



Zahira College Colombo

Group of 60

NEWSLETTER

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For private circulation among members only

Rugby Gala Dinner of the Group of Sixty

The Rugby Gala Dinner planned for the 3rd of February 2007 will take place at the Galle Face Hotel. The event will see the honouring of seventeen players from Zahira who had represented the country in the game of rugby. It is also an occasion to felicitate the present players.

Recent achievements would show that ruggar at Zahira is certainly improving. At the All Island Rugby Sevens Bowl Zahira ended up as Champions in early February 2006. At the Singer All Island League Tournament 2006 Zahira was promoted from C segment to B segment in the A Division. Another achievement was that the team emerged as the Semi finalists at the recently concluded Singer/Sri Lankan Airlines International Tournament.



Talking about the past one cannot forget the indelible marks that our stalwarts have kept in the annals of the game and upheld the name of Zahira as a team to reckon with, for several decades. Several of them have represented the National Team at various periods of time and by this event it is the intention of the Group of Sixty to honour them in recognition of the contribution they have made to the game of ruggar in general and the glory they have brought to Zahira in particular.

Plans for Improving Rugby

The Chairman of the Sports Committee, Mr. M.S. Mazeer, has great ideas to improve the standard of rugby at Zahira. He believes that training should start at grassroots level at the early age of 13 and sustain interest to build up players to continue till 20. His aim is to ensure that at least 80% of the ruggarites end up at A Levels. As such every assistance will be given to the players in their education aspect as well.



The gym which was installed recently has become very popular among all ruggarites.



Educational Programme on Track

Following the announcement that in the year 2006-2007 the activities of Group of 60' will focus on Education, the Education and Welfare Committee of the group has got into action and has worked out an exiting programme with a view to uplifting educational standards at Zahira College, Colombo. It is sad that only 39.80 per cent of the 306 students who sat the Ordinary Level examination held in 2005 from College in the Sinhalese medium obtained at least a simple pass in Science, and only 41 per cent passed in Mathematics the same year. Of those who sat the examination in the Tamil medium, only 34.48 per cent passed in Mathematics.

Foremost among the planned activities is a new seminar series for students sitting the GCE (Ordinary Level) examination in December 2007 with a grand opening scheduled for 6th March 2007. The series will consist of special lectures on subjects such as Science, Mathematics in which present day Zahirians are particularly weak, and special attention will be paid to sportsman who have to spend additional hours at practice, to help them improve their performance at the examination.

In an effort to retain the students who do well at the Ordinary Level examination in College, a scholarship scheme has already been launched by the Group of 60' in memory of Marhoom Dr. A.M.A. Azeez to award a sum of Rs. 2000/- per month to students who qualify to enter GCE (Advanced Level) classes at Zahira College on the basis of the results of the Ordinary Level examination held in December 2006. The recipients of these scholarships will be selected on the basis of merit and need, and an award ceremony is expected to be held on 22nd March 2007

Meanwhile, the Advanced Level Seminar Series launched last year will be continued this year too, with the third seminar scheduled for 12th and 13th March and the fourth scheduled for 18th and 19th June 2007. The first two seminars held last year proved to be very successful, and have evoked a great deal of interest among the students in Advanced Level classes in the preparation for the examinations to be held in December 2007. Teachers who teach Advanced Level classes at Zahira have welcomed the opportunity to interact and work with the resource persons who are conducting the seminars, and feel that the students are motivated to secure better results at the examination.

A Teachers' Day to honour the dedicated teachers at Zahira College has also been planned to be held on 22nd October 2007. In fact, World Teachers' Day is scheduled to be celebrated all over the world on 5th October 2007, but as this falls within the Holy Month of Ramazan, it was decided by the Education and Welfare Committee of Group of 60', in consultation with the Principal, to hold the Zahira College Teachers' Day on 22nd October in a fitting manner.

The Education and Welfare Committee of the Group of 60' led by Justice Saleem Marsoof, P.C and comprising Prof Tuly de Silva, Messrs. Ashroff Hussain, Ibrahim Hamid, Salahudeen Cader, A.J.S.H Ilyas and Munsif Hussain must be congratulated for working out such an extensive programme for uplifting educational standards at Zahira. While the members of this Committee started work in a small way, sharing the expenses among themselves, they have been encouraged by the support they have received from many Old Boys, benefactors and friends who have come forward to contribute generously towards the expenses of these educational projects. Since contributions are still coming, and it is not too late for you to pay back what you got from Zahira, a full list of contributions received for these projects will be published in the next issue of this newsletter.

