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Pakistanis Are Silicon Valley's Largest Foreign-Born Muslim Group

■ By Riaz Haq

CA

Pakistani-Americans are the largest foreign-born Muslim group in San Francisco Bay Area that includes Silicon Valley, according to a 2013 study. The study was commissioned by the One Nation Bay Area Project, a civic engagement program supported by Silicon Valley Community Foundation, The San Francisco Foundation, Marin Community Foundation and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy.

Overall, US-born Muslims make up the largest percentage at 34% of all Muslims in the Bay Area, followed by 14% born in Pakistan, 11% in Afghanistan, 10% in India, 3% in Egypt and 2% each in Iran, Jordan, Palestine and Yemen.

Silicon Valley Pakistani-American by the Numbers

There are 35,000 Pakistani-born Muslim in San Francisco Bay Area, or 14% of the 250,000 Muslims who call the Bay Area home, according to the study. Bay Area Muslim community constitutes 3.5 percent of the area's total population and is one of the highest concentrations of Muslims in the country.

As of 2013, South Asian Muslims, including Pakistanis, have the highest income levels, with nearly half (49%) of them having a household income above \$100,000. In comparison, those groups with the lowest proportion of household incomes above \$100,000 were Hispanic Muslims (15%), Afghans (10%), and African American Muslims (10%).

The Bay Area Muslim community is very diverse in terms of race and ethnicity:

- South Asians (30%)
- Arabs (23%)
- Afghans (17%),
- African Americans (9%)
- Asian/Pacific Islanders (7%)
- Whites (6%)
- Iranians (2%)

Based on the survey findings, the majority of Muslims live in the following three counties:

- Alameda (37%)
- Santa Clara (27%),
- and Contra Costa (12%)

Pakistani-American Techies

Thousands of Pakistan-born techies are working at Apple, Cisco, Google, Intel, Oracle and hundreds of other high-tech companies from small start-ups to large Fortune 500 corporations. Pakistani-Americans are contributing to what Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee describe as "The Second Machine Age" in a recent book with the same title.

Pakistani-American entrepreneurs, advisers, mentors, venture capitalists, investment



Ashar Aziz, Founder of FireEye



Osman Rashid, Founder of Chegg



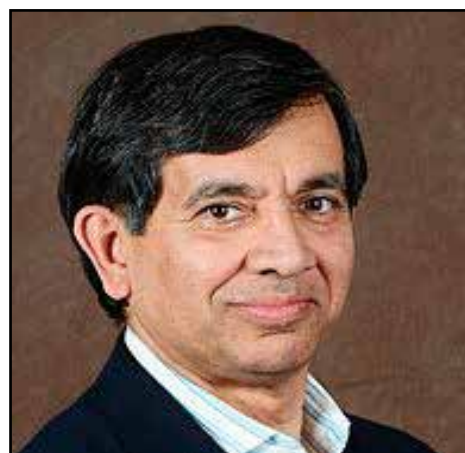
Qasar Younis, Head of YCombinator



Raghib Husain, Founder of Cavium



Rehan Jalil, Founder of Elastic



Naveed Sherwani, Founder of Open Silicon

bankers, accountants and lawyers make up a growing ecosystem in Silicon Valley. Dozens of Pakistani-American founded start-ups have been funded by top venture capital firms. Many such companies have either been acquired in M&A deals or gone public by offering shares for sale at major stock exchanges. Organiza-

tion of Pakistani Entrepreneurs (OPEN) has become a de facto platform for networking among Pakistani-American entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley.

Pakistani-American techies presence in Silicon Valley has been recognized in a popular HBO show called "Silicon Valley" that stars a

Pakistani actor Kumail Nanjiani playing a Pakistan-born Silicon Valley techie.

Silicon Valley's biggest tech start-up incubator Y-Combinator is now headed by Qasar Younis, a Pakistani-American born in the Pakistani village of Lala Musa. Younis was a keynote speaker at the Pakistani-American entrepreneurs conference called OPEN Forum 2016 just last month in Silicon Valley.

