

SAYED HOUSEN MIA

6 March 1946 - 17 August 2022

A Pictorial Tribute

by Fakir Hassen

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PREFACE 1

MESSAGE FROM SAMMY NAIDOO 8

MESSAGES FROM THE FAMILY 9

SAYED THE RECIPIENT OF NUMEROUS ACCOLADES 21

SAYED AND THE DREAM OF TRADE ROUTE MALL 32

SAYED THE ENTERTAINMENT LOVER 40

SAYED THE PHILANTHROPIST 52

SAYED THE FRIEND OF ALL 65

SAYED THE FAMILY MAN 78

THE FINAL JOURNEY 83

I first got a call from our mutual friend Yusuf Moosajee, Executive Director of the Congress of Business and Economics (CBE), where both my lifelong friend Sayed Mia and I served, about his sudden passing on the morning of 17 August 2022.

Yusuf said he knew of the very close relationship that Sayed and I had, so he instinctively called me to find out if it was true, as Yusuf believed I would be one of the first to know of such a tragedy in the family. I did not. I was just as shocked as Yusuf was, because just a few days earlier, we had all been together at the annual Awards gala of the CBE in Sandton. My wife Zarina and I, chatting with Sayed and Farida, arranged to meet up within that ensuing week to catch up after the long hiatus of Covid.

I immediately got hold of Sayed's eldest son Ridwan, who was still in the UK and trying to get an urgent flight back for the funeral. Ridwan confirmed that his Dad had collapsed at home just after returning from the gym and had been declared dead by the paramedics attending to him in the presence of his Mom and his siblings Mohamed Reza, Zaakir and Razia.

It took months to overcome the sense of disbelief that my closest friend, my greatest inspiration after my parents, my greatest supporter, and in fact the benefactor of almost every organisation that I had worked with in my journalistic career of over five decades, was no more.

For weeks after the funeral, condolences poured in from all over the world, besides to the

family, also directly to me from people who had known about our special relationship. At every gathering I attended of so many diverse organisations for months afterwards, there was always a tribute to Sayed for his association with it.

In consultation with the family, we decided that a fitting tribute would be to record some of his varied activities in this small book. The book is not a biography of Sayed's life, as that would take up several volumes. What it is, is a collection of photographs I have been privileged to take of just a few of his interactions with the community in more recent years, as well as the stories related to them.

No doubt there would have been hundreds more similar ones, often adding to the many relationships and assistance efforts by Sayed that even the family would not know about. This was made clear as messages of condolence poured in from people we did not even know, whose hearts and careers Sayed had touched in some way.

Our relationship started when we were both teachers in the early 1970's. Despite the meagre salaries we earned, Sayed used part of this to support the education of the children from the slum area of Thomsville in Lenasia, popularly known as "the two-rooms".

But his real calling was for other fields, so he soon moved into insurance, developing a formidable team which year after year won awards for the best performance nationally. Here too, his

philosophy of sharing whatever he earned translated into support for organisations as diverse as the annual Diwali Festival of the Hindu Coordinating Council and bursaries for the Tamil Federation of Gauteng to new mosques and a wide range of educational and social welfare programmes.

During the critical housing shortage in Lenasia during the apartheid era, Sayed not only undertook some of the first private sector projects to build a thousand affordable homes for people, but even assisted with their required deposits for electricity and water connections sometimes.

And I had the distinct honour of covering many of these events for the Lenasia Times, Post and other media that I worked with over the years. Sometimes this was even despite Sayed's requests not to give him so much attention. We often had the discussion about why I believed it was necessary not to, as he put it, "for people to think I am showing off again", but to inspire others to do what he was doing for the community.

It was no small surprise then that community leaders paid glowing tributes to Sayed ahead of his funeral on Thursday 18 August.

"Often called a businessman with a heart of gold, Mr Mia's support for many community projects is testimony to this title being well-deserved," said Kishore Badal, Chairperson of the Hindu Coordinating Council.

This included support for the employment project started by Jocod, an organisation for those with disabilities; and eventually even the culmination of a dream that he nurtured for more than two decades – a regional major shopping centre in Lenasia, when the Trade Route Mall was launched. The Nishtara substance abuse centre next to the Mall was also always part of this vision.

Mickey Chetty, former President of the SA Tamil Federation and now Africa Head of the International Movement for Tamil Culture, said he had known Sayed since his days as a young policeman in Lenasia.

“Mr Mia came to the assistance of everyone, irrespective of who they were. Everyone, of any religion or race, could rely on Mr Mia assisting them in whatever they were doing. His motto in life was to share whatever he had and we could all take a lesson from his life,” Chetty said. Ashwin Trikamjee, President of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha recalled how Sayed had come to the rescue of non-racial football in the apartheid era when nobody else would provide sponsorship.

Of the scores of awards and accolades that Sayed received, he always shared with me that one of those he was proudest of was getting the prized Paul Harris Award from Rotary International. Sayed was an ardent supporter of every book that I have published, making a point of attending every launch, even when it was in Durban. At the launch of my book ‘250 Bollywood

Encounters' at Killarney CineCentre, Sayed surprised everyone (including myself!) with his detailed knowledge of the Indian film industry.

The only book launch that he missed was when I launched my book '70 Not Out', which Shumarlan and Sammy Naidoo of the Apple Group of Print Companies published to mark my milestone 70th birthday. Sayed's was one of the scores of messages by people from all walks of life in the book. Sayed was away abroad, but he still made sure that he sent a message of support, which I am ending my foreword with because he described the objectives of all my work, forgetting that most of it was inspired by what I had learnt through him becoming my most special friend.

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen and my sincerest apologies for not being personally here tonight on this special occasion. I would definitely have been there if it was still yesterday, as originally scheduled, but had to fly out abroad today unavoidably.