Mens sana in corpore sano

A healthy mind in a healthy body — the motto by which the majority of pupils of the past public schools were expected to live. What a good and time tested motto for us to follow if we as a community are to keep our place in this country. So the perceived wisdom of the Group of Sixty would be to produce youths with a healthy mind and a healthy body. With these twin objectives in mind, all our activities will center on education and sports. A lot has been done so far and more are planned for the future and we appeal to all readers to be a partner in our endeavour to produce quality products of Zahira.

G60 played a significant role to help the affected students of Zahira Hambantota and other schools in Hambantota, Kirinda and Lunugamwehera in the aftermath of the Tsunami. Pix above shows the leader of the delegation Hon. Justice Saleem Marsoof addressing the gathering at Zahira, Hambantota. Pix below shows Mr. Salahudeen Cader presenting a wrist watch to a deserving student.



He set an unparalleled record *(Extracts from an article by A.G.A. Barrie, P. Eng).*

November 24, 2006 marked the 33rd death anniversary of Al Haj Dr. A.M.A. Azeez, an eminent scholar, educationist and visionary, who worked wholeheartedly towards the betterment of the Muslim community in Sri Lanka. His work, especially in the sphere of Muslim education, has indeed been beneficial to the community.

Azeez was born in Jaffna on October 4, 1911. After his early education at Allaphichai Quran Madrasa, Vaidyeshwara Vidyalayam and Jaffna Hindu College, Azeez graduated with honours in History from the University of London in 1933. He never forgot his roots in Jaffna, where he received an education that made him a scholar in Tamil and versatile exponent of both Islamic and Hindu philosophies. These gave him a broad outlook and the University of Jaffna conferred a posthumous doctorate on him at its first convocation.

He was the first Muslim civil servant in this country and had many important positions within the Ceylon Civil Service, excelling in each and everyone of them. He is best known for dedicated work in his efforts to raise the living standards of the Sri Lankan Muslim community in particular.

His main concern was with education for Muslim youth. He founded the Kalmunai Muslim Education Society in 1942. Poverty was identified as one of the main factors which prevented many eligible and intelligent students from furthering of their education. This prompted Azeez, the visionary, to initiate The Ceylon Muslim Scholarship Fund in May 1945. As of today more than 2000 deserving students, including this writer, have been benefited. To train the youth leadership and social service, Azeez inaugurated the Young Men's Muslim Association Conference in 1950, which has numerous branches in all areas of the island.

After the general election in 1947, T.B. Jayah tendered his resignation as Principal of Zahira College to join the Cabinet of Ministers. The mantle fell on A.M.A Azeez and he accepted the challenge to become the Principal of Zahira with hope and enthusiasm. I was a fifth standard student at Zahira and watched with awe when two stalwarts, T.B. Jayah and A.M.A. Azeez were walking the school grounds on the morning of August 23, 1948, when Azeez ceremoniously accepted the principalship of Zahira. In the evening, the first major event presided by the new principal was the unveiling of the portrait of Jayah by the Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake at the Ghafoor Hall. This was truly a historic day for Zahira.

Azeez exhibited his efficient administration and outstanding leadership qualities by grooming Zahira into one of the leading schools in the country. The achievements in a very short spell of his career are unparalleled. Zahira excelled in education, sports and other extra-curricular activities such as music and drama. In his own words, "Zahira was the radiating centre of Muslim culture, thought and activities".

For the benefit of the students, various associations were formed such as the Science Club, Curia Historica, Iqbal Society, Sinhalese Society, Dramatic Society, Art Club etc., The Cultural Centre too was built in the College premises which accommodated the Islamic library, publication bureau and an Islamic research centre. All these were formulated towards achieving Azeez's final goal of establishing at Zahira a Muslim Cultural University in the line of the Vidyodaya, Vidyalankara and Hindu cultural universities.