Islamophobia in America

Muslim-Americans, including Pakistani-Americans are thriving in the high-tech Bay Area in spite of the recent rise of Islamophobia in parts of America where the Republican presumptive nominee Donald Trump appears to be popular.

But Muslim-Americans cannot afford to ignore the gathering clouds of Islamophobia and xenophobia in America. The economic difficulties of many Americans are being exploited by demagogues like Donald Trump who is blaming foreigners for their unemployment and underemployment which can be traced to the twin forces of automation and globalization.

First, it was the manufacturing jobs that moved offshore in the 1980s and 1990s in an effort to save costs and fatten profits. This forced many factory workers to move into service industries and take pay cuts. Now the service sector jobs are also falling prey to outsourcing and automation.

Instead of addressing the root causes of economic difficulties faced by many Americans, Republican front-runner Donald Trump's presidential primary campaign is blaming immigrants and Muslims for their problems. This is giving rise to forces of racism, bigotry, xenophobia and Islamophobia in America.

Summary

It's in the best interest of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, particularly Muslim-American entrepreneurs, to pay attention to the economic difficulties being faced by many Americans who are losing jobs to automation and globalization. These difficulties lie at the root of growing xenophobia and Islamophobia. The Muslim-American entrepreneurs need to think of new ways to help people who are being left behind. They need to explore ideas such as helping build new skills needed for the new economy, promote policy discussions on the idea of universal basic income and expansion of safety nets and development of new gig economy to ensure full employment with decent incomes. Failure to do so could lead to significant social strife and cause irreparable damage to the very foundations of the system that has brought great wealth and power to America as a nation.



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In Election Year, More Immigrants Applying for US Citizenship

■ By Anthony Advincula

Houston, TX: For more than a decade, Jannette Diep has been helping immigrants apply for US citizenship. But as the presidential election looms, Diep, the executive director of Boat People SOS, says she has seen a rising interest among immigrants in becoming US citizens.

More immigrants are going to community centers like hers to find out how to become a US citizen, she said.

The number of people applying for US citizenship shows an uptick during presidential election years, according to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

"They come to our office or call us," said Diep. "They're very eager to get their citizenship."

The good news, she said, is that applying for citizenship is easier than people think.

Boat People SOS and other organizations across Houston are providing free and low-cost services to help Houstonians take the step to become US citizens. The effort is part of the New Americans Campaign, a national, nonpartisan campaign now in its fifth year that helps legal permanent residents take the step to become citizens.

The organizations host free workshops where legal permanent residents can get help with their applications. They help eligible immigrants access fee and language waivers. They also offer English language and civics classes.

Mariana Sanchez, chief operating officer of Bonding Against Ad-



The naturalization process, from the time an applicant sends in the application to an interview with an immigration officer and taking part in the actual swearing-in ceremony, can take five to six months. That means that many immigrants are applying to become US citizens now, in the hope that they will be able to register to vote in time for November

versity, said that between January and April, her organization alone has helped more than 1,000 immigrants file their citizenship applications. "We're hoping that more and more will apply," she said.

There are about 8.8 million immigrants in the United States eligible for naturalization, and about 350,000 live in the Houston area, according to Benito Juarez, manager for immigrant and refugee issues at the Houston Mayor's Office of International Communities and Refugee Affairs.

"If they'd be able to vote, then

they'd become part of the life of the city," Juarez said at an ethnic media briefing in Houston. "They'd become more active [in civic engagement]."

The naturalization process, from the time an applicant sends in the application to an interview with an immigration officer and taking part in the actual swearing-in ceremony, can take five to six months. That means that many immigrants are applying to become US citizens now, in the hope that they will be able to register to vote in time for November.

Some newly naturalized citizens say being able to exercise their right to vote is the main factor that prompted them to apply for citizenship.

"Now that I can vote, this gives me a sense of ownership to be part of this country," said Ming Shen, an immigrant from Taiwan who became a US citizen earlier this year. "I'm very glad that my voice can be heard in this country."

