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Saudi Arabia gives \$1.5b to Pakistan

H.M. King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz

Custodian of two Holy Mosques Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



PM eager to increase relations with Bahrain

King of Bahrain H.E Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa
with Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan

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Mian Fazal Elahi

Editorial

King of Bahrain, Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa visited Pakistan on the invitation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for bilateral talks that were focused on economic ties.

It was the first official visit of the king of Bahrain to Pakistan in last forty years. During the visit the king led a high-level delegation including members of the Cabinet, government officials and important businessmen. Leadership of both countries reviewed bilateral, regional and international matters of mutual interest and agreed to increase bilateral cooperation in coming years.

Both the countries signed agreements include, establishment of joint ministerial commission for bilateral cooperation, agreement for promotion and protection of investment, cooperation in food security, air services agreement, cooperation between interior ministries and cooperation in the fields of power. This visit will provide a good opportunity to explore ways and means to further strengthen cooperation in diverse areas of interest, particularly in expanding bilateral trade and enhancing investments in Pakistan.



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President Mamnoon Hussain addressing the gathering during special event "Manzil-i-Murad" held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad to commemorate Pakistan Day.

By Mian Fazal Elahi

President confers awards^{on} military, civil persons

President Mamnoon Hussain conferred civil and military awards on outstanding individuals at investiture ceremony here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The ceremony marking the Pakistan Day celebrations was attended by Chairman Senate, Speaker National Assembly, federal ministers, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, services chiefs, ambassadors and notables. The

awards are given in recognition of the meritorious services rendered by men and women in their respective fields, or for exemplary acts of gallantry.

The awards were given in various categories for "acts of bravery, heroism, courage and rendering of dedicated services with selfless devotion in human rights and public service."

The President conferred Hilal-i-Imtiaz (military) on Vice Admiral Khwaja Ghazanfar Hussain, Vice Admiral Khan Hasham Bin Siddiqui, Air Marshal Sohail Amar, Rear Admiral Shahid Saeed, Air Vice Marshal Arshad Qudus, Rear Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi, Air Vice Marshal Syed Razi Nawab, Rear Admiral Sayed Arif Ullah Hussaini, Maj. Gen. Akhtar Waheed, Maj. Gen. Mohammad Junaid, Maj. Gen. Salman



President Mamnoon Hussain decorating officers and officials of the armed forces during Investiture ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Pakistan Day.



President Mamnoon Hussain giving away civil awards during Investiture ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Pakistan Day.

Ali, Rear Admiral Adnan Nazir, Maj. Gen. Shahab Naqvi, Maj.Gen. Shahzad Sikandar, Maj.Gen. Mian Mohammad Hilal Hussain, Maj.Gen. Tariq Javed, Maj.Gen. Ghayyur Mahmood, Maj.Gen. Asghar Nawaz, Maj.Gen. Nadir Zeb, Air Vice Marshal Ijaz Mahmood Malik, Maj. Gen. Nazir Ahmed Butt, Maj.Gen. Jamil Ahmad, Maj.Gen. Ijaz Shahid, Maj. Gen. Aamir Azeem Bajwa, Maj. Gen. Tariq Ghafoor, Maj.Gen.Iftikhar Ahmed Wynne, Maj.Gen. Mohammad Saleem Raza, Maj.Gen. Abid Nazir, Maj.Gen. Naveed Mukhtar, Maj.Gen.Hidayat-ur-Rehman, Maj.Gen.Mohammad Arif Warraich, Maj.Gen. Mohammad Zafar Iqbal, Maj.Gen. Mazhar Saleem Khan, Maj.Gen. Maqsood Ahmed Abbasi, Maj.Gen. Javed Mahmood Bukhari, Maj.Gen. Anwar Ali Haider, Maj.Gen. Waqar Ahmed Khan.

Sitara-e-Basalat was conferred upon Lt.Col.Khurrum Waheed, Major Abrar Ahmed (Shaheed), Sq.Ldr. Bilal Hassan Babri (Shaheed), Capt. Fasih Babar Amin (Shaheed), Capt.Salman Sarwar (Shaheed), Capt.Manan-ul-Hassan (Shaheed), Capt. Hafeez Ullah, Capt. Tariq Jamal (Shaheed), Commander Mohsin Farooq Khan, Lieutenant Anas Satti, N/Sub. Safi Ullah, N/sub Murad Khan (Shaheed), Hav. Mohammad Amriz (Shaheed), Ln.Hav.Mazhar Iqbal (Shaheed), Sep. Jahangir Khan (Shaheed), Dy, Sup. Rangers

Mohammad Haneef Khan (Shaheed), Sep. Ashiq Ali (Shaheed), Sep. Khurram Shahzad (Shaheed), Sep. Zuhaib Iqbal (Shaheed), Sep. Imam Hussain Shah, and Clearance driver Arshad Mahmood.

Among those who were awarded Civil Awards include: Ghulam Nabi (Nishan-e-Imtiaz) in Science (Physics), Mr.Mustafa Babur Hizlan former Turkish Ambassador (Hilal-i-Pakistan) Services to Pakistan, Former Argentine Ambassador Mr. Rodolfo Jose Martin-Saravia (Hilal-e-Pakistan) Services to Pakistan, Fayyaz Sumbal Shaheed (Hilal-e-Shujaat) Gallantry, Muhammad Naeem (Hilal-i-Imtiaz) in Science - Nuclear Fuel, Dr Nabeel Hayat Malik (Hila-i-Imtiaz) in Mechanical Engineering, Maj.Gen. Muhammad Tahir (Hilal-I-Imtiaz)-Cryptography (Military Application, Zafar Iqbal (Hilal-i-Imtiaz) in Literature, Ata-ul-Haq Qasmi (Hilal-i-Imtiaz) in Literature, Irfan Siddiqui (Hilal-i-Imtiaz) in field of Journalism, Syed Iqbal Haider (Late) (Haila-i-Imtiaz) in Public Service (Human Rights & Justice).

Sitara-i-Pakistan was conferred on General © C.S. Weerasooriya, former Sri Lankan envoy to Pakistan in Services to Pakistan.

Sitara-i-Shujaat were conferred upon Ms. Samia Noreen (Shaheed) Gallantry, Abdul Mansoor Kakar Shaheed Gallantry, Hilal Haider (Shaheed) Gallantry, Shaheed

Atizaz Hassan Bangash Gallantry.

Sitara-i-Imtiaz were granted to M. A. Siddiqui (late)-Education, Samiullah Khan Sports (Hockey), A. Hanif Khan Sports (Hockey), Hassan Sardar Sports (Hockey).

President award for Pride of Performance were conferred upon Prof Dr Mohammad Mujahid Materials Engineering, Saud Sahir Journalism, Muhammad Ayub Khan (Ayub Khawar) Director/Producer/Writer, Misbah-ul-Haq Sports (Cricket).

Tamgha-i-Shujaat were granted to Muhammad Bashir Shaheed Gallantry, Malik Taj Muhammad Khan Shaheed Gallantry, Fazal Karim Shaheed,Gallantry, Balqiaz Khan Shaheed Gallantry, Hayat Ullah Khan Shaheed Gallantry, Naeem Ullah Shaheed Gallantry, Dr Shabbir Ahmed Magsi Shaheed Gallantry, Muhammad Anwar Mir Shaheed Gallantry, Mrs. Zahra Shahid Hussain (Late) Gallantry, Muhammad Rafique Gallantry, Mohabbat Ali Unar Gallantry.

Tamgha-i-Imtiaz were conferred upon Mr. Wang Dejie (Naval Constructor) Services to Pakistan, Abdul Sattar Muslim (Ain Seen Muslim) Literature, Mst. Nijat Bibi Arts (Hunza Embroidery) while Tamgha-i-Khidmat was given to Park Kyo Soon (Esther) Art & Culture.





President Mamnoon Hussain and Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif witnessing performance by Air Force during Pakistan Day Parade held at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



Pakistan Day

celebrated with traditional fervour

Pakistan Day was celebrated throughout the country with traditional fervor to commemorate the Lahore Resolution of 1940. During the day, special prayers were held for security and prosperity of the country at all places of worship. The day dawned with a 31-gun salute in Rawalpindi

Senate Chairman Nayer Hussain Bukhari, Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, members of the federal cabinet, chiefs of armed forces and a large number of diplomats were present at the event.

A fleet of 12 fighter jets and nine helicopters from the Pakistan Air Force led by Wing



and 21-gun salute at all the provincial capitals. President Mamnoon Hussain along with Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif attended a ceremony at the President House to mark the day.

The two dignitaries hoisted the national flag at the Presidency followed by national anthem and patriotic songs sung by children.

Commander Ronald Afzal performed an eye catching and fantastic fly-past over the President House.

Later an investiture ceremony was held at the Presidency, in which President Mamnoon Hussain conferred awards on prominent personalities from various walks of life.

Investiture ceremonies were also held in the provinces, while

governors and chief ministers held receptions at the provincial capitals.

Flags were also hoisted on all Pakistani missions abroad during ceremonies attended by members of the Pakistani community. Messages of the President and Prime Minister to the nation were read out on the occasion.

Governor Dr Ishratul Ebad Khan and Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah along with provincial ministers and legislators laid wreaths at the mausoleum of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah to pay homage to the Founder of the Nation.

Pakistan Day was celebrated at all Pakistan Air Force (PAF) bases and installations.

Chairman of All Parties Hurriyet

Conference Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and other leaders felicitated the government and the people of Pakistan.

Television and radio stations broadcast special programmes and newspapers took out special supplements to highlight significance of the day.

Seminars, poetry recitation events, exhibitions of photographs and documents relating to the Pakistan Movement, Qirat contests, debates and essay competitions were held in cities and towns.

Sweets and gifts were distributed at orphanages and Darul Amans and special meals were served to prisoners across the country.



Chinese President **felicitates** President Mamnoon on Pakistan Day

Chinese President, Xi Jinping warmly felicitated President Mamnoon Hussain on auspicious occasion of Pakistan Day (March 23). In his letter to President Mamnoon Hussain, the Chinese President, on behalf of Chinese government, people and in his own name, also conveyed best wishes to the Pakistani government and people. He said that Pakistan was making all-round progress in its social and economic development, and playing a more important role in the region and the

world. "I am delighted for all the achievements scored by Pakistan," he added.

The Chinese President in the letter released by Chinese Embassy here said, it was his conviction that the "Asian Tiger" dream of Pakistan would surely come true and Pakistan would become a more prosperous and stronger country.

Xi Jinping said that China and Pakistan were all-weather strategic cooperative partners.

Recently, President Mamnoon Hussain made a successful state visit to China, he said and added, "I had a fruitful discussion with you and reached important consensus on jointly building the "China-Pakistan Community of Shared Destiny".

Wishing Pakistan prosperity and its people well-being, he said, "I stand ready to join hands with you to push forward the China-Pakistan relations to a new height."



Dr Margaret Chan, Director General World Health Organization in a meeting with the President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad

Efforts being made to *improve health care according to Int'l standard* **President confers Hilal-i-Pakistan upon DG-WHO**

President Mamnoon Hussain conferred Hilal-i-Pakistan upon Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General World Health Organization in recognition of her outstanding services for the people of Pakistan in public health. The Award was conferred at a special investiture ceremony here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The citation, read on the occasion, appreciated

the role of Dr. Margaret Chan towards strengthening cooperation between Pakistan and WHO, and noted that during her tenure, the partnership between WHO and Pakistan gained strength with the Organization, providing valuable technical support in a wide range of areas. The investiture ceremony was followed by a meeting wherein matters relating to

cooperation between Pakistan and WHO, its role in fighting diseases in the country, measures taken by the Government in the health sector, especially towards eradicating polio from the country, were discussed.

President Mamnoon Hussain, while congratulating Dr. Chan on the award, appreciated WHO's continued assistance



menacing disease.

Dr. Margaret Chan thanked the President and the Government of Pakistan for the award and said WHO has a very long association of with the country. She assured the President of continued support of WHO towards combating diseases and improving health care systems in the country.

The World Health Organization has been working in Pakistan ever since its inception in 1948 and has been robustly assisting Pakistan in achieving its health targets since the establishment of its country office in 1960.

It has worked to contain communicable diseases and pursue the Millennium Development Goals, relating to reducing maternal and child mortality. It has also played a remarkable role in the eradication of Small Pox and Guinea Worm disease and has been in the forefront for the eradication of Polio from Pakistan. Diplomatic Correspondent

to the country towards combating diseases and further strengthening health systems in the country.

The President said the health sector and quality health care to the people of the country were the foremost priorities of the Government and every possible effort was being made to meet the challenges in the health sector.

Highlighting various efforts, the President said the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) was being further strengthened in the country to reduce illness, disability and mortality.

He said besides focussing on communicable diseases, the government was also focusing on non-communicable diseases as currently the country was suffering from dual burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

The President said the government was working with

international partners to improve health care system in the country and to enable access to quality health care.

President Mamnoon, while appreciating WHO's consistent support and substantial contribution towards Polio eradication efforts, said Pakistan would like to continue its close collaboration with WHO to further strengthen national efforts to eliminate the crippling disease.

The President highlighted measures being taken to fight the menacing disease, especially in those areas where Polio campaigns were facing certain security problems.

He expressed the hope that with unswerving political commitment, continued cooperation from international partners and involvement of all segments of society, the efforts would result in achieving significant milestones against the



President Mamnoon Hussain conferring Hilal-i-Pakistan upon Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General World Health Organization, during a special investiture ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.



Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Iraq, Mr. M. Iftikhar Anjum called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

Pak envoy to Iraq meets President to discuss new assignments

Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Iraq, M. Iftikhar Anjum called on President Mamnoon Hussain here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr and discussed matters pertaining to his diplomatic assignment.

Congratulating Mr. Iftikhar Anjum on his new responsibilities, the President urged him to focus on further cementing Pakistan's close and

cordial relations with Iraq. The President said that government attaches great importance to the development of trade and economic cooperation as an integral part of its foreign policy objectives.

He emphasized the need for pursuance of economic diplomacy by all diplomats to further enhance Pakistan's economic and trade ties with the countries of their posting.

The President remarked that Pakistan values its fraternal bilateral relations with Iraq and advised the ambassador designate to focus on strengthening Pak-Iraq cooperation in diverse areas especially trade, investment, energy, and oil and gas. He expressed the hope that the newly appointed ambassador would work with full devotion and use all his potential and

capabilities to further cement Pakistan's trade and commercial ties with Iraq. The ambassador designate thanked the President for reposing confidence in him and assured that he would do his best to augment Pakistan's bilateral relations with Iraq with focus on enhancing trade and investment ties. Diplomatic Correspondent

Pakistan Ambassador to Belgium meets President



Ambassador designate to Belgium Ms. Naghmana Hashmi called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

President Mamnoon Hussain said that the grant of GSP-Plus status to Pakistan demonstrated the trust and confidence of the European Union (EU) countries in the quality and competitiveness of its goods and products. He was talking to Pakistan's ambassador-designate to Belgium Ms. Naghmana Hashmi who called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr and discussed matters pertaining to her diplomatic assignment. Congratulating Ms. Naghmana Hashmi on her new responsibilities, the

President observed that Brussels, being the headquarters of European Union, was an important Capital.

He expressed the hope that the ambassador-designate would work with full devotion to further enhance cooperation between Pakistan and the European Union.

He also urged the newly appointed ambassador to play her active role in optimum utilization of the GSP-Plus facility to boost Pakistan's exports to the EU countries.

The ambassador-designate thanked the President for reposing confidence in her and assured that she would use all her potential and capabilities to further cement Pakistan's trade and commercial ties with Belgium and the EU.



Mr. Harve Ladsous, Under Secretary General UN Department of peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Under Secretary General UN DPKO appreciates Pak role in peacekeeping

Mr. Herve Ladsous, Under Secretary General, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The President while welcoming Mr. Herve Ladsous and his delegation to Pakistan greatly appreciated the leadership of Secretary General Ban especially in promoting peace, security and development across the world and also towards further strengthening cooperation between Pakistan and United Nations.

Reiterating Pakistan's commitment towards UN peacekeeping efforts, the President remarked that it was rooted in country's foreign policy objectives and the importance that we attach to multilateralism and the United Nations as the best means of addressing the challenges of today.

The President reaffirmed that UN will always find Pakistan as a reliable partner in its effort for the maintenance of international peace and security. As a leading troop contributor, the President said, Pakistan has a significant stake in the success of UN peacekeeping. On this occasion the President also highlighted Pakistan's contribution and the sacrifices made by Pakistani soldiers towards this noble cause. The President said that we were proud of our brave men and women who have served under the UN flag with professionalism and selfless devotion to the cause of world peace. They have indeed set high standards, observed the President.

The President also highlighted Pakistan's positive contributions towards policy discussions aimed at further strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness of peacekeeping. In this regard the President

mentioned Pakistan's tenure of Presidency of the Security Council wherein the landmark Resolution 2086 on multidimensional peacekeeping was adopted in January 2013.