Though his dream was not fulfilled and denied to him in his country, Azeez's contribution to education was recognized in neighbouring India. Just two months before his death he was invited to inaugurate the Tamil Nadu Muslim Educational Conference in Madras and was honoured with a "Golden Shawl". Being a visionary the disappointment did not stop him from imparting his knowledge and experience in founding the Jamiah Naleemiah. He gave his experience to this Institute until Allah called him back from this world prematurely. Inna Lillahi Wainnah Illaihi Rajioon.

Dr. A.M.A Azeez has set an unparalleled record and will be remembered as a distinguished scholar, a competent administrator, renowned educationist and above all as a man of unquestionable honesty and integrity. He was a modest, unassuming and humble gentleman approachable at any time by anyone. His achievements, deeds and dedication will be an example to present day leaders of all communities. He is the only Sri Lankan to be honoured by his inclusion in the "100 Great Muslim Leaders of the 20th Century" published by the Institute of Objectives Studies in India.



Membership Drive

The membership drive initiated by S. Macan Markar, immediate past President, is producing results and the membership has now gone upto 67. His request is that each member should introduce 2 new members. All members to note this request and give him all support by making a concerted effort to introduce past Zahirians of the Sixties.

CHIEF JUSTICES MEET IN HYDERABAD, INDIA



L to R) Justice K.G Balakrishnan, Chief Justice of India, Justice G.S. Singhvi, Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister Y.S. Rajashekhara Reddy, Justice Saleem Marsoof from Sri Lanka and A. Narasimha Reddy, President of the Andhra Pradesh Bar Association, lighting the oil lamp at a ceremony to open the Cyber Centre of the City Civil Court of Hyderabad on December 20th, 2007.



AT THE AGM AND THE ANNUAL DINNER—2nd September 2007

Pix on left shows (L to R) Hazmie Yusuf, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Justice Saleem Marsoof, President and M.S. Mazeer, Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting held on 2nd September 2007 at Galle Face Hotel.



Outgoing Secretary, Rummy Hassen recognized for his yeomen services by former President S. Macan Markar. Mr. Rizmie Reyal, Chief Guest, is in the background.



Vote of Thanks by Ashraff Ghany

**AT G60 IFTHAR , MIAMI HOTEL, 7th Oct
2007**



DOWN MEMORY LANE

The Finance & Fund Raising Committee led by Fuad Jain has organized an event scheduled to be held on 9th June 2007, at the Garden Terrace, Galle Face Hotel at 7.30 p.m. "Down Memory Lane" will be a musical extravaganza with the popular band Rajiv and the Clan who will entertain you with music from 60's 70's and 80's era. Some popular artistes are also billed to perform. A sit down dinner is being arranged while you enjoy the music. Members are requested to keep the date free, for a fun filled evening with family and friends



ZAHIRA COLLEGE COLOMBO GROUP OF '60

**GROUP OF 60
MEMBER'S DAY**

**FAMILY EXCURSION
TO**

LANGS LAND ESTATE-NEBODA MATHUGAMA.

ON

28 FEBRUARY 2007

24-01-2007

Dear Member,



The group of 60 has organized an Excursion for members and their families for a Day Out at **LANGS LAND ESTATE,NEBODA,MATHUGAMA.**

The location has been selected for its natural scenic beauty and countryside atmosphere. The Estate Bungalow provides ample space for relaxation and is also equipped with a Swimming Pool for kids and adults ,for fun and frolic.

We want to make this an occasion for members and their families to unwind themselves and Interact in friendly banter with other members, while swapping stories of old times within the Portals of Zahira, where many of us have cherished memories.

The travel time from Colombo is approx. 2 hours and arrangements have been made for free transport from Colombo by bus.

The charges are as follows :

- Rs.400.00 per adult [incl. Lunch, Tea and Transport]
- Rs.250.00 per child [6-12 years, incl. Lunch, Tea and transport]
- Children under 6 years free.

We shall appreciate if you would kindly confirm your participation by returning the enclosed Confirmation slip to reach us before 15-Feb-2007 for us to make the necessary arrangements.

Thank you

.....
M. Rummy Hassen

GROUP OF '60-ZAHIRA COLLEGE COLLOMBO

**P.S. : FOR FURTHER DETAILS
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