But the benefits of becoming a US citizen extend far beyond November. US citizens can petition family members, travel freely out-

side the United States, have immunity from deportation, and get a job with the federal government.

Tien Nguyen, a recently naturalized US citizen from Vietnam, said that becoming a US citizen allows him to travel without worrying whether he will be let back into the country.

"I can now travel freely as an American," said Nguyen.

Research has shown that becoming a US citizen is also associated with an increase in income.

Since he became a US citizen this year, Mateo Amador Perez says he got a better-paying job and the quality of life of his family has improved.

"I decided to naturalize because I knew it will bring more opportunities for me and my family," said Amador Perez, who is originally from Mexico. "I wanted them to have the best future that I could give."

Texas State Representative Gene Wu, who spoke at the press briefing, echoed the sentiments of the newly naturalized citizens. Forty percent of the people in his district are foreign-born, he said.

"My family, myself—we are all immigrants ourselves," Wu said. "Being an American citizen is something that I have been very proud of."

(For more information about the New Americans Campaign and upcoming citizenship workshops, go to www.newamericanscampaign.org)

- New America Media

Pakistan's First Formula Electric Car Enters US Competition

Just a few days ago, National University of Science and Technology (NUST) made news as it was named among the 150 best young universities in the world. The varsity certainly deserves its place in the list with its students having built Pakistan's first electric-powered formula racing car.

At an impressive ceremony at the Pearl Continental Hotel, Karachi on Thursday, a team of undergraduate engineering students from Pakistan Navy Engineering College, a constituent college of NUST, unveiled a formula electric racing car which has been entirely designed and manufactured in-house.

The students have been selected as the only team from Asia to take part in the FSAE Electric competition in the electrical category to be held in Lincoln, NE, USA this year from June 15 to June 18.

"It's an amazing feeling and a great honor for all of us to be a part of the team and represent Pakistan at such a big stage," Daniel Thebo, who is part of the communications and management team, told The Express Tribune.

He added that the car was made in compliance of the stringent standards laid out by SAE International and would compete with universities from all over the world.

The team is certainly geared up to put a good show at the international event after spending 16 months in planning, researching and manufacturing the car.

"Bank Alfalah is on board with us now as part of their rising talent campaign and is sponsoring us to raise the green flag for the very first time in the USA," Thebo said.

Another team from the same university called NUST Formula Student



Pakistan's first electric-powered formula racing car unveiled for international competition in the US. Photo by Daniel Thebo

Team has also been selected to contest in an international design competition in Germany.

The competition named Formula Student Germany is part of Formula SAE series and will be held from 9-14 August 2016.

"We are NUST FS Team, and we have been developing a combustion type race vehicle, every year for the past four years, and have been participating in FS UK earlier, and FS Germany later, as the only team from Pakistan," Muhammad Umer, team manager, told The Express Tribune.

"Last year at Formula Student UK, we stood at 49th rank among 106 teams from 28 different countries of the world, surpassing two teams from India," he

added.

Formula Student is an engineering design competition organized by Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE). The competition aims to inspire and develop enterprising and innovative young engineers. It challenges universities across the globe to conceive, design, build and test a small scale formula style race vehicle every year. Each student team builds a prototype based on a series of rules, both ensuring on-track safety and promoting clever problem solving.

The event takes place at a number of locations around the globe every year, including UK, Germany, Lincoln, Michigan, Australia and Japan. The competition is backed by many leading automotive and engineering firms around the world.

Civil Rights & Religious Groups Support New Jersey Muslims' Right to Worship

Muslim Advocates led a coalition of 15 of its allies to file an amicus brief in support of a New Jersey Muslim community whose proposal to build a mosque was rejected by the Township of Bernards. The Township held 39 hearings on the proposal, creating roadblock after roadblock for the mosque. Despite the fact that the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge (ISBR) responded to, and complied with each request, the permit was ultimately denied.

