

News & Events

I

“ . . . [I]N OUR SOCIETY, there is so much polarity that every successive regime appoints its own historians and tries to rewrite history. In a situation like this, *the only true history of our age will be written in fiction*” (italics ours). —Abdullah Hussein, responding to a question by Zaman Khan during an interview.

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Urdu scholars—but especially those among us who have often lamented the absence of a good Urdu-English dictionary in translating from Urdu and have had to make do with Platt’s outdated but still important work—will be pleased to know that Syed Yakoob Miran Mujtahedi of Hyderabad (Deccan) has recently completed work on his Urdu-English dictionary. Essentially a one-man undertaking, the project took 20 years to complete, with only Rs. 14,000/- coming in support from the Nizam’s Charitable Trust. The salient features of the as yet unnamed dictionary, to be published by Orient Longman in possibly three volumes of a thousand pages each, are: (1) pronunciation of the Urdu entries in Roman script; (2) etymology and grammatical characteristics (such as gender and number) of every Urdu word; (3) illustrative sentences in Urdu along with English translations to indicate, wherever necessary, the nuances of a word; (4) non-English words and phrases, widely used in English, with their original and Anglicized pronunciation; (5) stylistic values of words (e.g., obsolete, archaic, slang, literary, poetic, etc.); and (6) equivalent English proverbs, where possible, for Urdu proverbs. The work also contains a large number of bureaucratic and administrative terms. Mr. Mujtahedi worked in the Translation Bureau of the Andhra Pradesh Government, retiring as Deputy Director of Translation in 1989.

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The year seems to be especially propitious for Urdu lexicography. For two recent and indispensable entries, compiled and edited by Dr. Jameel Jalibi, see Bibliographic News in this issue.

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Galimard of Paris has recently brought out a French translation of Ahmad Ali's celebrated *Twilight in Delhi*. A Spanish translation also appeared in 1991 (see Bibliographic News). A German translation is underway.

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Edebiyāt, A Journal of Middle Eastern and Comparative Literature, edited by William L. Hanaway and published by the Middle East Center, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, defunct for some time now, has been relaunched by Harwood Academic Publishers, Chur, Switzerland, with Julie Scott Meisami of Oxford University and Michael Beard of the University of North Dakota as Editors. Muhammad Umar Memon will continue to serve on the Editorial Board as a referee for Urdu materials. A future issue will carry a translation of the opening chapter of Intizar Husain's novel *Bastī* by Frances W. Pritchett. If you have a piece that you would like considered for this publication, please send it to Muhammad Umar Memon at:

University of Wisconsin
Department of South Asian Studies
1220 Linden Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

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Urdū Bungaku (a journal devoted to translation of Urdu literature into Japanese) has been launched by the Urdu Society, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, with Professor Takeshi Suzuki as editor. Four issues have come out to date. (See Bibliographic News.)

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The Triangle South Asia Consortium, in association with the Independent Scholars of South Asia (ISOSA), sponsored an all-day symposium on "The State and Popular Participation in Community Activities" at North Carolina State University on February 22, 1992. The following papers were presented in the opening panel: Gail Minault (University of Texas), "The Patronage Puzzle: British Patronage and Vernacular Education in North India in the Late 19th Century"; Geeta Patel (University of Iowa), "Miraji's Essays: Transforming the Urdu Canon"; and Carla Patievich (University of British Columbia), "Heroes, *Virahinis*, and Gender-

Bending: Historicizing the Urdu *Ghazal*.” Sandria B. Freitag (University of California) chaired the panel and David Gilmartin (North Carolina State University) discussed the papers.

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The Center for South Asia Studies, University of California at Berkeley, held its Sixth Annual South Asia Conference on February 22–23, 1992. In the art and literature panel, both Carla Petievich (University of British Columbia) and Laurel Steele (University of Chicago) presented papers on Urdu poetry which provoked lively discussion.

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The Ninth Annual Spring Symposium, sponsored by Center for South Asian Studies, University of Hawaii, took place March 5–7, 1992. This year’s topic: “Other Voices, Other Views: Anti-Hegemonic Discourse in South Asia.” Papers relevant to Urdu were presented by: Lubna Chaudhry, “Creating New Worlds, Expressing Old Realities: The Poetry of Kishwar Naheed and Parveen Shakir”; Arifa Farid, “Feminist and Anti-Feminist Trends in Urdu Literature”; and Gail Minault, “Other Voices Other Rooms: The View from the *Zenana*.”

