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**The next Nobel laureate of Pakistan**

A shared prize for Asma Jahangir and Asia Bibi would be a huge boost to minorities

[**KamranChaudhry,Lahore**](https://www.ucanews.com/category/author/kamran-chaudhry)[**Pakistan**](https://www.ucanews.com/country/pakistan/34) **March 8, 2019**

**It is the world's most prestigious award, the highest recognition for intellectual achievement. Yet Pakistan's two Nobel Prize laureates share a controversial history.**

**Professor Abdus Salam won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1979 to become the very first Pakistani and only the fourth person from the subcontinent to achieve this distinction. But no one received him at the airport when he returned home after receiving his award for his contribution to developing the theory of electroweak unification in particle physics.**

**“After his resignation Dr. Salam was science adviser to the state of Israel until death, and he stole Pakistan’s atomic secrets and passed them on to imperialists,” stated an opinion article in *The Daily Islam*, an Urdu newspaper, in 2017.**

**The great scientist was forgotten by both state and society due to his religious affiliation with the Ahmadi faith,**[**regarded as pariahs and heretics**](https://www.ucanews.com/news/ahmadis-made-to-feel-like-outlaws-in-pakistan/84586)**by mainstream Muslims in the Islamic republic. He was banned from lecturing at public universities under pressure from religious student organizations. He left Pakistan in 1974 in protest after then prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto declared Ahmadis non-Muslims via a constitutional amendment.**

**The former chief scientific adviser to the president was buried in 1996 according to his wishes in Rabwah, the sect's headquarters in the country, without a state funeral. Sadly, Salam was not even spared after his death. The word “Muslim” was deleted from his tombstone under court orders in 2014. The 20th anniversary of his death in 2016 passed without any significant mentions. Our education experts didn’t feel it necessary to mention him in school textbooks.**

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**Still, I was heartened to see his portraits on the walls of Nusrat Jahan College, an Ahmadi-sponsored college for women in Rabwah.**

**Taliban victim seen as 'Western agent'**

**Malala Yousafzai, the second Pakistani to receive a Nobel Prize, last year attended the screening of a documentary on Abdus Salam at Oxford University’s Ahmadiyya Muslim Students’ Association. Her fate was no different from that of the Ahmadi professor.**

The girls' education activist was shot in the head by the Taliban in October 2012 but recovered and went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014. The now 21-year-old has been hailed around the world for campaigning for education, but the response to her in Pakistan has not been universally positive, with some seeing her as a "Western agent" on a mission to shame her country.

An association of Pakistani schools held an "I am not Malala" day in 2014, condemning what it called her support for controversial novelist Salman Rushdie. Rushdie in 1989 became the target of an Iranian fatwa, or religious edict, calling for his murder for allegedly blaspheming Islam and the Prophet Muhammad in his book The Satanic Verses.

The controversy does not end with Nobel laureates. Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, the only Pakistani to have won two Academy Awards (Oscars), is criticized by many for showing the negative side of Pakistan to the rest of the world through her films on honor killings and acid attacks on women.

Given the troubled history of our “heroes”, it might be possible to predict the next Pakistani candidate who falls into the same category of fighting for freedom. Amid the prevailing intellectual poverty, it is highly unlikely that we can win the highest honor in the fields of chemistry, literature, physics or medicine.

My hopes lie in peace activism, especially after the United States last December added Pakistan to its blacklist of "countries of particular concern" regarding protection for people to worship according to their beliefs.

**And the Nobel Prize goes to …**

In the spirit of the ongoing Women's History Month, I vouch for not one but two candidates — iconic [activist Asma Jahangir](https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistan-musicians-pay-tribute-to-lawyer-asma-jahangir/81655) and Asia Bibi, the Catholic woman acquitted of blasphemy after spending eight years on death row.

Jahangir held three different positions as a U.N. special rapporteur and co-founded the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. Known for fearlessly supporting women and minority groups for over 50 years, she criticized draconian anti-blasphemy laws and the politicization of state institutions. Religious minorities mourned their “mother” when she died last year. Speaking at her first death anniversary last month, many peace activists suggested lobbying to secure the Nobel Prize for her efforts.

The [high-profile case of Bibi](https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistan-acquits-asia-bibi-on-death-row/83759) carries almost equal weight. Despite immense pressure from religious parties, Pakistan’s Supreme Court rejected a final petition challenging her release on charges of blasphemy on Jan. 29. The last I heard of her, she was being flown to Canada to join her family in asylum.

Oslo City Hall, which hosts the annual Nobel Peace Prize ceremony on the death anniversary of Alfred Nobel, now carries Bibi’s portrait. “The international community has found a perfect Nobel laureate; a woman belonging to a persecuted minority. Even the cloistered nuns on Norway know her story. They gave me a book about her as a gift,” a senior Pakistani priest told me.

A Catholic Nobel Peace Prize winner from Pakistan would certainly boost the spirits of our small church, which has also been dubbed the church of martyrs. A shared prize for Bibi and Jahangir for their struggle for the rights of all minorities would be fitting.

Many Pakistanis say Prime Minister Imran Khan deserves the Nobel Peace Prize for his statesman-like approach in the face of heightened tensions between Pakistan and India. Khan replies by tweeting that “the person worthy of this would be the one who solves the Kashmir dispute according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people and paves the way for peace and human development on the subcontinent.”

Pakistan cannot demand rights for Kashmiris until it guarantees equal citizenship to its own people, especially the community that gave us our first Nobel laureate.

*Kamran Chaudhry is a Catholic commentator based in Lahore.*

https://www.ucanews.com/news/the-next-nobel-laureate-of-pakistan/84660

**Annual ShuhadaKhatme Nabuwat conference will be held today in Chenab Nagar.**

**Arrangements have been completed and beautifil stage has been set up. Rich tribute will be paid to Khatm e Nabuwat martyrs of 1953.**

Chenab Nagar (Ausaf Correspondent) Center of Khatm e Nabuwat, Jamia Usmania will organize annual conference today. Tribute will also be paid to elites of Khatm e Nabuwat. This conference will prove to be decisive to instruct Qadianis and to eliminate sectarianism from the country. Various scholars, lawyers and journalists will address the participants. Qari Shabbir Usmani will preside over the conference while Salman Usmani will monitor activities. Salman Usmani told media correspondents that this conference is being organized as a part of our tradition. Duty of inviting deniers of khatm e Nabuat has been performed since long. This conference has historical importance. It will have long-lasting impacts on the land of Chenab Nagar. **(Daily Ausaf Lahore, Thursday,7th March, 2019)**