I have spoken before on how Fakir's innovative ideas, and in particular his writing for many years, have brought together diverse South Africans from all walks of life in so many different ways. Fakir's work has always bridged all divides of race, language, religion and culture, which makes him one of the few South Africans who are welcomed with open arms in so many institutions and by so many organisations all over the country – whether diplomatic missions and regulatory bodies, media houses or even mosques, temples or churches.

Until now, his books have been about others and I am very glad that finally he is writing about himself to get the credit that is really due to him for placing so many of us on the national and international map for so many years. As I know him, his pen will tell the truth, even if some do not like it, alongside the stories he revels in of sharing the successes of others.

As an executive in a wide range of cultural, educational and social institutions myself, there is one remarkable feature that I have been witness to that has always stood out about Fakir – his constant refusal to serve in any official position in any such body or board despite the frequent requests for him to do so for many years. Fakir's reasoning for this is that he wants to retain his status as an unbiased rapporteur of events of all organisations, and serving on any one or even more, would lead to perceptions of favour and bias, as he has always been intent on serving them all equally in whatever way he can. Fakir, maybe now in your retirement it is time to review that position of yours and share the valuable knowledge and experience with them.

I wish you well with your latest venture, and know that this is not the end of it. I look forward with great anticipation to what comes from your pen and camera next, and I'm sure you will have the same level of support from the community that you are no doubt having there tonight. Personally, I pledge my support, as always."

That support is already sorely missed, barely a year after the pledge. Sayed was one of the regular sponsors of my books, allowing us to place them free of charge in

public and school libraries in Gauteng and KZN to allow greater access. Thanks to the support of Sayed's children, we will be doing the same with this book.

While almost all photographs in this book were taken by myself; where I appear in some photos with Sayed, thanks must go to Manoj Master, Naazneen Ismail, Abdulhak Mall, Dimple Patidar and Priya Ranchod for their support over the years.

Many people continue even today to humbly plead in their prayers for Sayed to be afforded a prime place in Heaven. I believe that for all the good he has done in the world and the continued legacies that he initiated, he is already there, looking down on the rest of us to do our own little bit to continue the tradition.

Rest in Peace, my Dearest Friend!

FAKIR HASSEN

August 2023

MESSAGE FROM SAMMY NAIDOO, CHAIRMAN APPLE GROUP OF COMPANIES

Sayed Mia was a dear friend whose support for community organisations always amazed me. We often ended up together at many events, and even sometimes when he was not present because of travelling abroad or elsewhere in the country, his absence would always be noted by the organisers. This showed the high regard in which he was held by these organisations.

In all the projects that the Apple Group of Companies has done with Fakir Hassen , especially those of recording the contemporary history of our community and placing books in school and public libraries, Sayed was always the foremost supporter. Whenever we shared a platform to speak at some of these events, Sayed always impressed with his kind demeanour, good words of encouragement to everyone, and always shared something which everyone could learn from.

The attendance at his funeral further highlighted the esteem that Sayed commanded from all sectors of the community, irrespective of race or creed, without him ever having to expect this during his lifetime.

A philanthropist like Sayed Mia, totally thinking of others always before himself, comes along perhaps once in a lifetime.

We, like scores of other institutions and individuals, will always miss him.

May his soul rest in peace.

**MESSAGES
FROM
THE FAMILY**

As I write this message on Sunday, 16th July, it marks the 51st anniversary of our wedding day in 1972, bringing a lump into my throat.

We had an awesome journey together of fifty years, one month and one day exactly.

My children, grandchildren and I miss Sayed all the time.

His presence gave tremendous meaning to our daily lives and achievements.

His passing has brought us grief which we bear with patience and try to live each day with the pleasure of Allah S.W.A.

Sayed cared deeply for all around him, not only all families, but also each person from all walks of life that he made contact with.

His lifelong goals of building and lending a helping hand to all the people with special needs and financial aid have left a huge impact on many people's lives.

I pray to Allah that we have the capability to to be able to continue with the profound legacy he has left us with.

I don't know where to begin and where to end. I can write volumes about my late father with intense emotion. He was a hero, mentor, teacher, guide and social role-model to me and to my children; Taariq Hoosein, Samihah and Shakeel Ahmed.

His passing has left a huge void in the lives of family members, friends, as well as business and student colleagues alike – similar to a vacuum that cannot be filled.

His participation in community-driven fundraising initiatives and events for charity and welfare organisations, is greatly missed. His absence is definitely being felt by many of us, and will be for years to come – if not forever.

Sayed Hoosen Mia, a gentleman of great stature, left behind a legacy of such proportion that very few will ever manage to attain, even in two lifetimes. His legacy is inspiring for us all, and we can strive to follow in his footsteps as best as we are able to.

My father sought to establish good connections and relations with people from all walks of life. Nationality, race, religion and social status was never a deciding factor for him when it came to associating with others, particularly when he offered assistance in any way that he could. He was a talented 'networker', constantly and consistently bringing people together.

As the head of our family, he set an example for us within our family unit as well. He established strong bonds with immediate, and extended family members. His motto was, “Always seek to build relationships, do not burn them”.

Keep my beloved father and his family in your memories, thoughts and prayers.

May the Almighty Allah grant us patience and strength. May his soul rest in peace. May his children and grandchildren maintain and keep up the legacy he left behind, and may our souls re-unite in the next life in the highest stage of Jannah (Heaven).

Aameen.

“We start to think in their voices”.