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The Urdu Literary Society of Montreal held a conference on “Western Influences on Urdu” on May 22–24, 1992 on the Loyola Campus of Concordia University, Montreal. Participants included, among others: Sheila McDonough, Carla Petievich, M.H.K. Qureshi, Khalid Sohail, A.Q. Zia (Canada); Qamar Rais (Delhi, India); Mushtaq Ahmad (Sweden); Mohsin Ehsan, Siddiq Javed (Pakistan); Muhammad Umar Memon, Frances Pritchett (USA). The Conference concluded with a *mušā’ira* (poetry reading) in which, in addition to a number of Canadian and US Urdu poets, Muhsin Bhopali, Ahmad Fraz, and Arif Abdul Matin from Pakistan also participated. The Conference was organized by Dr. Shafiq Alvi, who is a professor of Economics.

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The following papers were presented at the 45th Annual Seminar of the Department of South Asia Regional Studies, the University of Pennsylvania, on Language, Literature and Society in South Asia: Peter Gaeffke: “Newspapers in Bengali, Urdu, and Hindi” (November 4, 1992); C.M. Naim: “Transvestic Words: Some Comments on Urdu Rekhti” (January 20, 1993); and Frances Pritchett: “A Garden in the Fall: Azad, the Victorians and the Power of Time” (January 13, 1993).

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Famous Urdu novelist and winner of the Bharatiya Jnanpith Award

Qurratulain Hyder spent part of May and June 1992 in the US and gave readings from her latest novel *Čāndnī Bēgam* in a number of literary meetings sponsored by the South Asian expatriate community in Cincinnati, Boston, New York, etc.

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David Matthews of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, informs us that his translation of Shaukat Siddiqi's novel *Xūdā kī Bastī* "has recently been published by Paul Nurbury Publications, Sandfold, Folkestone, Kent, UK." (This item couldn't be included in the Bibliographic News for insufficient information.) In a recent letter, Dr. Matthews writes that he has just completed a book on Iqbal (text, translation, and commentary) which is now ready for the press. Another book, which concerns *naẓms*, is in the last stages of preparation, and a third, which is a "self-indulgent anthology of Urdu verse in translation," is in press in Delhi. Dr. Matthews is planning to visit the US in July, and would like "to meet as many 'Urdu' people as possible." If interested in inviting Dr. Matthews to your campus, contact him at SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG.

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Ralph Russell informs us that he is preparing an Urdu translation of his recently published *Pursuit of Urdu Literature*. Also: "I have to check and finalise with the translator the translation of Marion Molteno's stories which are being published in Urdu in Pakistan; and I also have an anthology of Urdu literature in English translation to prepare for a publisher here." These activities prevented him from preparing and sending the *AUS* "the translation of the transcript of my conversation with Ismat Chughtai in 1965."

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The following men of letters passed away: (1991) Saba Akbarabadi, Anwar Enayetullah, Zoe Ansari, Hasan Naim, Aziz Hamid Madani, and Maikash Akbarabadi; (1992) Akhtar Husain Raipuri, Mumtaz Husain, Sajjad Baqir Rizvi, and Kumar Pashi.

Saba Akbarabadi was a poet and distant relative of Ghalib, and died in Islamabad at the age of 83. Anwar Enayetullah, who died on November 30 in Karachi at the age of 66, was a short-story writer; however, he was better known as a translator of Urdu short stories into English, and a literary and TV columnist. Zoe Ansari was a connoisseur of classical Urdu literature, a journalist, and a translator who lived for many years in the Soviet Union, translating many Russian classics into Urdu. Akhtar

Husain Raipuri, who died at the age of 80 in Karachi, was the first Marxist critic in Urdu. His 1935 article "Adab aur Zindagi" was an explication of his Marxist views on literature. Among his many languages were Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi, and French. Mumtaz Husain, critic and author, was a well known proponent of progressive ideology in literature. In addition to studies on Khusrao and Ghalib, he produced several collections of critical essays. He died in Karachi at the age of 75. Kumar Pashi was a significant modernist poet who lived in Delhi.

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Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, distinguished Urdu critic, spent the month of April (1993) at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, where he is adjunct professor of Urdu at South Asia Regional Studies Center.

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The following received awards: Majruh Sultanpuri (Iqbal Award, given by the Madhya Pradesh Government); Ali Sardar Ja'fari (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Award, given by the U.P. Urdu Academy); Gyan Chand Jain (cash award of Rs. 10,000/-, given by the U.P. Urdu Academy, for his lifetime literary achievements, which he refused); Rashid Hasan Khan (cash award of Rs. 25,000/-, given by the Delhi Urdu Academy, for his research work); Malik Ram (Hali Award for 1992); and Iqbal Majeed (cash award of Rs. 11,000/-, given by Madhya Pradesh Urdu Academy).

