

Lenasia Educator Moolla Launches Haj Book

Ahmed Saeed Moolla, a former Transvaal College of Education Geography lecturer and Deputy Principal of Libra Primary School in Lenasia, has launched his photographic essay of his multiple trips to Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.



(L-R) Ismail Variava, Yunus Chamda, Johara Moolla, Ismail Vadi and Ahmed Saeed Moolla (seated) at the book launch at Impala Crescent Primary School in Lenasia
(Courtesy: Yunus Chamda)

Moolla and his wife, Johara, first went on an Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca in 1973 and has since taken historic photographs of Muslim religious sites in both cities over 44 consecutive years.

His book, entitled, “Makkah and Madinah: Through the Lens of Ahmed Saeed Moolla, 1973–2017”, provides a rare collection of historic and contemporary photographs of these two cities that occupy a central place in the lives of Muslims worldwide.

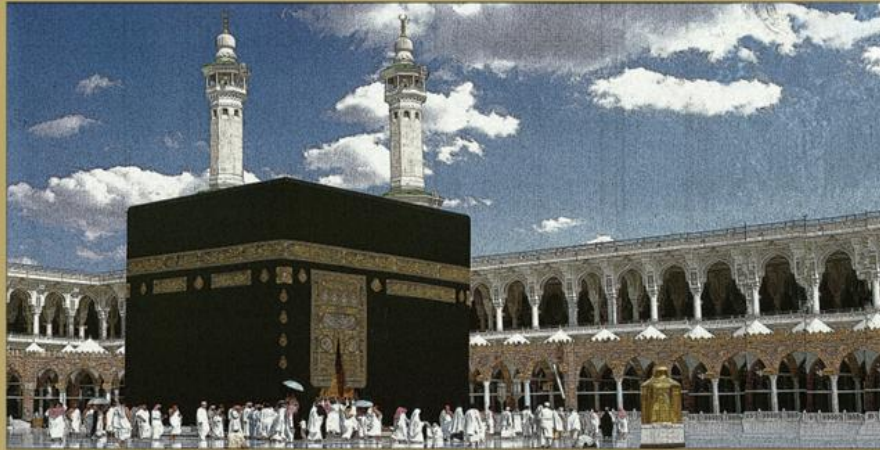
“I bought a Canon camera, took whatever photographs I could during my first pilgrimage to the holy cities, and pledged that for as long as the Almighty invited me as a guest at His door, I would record that privilege with my camera and educate pilgrims intending to go for Haj or Umrah,” said Moolla.

Since then, Moolla had teamed up with local theologian, (Maulana) Mohamed Seid Banoo, and arranged annual haj classes for Muslim pilgrims to Mecca.

The book also has short essays by Dr Ismail Vadi, Ismail Variava and Yunus Chamda on the life of Ahmed Saeed Moolla and his craft as a photographer.

MAKKAH AND MADINAH

Through the Lens of Ahmed Saeed Moolla (1973 - 2017)



COMPILED BY

Ismail Vadi, Ismail Suliman Variava and Yunus Chamda

“In his quiet, discreet and nondescript way, Ahmed Saeed Moolla has captured over four decades the pictorial history of the sacred city of Mecca and the enlightened city of Medina. This passion lasted for forty-four years until 2017, when declining health and later the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible for him to continue any further,” said Vadi.

He added that Moolla is a master of ‘still’ photography, capturing the architecture and infrastructural expansion of the two sanctified mosques. In recent years, Moolla’s work was acknowledged by the Saudi authorities, and he was offered rare access to the Saudi Haj Research Centre, where historical photographs and records are kept meticulously.

Moolla has graciously agreed to donate all proceeds from the sale of his book to Awqaf South Africa, a community trust committed to social development. Copies of the book are available from Ismail Vadi on 082 772 3119 @ R250 per copy.