A close friend said this to me when we sadly lost my dad. I’m so sure my late dad foresaw this time and was preparing us for it on some level. His wise words, sometimes imparted in casual conversation and sometimes during serious and pointed discussions live on and echo daily in my, my mother and siblings’ minds. The extreme sadness is somewhat alleviated by the recollection of the kindness, warmth and sincerity in his voice. Just a month prior to his passing, my parents celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Listening to our mother, it’s obvious that mutual nurturing and love between them had shaped them both into the kind and beautiful souls they have become.

To say that Sayed Mia has left a legacy would be an understatement. Selflessness was the outstanding quality he had. Personal ambition, needs and wants easily fell by the wayside as long as someone else needed help. A struggling football team, difficulty in an employee’s life, emotional or financial turmoil for a family member, a student unable to pay their fees or someone just needing time; our beloved dad was always willing to step in and lend a hand. An entire community needing homes in the 1980’s under the weight of apartheid laws was seen as a calling for him, and as every one of the 700 “Golden City Housing” homeowners will testify, Sayed Mia was there for them. To this day we joke about how everyone but my dad became wealthier because of that project he worked so hard on.

The Islamic ideal of benefiting mankind was central to his life's plan.

Listing all the various charities and causes he had supported in some fashion or the other would be a book of its own!

My dad's faith, forgiving and empathetic nature were always evident. When confronted with injustice, threats and even false allegations and betrayal, he chose to forego ego and comfort and place all trust in the Almighty and refused to entertain thoughts of retribution. Consideration for others was core and he took pride in achieving victory and justice by the correct means.

Maintaining family ties and friendships was something my dad always emphasised. The social occasions and functions that were held just to have a get together were a family hallmark thanks to him. As a family, we will remember and miss our doting father and grandfather for as long as we are around. My wife Nurain and I are so grateful that he was able to leave such beautiful memories in the time spent with our young daughter and son, as well as all our nieces and nephews.

Whether as a teacher, insurance salesman, property entrepreneur or just as a friend he left a wonderful impression. The anecdotes and stories about him that we hear so often really touch our hearts. A medical colleague and his family came to my dad's funeral because they

remembered the concern he showed to them when their child was born in hospital, and my dad was there to visit another patient.

The well-known Trade Route Mall in Lenasia, a community he deeply cared for, was a labour of love for my dad. It is incorrectly thought that he saw it as a commercial venture. After ten years of planning and working to get the project off the ground and eventually seeing its build through, he was elated to see it filled with the people of Lenasia and surrounds. For him it was a place for the community to gather and now they didn't have to travel anymore to experience the convenience that came with it.

My dad's profound guidance and stewardship to us as his children will always be highly valued. "Follow your passion and the rewards will come naturally" is what he advised when it came to major decisions of career paths or study options. Financial gain was seen as secondary and never worth the chase.

We ask all whose lives he had touched in some way to join us in praying that the Almighty grant my dad a beautiful abode in the highest stages of Jannah (heaven) and shower him with infinite mercy and blessings.

Dear Dad,

It has been almost one year since you departed from this world, and not a day goes by without thoughts of you crossing my mind. There are countless moments when I wish I could have one more conversation, one more hug, or simply the opportunity to tell you how much I love and miss you. Though I cannot reach you in the physical realm, I hope that these words will somehow find their way to you.

Life has been both a journey and a challenge since you left. Your absence has left an irreplaceable void in our family. Your wisdom, strength, and unwavering love continue to guide us, even though you are no longer by our side. Your legacy lives on through the memories we cherish and the values you instilled in us.

I want you to know that your influence has shaped me in profound ways. The lessons you taught me about resilience, compassion, and the importance of family have become the pillars of my life. I strive to carry on your legacy and make you proud with every step I take.

There are moments of great joy and success that I wish I could share with you. Your belief in me was a source of inspiration, and I often find myself seeking that reassuring smile that could brighten even the darkest days. Your absence has taught me the value of cherishing the present and expressing gratitude for the time we have with our loved ones.

I carry your love with me always, dear father. It provides me with the strength to face life's challenges and the comfort to know that you are watching over me. Your spirit lives on, not just in my heart, but in the lives you touched during your time on Earth.

As I continue to navigate this unpredictable journey, I will strive to honor your memory by being the best version of myself. Your absence reminds me of the fragility and preciousness of life, urging me to live each day with purpose and embrace the opportunities that come my way.

Until we meet again, know that you are dearly missed and forever loved. Thank you for being my guiding light and the source of unconditional love in my life. You will always be my beloved father, and I am eternally grateful for the time we had together.



The family on an Eid Day morning a few years ago - Farida, Sayed, Zaakir, Ridwan, Razia and Mohamed Reza

In the pages of this book, we honour the life and legacy of a truly exceptional man, a loving father, and a guiding light in the lives of many. It is with both a heavy heart and a profound sense of gratitude that we remember my father, who left an indelible imprint on the hearts and minds of all who were fortunate enough to know him.

As a father, he was a paragon of virtue, imparting invaluable life lessons to his family. Among the numerous values he instilled, honesty stood at the forefront. He believed in the power of truth, teaching his children the importance of integrity in every aspect of life. Through his own unwavering honesty, he provided a shining example, illuminating the path towards righteousness.

Hard work was a cornerstone of his character, and he tirelessly demonstrated the rewards it brings. He understood that success comes to those who are willing to roll up their sleeves and pour their heart and soul into their endeavours. With a spirit of determination, he inspired us to chase our dreams and reach for the stars, never settling for mediocrity.

As an accomplished salesperson, he was a master of his craft. His persuasive skills and ability to connect with people were unmatched. He passed on this invaluable knowledge, showing us how to navigate the intricate dance of business. Through his teachings, he not only provided a roadmap to professional success but also illuminated the importance of building meaningful relationships.

However, my father's teachings extended far beyond the realm of business. He believed in the inherent goodness of humanity and the power of giving back. Charity was not just an act but a way of life for him. He taught everyone the profound joy that comes from helping those less fortunate and encouraged them to be a beacon of kindness in the world.