II

—*The following, originally put out by the Center for Research Libraries, was submitted by James Nye from the University of Chicago.*

DATE: September 16, 1992 *Revised*
For more information, contact
Linda Naru (312) 955-4545 ext. 318

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES has awarded a grant of \$140,000 to the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) on behalf of the South Asia Microform Project (SAMP) to improve access to 2,800 nineteenth century Hindustani books held in the British Library's Oriental and India Office Collections. The project will include the microfilming of the volumes for preservation and wider dissemination to scholars and the creation of machine readable cataloging that will be added to CRL's bibliographic file and to the OCLC and RLIN bibliographic

databases.

The increased accessibility that will be achieved through this project is particularly important to scholars in the United States because collections here have been built mostly since 1960, and lack extensive holdings of earlier published works in the modern regional languages of Southern Asia. The preservation of these titles is important because of the fragile condition of the original volumes.

During the project period, October 1992 through December 1994, a panel of South Asian scholars in fields of history, literature, linguistics, folklore, and religious studies will select the titles and editions from the *Hindustani Section* of the *Catalogue of the Library of the India Office* within the subject areas "Arts and Sciences," "History and Geography," and "Literature."

The selected titles will be microfilmed at photoduplication facilities of the British Library. Master negatives will be retained by the British Library under their copyright, and a positive service copy of each reformatted title will be deposited into CRL's collection. All titles produced in the project will be freely available to CRL members and SAMP participants and to non-CRL members according to the existing policy.

Principle Investigator for the project is Donald B. Simpson, CRL President. James H. Nye, Bibliographer for Southern Asia at the University of Chicago Library, is the Academic Coordinator who will guide the selection of materials to be microfilmed.

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The Center for Research Libraries, founded in 1949, is the nation's oldest cooperative, membership-based research library. The Center's mission is to make available to the library community research materials that are rarely-held in North American Libraries. In working toward this goal, the Center acquires, preserves, provides bibliographic access to and lends from its collections. These collections, comprised of more than 3.7 million volumes and 1.1 million units of microfilm, are housed in Chicago and include newspapers, dissertations, archival materials, scientific and technical serials and monographs, area studies microforms and special collections. Center membership consists of 130 university, college and research libraries throughout the United States and Canada.

The South Asia Microform Project (SAMP) was established in 1967, at CRL following five years of efforts by the South Asia Microform and Library Committee of the Association for Asian Studies. SAMP's purpose is to acquire microform copies of research materials relating to India, Pakistan,

Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. SAMP is administered by CRL and governed by twenty-six institutional members.

III

—The following is an e-mail message sent by David Magier of Columbia University.

Arabic/Persian/Urdu Optical Character Recognition (OCR)

Below is from an article in MacWeek (7/13/92, p. 18), which appears as a sidebar to a major article on optical character recognition software for the Macintosh from CTA Inc. (25 Science Park, New Haven, Connecticut 06511; phone: (203) 786-5828, FAX: 786-5833). Everyone has always said, as a prime example of the weakness of OCR technology, that it would be YEARS before anyone managed to come up with OCR software that would recognize Arabic. But now that it exists, it opens all sorts of possibilities for text analysis of Arabic/Urdu/Persian poetry, digital text storage and retrieval, e-text archives (available by ftp) in each of these languages, etc., etc. Of course the software isn't cheap, but it's certainly cheap enough to make librarians and scholars stop and consider it for possible projects that could benefit us all. . . . (By the way, I have no affiliation with CTA, and no direct knowledge of the software described, other than the article that I'm passing along below. Hope you find it as intriguing as I do. —David

CTA makes first foray into Arabic recognition

CTA Inc. has announced a new version of its OCR software that the company said provides the first omnifont recognition of Arabic text.

TextPert Arabic, available now for \$1,495, recognizes documents ranging from 10 to 72 points in several typeset Arabic script styles and fonts, including Persian and Urdu. It can capture Arabic text at a rate of 2,500 characters per minute, CTA said. It also handles 32 Indo-European languages and can recognize pages containing Arabic and non-Arabic alphabets in separate text blocks.

Like the Indo-European version, TextPert Arabic lets users specify text blocks to recognize and supports batch processing of TIFF files. A version of the program also is available with CTA's TextPert High Speed

RISC board for \$5,995.

The program comes with Arabic and English software and documentation.

According to CTA, TextPert Arabic was created at the request of Apple Europe, which helped fund the project and is offering the product through European dealers. CTA said its contract with Apple stipulates that TextPert Arabic will be available exclusively on the Mac for an undisclosed period of time.

NOTE: If you have read a paper or published an item or know of a piece of information of interest to Urdu-wallahs, please do not hesitate to send it to us for inclusion in the next issue of the *AUS*. —Editors