The President said that Pakistan looks forward to continuing close interaction with the Secretariat to further enhance cooperation in the UN peacekeeping efforts.

The President also welcomed the appointment of Gen. Maqsood Ahmed in UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and expressed the hope that his presence would further boost our cooperation and mutual understanding.

Mr. Herve Ladsous thanked the President for meeting and greatly appreciated Pakistan's role and contributions towards peacekeeping efforts by the United Nations. ***Diplomatic Correspondent***

Saudi Arabia gives \$1.5b to Pakistan

Saudi Arabia has given \$1.5 billion (Dh5.5 billion) to Pakistan to bolster the country's falling foreign currency reserves and help cement security ties between the two countries.

Senior officials at the finance ministry in Islamabad and the central bank in Karachi said that at least half of the funds, which were deposited in March, came as a grant.

"The Saudi leadership has given these funds to Pakistan to help the rupee," said one central bank official. "The other half [of the funds] could also eventually become a grant."

The injection of Saudi money will lift Pakistan's liquid foreign reserves about 18 per cent and offer a boost to a struggling economy.

The Saudi support to Pakistan follows a mid-February visit by Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, Saudi crown prince, amid suggestions that Saudi Arabia is seeking an expansion of its security ties with Pakistan.

In February a senior Pakistani intelligence official told the Financial Times that Saudi Arabia was seeking "a large number of [Pakistan] troops to support its campaign along the Yemeni border and for internal security".

The official confirmed that Pakistan's agreement, during Prince Salman's visit, to support the establishment of a "transitional governing body" in Syria was an important aspect of the deal. Islamabad had previously remained neutral and urged Syrian president Bashar Al Assad and his opponents to end the conflict peacefully.

The Pakistani rupee has appreciated more than 4 per cent in the past three weeks



with officials pointing to the Saudi assistance as one of the reasons for its strengthening. But some believe there are inherent risks for Pakistan, which is fighting an internal battle with Taliban militants, in getting closer to Riyadh.

Historically, Pakistan has sought to maintain an even hand in public in its relations with predominantly Shiite Iran and largely Sunni Saudi Arabia.

During Prince Salman's visit an Iranian minister threatened to send troops across the border in to Pakistan if Islamabad failed to secure the release of five Iranian border guards kidnapped in the country. Officials in Tehran alleged the guards were taken by hardline militants backed by Saudi Arabia. The Iranian guards have still not been released.

"We have to be careful in how we pursue our relations [with Saudi Arabia]," said Farooq Hamid Khan, a retired brigadier and commentator on security affairs. "As long as our security relations with Saudi Arabia are for internal security duties, that can be managed but we must not extend

ourselves beyond that."

The Saudi assistance may help to support Pakistan's weak economy though it cannot fund a long-term recovery, economists said.

"The Saudi money for now has helped our reserves," said Sakib Sherani, a former chief economist at the finance ministry.

"But it's early in the day. We need to build up on our progress. Pakistan's economy needs to be put through other reforms too."

Last year, the IMF agreed to a \$6.7bn loan programme for Pakistan. However, western diplomats say, Pakistan is riddled with challenges, notably energy shortages and domestic insecurity, which continue to deter investors.

"In a country with major energy shortages, a low number of taxpayers and corruption in many areas, the Saudi money will help but only temporarily," said one western diplomat in Islamabad.

Diplomatic Correspondents



No international mediation with Qatar: Saudi Arabia



Saudi Arabia has ruled out the possibility of international mediation in its dispute with Qatar, and said that the conflict will not be resolved "until Qatar revises its policies".

In the first official statement from the three countries that recalled their ambassadors from Doha protesting against what they say is Qatar's interference in their affairs, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal told London-based Saudi daily Al Hayat that the trio will not budge from their positions on Qatar.

A political crisis between Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE and fellow Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member Qatar is looming large this week.

Manama, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi on March 5, in an unprecedented move since the establishment of the GCC in 1981, pulled out their ambassadors from Doha to protests against Qatar's non-compliance with agreements approved by the GCC states.

Even though Doha did not reciprocate and did not withdraw its ambassadors, the situation remained tense amid speculations that it could even escalate.

Al Faisal added that plans for a Gulf union it has proposed remain on the table and have not been affected by the Gulf crisis.

The paper also reported that a number of Saudi officials have in the past two weeks skipped bilateral meetings with their Qatari counterparts that were scheduled to be held in Doha.

The three GCC states are angry at Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist movement.

They particularly resent the way Doha has sheltered prominent Brotherhood preacher Yousuf Al Qaradawi, a critic of Saudi and UAE authorities, and given him regular air time on its pan-Arab satellite channel Al Jazeera, and on Qatari state television.

"If Qatar, which caused the crisis readjusts its policy, there will be a breakthrough," Prince Saud said in statements carried by Saudi-owned London-based Al Hayat and Asharq Al Awsat.

US President Barack Obama is said to be in Saudi Arabia at the end of this month.

Al Faisal made his statements amid reports that Saudi officials did not show up for bilateral meetings with their counterparts in the Qatari capital over the last two weeks.

If true, the Saudi decision to limit contacts with the Qataris would mark a new low in the relations between the two neighbouring countries as tension in the GCC thickens.

In Kuwait, sources told local Arabic daily Al Watan that a GCC meeting for coast guard officials scheduled to be held in Doha had been moved to Kuwait.

However, a foreign ministry official denied reports that the GCC countries had agreed to shift all the GCC institutions from Doha to Riyadh.

"The claims are mere speculations. The

GCC foreign ministers have not met since they decided to recall the ambassadors, so how could they make a decision on the matter?" the sources that the daily did not name said.

Several Kuwaitis have insisted that Kuwait, the host of the Arab summit on March 25, could play a positive role in narrowing the gap between Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE on one side and Qatar on the other.

Last week, the local media reported that the Kuwaiti Emir Shaikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah received a letter from the Qatari Emir Shaikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani on bilateral relations, issues of common interest and the latest regional and international developments.

Last week, Qatar dismissed demands by the three fellow Gulf states for changes to its foreign policy, calling its independence "non-negotiable".

The GCC, formed in 1981 and also including Kuwait and Oman, has generally presented a united front at times of threat ranging from Iranian revolution on the other side of the Gulf to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Diplomatic Focus Thru lens



Ambassador of Myanmar to Pakistan, Mr. San Myint Oo called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Presidency.



President Mamnoon Hussain recording his comments in visitors' book during his visit to Urban Planning Exhibition Centre, Shanghai.



My. Yukiya Amano, Director General, International Atomic Energy (IAEA) meets President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.



President Mamnoon Hussain exchanging views with Mr. Enver Hoxhaj Foreign Minister Republic of Kosovo during meeting at the Presidency.



The Australian High Commissioner H.E. Mr. Peter Heyward exchanging views with the Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House.



Mr. Herve Ladsous Under Secretary General UN Delegation of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.



A Delegation of Bank Al-Bakara headed by CEO Mr. Khalid Rashid Al-Zayani called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.



High Commissioner of Australia to Pakistan, Peter Heyward called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

Diplomatic Focus Thru lens



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif cutting the ribbon to inaugurate Pakistan Auto Show 2013 at the Expo Centre, Lahore.



British High Commissioner H.E Mr. Philip Barton called on the Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Chairman Arab National Construction (ANC) Holding LLC Dubai Mr. Tayeb Abdul Rahim Ahmed Al-Baker witnessing a MoU signing ceremony between Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB), Minister of Water & Power Arab National Construction for construction of 2 based power generation plants in Gadani.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is being presented a Memento at the Export Trophy Award Distribution Ceremony of KCCI at PAF Museum Karachi.



Nie Kai, President of Chinese Gezhouba Group of Companies talking to the Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House.



DG World Health Organization Dr. Margaret Chan, meets Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House.



Ambassador of Netherlands, De Vink called on Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform Prof. Ahsan Iqbal in Islamabad.



Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Jong Hwan Song reviewing bilateral ties with Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal in Islamabad.

Diplomatic Focus Thru lens



Acting President Syed Nayyar Hussain Bokhari in a group photo with the delegation of Women Parliamentarians from UK and Afghanistan at the Aiwan-e-Sadr Islamabad.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with Turkish Delegation at Lahore. Chief Minister Punjab Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif is also present.



Federal Minister for Petroleum & Natural Resources, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi in a meeting with the delegation headed by H.E Enver Hoxhaj Foreign Minister for Kosovo who called on him in Islamabad.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Tariq Fatemi planting a Sapling at Foreign Office Islamabad.



Chief Executive of the German Solar Energy Society, Dr. Uwe Hartmann called on the Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Baltistan, Mohammad Barjees Tahir in Berlin.



Ambassador Jaleel Abbas Jilani addressing a large gathering of South Asian Community of Washington DC-Maryland area who arranged a welcome reception in his honor in Washington DC.

Diplomatic Focus Thru lens



Secretary General SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industries Iqbal Tabish presenting Shield to Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Investment, Javed Malik in Islamabad.



Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Shaukatullah flanked by members of Parliament & Tribal Elders from Bajaur Agency witnessing singing ceremony of activity agreement for construction of 132 KV Grid Station at KPK House Islamabad.



Executive Vice President MOL, Alexander Dadds called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House, Islamabad. Minister for Petroleum Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Minister of State for Petroleum Jam Kamal are also present.



Pak Int'l Business Investment Council delegation called on Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Professor Ahsan Iqbal in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Water & Power, Khawaja Muhammad Asif in a meeting with Vice Minister for Trade of Netherlands, Simon Smiths in Islamabad.



President Mamnoon Hussain during meeting with a delegation headed by Bishop Tony Robinson, Bishop of Wakefield & Chairman of Pakistan Focus Group set by the Arch Bishop of Canterbury UK at the Presidency.



Advisor to PM on National Security & Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz in a group photo at an International Conference on "History of Nonviolent Resistance in Pakistan".



Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar in a meeting with Thomas Williams, Deputy Chief of Missions along with Ms. Sarah Beran, Economic Counselor US Embassy in Islamabad.



Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosa Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research (MNSFR) in meeting with Mr. Simon Smiths, Vice Minister for Trade of Netherlands, when the latter called on the Minister in Islamabad. H.E. De Vink, Ambassador of Netherlands in Pakistan is also present on the occasion.



Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan, Mohammad Barjees Tahir, addressing the members of the Pakistani and Kashmiri Community living in Berlin.



By: Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed

Difficult years lie ahead, perhaps five or even as many as ten. This future requires a new regional and international approach. The US may no longer play the prominent role it acquired after World War II, and Europe will become more concerned with its southern neighbors in North Africa. Other countries, such as those in the Gulf, may have to create small blocs to defend themselves. They may also have to establish additional alliances based on larger, shared interests.

Saudi Crown Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz's visit to China is of special importance. Saudi Arabia is important to China as it is a prominent partner. On a daily basis, China buys more than one million barrels of oil from Saudi Arabia. And the Kingdom has an important spiritual role for the Chinese Muslim minority.

I was present on this visit to China. Previously, I witnessed Saudi political openness towards China when King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz decided that China would be the first country he visited as King. King Abdulaziz thus ended a long era of ruptured relations between the two

states.

The problem is that the Chinese don't like politics much. So, the important question is: How can one seeking to protect his interests depend on this sleeping giant? Countries that will confront new challenges over the next few years will have to protect their interests. Prominent countries such as those in Europe and China know that relations with stable countries are better than relations with erratic countries or with countries such as Iran. There are several signs which indicate China's desire to expand the scope of its strategic interests and not just the scope of its purchases. Oil and large-scale investments are the foundations of a long-term relationship between China and Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi delegation, which ended its visit on Sunday, wanted to expand relations with China. This may balance out Saudi Arabia's oil exports at a time when the US says it is no longer interested in buying much oil from the Gulf as it has enough domestic shale oil.

China itself is in a state of transition similar

to countries like Saudi Arabia—it is undergoing a gradual transition, one that may appear slow.

Although it has been 20 years since my first visit to China, the country continues to be mysterious and interesting. Almost everything has changed in Beijing. When I first visited, Beijing's wide streets were packed with bicycles. There were tens of thousands of them and very few cars. A dark cloud from the coal used in heating systems covered the city. However, China, its people and its ideology have now changed. Despite this, the regime, which staged a counter-revolution, hasn't, and it is trying to make a gradual transition while avoiding chaos. This is how China managed to become one of the richest and strongest economies in the world. It is now at a point where it wants access to new markets and wants to cement new alliances.

This does not necessarily mean that China will replace America, but it will be an important player on the world stage. Also, its philosophy and practices are different to Russia's, which has exposed its ugly side wherever it has intervened.



By Sajid Ali Zaidi

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif shaking hand with king of Bahrain H.M Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa at PM House, Islamabad.

PM eager to increase relations with Bahrain



King of Bahrain H.E Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif standing in honor of National Anthems at the guard of honor.



King of Bahrain H.E Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa reviewing guard of honor at PAF base Chaklafa on his arrival.



King of Bahrain H.E Hamad Bin Isa being presented a photo album of his visit to Pakistan.

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif invited Bahraini investors to invest in Pakistan, which provided a better investment environment and they should avail this opportunity for the best returns. "We would welcome Bahraini investments in mega projects in the field of energy, downstream oil industry, port development, mining and minerals, infrastructure, banking and financial sectors", the Prime Minister said while welcoming King of Bahrain Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa at the PM House.

He stressed the need for regular Joint Commission meetings as it provided a good platform to review bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

"We would deeply appreciate Bahraini support for early finalization of Gulf Cooperation Council- Pakistan Free Trade Agreement", he commented.

The Prime Minister also urged the need to enhance bilateral trade, saying, "We would like Bahrain to

increase its imports from Pakistan of high quality Basmati rice, Halal meat products, poultry, textiles and clothing, sports goods, surgical instruments, carpets, marble and cutlery. Cooperation in agriculture and food sectors would be mutually beneficial also."

He said the institutional framework of bilateral political consultations between the two foreign ministries provided a useful mechanism to review bilateral relations.

He said Pakistan and Bahrain enjoyed close and cordial relations based on mutual trust and understanding.

The Prime Minister said the Pakistani community residing in Bahrain served as a bridge between the two countries and had played a positive role in the development of Bahrain as well as contributed to Pakistan's economy.

Pakistan had skilled manpower, which could play their role in different economic sectors of Bahrain, he added.

President wants enhanced, consolidated Pak-Bahrain trade ties

President Mamnoon Hussain called for translating the political goodwill and fraternal bonds existing between Pakistan and Bahrain into a strong economic and trade partnership and to the mutual benefit of the people of the two countries. The President said this during his meeting with Shaikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, here at the Presidency. The two leaders exchanged views on Pakistan-Bahrain bilateral relations, and regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Welcoming the King of Bahrain on his visit to Pakistan, the President said Pakistan attached great importance to its close and fraternal ties with Bahrain and desired to further consolidate and strengthen these ties in diverse fields.

Pakistan and Bahrain enjoyed close and cordial relations based on mutual trust and understanding and deeply rooted in culture and history, he stated.

The President said the two countries had always stood by each other in testing times and appreciated the assistance extended by the Kingdom of Bahrain to Pakistan in difficult times, including the natural calamities over the years.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction that the two brotherly countries enjoyed similarity of views on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Discussing bilateral trade ties, the President said economic and trade relations between the two countries had been gradually improving, which, however, were still well below the real potential existing between Pakistan and Bahrain.

He urged the need for regular holding of the Joint Commission's meetings as it provided a good platform for reviewing status of bilateral economic and trade cooperation. The chambers of commerce and industry of both countries needed to be encouraged to have regular interaction and revitalize the Joint Business Council, the President said.

Highlighting the business and investors friendly initiatives of the government, he invited Bahrain's investors and businessmen to avail the investment opportunities and the incentive packages,

the present government offers for investment in diverse areas, including trade, energy, agriculture, livestock, textile and others.

The President said Pakistan would



President Mamnoon Hussain greets King of Bahrain, His Majesty Shaikh Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, on his arrival at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

welcome Bahraini investments in mega projects in the field of energy, downstream oil industry, port development, mining and minerals, infrastructure, banking and



President Mamnoon Hussain exchanging views with King of Bahrain, His Majesty Shaikh Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa during meeting at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

financial sectors.

He expressed the hope that the impressive business delegation accompanying His Majesty would help bring the business communities, especially the private sectors of the two countries further closer and consolidate Pak-Bahrain trade ties.

The President expressed confidence that various memorandums of understanding and agreements signed during the visit in various fields would explore new avenues

of mutual cooperation and help boost Pak-Bahrain trade and economic ties to new heights.

President Mamnoon said Pakistan had keen interest in concluding a free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council and sought Bahrain's support in early conclusion of the agreement. The agreement,

he said, would pave the way for increased commercial activity between Pakistan and the Gulf countries.

Commenting on Pakistani diaspora in Bahrain, the President said sizeable Pakistani community working and living in Bahrain served as a bridge between the two brotherly countries. They had played a positive role in the development of Bahrain as well as contributed to Pakistan's economy, he added.