Perhaps most significantly, he emphasized the immeasurable worth of friends and family. He nurtured a deep appreciation for the bonds that unite us, recognising that these connections form the very fabric of our lives. He cherished moments spent together, creating lasting memories and reminding us that love and support are the greatest treasures one can possess.

One of the most remarkable aspects of his love was his unwavering commitment to his children's futures. Sacrificing where he had to, he provided unwavering support, putting his children through university; two of them through medical school. With every hurdle we faced, he stood steadfastly by our side, a source of strength and encouragement. His belief in our potential knew no bounds, and he invested everything he had to encourage our success.

Though he may no longer be physically present, the spirit of Mr Sayed Mia lives on, a guiding force and a guardian angel. In moments of triumph and in times of struggle, his presence is felt, reminding us of the incredible people we have become and the boundless love that continues to surround us.

He was awarded an honorary doctorate in philosophy shortly before his passing and should probably be remembered as Dr Sayed Mia.

As we conclude this tribute, let us remember him not with sorrow but with a profound sense of gratitude. Let us honour his memory by living the values he instilled, by embodying the qualities that made him such an extraordinary human being.

In the spirit of love, gratitude, and an unwavering determination to make him proud, let us carry forward his legacy, forever grateful for the immeasurable impact he had on our lives. We pray for you daily and want you to know that you are missed, cherished, and eternally loved.



June 2008 - A close family friend of the Mias, prominent Lesotho businessman Aslam Abubaker, draped Sayed with the highest honour that is normally reserved for royalty there and VIP visitors to the King – a traditional blanket and woven traditional Lesotho hat. With them was Aslam's son Yacoob.



April 2009 - A lifetime of service by Sayed which had benefited many members of the Tamil community was acknowledged with a surprise special award from the South African Tamil Federation at its belated Tamil New Year celebrations at the Patidar Theatre in Lenasia.

“Mr. Mia came here expecting only to enjoy the show by the international artists from Chennai this afternoon, but we at the South African Tamil Federation felt that despite his protestations, we needed to recognize his contribution to the Tamil community of many decades now,” said SATF President Mickey Chetty as he apologised to Sayed for not advising him earlier of the award.



May 2009 - The South African National Zakaat Fund (SANZAF) presented Sayed with a huge Arabic painting in recognition of his service to the community at a function in Crosby last Friday evening. Sayed had contributed a substantial amount towards the construction of a school that is administered by SANZAF in an informal settlement near Lenasia. In the photo are Shauket Fakie, Yusuf "Tara" Seedat, Sayed Hoosen Mia, Mohamed Lutchika and Akhtar Thokan.



November 2009 - The Johannesburg Institute of Social Services marked its 70th anniversary with special awards to long-serving members. Back fltr – Sayed Mia, Yunus Mayet, A Munshi, S A Panchbhai, Adam Lorgat, A Amoojee, M Y Mayet, and Dr Rashid Salojee. Front fltr are A K Saloojee, Moosa Theba, Shantilal Mistry, N G Patel, M E Dhorat, Dr Essop Jassat, Essop Bhana, Zohra Isane, and Maganlal Patel.

May 2010 - Sayed and then Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa were honoured when the Gauteng 1860 Legacy Foundation hosted an event at the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg to raise funds for events later in the year to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first indentured labourers from India.

Sayed recalled how he, like most of the 1.4 million South Africans of Indian origin, were descended from the labourers and merchants who settled in South Africa to start a new life. He urged the latest generation not to forget the suffering and sacrifices of their forebears.



September 2012 - Chairman of the Islamic Finance judging panel Yunus Suleman, with all the Business Person of the Year finalists - Farouk Dangor, Anver Alli Carrim and Sayed.





December 2016 - Sayed received the Distinguished Service to Society Award at the prestigious Congress of Business and Economics (CBE) Gala Awards evening at the Palm Continental in Johannesburg. He was particularly proud as his eldest son, Dr Ridwan Mia, also received the same award that evening.

December 2016 - From its humble beginnings in a Durban cinema, the Miss India SA Pageant celebrated its 25th anniversary at the Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City this month. Special awards were made to several people at a banquet preceding the selection of the latest Miss India SA to represent the country against peers from more than 20 other countries in the diaspora at the Miss India Worldwide Contest next year.

Among the recipients for their support over all those years were Sayed, described by founder Farook Khan as “an ardent supporter right from the start.” With him was veteran sportsman A K Ismail.





Left: July 2019 - Sayed was acknowledged as a strong supporter of the community radio station Lenz FM 92.2 at a show in Lenasia where the founder of the station, Bash Hoosein, and CEO Kim Khan presented him with a special citation.



Right: November 2019 - Sayed was part of a group of community veterans who received various awards from several organisations over just one weekend in November 2020, including founder of the Lenasia Times Group (now late) Waheed Camroodeen, Fakir Hassen, Sammy Naidoo, and Mohan Hira. Joining them was Javie Ravjee.

November 2020 - Big M Productions, headed by veteran promoter Pinky Mothie, hosted the Gauteng Influential Men of the Year 2019 Awards alongside the Legends Awards for the musical fraternity at the Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City.

In his typical humble way, Sayed acknowledged all his fellow recipients as more deserving than him. The men from all walks of life who were honoured were Nadas Pillay; Shaun Kuni; Chan Naidoo; Chief Ndubueze Jonas Udeji; Danie Bezuidenhout; Dhineshan Moodley; Ganas Nardhamuni; Josef Bitschnau; Karthigasen Moothsamy; Kovelin Veramoothoo; M.S.Pillay (Thumbie); Maishen Naidoo; Marie Pillay; Pregy Pillay; Raghav Sandeep Jonnalagadda; Strini Naidu; Velaphi Mpolweni; Sayed Mia; Sammy Naidoo; Valentino; Kevin Naidoo; Fakir Hassen and Vinesh Sukhari.