The amicus brief, filed by leading civil rights and religious groups including the ACLU, Union for Reform Judaism, Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC, Arab American Institute, and ColorofChange, supports the lawsuit by ISBR, which claims the Township's decision to reject ISBR's zoning permit application was discriminatory. ISBR argues that the Township used one standard for churches, and a different and more stringent standard for the mosque.

"Sadly, this case represents the struggle Muslim communities across the nation are increasingly facing due to anti-Muslim bigotry," said Madihha Ahussain, Muslim Advocates staff attorney and lead for the Program to Counter Anti-Muslim Hate. "The Muslims in Basking Ridge deserve what every American is entitled to – the right to freely exercise their faith. Blocking a zoning permit for a mosque due to bigotry not only hurts the Muslims in Basking Ridge, it undermines the

religious freedom of all Americans."

M. Ali Chaudry, who served as the Bernards Mayor from 2004-2007 and has been a resident of the community for almost 40 years, initially purchased a plot of land designated for homes and houses of worship and applied for a permit to build a mosque where community members could congregate and send their children to Sunday school classes.

The congregation ensured that the mosque was designed to fit into the neighborhood and met all Township standards for houses of worship. The Township of Bernards, however, repeatedly made unreasonable demands on the mosque. Ultimately, the Township determined that the mosque should be held to a more stringent standard than churches, requiring more than double the number of parking spots than a church of the same size would require. Despite meeting Township demands and submitting a proposal with the increased number of parking spaces, ISBR's application was still denied.

ISBR responded by filing a lawsuit against the Township and its officials in January 2016. The amicus brief was filed with a motion for leave to file amicus curiae brief.

To read the amicus brief filed, click here.

Muslim Advocates is a national legal advocacy and educational organization working on the frontlines of civil rights to guarantee freedom and justice for Americans of all faiths.

US Postal Service Eid Stamp Getting a Makeover in 2016



September 1, 2001



September 3, 2009



August 12, 2011



August 8, 2013



June, 2016

■ Noman Hassan
Folsom, CA

Every year the United States Postal Service (USPS) brings joy and cheer to millions in the United States and across the world with its Holiday Stamp Program. The first holiday stamp, a set of Christmas stamps, was issued on November 1, 1962 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Since 1962, USPS has added Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Eid stamps to its holiday stamp program to celebrate Jewish, African-American and Muslim traditions and holidays respectively.

The first Eid stamp was issued on September 1, 2001 to commemorate the two most important festivals in the Islamic calendar, namely, Eid

al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha (also known as Eids). Eid stamps shown below feature the phrase “Eid Mubarak” in gold Arabic scripts on a blue background – the phrase “Eid Mubarak” means “Eid Greetings or Blessed Festival”. On the days of Eid ul-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha, Muslims greet each other with the phrase shown on the stamps – “Eid Mubarak” which can be paraphrased as “May your religious holiday be blessed”. Since the first issuance in 2001, Eid Stamp had been reissued seven times with the same calligraphy and script but with different background colors (Blue, Maroon, and Green) and as Forever stamp.

In 2016, US Postal Service is giving the Eid Stamp a well over due makeover. 2016 Issuance of Forever Eid Stamp will feature the phrase

“Eidukum Mubarak” in golden Arabic script on a purple background – meaning “May your Eid be blessed (bountiful)”. All these Eid stamps with gold calligraphy in Arabic against various color backgrounds feature the work of Mohamed Zakariya, a world-renowned calligrapher.

Eid al-Fitr, marks the end of the month of fasting known as Ramadan, revered as the month of blessing, charity and devotion to God. The first verses of the Holy book of Islam – Qur’an – were revealed to Prophet Muhammad during the month of Ramadan and it is believed that the revelation was also completed during the month of Ramadan. Religious practice of fasting is shared by the three Abrahamic religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam – though in different forms and on different days.