Pakistan had skilled manpower that could play their role in different economic sectors of Bahrain, he said.

The President, on his own behalf and on

behalf of the people of Pakistan, prayed for the King's good health, wellbeing and for the sustained progress and prosperity of the fraternal people of Bahrain.

The King of Bahrain thanked the President, the Prime Minister and the government of Pakistan for warm welcome and hospitality extended to him and his delegation and said Pakistan was like a second home to him.



Group photo of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif with his Majesty, King of Bahrain, Hamad Bin Isa Bin Sakman Al-Khalifa, along with delegation from Bahrain at Joint Services Headquarters. Minister for Defense, Khawaja Asif and Chief Army Staff, General Raheel Shareef were also present.

King of Bahrain visits Joint Staff Hqrs

King of Bahrain Hamad Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa along with his delegation visited Joint Staff Headquarters. On his arrival, King Hamad was received by Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Rashad Mahmood. Federal Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Chief of

the Army Staff General Raheel Sharif, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Mohammad Asif Sandila and Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Tahir Rafique Butt were also present on the occasion.

Both sides discussed brotherly relations between the two countries and vowed to further enhance military cooperation.

Paying rich tribute to Pakistan's Military for

its valour and sacrifices in defence of the motherland, King Hamad particularly praised professionalism, quality of training and commitment of the Pakistan's Armed Forces. Earlier, the King was presented a guard of honour by a smartly turned out contingent of tri-services.

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Pakistan wishes to strengthen ties with Bahrain: Ch Nisar



Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan in a meeting with Interior Minister of Bahrain Sheikh Rashed bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, in Islamabad.

Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said Pakistan values its close ties with Bahrain and wishes to strengthen them in all fields particularly cyber crime, border security, civil defence and international crime. He said this while talking to Lt. General Sheikh Rashed bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, Bahrain's Minister for Interior who met him here. The Minister said that both countries share common faith, culture and values which strengthen the bond between the two countries. Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan invited his Bahraini counterpart to pay a longer visit to Pakistan at his convenience so that matters agreed upon in the MoU signed between the Interior Ministries of two countries, can be discussed in detail.

In the meantime, he proposed

that committees be formed by both sides to look deeper into specific areas of cooperation. He said that Pakistan has a state-of-the-art system of registration under NADRA and the kingdom of Bahrain can benefit from our expertise in this field.

General Rashed briefed the Minister about security situation in his country and the steps Bahraini government is taking to increase the use of technology in maintaining order in the country.

He informed the Minister that quite a number of Pakistanis are working in Bahraini government and the private sector.

General Rashed is visiting Pakistan as member of the entourage of the King of Bahrain Sheikh Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, who was on a three day visit to Pakistan.

Pakistan, Bahrain sign bilateral agreements, MoUs

By Mian Fazal Elahi



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif witnessing signing ceremony between Pakistan and Bahrain along with King of Bahrain H.M. Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa at Islamabad.

Pakistan and Bahrain signed six bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) to bolster cooperation in diverse areas, including trade, energy, investment, agriculture and aviation. The signing ceremony, held here at the PM House, was witnessed by King of Bahrain Shaikh Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa and Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Bahrain Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Muhammad Khalifa signed the MoU for the establishment of Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) for Bilateral Cooperation and the agreement for the promotion and protection of investment.

Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan and his Bahraini counterpart Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa signed the MoU on cooperation between interior ministries.

The MoU on cooperation in food security,



Adviser to the PM on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and Foreign Minister of Bahrain HE Shaikh Khaalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa signing an MoU at Foreign Office, Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in a meeting with King of Bahrain His Majesty Hamad bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifah, in Islamabad.

particularly in rice, between the two countries was signed by Minister for Food Security Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan and Commerce Minister of Bahrain Dr Hassan Fakhro.

The MoU on the cooperation in the field of water and power was inked by Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Asif and Bahrain's Minister of State for Electricity and Water Affairs Dr Abdul-Hassain bin Ali Mirza.

The air services agreement was signed by Minister for Planning and Development

Ahsan Iqbal and Bahrain's Minister for Transport Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed.

Delegations of both the countries also met under the leadership of King of Bahrain and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Pakistan's delegation included Minister for Water & Power Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Finance Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Interior Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Advisor to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and Special Assistant to Prime

Minister Tariq Fatemi.

Bahrain's delegation comprised Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Mohammad bin Mubarak bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, Chairman of the House of Representatives Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Dhahrani, Chairman of Shura Council Ali bin Saleh, Lt Gen Shaikh Muhammad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Salman Al-Khalifa.

Later, the Prime Minister hosted a dinner in honour of the King and the visiting delegation at the PM House.



Federal Minister for Commerce, Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan shaking hand with Mr. Hassan Abdullah Fakhru, Minister for Trade and Industry of Bahrain after holding bilateral talks in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Ghulam Murtaza Jatoi in a meeting with Mr. Hassan Abdullah Fakhru, Minister for Trade and Industry of Bahrain to enhance bilateral cooperation on industries and investments between Pakistan and Bahrain in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, in a meeting with King of Bahrain His Majesty Hamad Bin Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, in Islamabad.

By Sajid Ali Zaidi

Pakistan, Bahrain discuss cooperation in defence, training

Federal Defence Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif called on King of Bahrain Sheikh Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa and discussed matters of mutual cooperation in the field of defence and defence trainings. Terming the visit highly significant, he said, "We thank the King for undertaking this most important visit at the most important time."

The Defence Minister reiterated that Bahrain holds great importance for Muslims countries.

He expressed the hope that the visit would further enhance ties and give boost to relations between Pakistan and Bahrain.

"This cooperation is not new, the visit is going to increase cooperation. This is a bond between two countries. In my opinion, it is very significant," he added.

Pakistan and Bahrain enjoy brotherly and

cordial relations, which are based on historic bonds of mutual trust and understanding.

Bahrain has always been supportive of Pakistan on all issues at national, regional as well as international levels.

The Defence Minister stressed that Pakistan had always looked upto its Muslim brothers and consistent support from Muslim friends was commendable, said a press release issued here.

He said Pakistan had faced a lot of difficulties during the ongoing war on terror and had laid down unprecedented sacrifices in this regard.

"We have not only lost our brave and valiant soldiers in the line of duty, but the civilian population has also suffered immense casualties," he added.

Pakistan, he said, believed in regional stability and peaceful Afghanistan. "We are also keen on supporting Afghanistan and strongly believe that it is in the interest of the region."

Meeting between King of Bahrain and Khawaja Mohammad Asif discussed overall situation of the country, sacrifices in war on terror, Pak-Afghan relations, Post 2014 situation and matters of regional stability.

Bahrain not only recognized all areas that came under discussion, but acknowledged sacrifices in war on terror and role of Pakistan in regional stability. The visit of King Sheikh Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al-Khalifa is said to have paved a key path in setting the direction. Bahrain greatly appreciated the capacity of Pakistan defence industry and cooperation in the field of defence production also came under discussion.

Bahrain-Pakistan Business Forum at Islamabad Marriott Hotel

The Bahrain Pakistan Business Forum, organized by Bahrain's Industry and Commerce Ministry, was held at the Marquee and was attended by more than 500 participants. MoUs were signed, between the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Pakistan Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, for various sectors of economy. Prominent figures who attended the forum included Federal Minister of Commerce Engr. Khurram Dastaghir, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Dr. Musadak Malik, Board of Investment Chairman Dr. Miftah Ismail and Bahraini Minister for Industry and Commerce Dr. Hassan Fakhro.





Adviser to the PM on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with King of Bahrain His Majesty Hamad bin Salman AL Khalifah, in Islamabad.

By Sajid Ali Zaidi

Sartaj Aziz calls on King Hamad

King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa said he felt that he was in his second home and the bonds of love and amity between Bahrain and Pakistan were deep rooted in culture and history. He was talking to Adviser to Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz, who called on him here.

King of Bahrain said, "Although we are new countries, but we have been trading partners since 7000 years when the Indus Valley civilization had trade with Dilmun civilization." It was, therefore, easy to translate the political goodwill into effective economic and trade relations between the two countries, he added. The King expressed the desire for enhanced trade and investment, which would lead to tangible dividends for the progress and prosperity of the brotherly peoples of the two countries.

He conveyed Bahrain's interest in further expanding and diversifying its relations with

Pakistan in all areas of cooperation.

He also shared his views on bilateral, regional and international areas of mutual interest with Sartaj Aziz.

The Adviser, while emphasizing the importance of the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif attaches to Pakistan's relations with Bahrain, briefed the King on the key policies and priorities of the country's foreign policy.

Sartaj Aziz said the visit of King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa was a manifestation of the deep commitment of Bahrain towards taking Pakistan-Bahrain relationship to new heights.

He also thanked the King for his affection towards Pakistani community and expressed the hope that the community would continue to play a positive role in different sectors of Bahraini economy.

Diplomatic Correspondent



US Secretary of State John Kerry shaking hand with Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on the sidelines of Third Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) held in the Hague.

Nawaz, Kerry review Pak-US relations

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif met US Secretary of State John Kerry and both sides reaffirmed their desire to continue the strategic dialogue, covering a wide range of areas. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the two-day nuclear Summit. US Secretary of State said his country has great confidence in Pakistan's nuclear security and will continue to work with Pakistan in fighting terrorism.

In brief remarks to the press he also assured cooperation to Pakistan to help meet its energy needs.

John Kerry said the two countries were "deeply engaged" and said the two sides

will focus on the issue of terrorism, counter terrorism, global energy besides Afghanistan and the bilateral Pakistan-United States relations.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said there were a lot of challenges for his government that came into power nine months back, however measures were afoot to address these.

He also mentioned his meeting with US President Barack Obama a few months ago in Washington DC and said the dialogue with the US will continue.

John Kerry mentioned his meeting in Washington with the Adviser to Prime Minister Sartaj Aziz recently and said he



was looking forward to his meeting with Finance Minister Ishaq Dar soon.

The Prime Minister is accompanied by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Syed Tariq Fatemi and Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry.

Pakistan

attaches
highest importance to
**nuclear
security:**

By Saeed Khan

PM

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said that Pakistan attached highest importance to nuclear security because it was directly linked to country's national security. "Pakistan is a responsible nuclear weapons state and pursue a policy of nuclear restraint, as well as credible minimum deterrence," the Prime Minister said while speaking at the 3rd Nuclear Security Summit here. Leaders from 53 countries, United Nations, European Union, International Atomic Energy Agency and Interpol are attending the nuclear summit. "Our region needs peace and stability for economic development that benefits its people. That is why, I strongly advocate nuclear restraint, balance in conventional forces and ways to resolve conflicts," the Prime Minister said.

He said Pakistan's nuclear security was supported by five pillars - a strong command and control system led by the National Command Authority (NCA); an integrated intelligence system; a rigorous regulatory regime; a comprehensive export control regime; and active international cooperation.

The Prime Minister said Pakistan's security regime covered physical protection, material control and accounting, border controls and radiological emergencies. He said that Pakistan's nuclear materials, facilities and assets were safe and secure and the country's nuclear security regime was anchored in the principle of multi-layered defense for the entire spectrum - insider, outsider or cyber threat.

The Prime Minister said Pakistan has established a Centre of Excellence that conducts intense specialized courses in nuclear security, physical protection and personnel reliability, adding that Pakistan was ready to share its best practices and

training facilities with other interested states in the region and beyond.

The Prime Minister on the occasion paid tribute to President Barack Obama for launching the nuclear security summit process four years ago.

Prime Minister Sharif said Pakistan had been running a safe, secure and safeguarded civil nuclear programme for more than forty years and the country had the expertise, manpower and infrastructure to produce civil nuclear energy.

"As Prime Minister, I feel that energy deficit is one of the most serious crises facing Pakistan. As we revive our economy, we look forward to international cooperation and assistance for nuclear energy under IAEA safeguards," he added. The Prime Minister called for Pakistan's inclusion in all international export control regimes, especially the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

He said international treaties and forums should supplement national actions to fortify nuclear security.

He said Pakistan was a party to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and worked closely with the IAEA to deal with safety and security of radioactive sources and illicit trafficking of nuclear materials.

The Prime Minister said Pakistan regularly submitted reports to the UN Security Council 1540 Committee on the measure the country take to exercise control over transfer of sensitive materials and technologies.

"Looking back, we can say with confidence that our decisions and commitments have spurred national action, promoted international cooperation and fostered

adding has contributed to

The Prime Minister said all leaders gathered here wanted nuclear security, which was a national responsibility and a global priority.

He said all the countries should continue to take measures to secure all nuclear facilities and materials and prevent any perceived nuclear terrorist threat.

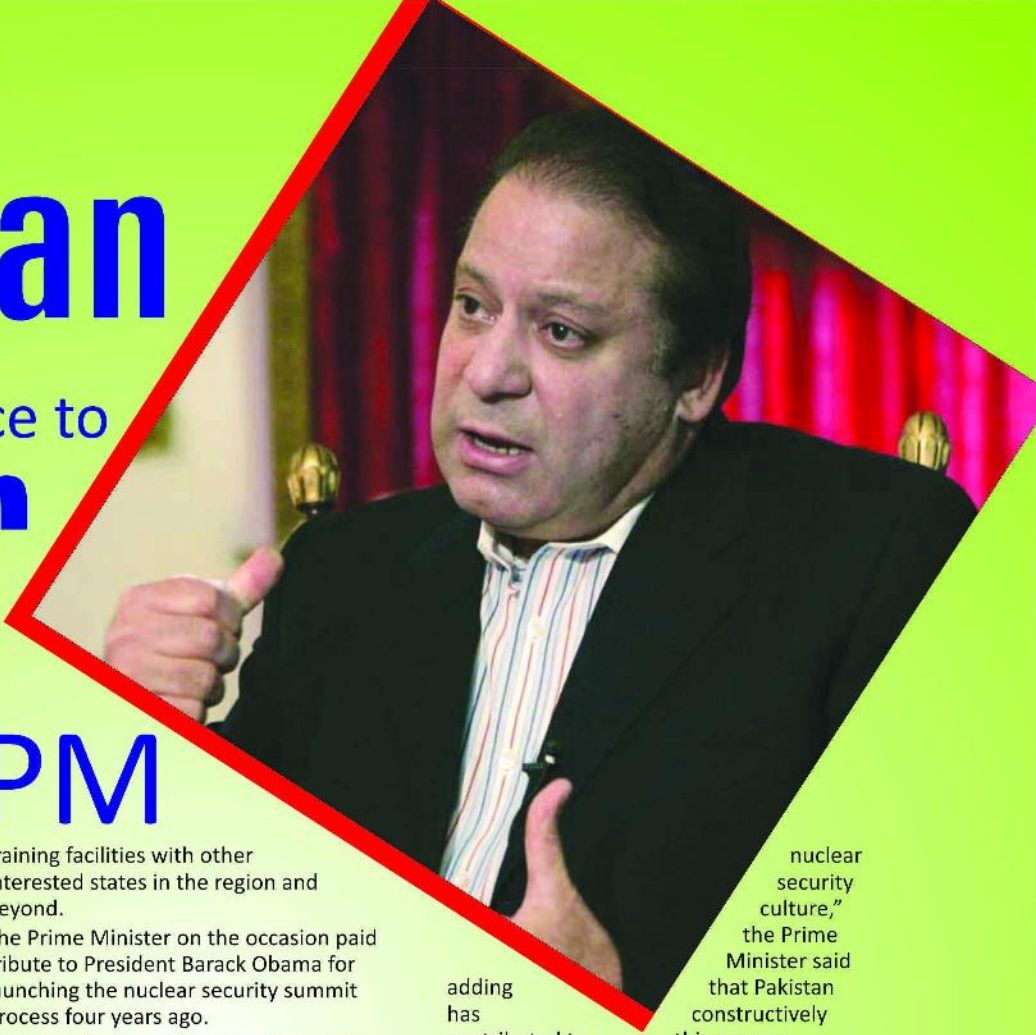
"We all need radioactive sources for hospitals, industry and research; but should be vigilant about radiological threats," he added. He said Pakistan has also deployed radiation detection mechanisms at several exit and entry points to prevent illicit trafficking of radioactive and nuclear materials.

In the realm of international cooperation on nuclear security, the Prime Minister said the IAEA has an essential responsibility and a central role to play, adding that Pakistan has been working productively with the IAEA to implement its Nuclear Security Action Plan (NSAP).

The Prime Minister on the occasion announced that Pakistan was considering ratification of the 2005 Amendment to the CPPNM and was actively conducting a review to meet its various requirements.

"As we look towards the future, we should consolidate progress made so far on nuclear security. We must also maintain our political will, avoid duplication of effort and broaden our membership to gain more acceptance for our decisions," the Prime Minister said.

nuclear security culture," the Prime Minister said that Pakistan constructively this process.





Mr. Yukiyo Amino, Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) talking to the Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PH House.