Sayed's biggest dream was to establish a large shopping centre along the lines of those in the wealthier suburbs of Johannesburg. At the launch of his plans for the Trade Route Mall, Sayed explained that besides the economic growth that it would bring for Lenasia, residents from the township and those neighbouring it would no longer have to travel into the city to use the shops there. Such grand ideas had been debarred in the apartheid era.



Not long after he announced the plans, construction work started at the site of the Trade Route Mall. Joining Sayed were several senior officials.



April 2006 - Sayed's dream was realised when then Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Nguka joined him and partner Ismail Valli to officially open Trade Route Mall at a gala event.

Also there was Moosa Moosa, who together with his son AB, opened the CineCentre complex in Trade Route Mall.





April 2007 - Sayed and Ismail helped shoppers celebrate the first birthday of Trade Route Mall and the spectacular support for it from both tenants and the local community.



February 2009 - Miss India South Africa, Sabiha Hussain, did her host country proud by being named the second princess in the Miss India Worldwide 2008 Pageant held at the new Convention Centre at the Trade Route Mall.

Miss India India, Shagun Sarabhai, a Mumbai homeopathy student, was crowned Miss India Worldwide at the gala banquet, with Miss India Canada, Uppeka Jain named First Princess.



Sayed and Ismail also received special citations from the organisers for hosting the first Miss India Worldwide international pageant in South Africa.



December 2009 - Targets set by national chain store Game for its new Lenasia store for the opening weekend were already broken by lunchtime on the first day, it was announced at a special function to mark the opening of the latest phase of the Trade Route Mall. Sayed was particularly happy that his brother Dr Anwar Hoosenmia (centre) was there to help him celebrate.



October 2012 - Sayed and Ismail received special awards from PMR.Africa in the category for Leaders and Achievers. With them was Yasin Valli, Centre Manager of the Trade Route Mall.



July 2006 - Sayed and Farida were never far from the Bollywood stars who came to South Africa. They were there when Kangana Ranaut and Bobby Deol spent some time at Emperors Palace shooting for the movie Shakalaka Boom Boom.



On another occasion, Sayed was with renowned ghazal singers Panjak Udhas and Anup Jalota.



July 2007 - Sayed and Mohamed Reza with actors Akshaye Khanna and Darshan Jariwala at the world premiere of the film Gandhi My Father at Monte Casino. Sayed supported the range of community projects that were to be funded by the R1,4m raised at a gala banquet there.

August 2007 - Veteran actress Sharmila Tagore was the chief guest during the Shared Histories Festival. At a reception hosted by Indian Consul General Navdeep Suri, (right) Sayed and Farida joined Kumkum Bhatia and Laudium socialite Dr Yunus Abdullah to watch a dance performance by Jhankaar Dance School of Lenasia.





February 2009 - Sayed was with the founders of the Pageant, Dharmatma and Neelam Saran from New York, on Valentine's Day when American communications student Nikkitasha Marwaha was crowned Miss India Worldwide 2009 at a glittering function on the beach at Suncoast in Durban. Australian honours student in sleep research Kanchan Verma, 23, was named the first runner-up and Sunaina Bhoendie of the Netherlands, a 20-year-old business management student, was placed third.



July 2011 - Visitors to an exhibition at Trade Route Mall were treated to dance and music items and a video reflecting the history of Indian cinema over more than century.

Titled Bollywood in Posters, there were also life-size cut-outs of a number of top Bollywood stars with which visitors could pose.

Sayed was among the hundreds of people who shared in the fun at the launch, where Sayed, opted to stand between the two biggest icons of Bollywood, Amitabh Bachchan and Shahrukh Khan.



July 2011 - Sponsor Sayed Mia and promoter Mike Narsey joined Eastwave 92.2 radio presenters Sharita Nanoo and Riaz Safee Shahid Abdool. TV stars Sushant Singh Rajput (Manav, looking up in awe at the huge crowds above them) and Ankita Lokhande (Archana), put in an appearance at Trade route Mall ahead of their show later that evening.

July 2011 - Singer Udit Narayan removed his jacket, to the delight of the huge audience, as a comment is made by about how he was in better shape than ever before at the end of his show in the city on Sunday night. Also in the picture are from left to right – sponsor Sayed Mia, and show promoters Veesham Maharaj and Abhijit Choudary.



September 2011 - Five years after he last performed in South Africa, playback singer Kumar Sanu again thrilled his fans with a show at Emperors Palace.

The show was in aid of funds for the Association for Persons with Physical Disabilities KwaZulu-Natal, supported by DSTV Indian. But those who were there screamed out in delight as the singer belted out in long stretches on stage his evergreen hits of the eighties and nineties, many requested by Sayed personally.





January 2013 - Sayed was the sponsor of the Indian Cinema Centenary Awards hosted by AB Moosa of the Avalon Group at the CineCentre Cinemas in Killarney in Johannesburg and Suncoast in Durban. At each venue, 100 people who have been involved in the Indian entertainment industry in South Africa in various ways were honoured with a special commemorative award. This special award to Sayed contains a miniature of the best film from several decades.



April 2013 - Sayed frequently spoke about his fondest memories of Radio Lotus being the times when Zakia Ahmed and I undertook live broadcasts which were hosted by him in Lenasia in the 1990's. This picture was taken much later at one of the shows that she was compering.



April 2016 - At the packed Mikka Singh concert at Emperors Palace, Sayed congratulated the singer as Ismail Valli looked on.

