IIS Alumni

Newsletter

Merchant, an IIS alumnus and Head of the IIS Library.

The second day began with a talk by Dr Tom Kessinger, General Manager of Aga Khan Foundation. In his presentation, entitled òAga Khan Development Network: Scope and Opportunitiesó, Dr Kessinger presented an overview of the AKDN, focusing on new projects outlined by His Highness the Aga Khan, as part of the Golden Jubilee initiatives. Current students from STEP and GPISH programmes were invited to attend this presentation.

As part of the Alumni showcase, Salima Bhatia, (Class of 1999), shared her experiences and contributions as a co-producer of the theatre production, òAli to Karim - A Tribute to the Ismaili Imamsó, which was part of the global Golden Jubilee programmes.

Shiraz Kabani, Head of the Department of Operations, Finance and Development, presented an overview of the activities and new developments at the IIS, including implications of the co-location of the IIS with AKUõs Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations and the Aga Khan Foundation (UK) at the new premises.

The annual meeting concluded with a panel discussion where the part A C [illegible] w T] w T]
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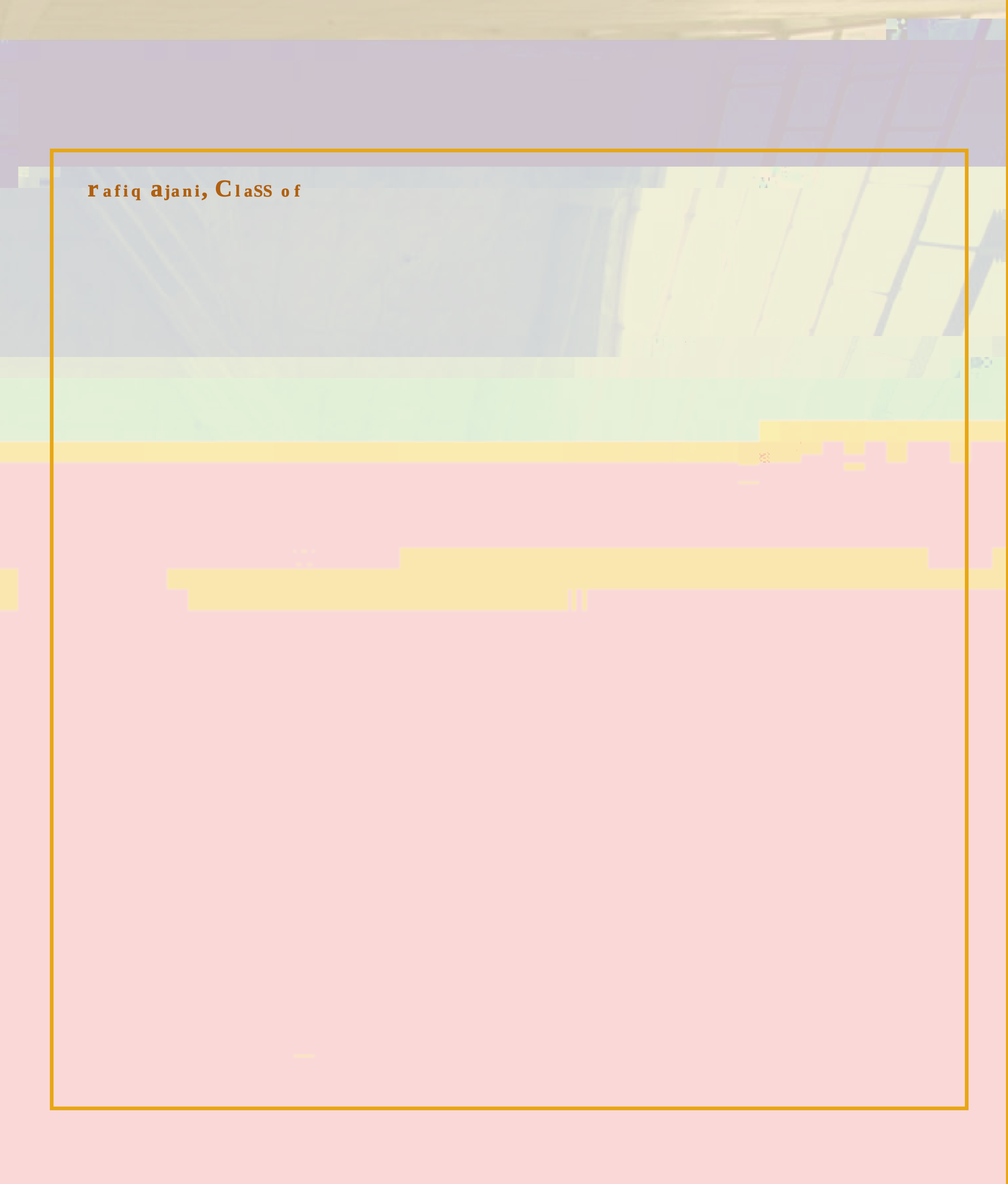
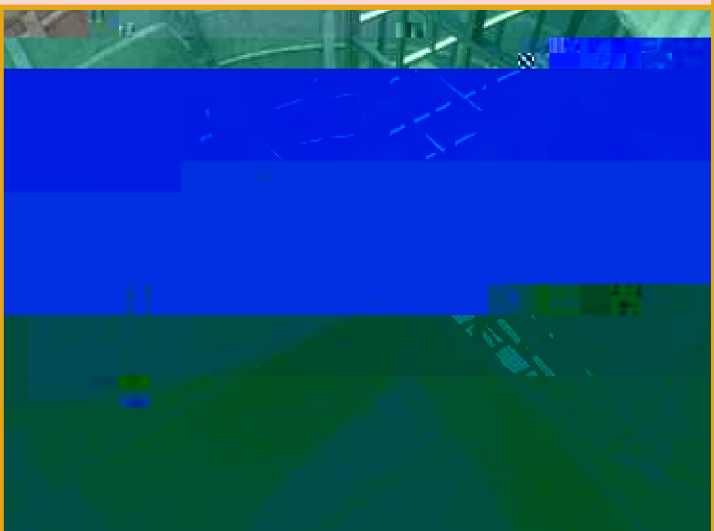
Asia Europe North America