Pakistan, a committed nuclear non-proliferation state: Nawaz

Pakistan, IAEA firm to make stronger cooperation

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said Pakistan was actively expanding its power production potential by utilising nuclear technology to address country's severe energy crisis. Talking to Director General International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Yukiyo Amino at the PM House, the Prime Minister said Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) was helping the country to meet its power requirements.

He said Pakistan with the help of IAEA was making use of nuclear technology in several areas including power production, medicine, agriculture, food preservation and water management for the benefit of its people.

Prime Minister said Pakistan has very close cooperation with IAEA since 1957, under the 'Atoms for Peace' initiative and said the country values this cooperation for peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

Nawaz said Pakistan was a committed nuclear non-proliferation state and added "all our current nuclear power plants as well as research reactors are under IAEA safeguards and all obligations are being fulfilled adequately."

Prime Minister appreciated the positive role played by the Agency in the development of peaceful use of nuclear technology in Pakistan, for human resource development in various scientific disciplines and establishment of R&D facilities at different centers in the country. He said PAEC has benefited significantly

from IAEA's program on Cancer Therapy and Control in member states. Every year, a large number of its scientists and engineers benefit from IAEA sponsored activities and share their knowledge and experience in specific fields while Pakistani experts render valuable services to other IAEA Member States.

He said the government of Pakistan values its relationship with IAEA and said this cooperation shall be strengthened in the time ahead.

DG IAEA appreciated Pakistan's commitment to use of nuclear energy for benefit of its people and extended his support for the cause.

Meanwhile, IAEA Chief Yukiya Amano met with Adviser on Foreign Affairs and National Security Sartaj Aziz.

Pakistan is working to increase the contribution of nuclear energy to the energy mix as part of its strategy to reduce the power deficit that has caused prolonged outages. The country expects to have seven functional 1,100MW nuclear plants by 2030, work on two of which has already begun. The plants will be in addition to four smaller 300MW capacity units.

Besides, Pakistan is using nuclear technology in medicine, agriculture, food preservation, water management and industry.

All of the country's nuclear power plants are under the IAEA's safeguards and Pakistan has always advocated a central role for nuclear watchdog in global nuclear architecture. **Diplomatic Correspondent**



Adviser to the PM on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with Director General IAEA Mr yukiya Amino in Islamabad.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with France's President Francois Hollande on the sidelines of Nuclear Security Summit at the Hague.

Nawaz, French President discuss bilateral relations

Prim Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif said that friends of Pakistan must acknowledge its sacrifices in war on terror in a solid manner. He said that Pakistan's economy suffered heavily and now it is the world that has to pay back in terms of enhanced cooperation in trade and economy. He was talking to French President Francois Hollande on the side-lines of Nuclear Security Summit, here. He said that Pakistan attaches special importance to its relations with France and hopes that these relations will continue to

improve in all fields of cooperation in future.

The French President said that France acknowledges Pakistan's sacrifices in war on terror. He appreciated Economic Reforms being undertaken by the Government. He also appreciated the initiative Pakistan was taking to normalize its relations with India.

The Prime Minister replied that Pakistan is keen to normalize its relations with India, but also underlined the importance of

solution of Kashmir issue.

The French President expressed that France was also looking to continue and improve relations with Pakistan in all fields especially in trade and defence.

French President greeted the Prime Minister at the success of his party in recent elections in the country and on Pakistan Day. The Prime Minister thanked French support to Pakistan's bid for GSP plus.

Diplomatic Correspondent

Nawaz, Merkel discuss bilateral ties

Prim Minister Nawaz Sharif and German Chancellor Angela Merkel discussed the matters of mutual interest including bilateral trade. Prime Minister Sharif termed the meeting "productive" that took place on the sidelines of the 'Nuclear Security Summit'. In an interaction with media persons following the meeting, the Prime Minister said he thanked the German Chancellor for her country's support for Pakistan to get GSP Plus status. The Prime Minister said the meeting also discussed Pakistan's relations with India and Afghanistan. Merkel appreciated Pakistan's efforts and contribution for ensuring peace in the region.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif shaking hand with German Chancellor Ms. Angela Merkel during their meeting on the sidelines of Nuclear Security Summit at the Hague.

PM meets Obama, Xi Jinping, Abdullah Gul on sidelines of Nuclear Summit in Hague

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif met United States President Barack Obama, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Turkish President Abdullah Gul. The informal meetings were held on the

sidelines of the two-day Nuclear Security Summit.

The Prime Minister discussed with them matters of bilateral relations and mutual

interests. The Prime Minister is accompanied by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Syed Tariq Fatemi and Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry.



PM Pakistan Mian Nawaz Sharif talking to US President Barak Obama.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif talking with Turkish President Abdullah Gul at the sidelines of Third Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) held in the Hague.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif exchanging views with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of Third Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) held in the Hague.



43rd Independence & National Day of People's Republic of Bangladesh marked at Islamabad Serena Hotel





RIS NURTURING PAK-MAIRITIUS TIES

High Commissioner of Mauritius to Pakistan H.E. Rashad Duraeewoo hosted a grand Mauritius Independence Day dinner at the Marriott Hotel Islamabad in collaboration with Roots International Schools yesterday 12th March 2014. The evening was graced by many senior diplomats and their spouses along with influential people from the corporate sector and proved the strategic importance of the ties two countries hold. Federal Minister for Defense Productions Mr. Rana Tanvir and State Minister for Education Mr. Baleegh Ur Rehman embraced the occasion as the Chief Guests. The dignitaries cut the cake to celebrate the years of progress and opened path to get-together session for the diplomats and corporate leaders



Satrang Gallery organized second anniversary show



SERENA HOTELS





Ambassador Jilal Abbas Jilani with president Barack Obama after presenting his credentials at the White House, Washington D.C.

Pak Ambassador to US presents credentials to President Obama

Ambassador Jilal Abbas Jilani presented his credentials to President Barack H. Obama in an impressive ceremony at the White House.

In receiving the Ambassador, President Obama said that Pakistan and the US have a long standing relationship, based on mutual respect and shared recognition that a strong partnership between our two nations is vital to regional and international security. President Obama also noted that he remains committed to deepening and strengthening the bilateral relationship and that Prime Minister Sharif's October 2013 visit to the US and the January 2014 Ministerial Review of the Strategic Dialogue reflected the continued commitment on both sides to enhancing

the US-Pakistan relationship.

Ambassador Jilani conveyed highest personal regards and best wishes from the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan to President Obama as well as warm and cordial greetings from the people of Pakistan to the people of the United States. He said that it was an honor for him to be representing Pakistan as Ambassador to the United States. Ambassador Jilani said that during his tenure in Washington DC, it would be his priority to further build the positive momentum and strengthen the Pakistan U.S. relationship to make it truly reflective of the mutual desire on both sides to continue with the ongoing robust security cooperation, while expanding

collaboration in economic, trade, education, health and science and technology sectors. Another important area of his focus would be to promote people to people contacts and help educate the people of both countries about each other.

Ambassador Jilani also expressed his belief that collective and sustained efforts will enable both to lay down the foundations of a partnership that is rooted in the shared ideals of democracy and freedom, thrives on mutuality of trust, interest and benefit and seeks to maximize the convergences that the two countries have.

Diplomatic Correspondent



A delegation of Council for Protection of Journalists (CPJ), headed by Mrs. Kati Marton called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House, Islamabad.

Journalists' safety, government's responsibility: PM

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said journalists are vibrant part of the society and it is the government's responsibility to provide them safe and secure environment. He was talking to Kati Marton, the widow of late US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke and Executive Member of Council for Protection of Journalists (CPJ) along with its four-member delegation here at the PM House. The Prime Minister said in order to provide more secure environment to the media persons, the government was establishing a commission of media persons, public figures and government members which would propose measures to be adopted by the government to protect journalists in the field and

ensure their well-being. The Prime Minister said the commission will also suggest ways and means to effectively oversee/monitor prosecution of crimes against journalists. He said he wanted to make Pakistan a journalist-friendly country where not only local but international media feel safe and secure during their professional assignments. The Prime Minister lauded the role of Pakistani media in strengthening democratic institutions and restoration of judiciary.

He assured that the government was trying its best to ensure that the criminals and terrorists, accused of killing journalists, would be arrested and brought to justice.

The Prime Minister also praised late Richard Holbrooke for his role as peacemaker in Bosnia and also called him a friend of Pakistan.

Mrs. Kati Marton appreciated Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's resolve towards strengthening the democratic institutions in Pakistan.

She also appreciated his role in pursuing the case of journalist Wali Khan Baber which resulted in conviction of his killers and gave a strong message to the international community about rule of law in Pakistan.

Int'l community for integrated coherent policy on Afghanistan: Nisar

Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said that international community should come up with an integrated and coherent policy regarding Afghanistan in the post-2014 scenario and stressed on greater coordination among all stakeholders. According to the press release issued here, the Minister said this while talking to Richard Stagg, UK's High Commissioner to Afghanistan, who called on him here. UK's High Commissioner to Pakistan Philip Barton was also present during the meeting.

The Minister said that situation in Afghanistan is complex and calls for thorough debate among the international community.

He said that Afghanistan would be undergoing massive transformation during this year adding that solution of the problems being faced by the country must

come from within.

Chaudhry Nisar reiterated that the government is maintaining a non-partisan policy in regional matters.

He said the government has recently presented the country's first National Internal Security Policy which will be helpful in meeting the challenges faced by terrorism and militancy.

Talking about Pakistan-UK relations he said that Pakistan and UK enjoy good relations which would be further strengthened in the years to come.

Ambassador Richard Stagg said that the international community recognizes the important role that Pakistan has in establishing peace in the region with particular reference to the changing situation in Afghanistan.



Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan in a meeting with UK's High Commissioner to Afghanistan Mr. Richard Stagg and UK's High Commissioner to Pakistan Mr. Philip Barton in Islamabad.

By Staff Reporter

Diplomatic Focus Thru lens



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi in a meeting with Shaikh Ahmed Bin Ateyattallah Al Khalifa, Minister of Follow-up at the Baraini Royal Court, in Islamabad.



H.E. Sheikh Abu Khalid Nasir Jamal Al Saeed Director International Islamic Charitable Organization, Kuwait called on Federal Minister for Safron, Lt.Gen. (RETD) Abdul Qadir Baloch in Islamabad.



H.E Mr. Janan Mosazai, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan called on Federal Minister for Safron, Lt. Gen (RETD) Abdul Qadir Baloch in Islamabad.



Chief Commissioner Afghan Refugees & Director GIZ Syed Ahemd Zaib called on Federal Minister for State & Frontier Regions. Lt Ger(R) Abdul Qadir Baloch in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan in a meeting with Mr. Herve Ladsous, Under Secretary General UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations in Islamabad.



Senator Raja Muhammad Zafar-ul-Haq leader of the House in the senate exchanging views with delegation of Sultanate of Oman headed by Dr. Muhammad Said Khalifa Al-Mamri, Advisor Minister of Auqaf and Religious Affairs, at Parliament House Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Finance Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, in a meeting with Mr. Rachid Benmessaoud Country Director World Bank in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Information Broadcasting & National Heritage and Law & Justice Human Rights, Perviz Rashid addressing the Steering Committee meeting in Pakistan Coalition of Media Safety in Islamabad.

Diplomatic Focus Thru lens



Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf in a meeting with Ambassador of UAE, H.E. Essa Abdullah Al-Bashra Al-Noaim in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Prof. Ahsan Iqbal with Prof. S. Hirashima Senior Advisor JICA in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Commerce, Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan meeting with High Commissioner of Canada Greg Giokas in Islamabad.



Nigerian High Commissioner H.E. Dauda Danladi, Mni called on Federal Minister for Defense Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain in Ministry of Defence Production Rawalpindi.



Chairman Senate Syed Nayyar Hussain Bokhari exchanging views with British High Commissioner to Pakistan Mr. Philip Barton, at Parliament House Islamabad.



Chairman Senate Syed Nayyar Hussain Bokhari exchanging views with Mr. Marc Saba, UNAIDS Country Director at Parliament House, Islamabad.



Federal Secretary for Petroleum & Natural Resources, Abid Saeed signing an MoU for Cooperation in Energy and Mineral Resources with H.E. Tomasz Tomczykiewicz, Deputy Minister of Economy & Energy, Republic of Poland in Islamabad.



Secretary Economic Affairs Division, Ms. Nargis Sethi and Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan Hiroshi Inomata signing an MoU ceremony in Islamabad.

Sartaj Aziz meets senior British Cabinet Members to discuss bilateral cooperation

By Mian Asadullah



Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security & Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz with British Senior Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Ms Baroness Sayeed Warsi in London.

Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, who is on an official visit to UK for review of the Enhanced Strategic Dialogue (ESD) between Pakistan and UK met the following key British cabinet members today: International Development Secretary Justine Greening, Home Secretary Theresa May and Defence Secretary Philip Hammond.

Secretary Greening appreciated the concrete steps taken by the present Pakistan government in the areas of tax collection and economic reforms, and was hopeful that the present political dispensation would be able to achieve the

desired objectives. She also stated that the DFID programme in Pakistan was their most successful programme and reiterated UK's commitment to extend further assistance to help Pakistan meet its reform targets and enhance trade and investment in Pakistan.

Home Secretary May lauded Pakistan's new internal security policy and offered UK's support for its timely and effective implementation. She also said that Pakistan's stability was important for the entire South Asian Region and UK was ready for its meaningful cooperation to strengthen regional security.

Defence Secretary Hammond discussed the ongoing defence cooperation between

the two countries and hoped for a positive outcome of the next round of Defence Cooperation Forum (DCF) being held in London next week. The post-NATO withdrawal scenario in Afghanistan and its implications for the region were also discussed in detail.

Adviser Sartaj Aziz appreciated UK's support and cooperation in diverse areas including socio-economic development, security and counter-terrorism, and defence. He briefed his British counterparts on the initiatives undertaken by Pakistan on revival of economy, addressing energy crisis, introducing transparency and good-governance and expanding tax base.

The two sides expressed satisfaction over cooperation under the framework of Enhanced Strategic Dialogue (ESD) and hoped that the targets set under the framework would be achieved within the given time frame.

The Adviser spoke at the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) on "Post-2014 Transition in Afghanistan: Pakistan's Perspective on Regional Stability and Security". The event was well attended by diverse audience including policy makers, academia, think-tank notables and the media.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security & Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz meeting with the British Senior Minister of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs, Ms Baroness Sayeeda Warsi in London.

Trip of Diplomatic Corps to Sindh

A memorable trip consisted of a group of 15 Ambassadors and their spouses to Sindh. The trip was organized by the Ambassador of the Argentine Republic, Mr. Rodolfo Martin Saravia and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Sargodhian Spirit Trust, Mr. Tasneem Noorani (Former Federal Secretary of Commerce and Interior).

The main aim of the trip was to participate in the 9th Founders Day of Sargodhian Spirit Trust (SST) in the Sindh Province at Rashidabad near Tando Allah Yar. The Sargodhian Spirit Trust (SST) is a charitable organization; the main aim of the Trust is to provide quality education and grooming children of the deprived families living in remote regions of the country.

The event was graced by H.E. Chief of the Air Force, Air Chief Marshal, Tahir Rafiq Butt as the Chief Guest and the participation of various Ambassador and their spouses of different countries, representing 5 continents added glory to the event. The show was followed by a lunch with boys of the school. Participation in the Sindh Cultural exhibition was also one of the important activities of the trip which was very much appreciated by the participants.

The group of Ambassadors went to the city of Hyderabad where they have been accommodated at the

residence of Mrs. Raheela Magsi and her family and Son in law Faisal Mushtaq and also at

followed by Lunch at Keenjar Lake arranged by the Commissioner of Hyderabad.

such type of events are organized with adequate support of the Government and



the Army Headquarter Mess. They visited the Sindh Musseum, and at night the group was entertained by the Magsi family in a wonderful dinner party. The day after they left Hyderabad and on the way to Karachi they visted the Historical Monuments at Makli,

Through this successful and interesting trip, the group of Ambassador and their spouses not only attended the significant event of SST but also familiarize themselves with the beauty of the interior part of the Sindh province. The success of this trip has shown that if

safety precautions, Diplomats can move freely around Pakistan enjoying the beauty and diversity of this lovely Country. That is the reason why Ambassador of Argentina, Mr. Rodolfo Martin Saravia has always been striving to organize such interesting activites together with his colleagues in order to promote the maximum awareness of Pakistan and its people among the foreign community.

It would be unjustifiable not to mention that this great trip was made successful because of the generous support of the Pakistan Air Force that provided a special plane to travel back and forth to Hyderabad.

Diplomatic Correspondent



Diplomatic Focus Thru lens



Special Assistant to the PM, Syed Tariq Fatemi in a meeting with US Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan & Pakistan, Beth Jones in Islamabad.



Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Hiroshi in INOMATA called on Federal Minister for Water & Power, Khawaja Muhammad Asif in Islamabad.



Special Assistant to the PM, Syed Tariq Fatemi in a meeting with H.E Edmity Mezentsev Secretary General of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Islamabad..