October 2016 - Veteran playback singing icon Asha Bhosle, 83, said she was 'triple-blessed' as she made her stage debut in Johannesburg on October 3 at Gallagher Estate because of several auspicious events around the same time.

Sayed was quick to respond, telling her that it was South Africans who were blessed to see and hear Asha on stage after waiting for her for so many decades.





May 2017 - Fans of the legendary singer Mohamed Rafi had a double treat, thanks to sponsor Sayed who hosted two shows in Johannesburg before a troupe from India jettied out. A show was hosted for members of an exclusive music club of which Sayed was a member at the Wanderers Club and then a public one at Lifestyle Centre in Fordsburg. “When I heard these singers I felt that Johannesburg audiences should not be left out of the songs that are still hummed today by a third generation even after Rafisaheb passed on 37 years ago,” Sayed said. With Sayed were Laudium socialite Dr Yunus Abdullah, and businessmen Ismail Valli and Solly Noor.



September 2017 - Srisubha Addepalli, an IT specialist hailing from Andhra Pradesh, was crowned Miss India South Africa Gauteng 2017 at the Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City. A number of long-time supporters of the pageant received special awards at the event. Among them was Trade Route Mall owner Ismail Valli, who received his award from his one-time partner at the Mall, Sayed. They are both seen here together with Julie Valli, Zee TV CEO Harish Goyal and the top three winners.

March 2019 - Sayed and Farida with Miss India Worldwide 2018 Shree Saini from the US and Zee TV Miss India SA Kiara Rampaul from Durban, who were both in Johannesburg for a series of public engagements.

“Pageants are not just about showing talent on the ramp, but also about doing something to improve the lives of others in the community,” said Saini.

Rampaul said she preferred to remain in South Africa despite all the opportunities that presented themselves abroad.

Sayed lauded both the young women for starting their part to philanthropy, which he said had given him endless blessings and pleasure.





At the dawn of the South African democracy, Sayed was personally thanked by Nelson Mandela for a R500,000 donation which he made towards the first democratic elections. With them was Cas Saloojee. Sayed, who had met Nelson Mandela many times to assist in his various projects, recalled how he once facilitated a meeting at which Madiba received the prestigious Harvard Business School Statesman of the Year Award.

“My Alma Mater contacted me to see if I could arrange for Madiba to receive the award at his office, since he was so busy with his tasks as President at the time that he would not have been able to go to Harvard in the US to receive it. It was a particularly special privilege to have been asked to do this. What kept going through my mind was how the whole world was trying to acknowledge the lifetime that Madiba had spent bringing freedom to the majority of us in this country, and here was I being asked to play a role in this. Through Ahmed Kathrada, I secured an appointment at the Union Buildings in Pretoria and Madiba greeted us with his characteristic grin and firm handshake as he graciously acknowledged the award and accepted it on behalf of the people of South Africa,” Sayed said afterwards.





September 2007 - Seventeen years after it was first mooted, the Nishtara Clinic in Lenasia opened a fully-equipped in-patient facility to assist victims of substance abuse. Sayed said a few words before he cut the ribbon to mark the opening as Shamim Garda, SANCA National Executive Director, looked on.

March 2009 - Sayed was always a great supporter of Federation soccer in the apartheid era. At the launch of the Gauteng branch of the South African Soccer Federation, he joined a number of legendary footballers from the era who received special citations for their resistance to joining apartheid teams which were racially separated.



SAYED THE PHILANTHROPIST: TIBA



June 2011 - Sayed paid the highest amount when I donated the first copy of my book '250 Bollywood Encounters' for auction by TIBA in Lenasia. Pankaj Udhas personally signed the book for Sayed, as promoter Osman Osman of Blue Blood and compere Zakia Ahmed looked on.

August 2011 - The anti-SAIC (South African Indian Council) demonstrations in Lenasia in July 1981 were recalled at a function hosted by the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation in Lenasia.

Sayed was among the various speakers who highlighted how in the very repressive environment at the time when few dared speak out for fear of being arrested and even tortured, the apartheid government of the day ironically opened the way for protest action by allowing election campaigning for the SAIC.

He also said that the proceeds of the land at Trade Route Mall which was originally planned to be the site of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation would be given to the organisation.





October 2011 - The spirit of reconciliation continued at the annual Diwali Festival of the Hindu Coordinating Council in Lenasia, as HCC Chairman Kokkie Singh, Swami Shivashankarananda of the Adi Shankara Ashrama and Hitesh Bhakta lauded Sayed for his regular contribution towards the Diwali Festival.

“There is one aspect that all community organisations in Lenasia can learn from the HCC, it is that we all come from one continent in south Asia, which is

now Pakistan and India. Despite our religions, we should unite and integrate because we are basically one people,” Sayed said, to huge applause from the crowd. Please continue this exercise that you as the HCC have harmonised into one of spiritual values that can benefit all of us”, he added.

In a subsequent year, Kokkie and Javie Ravjee presented a special citation to Sayed.





August 2013 - A performance by Qawali artists brothers Aftab and Hashim Sabri and sisters Rubina and Subina from Mumbai in Ormonde helped raise substantial funds for the Smile Foundation, which assists underprivileged children with issues such as cleft palates. Mark Lubner of Smile thanked the Mia family and in particular Dr Ridwan Mia, for the generosity they had shown in supporting the work of the Smile Foundation. He also lauded the way in which the Indian community in general supported community social welfare projects, citing it as a lesson for other communities. A special painting of Nelson Mandela by a renowned Austrian artist was auctioned off in aid of funds for the Foundation. Pretoria businessman A R Gani took home the painting. In the photo are Hedley Lewis, Dr Ridwan Mia, Sayed Mia, A R Gani and Mark Lubner.



