CEO of KalSoft, a coveted and prestigious multinational software and consulting firm with a diversified portfolio of solutions and services offerings.

Khurram holds an MBA from the world top ranked London Business School with a Distinction.

Khurram also holds a degree of Bachelors in Computer Science from FAST National University. He graduated summa cum laude with a CGPA of 4.00/4.00 with Gold Medals in all 5 categories.

Khurram has won numerous awards and accolades such as Microsoft 'Circle of Excellence Award', Karachi Genius of the Year, awards by chamber of commerce, MPF, Islamic Chamber, and many other prestigious organizations in recognition of his business, academic and social achievements and contributions.



Ms SUMRIN KALIA
Advisor to Global Youth Chairman
Berlin, Germany

Sumrin Kalia whilst originating from Pakistan is currently based in Berlin, Germany. She has been associated with the WMO Youth for the past 7 years and is currently studying a doctoral fellowship in Political Science at Freie University Berlin. She has a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Karachi and an M.Sc. in Social Policy (Research) from LSE. Her research focuses on identity, nationalism and citizen engagement in Pakistan. She has published papers on bureaucratic performance and governance issues in Pakistan and worked on research projects funded by US State Department and IDRC. She has worked with government and non-government organisations as consultant and trainer and taught as lecturer in several of Karachi's top universities.

Sumrin has undertaken various key roles for WMO Youth and Ladies Wing projects. She is a mother of four children and has successfully combined career and social work with family responsibilities.



Dr SANA DURVESH
Advisor to Global Youth Chairman
Karachi, Pakistan

Sana Durvesh is a Doctor of medicine currently involved in Public Health Management with rich experience in Women and Youth Centered Program Designing, Program Management and Fundraising. She is currently involved in implementation of a social franchising program across Pakistan and new business development for her organization.

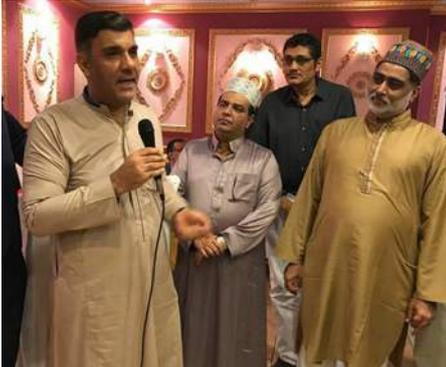
At work, she has demonstrated strong management skills, attention to details, and ability to multi-task. She has a demonstrated record of working successfully with diverse stakeholders and navigate complex environments.

She was recently named a Woman Leader by Health Policy Plus for working on Youth involvement in Sind Government's Costed Implementation Plan. Dr Sana has previously worked with Aahung, Marie Stopes Pakistan, Sind Police, and Pakistan Society for harm reduction of drugs users.

Dr Sana Durvesh has also conducted several training sessions for youth. Her notable sessions include, "Marriage Counseling", "Stress management" and "How to say no without feeling guilty".

Picture Gallery

MASA HONOURS MR. NOWSAD GANI



Mr. Nowsad Gani (Deputy President - WMO), Mr. Ehsan Gadawala (VP - WMO North India Chapter) and Mr. Hasin Aghadi (Regional Treasurer - WMO North India Chapter) were cordially invited by MASA (Memon Association Saudi Arabia) to attend an event on the 28th of December 2017 in order to meet with the respected members of MASA and learn more about the wonderful work being carried out by the esteemed organisation for the betterment of the community in Saudi Arabia.

CRYPTO CURRENCIES SEMINAR



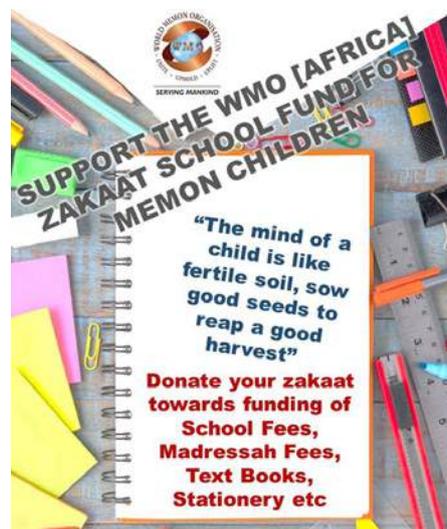
WMO Africa chapter in association with Minara Chamber of Commerce, the Spanish Business Chamber, the Nordic South African Business Association and Blockchain convened a Business Seminar at

the World Memon Foundation Centre, Laudium in Pretoria, South Africa on the 25th of January 2018.

Distinguished speakers, Mr. Ashwin Goolab of Ernest and Young, Mr. Farzan Eshani and Mr. Kabir Ghoor of Blockchain presented opportunities in "Crypto Currencies" and gave invaluable insights pertaining to the future of digital currencies.

A sizeable crowd from all sections of society participated and appreciated a very informative event, applauding WMO Africa Chapter for an enlightening evening.

ZAKAT APPEAL FOR EDUCATION



World Memon Organization - Africa Chapter appeals to direct your zakaat this month towards a very worthy "Education Campaign"

Help us to make a difference in the lives of these Memon children by lightening their education costs enabling them to reach their full potential and

become confident and proud leaders of tomorrow!!!!

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Full Name & Education

Section 18A certificates issued on request

For more information contact Khashiefa Martin:
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THE GENEROUS HAROON KARIM



Mr Haroon Karim (Chairman - WMO Board of Trustees) and Mr Feizul Ayob (VP - WMO Africa Chapter) standing on the vast plot of land donated by Mr Karim for a WMO legacy project in Laudium, Pretoria South Africa.

May Allah Swt reward Haroon bha for his generosity.