Special envoy to PM for Overseas Trade & Investment, Javed Malik addressing a press conference in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Petroleum & Natural Resources, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi in a meeting with Ambassador of Germany, Dr. Cyrill Nunn in Islamabad.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Tariq Fatemi meeting Mr. LIU Gaourgyan, Director General External Security Affairs, Chinese in Islamabad.



Minister of State for Water & Power, Abid Sher Ali in a meeting with the Ambassador of Poland Anerzej Ananicz in Islamabad.



A group photo of the outgoing Ambassador, Mohammad Sadiq with the officers and Official of the Embassy of Pakistan in Kabul.

Diplomatic Focus Thru lens



CEO Pakistan Power Park Management Company Limited, Ms. Nargis Sethi receiving Master Plan of Gaddani Power Park from vice President NESPAK at Gaddani, Balochistan.



CEO Pakistan Power Park Management Company Limited, Ms Nargis Sethi being briefed by Foreign Consultants about the Master Plan of Gaddani Power Park at Camp office at Gaddani, Balochistan.



Chief of Defence Force, Maldives National Defence Forces, Major General Ahmed Shiyam called on Secretary Defence, Lt General Retd Asif Yasin Malik in Rawalpindi.



Advisor to PM on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with H.E Jan Kubis, Special representative of United Nations Secretary General to Afghanistan in Islamabad.



Advisor to the PM on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with the Ambassador of Myanmar H.E U San Myint Oo in Islamabad.



Advisor to the PM on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with H.E Edmityr Mezentssev Secretary General of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Islamabad.



Acting Speaker Martaza Javed Abbasi and Ambassador of Republic of Azerbaijan Dashgin Shikarov shaking hand during visit to Azerbaijan Embassy, Islamabad.



Chairman Senate, Syed Nayer Hussain Bokhari, exchanging views with Mr. Enver Hoxhaj Foreign Minister of Kosovo, at Parliament House, Islamabad.

Can the UNsave Afghanistan?

2014 is a high stakes year for Afghanistan. Presidential elections are due to be held in April and the US is withdrawing its troops by the end of the year. But looking closer, these actions are not entirely what they appear to be. The elections are being shunned by most armed opposition groups, particularly by the Taliban that controls areas just a few kilometres outside the capital Kabul, in places such as Wardak and Logar.

During the last presidential elections in 2009, accusations of fraud and ballot-stuffing seriously discredited the outcome and it took the mediation of Senator John Kerry, then Chair of the US Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, to settle the

case between President Hamid Karzai and the then front runner up Dr Abdullah Abdullah.

Washington is in the process of withdrawing most of its troops by the end of this year, but it's very likely, per the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA), that it will leave behind a significant contingent of around 10,000 troops, preserving the ability to engage in ground and air operations - in particular the capability to launch cross-border drone strikes.

Pivotal year

There is also a measure of theatrics displayed by Karzai, who initially pushed for the BSA agreement and gathered a

Loya Jirga to get it approved, and now refuses to sign it - allegedly because the US is not setting up direct negotiations between his government and the Taliban leadership.

But Karzai is on his way out and all the major candidates, jockeying to replace him, have declared they have no qualms signing the BSA - which they view as a type of life insurance policy for their administration, should they win.

Whereas neither the US withdrawal nor the presidential elections are exactly what they appear to be, 2014 can still be viewed as a pivotal year for the war-afflicted Afghans. The US, which launched a full military intervention in that country in



October of 2001 and, along with its allies, remained there for the past 13 years, is about to significantly downsize its military presence and consequently reduce - somewhat - its influence over the country's affairs.

And a new president, as imperfect as his election may turn out to be, could be viewed as a better partner for talks by the armed opposition groups than his predecessor.

This is why I believe 2014 presents a good opportunity for the United Nations - still perceived by most as a neutral entity and representing the good will of the international community - to initiate a crucial comeback and play once again a determining part in seeking a diplomatic/negotiated resolution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

In the past, following the Soviet Intervention of December 1979 and over the years, the UN played a key role in efforts to reach a negotiated resolution to the conflicts in Afghanistan while making sure that the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity were respected.

The UN struck a master coup with the successful negotiations that led to the Geneva Accords of 1988. In the following years, the UN remained involved every step of the way in a number of negotiation talks among Afghan, regional and other international concerned parties to bring peace and stability back to Afghanistan. At the same time, the UN worked to the best of its abilities to alleviate the pain and suffering of civilian population through the work of its many agencies.

UN sponsorship

However, since 2001, the UN has played a rather minor diplomatic role and has been

subservient to a course designed in Washington that stressed on a military outcome. As we all know by now, that strategy simply did not work. Today we find ourselves almost where we started more than a decade ago; and we may very well go back to a situation in many ways similar to the one prevalent during the 1990s.

The reality is that the international community is better off with a peaceful Afghanistan than one that is unstable, one that constitutes a major threat to regional and international stability. It is also true that, at the end of the day, Afghans on all sides of the divide are above all Afghans, and need to be included in the process.

This is why I believe it is high time for the UN, in accordance with the fundamentals of its mission, to make a strong comeback on the diplomatic/negotiations scene of the Afghan conflict.

In order to speed up the process, it is essential that UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon moves in a way that shows his resolve and, through him, that of the international community, by inviting all Afghan parties/groups to participate in UN-sponsored discussions to reach a political resolution to the conflict, without preconditions.

Secondly, he should appoint a high profile personality - such as a former president or a former head of government - as his Special Representative for Afghanistan. And finally, he should set a date and a location for the first round of discussions.

I sincerely hope that Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon realises how 2014 can be an opportunity for the UN to revamp its policy and standing towards the Afghan conflict.

This is the time to energetically push, in accordance with the UN's core mission, for conflict-resolution through diplomatic means. All military options have failed. Afghans aspire for peace and they need hope. It is high time for roundtable talks and negotiations to take centre stage.

Assem Akram is author of five books on Afghanistan history and culture. He holds a PhD in History from the Sorbonne University. He also served as a diplomat. Recently, Akram taught a class at American University's School of International Service in Washington DC on the subject of "Afghanistan: Conflict and Society".

Agencies





58th Independence Day of Republic of Tunisia celebrated at Serena Hotel Islamabad





H.E. M Rashad Daureeawo, High Commissioner of Republic of Mauritius hosts a reception in Islamabad to mark 46th Independence Day





Rouhani for boosting ties with Oman

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani held talks in Muscat with Sultan Qaboos as he kicked off a two-day Oman visit aimed at boosting economic ties between the longtime allies.

Rouhani went into the meeting with Sultan Qaboos, who has acted as an intermediary between Western countries and the Islamic republic, soon after he arrived in Muscat accompanied by a delegation of Iranian leaders.

The two leaders discussed "bilateral cooperation" and "building good relations" between their countries, Oman's official

Before departing Tehran for Muscat earlier Wednesday, Rouhani hailed the "good relations" that exist between Tehran and Muscat.

"During this trip, we want to implement contracts (signed) in the field of trade and economy, especially those linked to oil and gas," as well as in finance, banking, and culture, he told reporters at the airport, as cited by IRNA, Iran's official news agency.

Tehran's ambassador in Muscat, Ali Akbar Sibeveih, said ahead of the visit that Oman and Iran are seeking to expand trade, which reached \$1 billion last year, as well



ONA news agency reported.

The sultanate is reported to have hosted secret talks between Iran and the United States ahead of the signing in Geneva last November of an accord between world powers and Iran on its nuclear programme.

A government official said Rouhani would also hold talks during his visit with senior Omani officials, the sultanate's top cleric Ahmad al-Khalil and members of the business community.

as bilateral investments which they expect will top \$10 billion by the end of this year.

Iran and Oman signed an agreement in 2009 for the construction of a 200-kilometre (124-mile) undersea gas pipeline linking the two countries.

Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh, accompanying Rouhani, voiced hope that the project would be finalised "during the visit".

Iran is planning to invest \$4 billion in

Oman's Duqm port on the Arabian Sea, in projects that include the establishment of 100 large oil and gas tanks and an iron-smelting plant, among other projects.

It will invest a further \$2 billion in two other ports — Sohar and Salalah, according to Sibeveih.

Meanwhile, Oman will invest in petrochemical, education, and oil exploitation projects in Iran worth \$4 billion.

Rouhani said his visit "is of great importance to strengthen relations between Iran and Islamic countries, especially those neighbouring Iran".

"The Strait of Hormuz gives countries south of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea great importance," he told reporters in Tehran.

Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards is in charge of protecting the strategic strait, at the entrance to the Gulf, a key gateway for the world's oil supplies.

Over the past year, the United States has gradually strengthened its naval forces in the Gulf region, particularly after Iran at one point threatened to block the strait.

Monitoring Disk



Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in a meeting with a delegation of US-Pakistan Business Council in Islamabad.

US-PAKISTAN BUSINESS COUNCIL'S DELEGATION CALLS ON ISHAQ DAR

A delegation of US-Pakistan Business Council and US Chamber of Commerce called on Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and discussed about economic situation in the country. The minister said when the PML-N Government took over, eight months ago, the economy was in tatters. "The Government had to undertake serious painful measures to bring things back on the track", he said adding due to prudent measures, today, the situation is much better. He said that budget deficit was going down and tax revenues had witnessed 17.7% growth, in the last eight months. Inflation is under control and we are on course to achieve the targets set for the fiscal year, he added. Ishaq Dar said that consistency in the economic policies will be ensured for protection of investors. He added that there is a huge potential in the renewable energy and hydro carbon sectors. Miles Young, Chairman of US-Pakistan Business Council congratulated the Finance Minister on the economic turn around. He said that the situation in

Pakistan is much better than eight months ago, when he last visited Pakistan during the general elections. He said that the international projection of Pakistan is also positive and it should stimulate American interest to the available investment opportunities. He informed that the Council is poised to make additional investments in Pakistan in the renewable energy and IT sectors. He also informed that the delegation will meet public and private entities in Lahore and Karachi to explore areas where the US investors may like to invest. Ms. Caroly Brehm, Member, Board of Directors, US-Pakistan Council said that Pakistan has made remarkable progress in short time and her company Proctor and Gamble is expanding its business by making additional investment in Pakistan. She said that her company sees a great potential in the huge Pakistani market. The meeting was also attended by Secretary Finance Dr Waqar Masood, Special Assistance to Finance Minister Shahid Mahmood and senior officials of the ministries of finance and commerce.

Pak Ambassador meets UAE Foreign Minister

Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates Asif Ali Khan Durrani called on His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ambassador Durrani conveyed the best wishes and prayers of President Mamnoon Hussain and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for the good health and long life of President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. Ambassador Durrani, who had presented his credentials to Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashed Al-Maktoum earlier this month, expressed the hope that bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries, which are based on a shared faith and

common destiny, would be further strengthened in the months and years ahead.

Ambassador Durrani also conveyed messages of good wishes from National Security & Foreign Affairs Mr. Sartaj Aziz and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi to His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed welcomed the Ambassador to the UAE. While reciprocating the good wishes of the Pakistani leadership, he expressed the desire of further strengthening the already existing and long standing relations between the two fraternal countries.



Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates Asif Ali Khan Durrani called on His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



US, Japan to jointly develop Littoral Combat Ship

Amid escalating tensions between Japan and China, a 12.2 percent budget increase in China's defense spending, and fears that budget cuts for the U.S. military could have a negative impact on the United States' ability to "pivot" to Asia, U.S. and Japanese officials have announced plans to co-develop a new high-speed vessel capable of carrying helicopters.

Following a meeting between U.S. Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy and Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, the two governments announced that the Japanese Defense Ministry and the U.S. Department of Defense would hold studies for the joint development of the vessel under the bilateral Mutual Defense Assistance (MDA) agreement.

Although very little information has been released about the project, analysts contend that the trimaran would likely be a lighter variant of the U.S. Navy's 3,000-tonne littoral combat ship (LCS), a platform designed primarily for missions in shallow coastal waters.

According to reports in Japanese media, the high-speed J-LCS would give the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) the ability to quickly intervene during incursions by Chinese vessels near the Senkaku/Diaoyu islets and other contested areas of the East China Sea. Chinese analysts speculate that the J-LCS could be intended as a counter to the PLA Navy's (PLAN) Type 056 corvettes and Type 022 fast-attack boats, two types of vessels that could be deployed to the region should relations continue to deteriorate. Furthermore, early reports indicate that the slightly enlarged hull of the 1,000-tonne-plus vessels could accommodate SH-60K anti-submarine helicopters and MCH-101 airborne mine countermeasures (AMCM) helicopters.

Coincidentally, the announcement came as the U.S. Navy unveiled a substantial reduction in the number of LCSs it will acquire, from 52 as initially planned to 32. A total of US\$1.5 billion was set aside to buy three LCS during FY2015 (down one from a planned four), for a total of 14

through 2019 (twenty LCSs have been funded through FY2014). As a large share of the LCSs in the U.S. Navy was expected to be deployed to the Asia-Pacific, the joint project with Japan could serve as a much-needed supplement to compensate for a trimmed U.S. force deployment, both in terms of reduced production costs and an increased number of surface combatants that, through burden sharing, the U.S. Navy and JMSDF could bring into play during hostilities.

Additionally, the outcome of this project could lead to the development of an alternative version to the current (and expensive) LCS. The U.S. Navy is reportedly seeking such an alternative amid criticism that the platform, sometimes referred to as an "undergunned corvette," doesn't pack enough firepower and would be no match against the better-armed — and cheaper — surface combatants (including the PLAN's 220-tonne Type 022 and 1,800-tonne Type 056) that would see action during combat operations in the Asia-Pacific. **Monitoring Desk**

US hands over wheat sowing technology to Pakistan

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has transferred latest wheat sowing technology to Pakistan with aim to enhance healthy wheat production in the country. The USDA, under U.S.-Pakistan Wheat Productivity Enhancement Project (WPEP) handed over wheat sowing planters to various research institutions and universities that would replace the traditional hand-sowing crop systems and antiquated machinery, currently utilized in Pakistan. The planters would initially be utilized on pilot projects in these institutions and would be replicated to transfer the technology to farmers to enhance their crop productivity.

The wheat planters were handed over to these institutions at a ceremony at National Agriculture Research Center (NARC) which was jointly organized by the USDA, International Center for Maize and Wheat Improvement (CIMMYT), Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), and several Pakistani agriculture institutions and universities.

The USDA-sponsored WPEP has imported research-grade wheat planters for provincial and university partners to increase Pakistan's wheat productivity.

Speaking on the handing-over ceremony, Secretary Ministry for Food Security and Research (MFS&R), Seerat Asghar said although population of the country was growing fast, we have been successful in catering to increasing food needs due to research conducted in the agriculture field.

He said that the wheat sowing technology should have been transferred three decades ago, however remarked that it was never too late adding that the

planters would particularly help small farmers to enhance their crop productivity.

He said that the planters would be handed over to the local manufacturers to replicate the technology to ensure that farmers take benefit of this technology.

ON the occasion, Chairman PARC, Dr. Iftikhar Ahmed said that the WPEP project achieved the goal of increased productivity by introducing disease-resistant wheat varieties, building research capacity, improving disease surveillance systems, developing seed distribution systems, and modernizing national crop development programs through upgrading infrastructure and equipment.

He said that Pakistan was fully prepared to cope with the challenges of UG99 crop disease as the scientists have developed new crop varieties to cater to the increasing food requirements.

He said that Pak-US collaboration in agriculture field resulted in establishment of several agriculture universities and institutions in the country.

USDA Agricultural Counselor in Pakistan, Clay Hamilton said that the transfer of planters to Pakistan was a symbol of long collaboration between Pakistan and US.

He stressed the need for enhancing links between researchers and farmers to achieve better results in agriculture production.

Director General NARC, Dr. Azeem Ahmed also spoke on the occasion and termed the inclusion of planters in Pakistan's agriculture sector as a landmark development that would help produce better results of research in enhancing crop production.

Country Representative CIMMYT, Muhammad Imtiaz said that since the planters would replace the traditional wheat sowing systems, so they would bring efficiency and improve productivity of small farmers.

In his remarks, Member Plant Sciences, Dr. Shaid Masood said that the planters were a new addition to agriculture field that

would ensure provision of fertilizers to plants at right time and at right place.

Among others, Professor David Marshall of University of Carolina, representatives of provincial research institutions and universities and official of PARC and NARC were also present on the occasion. Monitoring Desk



Ashan Iqbal calls for regional connectivity, resolution of disputes in South Asia



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reforms, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal presiding over the 3rd Annual South Asia Growth Conference at Lahore.

Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform has said that regional connectivity, resolution of disputes, and strong economic coordination between neighboring countries can turn the fortunes of South Asia. He stated this while delivering a key note address at the 3rd Annual South Asia Growth Conference in Lahore. Prof. Ahsan Iqbal stressed the need for taking immediate actions to address the immediate problems facing the region, which is lagging behind other regions of the world in development.