May 2019 - Sponsor Sayed joined some of the management, staff and listeners of Lenz FM at the Lenasia Stadium, when popular Lenasia personality and founder of Lenz FM Bash Hoosen hosted his annual Iftaar for the needy with huge support from well-wishers..

SAYED THE PHILANTHROPIST: TIBA

October 2013 - Tiba Chairman Ebrahim Patel singled out Sayed as a particularly supportive donor for community-funded projects.

“When Mr Ranchod and I started over 40 years ago a project for deaf education, we found it very difficult to get support from the community, because they were sceptical about whether we would be successful or not. We went to Mr Mia and told him about our position and he gladly gave us a donation. That was the inspiration to continue with deaf education. Annually we went to him and he gladly gave us donations,” Patel said.



At a fundraising event hosted by TIBA in Lenasia, Sayed joined Naazim Adam and Waseem Sirkhot to help the organisation that assists those with visual disabilities in various ways.



April 2014 - Sayed joined Feizul Ayob, head of the local chapter of the World Memon Organisation, and Moosa Carrim when they donated R450 000 as a boost to plans by Prof Jerry Coovadia to revive the once-renowned Addington Children's Hospital on the Durban beachfront.



November 2015 - A gathering of retired teachers in Lenasia got a double surprise at the launch dinner of a group aimed at coming together to use their skills for community upliftment. Guest speaker Sayed not only offered them some sage advice from his more than 40 years as a businessman, but also immediately agreed to their request to become the patron of the new organisation.

A teacher himself who left the profession in 1976, Sayed recalled how his mother was a teacher in India, then in Nyasaland (now Malawi) and then in South Africa and instilled in him the idea that all humans are born to be teachers. Sayed reminisced about his role as a founder member of many community organisations which are such formidable institutions in Lenasia today, such as the Jiswa School, as he spoke at the school where a hall is named in memory of his mother.

“You are either teaching or learning in life. If you’re not prepared to learn, you will get nowhere and if you are not prepared to impart knowledge, you are the most selfish person,” he said.

Sayed recalled how his teaching career came to a rather abrupt end after he started making more money through selling insurance policies than what the government was paying him. Initially using the skill to better the lives of colleagues and even use it as a tool for fundraising for his school, Sayed set out to establish his own agency in Lenasia, and together with his colleagues repeatedly garnered awards for being the best in the country.



In October 2016, co-owners of the Trade Route Mall in Lenasia, Sayed and Ismail Valli, handed over a brand new ambulance to the Saaberie Chishty Ambulance Society.



March 2019 - The World Memon Foundation was always very close to Sayed's heart. Here he was a speaker at the International Memon Business expo and Conference held at the Palm Continental Hotel in Mayfair, Johannesburg.

In a tribute after his passing, the organisation said he was “a visionary, property tycoon and philanthropist who selflessly served humanity.”

“Sayed Mia remains etched in our hearts and souls. We will strive to carry forward his legacy of touching and changing lives across the globe” WMO said.



May 2008 - Islamic Finance, a division of FirstRand Bank, hosted the first of a proposed series of Business Network meetings where it hosts its clients to talks by leading economists. Two of South Africa's most renowned economists, Clem Sunter (seen here with Sayed) and Rudolph Gouws gave an overview of how the current economic climate affects small and large business owners in South Africa.





February 2010 - Sayed with veteran freedom activist Ahmed Kathrada and legendary Lenasia photographer Gopal Naransamy, who captured a lot of the history of the anti-apartheid struggle through his lens. They were at an exhibition on Kathrada's life at the Trade Route Mall in Lenasia.



August 2012 - Hard and uneasy as it may be, we have to sit down and review what is superfluous in our lives amid the economic crunch, and the results may just lead to an improved lifestyle. That was the advice from philanthropist Sayed, who was the guest speaker at a High Tea organised in Lenasia to wind up Women's Month activities by the local branch of Women for Peace.

“Call it slowdown, downturn or even recession, we all have to ask ourselves some tough questions,” Sayed said. “We have to ask what is important in our lives. What can we do without and what is unnecessary?”

Sayed suggested that the results of such a lifestyle review might disclose some critical issues to result in different priorities to just rushing to work or business to amass wealth while disregarding health and family time, especially with women today also being forced to work, often leaving children at home or in the care of others.



April 2013 - Education was a favourite area for Sayed. Here he was with then Gauteng Premier Nomvula Mokonyane after Deputy Minister of Home Affairs Fatima Chohan had handed over the award in the Education category at the annual Ubuntu Dialogue Awards to Gauteng Education MEC Barbara Creecy for the strides made in the province under her leadership. The awards were made in six categories by the Turquoise Harmony Institute.



April 2014 - At the launch of my book 'A Thousand Inspirations' at the Lenasia Stadium, Sayed was a speaker alongside Indian High Commissioner Virendra Gupta and Dr Farouk Kaka of Lenmed.

Sayed with his long-time friend Haroon Nosarka.





March 2016 - At the 70th birthday celebrations of Sayed and 40th of his son Dr Ridwan, the cakes were presented by the third generation of the Mia family, the children of his daughter Razia - Taariq Hoosein, Samihah and Shakeel Ahmed.

At a separate celebration, the Congress of Business and Economics, where Sayed was a Board member, also feted the man colleagues described as a guiding light in the organisation with his astute advice and calm demeanour.



March 2016 – At the birthday celebrations - Ridwan and Sayed with Moulana Naushad of Lenasia. Sayed contributed significantly to a mosque built there by the religious leader.



Another organisation Sayed strongly supported was the Saaberie Chishty Society and its diverse projects. Rookshana and Abdullah Sayed represented the Society at the event.



Some of the many friends who shared the birthday celebrations.

