

PAKISTANIS WILL CELEBRATE INDEPENDENCE FESTIVAL WILL INCLUDE FOOD, CRAFTS, AND LIVE PERFORMANCES

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

Ethnic food, crafts, dances and live performances by famous Pakistani singers and dancers will highlight an Independence Day celebration on Friday, August 29.

“Pakistanis received their independence from Britain on August 14, 1947, so this will be our 56th anniversary,” explained Syed Jafri of Coral Springs, who serves as Secretary of the Asian Welfare Culture Society. “It’s a big event in Pakistan.”

Jafri said that his organization has sponsored the festival for five years and he expects this year’s event at Miami’s Bayfront Park to draw at least 5,000 participants.

In addition to food and entertainment, the festival will offer south Florida residents the opportunity to see traditional Pakistani dress and hear from several local and international officials.

Included among the speakers will be the Honorable Mohammed Cheemh, Pakistan’s Minister of Trade.

Sponsors hope that the event will help non-Pakistanis to understand their culture and world role. “Our association involves not only Pakistanis, but people from India and Bangladesh and Sri Lanka as well,” Jafri explained.

In spite of historic tensions between Pakistan and India, Jafri said that the local organization serves to promote friendship and cooperation between the two nations.

“Our association brings all kinds of people together,” Jafri said. “Our two countries have fought wars, but that is changing now and we are going beyond that.”

Census estimates place the number of Pakistanis in south Florida at more than 20,000.

The Asian Welfare Cultural Society works to promote the music and culture of the region as well as to preserve handcrafts, food and cultural traditions.

Among the musical performers at the festival will be Jawad Ahmad, Faakhir, Babar Ali and Aavisha, as well as dancers Sara Chaudry and Farah Shah.

A raffle will be held which will feature a round trip airline ticket to Pakistan as one of the prizes.

The Festival will run from 7 p.m. until 1 a.m. on Friday, August 29 at Bayfront Park, 301 Biscayne Boulevard in downtown Miami. Tickets are \$7 in advance or \$8 at the gate and may be purchased at most Asian grocery stores in south Florida.

For more information, call 954-970-4558 or 954-868-8412.

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