He said that soon after coming into power, the PML-N government has economic focus and it took immediate action to address the prevalent energy crisis after coming into power and remarked that the energy sector was showing some signs of progress.

Similarly, the Minister said that the government had taken steps to curtail losses from state owned enterprises, curbing subsidies with the consequence that the deficit, which reached a maximum of 9% of GDP, was reduced.

The Minister spoke of the need of reforms in the civil services and in particular tax revenue.

He stated, "Identification and hiring of competent and honest officers is a must and we are vying to have a performance-drive

in public service.

He also addressed the issue of bringing reforms in tax collection mechanism.

The Minister said, "Bringing reforms in tax services will help the government to raise the GDP to tax ratio from 9 to 14%."

Most prominent among reforms in the civil service include a revamping of the Planning Commission into the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reforms.

Ministry of PDR is working through collaborative networks of experts, academia, private sector in order to create synergy and team work in planning.

Minister bemoaned the lack of planning and reforms during previous regimes, which produced energy crisis.

Speaking in more detail regarding the need for well informed and organized planning and development, the Minister Prof. Ahsan Iqbal informed the audience of Vision 2025, a 12 years development plan forged with extensive consultation with many stakeholders, including those in the corporate and finance sectors, civil society as well as academic and research institutions.

The Minister terms the vision as a 'buy-in' of all important stakeholders.

The Minister apprised the audience of the seven pillars of Vision of 2025 which will lead to a better and strong Pakistan.

According to Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, the seven pillars include developing world class human and social capital, sustained and inclusive growth, modernization of public sector

, focus of food, water and energy security, value addition in domestic production, infrastructure development as driver of growth and sustainable growth in small and medium enterprises.

He said, "People have to be at the heart of economic planning because future depends on quality of human resource any nation possesses. We suffer from socio-economic imbalance, our economic indicators make us middle income country but our social indicators put us among least developed countries. We are putting people first in our development agenda."

Federal Minister also urged the delegates from India attending the conference to work for greater bilateral cooperation between India and Pakistan.

The minister said, "It is about time Pakistan & India open up to each other on a bilateral basis. If Pakistan & India are cooperating, the whole region will reap dividends from the cooperation. Pakistan has taken number of initiatives but those haven't been reciprocated. We hope India will agree on liberal visa regime and provide access to Pakistani channels access to Indian viewers."

Replying to a question Minister said, "After eighteenth amendment there is a need to forge a new partnership between centre and provinces so that progress in social sectors can be effectively coordinated across provinces in order to accelerate achievement of national development goals."

Diplomatic Correspondent

Ahsan, Sardar Tanveer hail AIS education system at annual day



Al-Huda International School Islamabad held its 3rd Annual Day themed 'World Beyond Me' at the Aiwan-e-Sir Syed. The event was unique in its nature, unlike its usual kind, as it not only showcased the abilities and talents of its students, but also provided the audience an opportunity to experience and learn, from the students, conscious consideration for other beings around us in the world we live in. Students explored the relevance of unity, rights of a family, community and nation, the importance of moral values such as trust, respect, tolerance and the very significance of having a purposeful life—all in the light of the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W) Sunnah. The program was spread over the day and was split over morning and evening performances. The occasion was presided with the presence of distinguished guests Mr. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, President Pak Gulf Construction (Pvt) Ltd and Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning and Development who graced the morning and evening program respectively.

The performances included recitation from the Holy Quran, presentations, tableaux, skits and nasheed recitations. The youngest performers of the day formally welcomed the audience to the third annual day. The 1+ year old toddlers looked adorable in their costumes and brought smiles with their innocent gestures in their sing along poem performance. The immaculate discipline and synchronization amongst the students of Montessori was commendable. Their performance circled around the theme of the 'World Beyond Me' by bringing about the realization that it's these very children who build the community as showcased in their performance by Montessori level I students 'its me who build community' and pivotal role of a mother in the grooming and upbringing of individual in a performance titled 'Your Mother'. The Montessori level III students presented the rights of the neighbour in a poem "The good neighbours", they showed how a child can be helpful to others around him in "Ahad & Qasim's story" and made dua for the youth of the



Mr. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas,
President Pak Gulf
Construction (Pvt) Ltd.



Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal
Minister for Planning and
Development.

nation in "Lab pe ati hai dua".

The confidence and the accuracy of role portrayals by the AIS primary section students was commendable. The performances by the students of the AIS primary section included "No man in an island", "Jannat ka rasta" and "I am just a rock" by grade 1; "Islam: the choice I made", "Colors of Islam", 'The Honest Shepherd' and the "Unity of ants" by grade 2; "Brotherhood in Islam" and "Heart of a Muslim" by grade 3; "Incredible me" and an Arabic skit "At ta'awun wal it tehad" by grade 4.

Sardar Tanveer Ilyas said that he accepted the invitation because we are neighbours and that it's a children program. He found the performances to be true reflection of the hard work of the teachers and patrons of the school. We teach these children to walk and it is them who run the marathon of life and win. It is they who become our leaders and socially responsible citizens. He stressed the importance of respect for teachers through examples of Hazrat Ali (RA) and Imam Abu Hanifa.

The honorable guest Ahsan Iqbal was overwhelmed by the students' performances and creativity. He congratulated the institute and its founder as well as the working team on being successful in introducing Islam to the youth in such a manner. The unique blend of modern education and values of Islam was well reflected in the day's event and the students' performances. He emphasized that it's the age of knowledge revolution and learning Quran is very important in these times.

The Director School, Atif Iqbal thanked the honored guests and the audience and appreciated the efforts of all the students and staff. He said, "A question that keeps coming to our minds is how to entertain our children in this age of technology and to what extent. Allah sent us for a purpose, that is to worship Him, but the need for entertainment is in our nature and we even see that in the life of Rasoolullah (SAW) and his companions (RA). We should be mindful that any kind of entertainment should not take us away from Allah's remembrance, secondly it should not have any elements in it that are prohibited by Allah (SWT)." **Diplomatic Correspondent**

Mrs. Obama Takes Stab at Ping-Pong Diplomacy

U.S. first lady Michelle Obama took ping-pong diplomacy to a new level on her weeklong tour of China as the two countries try a new tactic to build trust in an often tense relationship.

More than 40 years after the traditional Chinese game restarted the two countries' diplomatic relations, it was again called upon during Mrs. Obama's visit.

Accompanied by her mother and two daughters, the U.S. first lady was escorted around the landmark Forbidden City by Peng Liyuan, wife of Chinese President Xi Jinping, in a meeting experts say is aimed at softening the U.S.'s image here. The group stopped at a prestigious Beijing high school, where Mrs. Obama picked up a ping-pong paddle and volleyed with a student and an instructor as Ms. Peng looked on.

"My husband plays. He thinks he's better than he really is," Mrs. Obama told the students and staff gathered to watch.

In the evening, before a private dinner and performance, Mrs. Obama met for tea with Mrs. Peng and Mr. Xi, who said he thanked the U.S. for sending a "heavy-weight ambassador."

The trip, which has been billed by White House advisers as personal and not



political, comes at a time when the two countries have plenty of squabbles, from regional territorial disputes to other disagreements over the value of China's currency and human rights. But Mrs. Obama's aides have said she will avoid bringing up any sensitive subjects.

Mutual suspicion between the two countries has been deepening, according

to a 2013 survey by the Washington-based Pew Research Center. Only 37% of people in the U.S. view China favorably, similar to the 40% of Chinese who hold a positive view of the U.S., the survey found, noting that for both countries, the percentages of favorable views have declined since Pew asked the questions in 2008.

Experts on bilateral relations say the





meeting between the two first ladies has the potential to be more effective at warming ties than a meeting of their husbands. No other president's spouse has made a solo visit with a Chinese first lady.

Mr. Xi and President Barack Obama "have nightmare jobs and more problems than they know how to handle with really fierce politics in their own countries to deal with," said James McGregor, Greater China chairman at consultancy APCO Worldwide. "If their wives can connect as human beings, that's an important channel that brings the human side into that relationship between Zhongnanhai and the White House."

Experts also expect that the tour will help China's push in recent years to create a softer image overseas. As its economy grows and domestic companies expand globally, China's leaders have begun to recognize the importance of appearing accessible on the international stage.

The country has built movie studios in the hopes that its films can rival Hollywood's to reach a global audience and its state-run news agency has expanded its U.S. office in the heart of New York's Times Square. President Xi Jinping has packed his overseas travel schedule in his first year in office.

But despite all its efforts, some say China's attempts have had little apparent success, said Chu Shulong, an expert on international relations at Tsinghua University in Beijing. "We have been puzzled as to why there has been so little

progress," said Mr. Chu.

The U.S. commands a 63% favorable rating around the world, compared with 50% for China, according to the Pew survey, of around 38,000 people in 39 countries, with respondents citing a widespread distaste for China's military and human-rights policies.

For the U.S., the hope is that the image of the popular Mrs. Obama can help improve its perception in a country where Washington is often viewed as an instigator of conflict set on containing China's rise on the world stage.

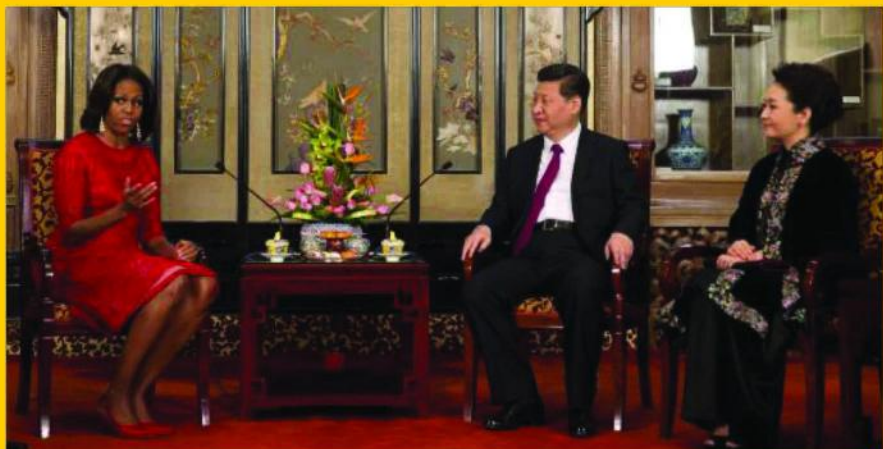
Pictures of Mrs. Obama attempting Chinese calligraphy with Ms. Peng and online discussion of fashion picks by the two women go a long way toward creating better ties, said Jin Canrong, a professor of international studies at Beijing's Renmin

University.

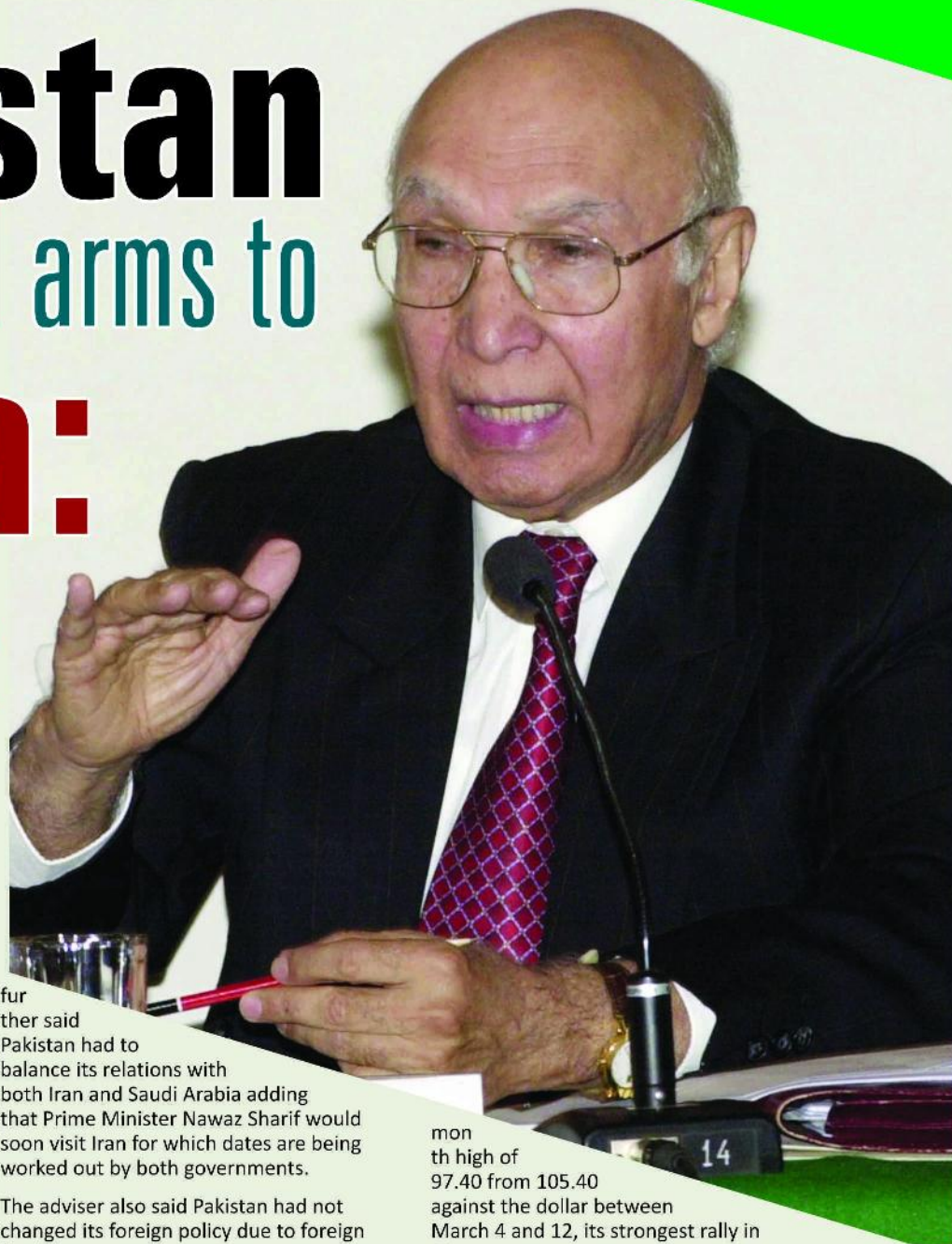
Others note that China's soft-power battle is likely to be an uphill climb, but say the meeting between the first ladies is nevertheless a vast contrast from 1971, when the U.S. had no formal diplomatic ties with China and relied on the U.S. table tennis delegation to visit the country, coining the term "ping-pong diplomacy."

"China is really learning about image making," said Mr. McGregor. "[For the two presidents] it's hard to be humans with each other. The ideological DNA and the political DNA between the two countries are so different, even if they did like each other, if they look too friendly they'll be bashed by their constituencies. But their wives can be human and get along."

Monitoring Desk



Pakistan won't send arms to Syria: Sartaj Aziz



Adviser to Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz informed the Senate's foreign affairs committee that Saudi Arabia had gifted USD 1.5 billion to Pakistan and added that the country would not send arms to Syria or to any other country undergoing a civil war.

Addressing a meeting of the Senate's standing committee on foreign affairs in the federal capital, Aziz said the donation of 1.5 billion dollars by Saudi Arabia was a "gift for the people of Pakistan which was deposited in the Friends of Pakistan fund.

Aziz was further quoted as saying that Pakistan would not send weapons to Syria or to any other country going through civil unrest.

While giving details of the Saudi sum received by Pakistan, the adviser said "the grant given by Saudi Arabia is unconditional and in return Pakistan is not supposed to give anything to the kingdom".

Aziz also confirmed the purchase of weapons by Saudi Arabia, however, he added that the kingdom would not use these weapons against any other state.

He

further said Pakistan had to balance its relations with both Iran and Saudi Arabia adding that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif would soon visit Iran for which dates are being worked out by both governments.

The adviser also said Pakistan had not changed its foreign policy due to foreign funding.

The committee was also briefed by Foreign secretary on the state of overseas Pakistanis in Jeddah and steps being taken for Pakistan consulate in Jeddah for the welfare of these Pakistanis.

Moreover, committee-member Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed of the Pakistan Muslim league - Quaid (PML-Q) moved a resolution condemning the incidents of terrorism in China and also expressed solidarity with the neighbouring country.

Speculation had been rife in Pakistan following a sharp recovery of the Pakistani rupee value, which rose to a nine-

month high of 97.40 from 105.40 against the dollar between March 4 and 12, its strongest rally in 30 years.

Reuters later reported that the climb in the rupee's value was a result of Saudi Arabia's \$1.5 billion "loan" to Pakistan last month which helped Islamabad shore up its foreign exchange reserves, meet debt-service obligations and undertake large energy and infrastructure projects.

Some sections of society were talking about the aid being granted to Pakistan as a reward for the country's u-turn in its foreign policy over the Syria issue.

Clarifying the 'rumours' regarding the status of the donation, Federal Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar said on March 15 that the amount was neither a loan nor was it given in return for any services.