Palla Pallaev

Palla Pallaev (Class of 2008) began his internship with AKF Russia in November 2008. For the first three months, he assisted AKF in identifying and relocating to new and larger premises required to house the programme staff and from where programme activities could be implemented. Thereafter, Palla was given the responsibility to initiate AKF's Civil Society Programme (CSP). Initially, this involved conducting a base line survey of labour migrants from CIS countries and organisations, both local and international, and addressing the needs of this vulnerable group. The survey was undertaken by a professional, guided by AKF's approach to civil society, and coordinated by Palla. Using the survey findings and recommendations, Palla went on to draft the CSP objectives, strategies and budget. He also assisted the CEO in strengthening relations with migrant community leaders and AKF partners. In addition, he helped organise and participated in Round Table meetings, attended conferences with the CEO, and also represented AKF independently. Through the above activities, Palla has developed an excellent working relationship with staff members and the AKDN Director for Civil Society Programmes. At the end of his internship, Palla was formally recruited as a full time CSP Projects Officer.



Rafiq Ajani, Class of



Shainool Jiwa (Class of 1984) and Dr. Nacim Pak-Shiraz (Class of 2002).

The primary goal of the conference was to investigate the composition of the Shiôa community and whether specific historical examples of art, architecture and material culture inspired by Shiôi traditions around the world could be identified.

Fahmida presented a paper entitled *“The Hand of Fatima: Origins and Significance”*, which investigated the origin and meaning of this ubiquitous amuletic symbol. The paper attempted to reconstruct the historical and mythological importance of Bibi Fatima (a.s.), daughter of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s.), wife of Hazrat Imam ôAli (a.s.) and mother of Hazrat Hasan (a.s.) and Imam Husayn (a.s.), in order to investigate why Muslims ð Sunni and Shiôa ð chose to identify the universal symbol of the human hand specifically with her. The paper also traced the earliest origins of the *‘Hand of Fatima’* or *‘Khamsa’* to Muslim Spain; thereby reiterating one of the conference themes regarding the universal reverence accorded to the *Ahl al-Bayt* by all Muslim societies.

Other conference papers explored topics including pilgrimage, architectural patronage, ô*Ashura* rituals, iconography and Iranian cinema. The proceedings of the conference are to be published in due course. | us

Amir Hussain, Class of 2005

In his book *The Aga Khan Rural Support Program, A Journey through Grassroots Development* Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan has attempted to encapsulate the transformation of community-based development in South Asia. Khan is internationally acclaimed p $he la e s ä p n to pove-Q y alleviation through 50 years of grassroo s engagement an in his book, he lucidly desc-Q bes the transition from a top-i ƀ n approach to pamQ cipatm p development.

The book captures his expe-Q ence of w kirs' p cross South Asia e! $ ve-Q ve ecades, and relates this life journey to] l A ademQ development issues. It offers deep insights into the challenges to human agency that a-Q ce by effecting social change in favour of the poo . Divided into three sections that a- both log ^ cally a.d chronolog ^ cally li.ked, the book is far m epsig.if ^ cant a.d comprehensive than a conve.tional auto] Q _graphical account, and g/es] Q yond the anecdotal scope that many participato y development accounts genemQ lly entail.

The] Q ok] Q g ^ ns w ^ th an auto] Q _graphical int- duction and descmQ ` tions of the a5thomQ s childhood. Ex ` ressed a3 a wom d of pomp and cem m p y, the intm duction situates him w ^ thin the relatively well-off So th A3ian cla3se3 and thereby allow3 the reademQ to undem tand the cultumQ l context of evelopment eademQ in the making.

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Mahbanu Ratansi, Class of 1

Insd Isa: Wh A Billion Musims Realy Thnk is a documetm by Unit Poductions Foundatons.

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mir baiZ Khan, ClaSS of 1983

Beyond the Roof of the World: Music, Prayer and Healing in the Pamir Mountains is a book on spirituality as much as on medical ethnomusicology, therapeutic transformation and healing. Koenõs research penetrates the cultural and spiritual landscape of the Pamir Badakhshani Ismaili community and is an insightful representation of the role of devotional music, meditative and prayer practices in healing.

Divided into six chapters, the book begins by defining illness as an imbalance between human beings and spiritual forces, and health as restoration of the equilibrium. It goes on, in chapter two to discuss the power of music and prayer in healing as being inextricably interwoven with cultural and religious beliefs and devotional practices. Chapter three introduces the *music-prayer dynamics*, a model that suggests that an integrated use of music and prayer leads to healing, a process in which the number õfiveõ is the most significant and power-laden symbol and metaphor. Chapter four describes the notion of *spiritual entrainment* where weaker rhythmic processes surrender to stronger rhythms, implying that participants in *maddah* performance surrender their lower self (*nafs*) to that of the higher

aleem Karmali, ClaSS of 2009

The British Museumõs exhibition, *Shah î* چ *'I* غ آ *SA Ö*

ôCultures of Diasporic Mediaô, in *International Communication*, ed. Daya Thussu, Routledge, 2009, London, UK.

Kassam, Karim-Aly. ôViewing Change Through the Prism of Indigenous Human Ecology: Findings from the Afghan and Tajik Pamirsô, in *Human Ecology*, 37 (6),