Eid al-Adha is celebrated at the end of Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). All Muslims (regardless of gender) who are healthy and can afford to travel to Mecca are mandated to perform Hajj at least once in a lifetime. Eid al-Adha, also known as the festival of sacrifice, is also celebrated to commemorate Prophet Abraham’s submission to Allah’s command and Prophet Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his beloved son, Prophet Ishmael. Allah accepted Prophet Abraham’s sacrifice and replaced his son with an animal. On the day of Eid al-Adha, Muslims remember Prophet Abraham’s sacrifice and trials and sacrifice an animal such as sheep, goat or camel. The meat of the animal is shared with the poor, family and relatives.

The issuance of the Eid stamp on September 1, 2001 precisely 10 days

before the 9/11 terrorist attack, had not been without controversy. USPS received letters of protest but the letters of support outnumbered the letters of protest. Such controversies are not new to USPS as the issuance of the first Christmas stamp in 1962 was opposed by some groups who were concerned about separation of church and state. USPS issuance and reissuance of Eid stamp is an excellent proof and testimony of United States tolerance and diversity.

Next time you visit your local post office, make sure to purchase USPS Holiday Stamps collection and become part of the festivals of Christianity, Judaism, African Americans and Islam.

Source of images, the United States Postal Service*, “© United States Postal Service.

Luncheon Brings Groups together for Better Understanding of Religion

■ By Emily Bohatch

It was a child’s story that prompted Lancaster resident Angie Kiger to reach out to the Muslim community.

A now-retired teacher friend of hers told Kiger about a former student, a nine-year-old boy, who was being bullied because of his faith.

He came up to his teacher and said, “I’m not a terrorist, I’m not a terrorist,” Kiger said. “It just broke my heart.”

Given the current political climate, in which the Republican frontrunner has suggested banning Muslims from entering the country, Kiger wanted to understand more about the Muslim religion — more than she could learn in Fairfield County.

Kiger, who just recently moved back to Lancaster from Hilliard, contacted Imran Malik, president of the Board of Directors at the Noor Islamic Cultural Center in Hilliard, to see what kind of events they could offer to members of her community who had never been exposed to the Muslim faith.

The result of that contact was a lunch that attracted about three dozen people to the Noor center to mingle and to discuss issues affecting Muslims in



central Ohio.

“The purpose of these meetings is to fix misun-

derstandings and make a spirit to work together and live in peace together,” Inam Khokhar, a previous

board member at the Noor Center, said.

Malik said interfaith efforts tend to take root more successfully in metropolitan areas.

“The suburban interfaith (movement) has always been a more alienated concept,” he said.

Still, Kiger’s group got a better idea of what life is like for members of Noor.

They learned, for example, that it’s not easy for Muslims even in a fairly diverse area such as central Ohio.

Noor member Wahida Abaza said her 10-year-old daughter had been harassed by fellow students over the topic of Donald Trump’s candidacy.

“My daughter, somebody said to her, ‘When Trump becomes president, your family might have to leave,’” Abaza said.

“And she said, ‘Where would we go?’”

Kiger set up her group in hopes that lunch meetings like the one on Thursday might prevent similar encounters in the future.

“It’s very difficult to demonize people when you get to look into their eyes and get to know them,” said Sandra Anderson, a member of Ohio University’s Board of Trustees, who attended the lunch. - The Columbus Dispatch

Lena Khan Gets Best Film Director Award at Asian Pacific Film Festival



The Asian Pacific 32nd Film Festival was held in Hollywood, Los Angeles on April 27 2016. Tiger Hunter was selected and honored on the opening night

of the festival. About 1,000 men and women watched the screening of the film that features the life of an immigrant. The audience thoroughly enjoyed the

film and came out laughing and smiling.

After two days of screening, the Grand Jury of the Festival met at Director Guild of America in West Hollywood

and gave the best director award to Lena Khan. Tiger Hunter was adjudged as the best film of the festival. This is Lena Khan’s first full feature film.

Before Tiger Hunter, Lena had been making short films and had won accolades for her work. - Pictures by Anwar Khawaja