Diplomatic Correspondent



Ambassador of Korea, Song Jong Hwan meets Federal Minister for Defence Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain at Ministry of Defence Production, Rawalpindi.

By Mian Akhtar Hussain

Korean Ambassador, Rana Tanveer discuss defence ties

H.E Song Jong Hwan Ambassador of Korea called on Federal Minister for Defence Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain here at the Ministry of Defence Production. He thanked the Minister for sparing time for the second meeting in a few months' time. Korean Ambassador was warmly welcomed by minister and was commended for working towards joint cooperation for the second shipyard to be built in Pakistan.

Minister for Defence Production added that the work on second shipyard was being done speedily and rigorously and after some important and final deliberations the project would be in full serving.

Ambassador Mr. Song Jong Hwan presented the Minister with a proposal to efficiently handle the project. Minister commended the skill and technical expertise of Korea adding that Pakistan will seriously look into the proposal.

Minister hoped that Korean firms would come forward and venture into projects in Pakistan "The workmanship of Korea is highly commendable and we want more Korean firms to invest in Pakistan". Minister added that Korean firms should also step forward in proposing their deals and after scrutiny of terms and conditions we will be in a good position to decide.

Minister during the meeting also called for revising some of the strict laws so that cooperation can be enhanced and desired that pending MoUs will be expedited by Korea. The meeting was also attended by Secretary Defence Production, Lt Gen (Retd) Tanvir Tahir.

Turkish embassy marks Pakistan Day in Islamabad

The Ambassador of Turkey H. E. Mr. & Mrs. S Babur Girgin host a reception at Turkish Embassy Islamabad to celebrate Pakistan Day. The world's oldest Ottoman Military Band 'Mehteran' military band demonstrates outstanding performance on the occasion.





Mr. Faisal Mushtaq (TI) CEO RIS hosted a reception to celebrate conferment of Hilal-e-Imtiaz by Mr. Mamnoon Hussain, President of Pakistan to Dean of Diplomatic Corps H E Mr. Rodolfo J Martin Saravia, and former Ambassador of Turkey Mr. Babur Hizlan (currently working as DG Baltic States and Central Europe) at Thai Elephant Restaurant Marriott Hotel Islamabad





PAKISTAN, UK want to improve strategic ties

Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz, and British Foreign Secretary William Hague have agreed to enhance the strategic relations between Pakistan and the United Kingdom, which underpins the enduring partnership between both countries. The joint statement issued after the meeting of two officials in London said both reviewed progress on bilateral commitments and discussed future plans to develop a deeper dialogue between the two countries, strengthening friendship and promoting mutual interests. The dialogue represents a long-term commitment by both countries to work together for greater security and prosperity.

Adviser Sartaj Aziz and Foreign Secretary William Hague discussed priority areas of the bilateral relationship including renewing commitment to increase bilateral trade to three billion pounds by 2015, enhancing Pakistan's EU trade access recently secured with significant UK support, the UK's commitment to stand alongside Pakistan to tackle militancy, terrorism and extremism while acknowledging the huge sacrifices the Pakistani nation has made.

Aziz and Hague also welcomed the positive contribution made by the British Pakistani

community to further strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

The two sides agreed to review the whole spectrum of the Enhanced Strategic Dialogue during Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's forthcoming visit to the UK.

After the meeting the Foreign Secretary William Hague said Pakistan and the UK share longstanding ties and he was pleased to have this opportunity to discuss plans to reframe the Enhanced Strategic Dialogue into a deeper and more focused agreement between our two countries, which strengthens our partnership and promotes our mutual interests.

This dialogue represents a continuing, long-term commitment by both countries to work together to create the conditions necessary for greater security and prosperity, he added.

Sartaj Aziz said he was delighted to hold substantive discussions with Foreign Secretary William Hague and other key British cabinet members on the progress of bilateral cooperation in areas of common interest.

He emphasized the importance of greater international recognition of Pakistan's security concerns and said it was agreed to



intensify efforts to achieve meaningful and mutually beneficial progress in a holistic manner under the framework of the Enhanced Strategic Dialogue.

"The UK remains, as Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has said, one of Pakistan's closest allies and the leading development partner," he added.

The Enhanced Strategic Dialogue was signed in 2011 and sets out the UK and Pakistan's strategic partnership in five areas including trade and business relations; financial, macro-economic stabilization and development cooperation; Education and health; consultations on defence and security; and cultural cooperation. **Agencies**



Adviser to the Prime Minister on National and Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz, at the press conference after Commonwealth Action Group meeting in London.



Liberalization of trade with **India** to bring prices down in **Pakistan:** EU ambassador

The European Union (EU) ambassador to Islamabad Lars-Gunnar WIGEMARK said liberalization of trade with India would bring the prices down in Pakistan and could gradually create conducive ambiance to bilaterally tackle more complex issues like Kashmir. Billing Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's initiative to bolster trade with India as 'very positive' the ambassador told APP in an exclusive interview that there was more 'scope for regional trade' for Pakistan than with the outside world and the potential 'is far greater with India'.

There was 'a very clear intension by the government and prime minister personally to try to move forward on trade liberalization with India' which will bring the prices of commodities down and 'the consumers will benefit,' from increase in trading relations between the two nuclear capable neighbours.

He said there would be more competition and 'some companies and industries would feel exposed if they were to open up trade with India', however some vulnerable sectors of the Pakistan economy could be given protection by the government.

EU closely follow developments in Pak-India relations and it is welcomed that there has been some progress in improving relations between the two countries in last couple of years.

"It is unfortunate that the composite dialogue is stalled" said EU envoy and hoped after coming elections in India 'the common wisdom is that India will review its policies also towards Pakistan.'

"Our experience in the European Union has been to have a gradual process whereby, for instance, start opening up trade, start also opening up possibilities to travel more freely," said the ambassador.

"Visa liberalization, business to business contacts, people to people contacts in general will help to build a greater understanding and also to deal with some of the animosities, prejudices," between Pakistan and India, he said.

When questioned if an incident on the Line of Control (LoC) could impact trade between Islamabad and New Delhi, the EU ambassador said whenever there was an incident 'the whole relationship suffers'. But there seemed to be a willingness on both sides to overcome this tension.

"When it comes to Kashmir issue, I personally think that if you start trying to resolve the whole Kashmir conundrum, this is very difficult."

"Whenever something goes wrong in Kashmir, India would tend to point the finger to Pakistan and Pakistan would point the finger against India."

Fielding a question on the EU decision to grant Pakistan almost zero tariff for its exports to EU under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) Plus, he said it 'will give better market access to your companies, for your products made in Pakistan to the whole of European Union

which has some 500 million inhabitants,' which was the single largest market in the world. EU would like to enhance its trade with Pakistan, he added.

He said GSP Plus would have an overall impact of \$800 million trade with Pakistan per year though others have estimated more exports flowing into EU under this scheme.

"It is very much now in the hands of the business community, both here in Pakistan but also in the European Union," comprising 28 members to utilize this facility available since January for boosting trade between the two sides.

Lars-Gunnar said the current overall trade between the EU and Pakistan was 8.5 billion Euros per year which was slightly surplus in favour of Pakistan and we 'would expect that would rise in the coming years to about 10 per cent' in the first year or two.

Emphasizing on the new areas of trade, EU ambassador said it should not only be confined to 'just bed linen and towels' but should also include readymade garments of good quality because there was higher profit margin and because Pakistan was better placed in the region as both China and India did not enjoy GSP facility. Of the 10 countries which were given GSP status, Pakistan was the largest country with the largest economy, he added.

Lars-Gunnar appreciated many initiatives taken by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif government in creating business-friendly atmosphere by 'giving special incentives' like introducing loan schemes for young entrepreneurs.

"All of that is helpful and we see some positive signs already in the economy" he said referring to Pakistan agreement with International Monetary Fund and overall positive austerity programme of the government, he said.

On Government decision to have dialogue with Tehreek-e- Taliban (TTP), he said it was up to Pakistan 'to decide how it wants to proceed with the overall security situation. Answering another question the ambassador said 'whatever the decision is the EU would support it because it would be a decision by democratically elected government' following elections last year in which PML(N) got an 'undeniable victory' in the polls.

On counter terrorism, he said the EU welcomed the Government comprehensive strategy to fight terrorism.

"I think it is very welcomed as you know for the first time ever the Government have announced 'a comprehensive security strategy'. It is a comprehensive document and was something that we have been asking for."

"We have about 70 million Euros that we are spending on counter terrorism related programme," under which equipment, vehicles to deal with explosives, Improvised Explosive Devices were being provided to Pakistan. Diplomatic Correspondent



Canada ends military operations in Afghanistan

Canada ended military operations in Afghanistan, ending a 12-year mission as the international community winds down its role in the country ahead of an end-of-year deadline for foreign combat operations to end.

The Canadians formally ended their combat role in southern Afghanistan in July 2011 but maintained a small training operation in Kabul.

"Canada played a critical role in securing Kandahar Province and had a strategic impact across the country with their contribution to the NATO training mission," the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Joseph Dunford, said during a flag-lowering ceremony at the headquarters for international forces in Kabul.

At its peak Canada was the sixth largest troop-contributing nation, behind the U.S., Britain, Germany, France and Italy. It deployed more than 40,000 service members to Afghanistan since the mission began in 2001. Like Americans and Europeans, Canadians have grown weary of the war.

According to the Canadian government, 158 soldiers, one diplomat, one journalist and two civilian contractors were killed in Afghanistan.

A statement by the NATO-led international Security Assistance Force said Canada also was instrumental in developing a network

of roads as well as improving economic conditions and governance in Kandahar, the birthplace of the Taliban and one of the hardest areas to tame in Afghanistan.

Canada will continue to play a role in Afghanistan with the provision of \$330 million to help sustain the Afghan security forces, it said. **Monitoring Desk**





Country Director, World Bank, Rachid Benmessaoud talks to Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, in Islamabad.

World Bank

likely to approve assistance for Dasu Hydel Project

World Bank's, Country Director, Rachid Benmessaoud said that the World Bank is expected to approve the assistance for Dasu Hydel Power Project. The WB Country Director called on Finance Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar and discussed issues related to World Bank assistance to Pakistan. He said that WB is encouraged by the positive trend of the economic indicators and expected to approve the assistance for Dasu Hydel Power Project. He said that the Managing Director of the World Bank Ms. Sri Mulyani Indrawati will be visiting Islamabad in the last week of March to discuss Pakistan development projects. He informed the Minister about the

preparations being made in connection with her visit.

The Finance Minister expressed hope that the visit will be a successful one and will open the road to co-operation in many areas of mutual interest.

Ishaq Dar further said that Pakistan's economy is moving in the right direction adding that government would continue to engage with multi-lateral fora including World Bank for assistance in energy and infrastructure development programmes initiated by the Government.

In line with the vision of the Prime Minister to make Pakistan developed and

prosperous country, the government has embarked upon a plan to meet the energy requirements and to make country an economically viable, he added.

He emphasized that World Bank's assistance in energy and developments projects will help Pakistan progress.

The meeting was also attended by Secretary Finance, Dr. Waqar Masoud Secretary EAD, Ms. Nargis Sethi, Special Assistant to Finance Minister, Shahid Mahmood and senior officials of the Ministry of Finance. Diplomatic Correspondent

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps H.E. Mr. Rodolfo Martin Saravia and Madam Mrs. Susana Negri bid farewell to Myanmar Ambassador

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps H.E. Mr. Rodolfo Martin Saravia and Madam Mrs. Susana Negri hosted a Reception to say goodbye to H.E. Mr. U San

Myint Oo, the Ambassador of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Madam Mrs. Khin Thu and to welcome new ambassadors of Afghanistan H.E Mr. Janan

Morazán, H.E Mr. Alexey Yurievich Dedov Ambassador of the Russian Federation and Mr. Bassam Omran- Charge d' Affairs of Syrian Arab Republic.



H. E. Rodolfo Martin-Saravia, Ambassador of Argentina conferred Hilal-e-Pakistan



Ambassador of Argentina and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Rodolfo Martin-Saravia was awarded the highest civil award of the government of Pakistan, Hilal-e-Pakistan for his meritorious services in improving and promoting bilateral relations between Pakistan and Argentina.

The award was presented to the ambassador by the President of Pakistan

at the Pakistan Day ceremony held in the presidency.

It may be mentioned here that Ambassador Martin-Saravia has been in Pakistan for nearly a decade and is considered by everyone who knows him to be Pakistan's ambassador as well as he is a great supporter of the country.



Pak, Saudia to work for unity, welfare of Muslim Ummah



A Saudi delegation headed by Deputy Minister for Islamic Affaris, Dr. Abdul Aziz Abdullah Alammar called on Federal Minister for Religious Affaris & Inter Faith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf in Islamabad.

A six-member delegation of Saudi Arabia met with the Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter faith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousuf and discussed matters of mutual interest. According to an official, the delegation was headed by Saudi deputy minister, Dr Abdul Aziz Abdullah Al Amar. Both agreed to work for the unity and welfare of Muslim Ummah. Talking on the occasion, Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousuf said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were enjoying good and cordial relations and lauded Saudi efforts in connection with strengthen the bilateral relations. The Minister lauded Saudi efforts of providing more facilities to Hujajj.

Praising the Hajj literature booklets, he said the Hajj literature should have been in the shape of films or CDs so that the

illiterate Hujajj could understand Manasak-e-Hajj.

He said annual Husn-e-Qirat competitions held every year in the country in collaboration with the government of Saudi Arabia helped creating competitive atmosphere in the country.

Vowing to promote Arabic language in the country, he said government intends to introduce Arabic language in curricula up to Matric level as a compulsory subject.

The Arabic language will definitely help understanding the Holy Quran.

Arabic language know-how would also help maintaining close contacts with the Arab countries.

Yousuf said a stable Pakistan is essential for

having an effective Muslim ummah.

Efforts were underway to enforce peace in the country.

The government wants to construct a Quran Complex in line with Shah Fahd Quran Complex of Saudi Arabia which will benefit promoting understanding the teaching of the Holy Book.

Saudi Deputy Minister for foreign Affairs Dr Abdulaziz Al Amar said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are like one soul two bodies. Both should concentrate forging unity among the entire Muslim Ummah.

Saudi ambassador to Pakistan Dr Abdul Aziz Ibrahim Alghdeer was also present in the meeting.

Diplomatic Correspondent



President of Chinese Company Gezhouba Mr. Chen Xiaohua and MD Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB), N.A Zuberi signing MoU for setting up of three coal power projects at Gadani, in Islamabad. Federal Minister for Water & Power, Khawaja Asif and Secretary Water & Power are also present.

MoU signed with China to produce 2,640 MW electricity

China Gezhouba Group Company Limited (CGGC) and the Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding to install three projects of 660 MW each (1980 MW) based on imported coal at Gadani. Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Muhammad Asif witnessed the signing of MoU between CGGC and PPIB. Managing Director of PPIB Mr. N.A. Zuberi signed the MOU on behalf of the government, while the president of Gezhouba Group Mr. Chen Xiao Hua signed on behalf of the company.

Earlier in January, the PPIB had signed an MOU with CGGC in Beijing for the development of a 660 MW power plant at Gadani, however the CGGC has shown interest in developing another three plants at Gadani thus totalling 2,640 MW with an investment outlay of \$ 3.5- \$ 4

billion.

The Minister said that, relations between China and Pakistan are of historical importance.

He said that during the recent visit of the Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif to China, the Chinese leadership have committed to making substantial investments in various sectors of our economy including power sector and Chinese companies are keen to make business ventures in Pakistan, M/s Gezhouba being one of them.

He said that the initiative of Power Park at Gadani has sparked a lot of interest of the international as well as local investor's community. He said that presently, CGGC is playing a key role in construction of 969 MW Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Plant as lead contractor in collaboration with China National

Machinery Import and Export Corporation and is also the EPC contractor for the 840 MW Suki Kinari Hydropower Project in the private sector which is expected to achieve financial close by July 2014, however construction of the project is expected to be started within a couple of months. CGGC has high stakes in large dams in China like the Three Gorges, Shuibuya, Jinping I, and Longtan Dam, and its business reaches out to over 70 countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and America. In 2012, CGGC ranked No. 62 among the top 225 international contractors in the world and 42nd largest contractor by revenue in the world, which is approximately \$ 7500 million. Secretary Water and Power Saif Ullah Chattha and other senior officials of the government were also present on the occasion.

Agencies

Pakistan Oil and Gas 2014 Summit



A two days oil and gas summit, organized by the London based International Research Network (IRN) was held at the Crystal Ball Room. The chief guest for the occasion was Mr. Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, President of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The summit was opened by keynotes made by Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Minister of

petroleum and natural resources; Jam Kamal Khan, Minister of state for petroleum and natural resources; Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister of water & power and Ahsan Iqbal, Minister of planning and development. High profile executives from the oil and gas operating companies in the country, such as Polish Oil & Gas Company, Ocean Pakistan, the

Oil & Gas Development Company of Pakistan, Tullow Pakistan Developments, MOL Pakistan Oil & Gas and OMV, Byco Petroleum, Heritage Oil & Gas, Premier Oil, Government Holdings along with leading service provider companies, were gathered in the two-day summit.