Below:

Dr Noormohamed Madni, Yusuf Kamdar, Yunus Suleman, Moosa Carrim, Azim Omar and Solly Suliman. Seated are Haroon Joosub, AK Ismail and Mohamed Gani.

Above:

Asgar Mahomed,
Moosie Bhidia
and AB Moosa



November 2018 - At the Congress of Business and Economics Gala Awards Night at Palm Continental in Mayfair were Ismail Valli, Sayed Mia, JP Hargovan, Haroon Joosub, Prabah Hargovan, Sammy Naidoo, Fakir Hassen and Viveshen Naidoo.





October 2019 - Sayed was again a major sponsor when my book , ‘150 Years of Celebrating the Mahatma - the South African Legacy’, was launched at the Killarney CineCentre on the 150th birth anniversary of the global icon. Other friends were co-publisher Sammy Naidoo, Gandhi look-alike Harivardan Pitamber, Mahendra Modi of the Gandhi Walk Committee and East Wave presenter Munira Khan.



November 2019 - Sayed with veteran activist Ben Turok and former minister Derek Hanekom at the annual Congress of Business and Economics Awards, All three have been recipients of the prestigious CBE Ahmed Kathrada Excellence in Leadership Award.



Right - With Lloyd Theunissen, Rashid Chopdat, Prema Naidoo and Jay Pema.

November 2019 - Sayed was a regular attendee of the annual Congress of Business and Economics (CBE) Gala Awards. He was also a board member of the CBE. Here he was with Sanjay Govind, Marc Lubner and his partner.





December 2020 - Veteran Soccer administrator Ashwin Trikamjee, a long-time friend of Sayed, shared the platform with him at a special celebration organised in Johannesburg by legendary Gauteng soccer players of the Federation era. They were with Hamied 'Banjo' Cassim and Shirley Naran of the Gauteng Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation.

Sayed shared this picture of him with Ashwin at the historic inauguration of President Nelson Mandela in 1994 at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. Ashwin did the Hindu prayer as part of the proceedings.





The family at a function of the Smile Foundation, which both Ridwan and Mohamed Reza have been closely associated with. I recall Sayed commenting privately to me when I mentioned his two sons being doctors that he also had another one in the house in Farida. He said he was very proud of her having gained her Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Potchefstroom for her pioneering research into the dietary risk factor in artery diseases in the South African Indian community.



December 2006 - A particularly proud moment for Farida and Sayed - the graduation day of their youngest son, Dr Mohamed Reza Mia, at Wits University.

August 2012 - Farida and Sayed with Ridwan and Pinky Mothie, who presented a Legends Award to Ridwan at the Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City. Ridwan received international acclaim for his pioneering skin transplant on little Pippie Kruger a few months earlier. Ridwan shared what had moved him most about the operation he had been involved in – a comment by an old Jewish lady who was the curator of the Museum at an institution he worked at that aptly summed up the change in South Africa. “I can’t believe there’s an Afrikaner family with a farm out in Limpopo who said they trusted you, a Muslim Indian man, with the life of their child, whose favourite nurse is a Sotho man from Joburg,” Mia recounted her saying.



April 2013 – Sayed joined Ridwan and local councillor Zarina Motala when the Lenasia community gathered at Trade Route Mall to honour him and several other recipients of National Orders earlier at the Presidential Guest House in Pretoria on Freedom Day. The Order of the Baobab in Silver was presented to Ridwan for his pioneering operations on a young child, Pippie Kruger, who had sustained severe burn injuries, through skin cloning.

“When someone phoned my Dad’s office from the Presidency asking for my number, he thought it was someone playing a prank on us. I thought so too initially,” Ridwan said, as he explained how humbled he was for the recognition.

“My parents always told us – It’s not about money; it’s about service to the community.



We will fail the legacy of Ahmed Kathrada and Laloo “Isu” Chiba if we don’t continue serving the poor in our society. I’ve used my skills as a plastic surgeon to do just that,” Ridwan said.



November 2019 - Sayed, Farida and Zaakir were at the Congress of Business and Economics Gala Awards evening to see their son and brother Mohamed Reza receive a special innovation award for his concept of Pegasus, a vertical plane which has already been used in a Hollywood movie.



Sayed was very active in the Time to Care Foundation, the charity wing of the Nizamiye Mosque complex in Midrand, popularly known as the Turkish Mosque, since its inception. He was a great friend of the man who built the Mosque, “Uncle Ali” Katırcıoğlu, who passed on barely a month after Sayed.

In October 2012, Sayed and his sons Ridwan and Mohamed Reza were delighted at being among the VIP guests at the official launch of the complex, where huge flags of the two countries could be seen from many kilometres away.

Just a few weeks before his passing, Sayed had noted how the entire complex and especially the small cemetery there, was always so serene. It became his final resting place, without him knowing of a decision by Uncle Ali and his team, including Mustafa Eroglu, that the day Sayed passed on, they would offer his family a place there.

Ridwan explained: “A few years earlier, the family of a dear friend of my Dad had asked him to make a plea to Uncle Ali that he be buried there, after which they apparently decided on the gracious offer to us of a grave for Dad as well. We only found out about this the day my dad passed when Mustafa rang me to offer the place at the cemetery. My dad was unaware that his unspoken desire to rest there would be fulfilled.”



SAYED HOOSEN MIA

6 March 1946 - 17 August 2022

This book is a very small tribute to my dear friend Sayed Hoosen Mia, who until the very last day of his life spent more time in service of others than many of his contemporaries who had long since retired. It is a limited reflection of the many events he was at all over the globe, and only shares those few which I was privileged to cover.

SAYED HOOSEN MIA

6 March 1946 - 17 August 2022

A PICTORIAL TRIBUTE

By Fakir Hassen

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