Diplomatic Correspondent



Pakistan, US focusing on broad-based strategic partnership: Pak envoy



Pakistan and the United States are focusing on moving towards a broad-based, comprehensive and strategic partnership through the Strategic Dialogue process, Pakistan's Ambassador in Washington D C Jalil Abbas Jilani said. Speaking at a luncheon session organized by Asia Society Ambassador Jilani dealt in detail with the contours of Pakistan-U.S. bilateral ties. Expressing satisfaction over the current state of relationship that was marked by mutual respect and cordiality, he said that both sides had realized the need to respect each other's priorities, concerns and comfort level. He also emphasized the need to effectively address the irritants like unilateral U.S. drone strikes.

In his remarks, Ambassador Jilani gave a detailed overview of the government's efforts to overcome the challenges in security, economic growth, and energy sectors. Highlighting some of the significant transformations that Pakistan has gone through in recent years, Ambassador Jilani said that today's Pakistan was a transformed Pakistan where democracy had taken strong roots, where free media and independent judiciary were contributing to an effective system of checks and balances and where all state institutions were working within constitutional parameters. In the regional context, Jilani expressed the

hope that the forthcoming elections in Afghanistan would herald an era of peace and stability in that country. He reiterated Pakistan's full support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process. On Pakistan-India relations, the ambassador reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to resolve all outstanding issues including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir through a sustained, result-oriented and meaningful dialogue and expressed the hope that India would reciprocate Pakistan's sincere gestures. The session was attended by a wide cross-section of Washington D.C. based think-tank community and academia. **Agencies**

Japanese Ambassador, Finance Minister review bilateral cooperation



Ambassador of Japan, Hiroshi Inomata called on Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Islamabad.

H. E. Mr. Hiroshi Inomata, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, called on Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at the Ministry of Finance to discuss bilateral economic co-operation between the two countries. The Finance Minister informed the Ambassador that as a result of structural reforms and measures introduced by the present government the economy has started to show positive results. He said tax collection, GDP growth rate and foreign exchange reserves are moving up and the rate of inflation is going down. He mentioned that due to confidence in Pakistan's economic policies Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) has ranked Pakistan second in the world in terms of business growth. He said that if the survey is any guide then the Japanese companies should

expand their business in the country. He added that, instead of aid or loan, the Government would welcome foreign direct investment from friendly countries including Japan. He assured the Ambassador that Japanese investors will be facilitated to invest in Pakistan where huge investment opportunities are available. The Japanese Ambassador said that Japan fully supports the reforms program and economic policies undertaken by the present government and looks forward to renew its economic relations with Pakistan. The Japanese Ambassador said that a delegation of Japanese Businesspersons would visit Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi next month to explore avenues of co-operation. He hoped that the visit will help improve trade relations between the two countries.

Diplomatic Focus Thru lens



Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit Baltistan, Chaudhary Muhammad Barjees talking to a German Parliamentarian and member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Mr. Juergen Klimke at International Travel Trade Show, ITB-2014.



Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit Baltistan, Ch. Barjees Tahir addressing the office bearers and workers of PML (N) Berlin Chapter at Reception hosted by them in his honor.



Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Muhammad Barjees Tahir addressing the 4th UNWTO Silk Road Minister meeting in Berlin.



Turk cell Delegation held meeting with Minister of State for Information Technology & Telecommunication Anusha Rahman, in Islamabad.



Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research in a meeting with Ambassador of Netherlands, De Vink with the latter called on the Minister here in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, talking to the High Commissioner of UK Mr. Philip Barton in Islamabad.



Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr. Justic Tassaduq Hussain Jilani receiving Shield from Rector FC College at the Alumni Annual Reunion of Forman Christian College Lahore.



Prof. John W-Mellors & Dr. Stephen Davies of International Food Policy called on Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan in Islamabad.

Diplomatic Focus Thru lens



Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar in a meeting with Shehzad Ahmad, Ambassador Designate to Qatar in Islamabad.



Ambassador Kingdom of Norway, Ms Cecilie Landsverk called on the Federal Minister for Finance Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Finance, Senator, Muhammad Ishaq Dar in a meeting with Principal Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Beth Jones from the US Department of State in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar meeting with Mumtaz Khan CEO Asthma Capital Partners B.S.C.(c) Bahrain in Islamabad.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister/ Chairman, Board of Investment Dr. Miftah Ismail meeting with Marc Soisson, CEO, Total Parco Pakistan Ltd.(TPPL) and chairman oil companies Advisory Council in Islamabad.



British High Commissioner, Mr. Philip Barton Called on Federal Minister for Finance Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Islamabad.



Mr. Janan Mosazai, Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan talking to Finance Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at the Finance Ministry, Islamabad.



Deputy Assistant US Trade Representative of South and Central Asia, Ms. Mara M. Burr meeting Federal Minister for Commerce and Textile Industry Eng. Khurram Dasgiri in Islamabad.



Prof. Ahmad Yousif Al-Draiweesh, President International Islamic University, Islamabad presenting shield to Abdul Wahed Abugila Charge d' Affaires embassy of Libya to Pakistan in a seminar titled "Pak-Libya Relationships" organized at IIUI. Dr. Nabi Bux Jummani also present.

Libyan Charge d' Affaires highlights Pak-Libyan relations at IIUI

Charge d' Affaires of Libyan Embassy Abdul Wahid Abo Gaila said that Libya wants to expand its bilateral cooperation with Pakistan in different sectors including economic, political and other fields. While addressing in a Seminar on "Pak-Libya Relations: Challenges & Opportunities" organized by Department of Politics and International Relations of International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) Abo Gaila said his country values its longstanding ties with Pakistan and looking forward to expand these friendly relations.

President IIUI Dr. Ahmed Yousif Al-Draiweesh, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences Prof. Dr. Nabi Bux Jummani, faculty members of department of P&IR and large number of students were also present on the occasion.

Libyan Charge d' Affaires urged students to promote moderation and practice it while he also stressed upon the unity of Muslims.

Dr. Al-Draiweesh said in his speech that Muslims would have to be united to solve their issues. He added that

promotion of dialogue culture among the countries of Muslim world was the need of hour. President IIUI vowed that university would keep working with all the Islamic countries for promotion of knowledge.

Event was also addressed by political advisor to Libyan Embassy Abida Farroq who threw light on new phase of Pak-Libyan relationships and apprised the participants regarding positive developments in Libya especially from the economic perspective. She added that Libyan govt was committed to extend bilateral economic and friendly relations with Islamic countries including Pakistan.

The Seminar was also addressed by various faculty members including Assistant Professor Manzoor Khan Afridi, Chairperson Department of P&IR Dr. Noor Fatima, Assistant Professor Tauqeer Hussain Sargana and Dr. Amina Mehmood.

A souvenir of the university was also presented to Abdul Wahid Abo Gaila by President IIUI.

Diplomatic Correspondent

Lecture on contemporary Italian art history at NCA-Rawalpindi

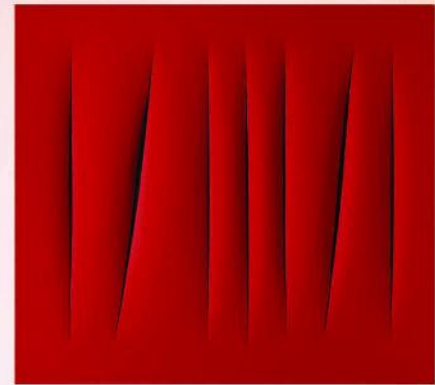
Mrs. Lavinia Filippi, Italian art historian and contemporary art critic delivered a largely attended presentation at the National College of Arts – Rawalpindi on “Arte Povera” (literally Poor Art), an art movement that started in Italy at the end of the 1960s and that became one of the most significant and influential avant-garde movements in post-war Europe. It grouped the work of those Italian artists identified for their use of everyday life materials that were new in art at that time, such as rocks, clothing, paper and industrial scraps.

The ARTE POVERA artists would sometime include in their installations the 4 elements (water, earth, air and fire), or even live animals. Most of their works were sculptures or installations but there was also an important performing aspect. The term, POOR ART, was used for the first time in 1967 by the Italian art critic Germano Celant and it was inspired from the “Poor Theatre” promoted, in the same years, by the Polish director Jerzy Grotowski.

To illustrate the theory of the movement Mr. Celant wrote – as Lavinia Filippi stresses – that ARTE POVERA consisted in “reducing at lowest terms, impoverishing the signs to reduce them to their own archetype”. In the same year, 1967, Germano Celant organized the first group show of the

individual, personal response in each of their pieces, stressing an interaction between viewers and objects that was impossible to repeat and purely original. Their work marked a reaction against the modernist abstract painting that had dominated European art in the 1950s, hence much of the group's work was sculptural.

But the group also rejected American Minimalism, in particular what they perceived as its enthusiasm for technology. Therefore, POP ART was also another “enemy”, even though the artists who took



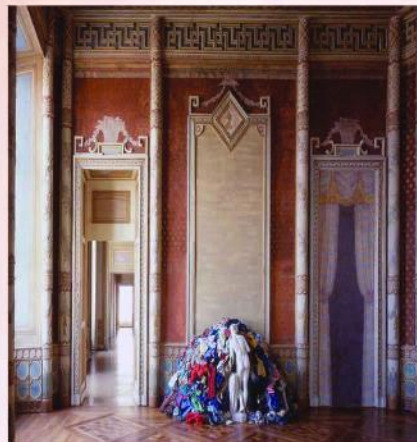
The ARTE POVERA's artists translated the desire for freedom, typical of the period, into an art that went beyond the idea of the artwork as an unique piece.

What they wanted was the “freedom of the object” to amplify the work towards a multiplicity of meanings and “beyond the borders of the object itself”.

Mrs. Filippi, that currently writes for several international art magazine including Flash Art, Arteln and Art Now Pakistan, moved to Pakistan 3 years ago when her husband, Dr. Federico Bianchi, was posted at the Italian Embassy in Islamabad. This gave her “the opportunity to discover a very vibrant and exiting contemporary art scene” as she stated in her opening remarks. I and I am specializing in Pakistani contemporary Art through interviews and studio visits of the main established and emerging Pakistani artists. Before moving to Pakistan, Lavinia worked for the Italian national TV Broadcaster RAI, with a show on contemporary art, with art galleries in Rome and New York City and for the “Castello di Rivoli” the most important Italian contemporary art Museum near Turin, that hosts the world biggest collection of ARTE POVERA.

In her closing remarks, Mrs. Filippi drew a parallel between the Italian art movement in the 1960s and the current Pakistani art scene that sees also artists working with simple and everyday life materials as a rejection to consumerism. Amongst them, she cited as example the work of IMRAN HUNZAI, Sculptor, painter and Professor at NCA Rawalpindi, who recently showcased his works made out of recycled electronic material – inspired by ARTE POVERA – at Satrang gallery, Islamabad

The presentation was organised by NCA Rawalpindi with the support of the ITALIAN EMBASSY IN ISLAMABAD.



part the Italian version of Pop Art, that took place at the very beginning of the '60 in Rome, and which includes Mario Schifano, Tano Festa e Piero Angeli, were close to the ARTE POVERA's artists. Also, although ARTE POVERA is most notable for its use of simple, artisanal materials, it did not use only these. Some of the group's most memorable work comes from the contrast of unprocessed materials with references to the most recent consumer culture. There would use a lot of Ready Made as they were called and first introduced in art by Marcel Duchamp and the Dadaist movement.

Believing that modernity could erase our sense of memory along with all signs of the past, the ARTE POVERA group wanted to contrast the new and the old in order to complicate our sense of the effects of the passing of time. More than a movement with a well-defined poetic identity, ARTE POVERA was a way of thinking. Thus in ARTE POVERA we can find not only an artistic theory about life, but also a reflection on the human condition.



movement in Genoa, in Northern Italy. It included works by Alighiero Boetti, Luciano Fabro, Jannis Kounellis, Giulio Paolini, Pino Pascali and Emilio Prini. All of the works made use of everyday or “poor” materials. Throughout the '60s, '70s and even more recently, many other artists were associated to the group or tried to be identified as part of it, with more or less success. In their mission to reconnect life with art, the Italian ARTE POVERA artists strove to evoke an



Pak-China Business Forum to promote University-Industry collaboration

The third Pak-China Business Forum held aiming at promoting University-Industry collaboration in business and economic sectors for the mutual benefit of both countries. The COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT) organized this four-day event in which 130 Chinese, about 100 Pakistani companies displayed their equipments and appliances. This year more than 100,000 visitors including students, academia, entrepreneurs and representatives of different companies and enterprises attended the forum.

Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Zahid Hamid inaugurated the forum and exhibition where different products were displayed to enhance bilateral trade and investment opportunities as well as sharing the technological advancement in different fields of science and technology.

Speaking on the occasion, Foreign Secretary, Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry commended the efforts of CIIT for organizing events for bringing closer the business communities and academia of both countries.

He said that about 210 stalls in the exhibition were reflecting the business friendly policies of the government and

diplomatic and strategic relations between Pakistan and China.

Foreign Secretary reiterated the government's resolve for maintaining friendly and peaceful relation with all neighboring countries particularly enhanced bilateral trade and investment cooperation with China for mutual progress and development.

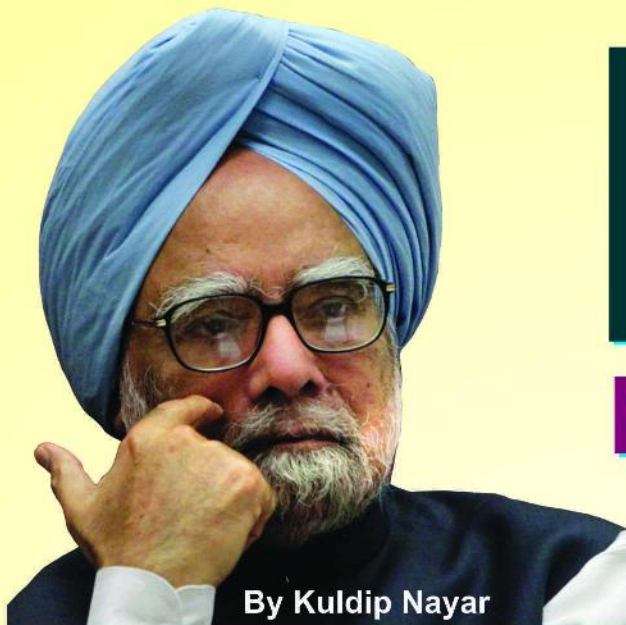
The Secretary said that Pak-China Economic Corridor project will open new era for development and prosperity for the region, adding that it offers enormous trade and investment opportunities and will turn the region into business hub.

Speaking to the forum Vice President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Imtiaz Ahmad said that it was high time to recognize the academia as engine of growth.

He said that business communities of the two countries were determined to further promote bilateral trade in different sectors of the economy for the benefit of the people of both countries.

He said that the event will open new avenues of bilateral trade between Pakistan and China particularly in renewable energy sector.





By Kuldeep Nayar

India faces political-military distrust

In another three months Indian voters will once again queue up before the polling booths to elect their representatives. Their quality has been wanting. But I am confident that the next house will be better in content because the emergence of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has changed the political scenario in the country to make it cleaner and transparent.

Another Lok Sabha, 15th in the series, has concluded its five-year tenure. Whatever business that was transacted in the house was, indeed, exasperating and raucous. Unfortunately the house representing the democratic system has fallen by the wayside practically in all Asian countries. Yet I do not like the increasing influence of the armed forces. Defence Minister A.K. Anthony was correct in saying that there can never be an army coup in the country. First India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru too echoed the same thoughts when he opted for the parliamentary way of governance after independence in August 1947. His argument was that the country was too large and too caste and religion ridden.

My worry, however, is over the say which the armed forces are beginning to have in the affairs of governance. Take the stationing of troops at the Siachin Glacier. Was it necessary when several retired top brass said that it had no strategic importance? Even otherwise, when an agreement had been initialed by foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan, our armed forces should have followed the decision but they had it stalled. Instead of being a no-man territory the soldiers of both countries at the glacier are suffering due to the inclement weather and losing men at regular intervals. Take another example of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) which empowers the army to detain or even kill a person on suspicion without any legal action. The

northeast has been under it for years. A government-appointed committee found it "unnecessary" and recommended its withdrawal. But the armed forces have had their way and the AFSPA continues to be in operation.

Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah has officially asked New Delhi to free the state from the law's application. He has made the appeal even publicly. But the central government has not relented because the armed forces want the AFSPA to continue. Even a marginal concession of releasing the political prisoners as requested by the Jammu and Kashmir chief minister has been denied. More recent is the inquiry into the "encounter" at Pathribal in Jammu and Kashmir. The army is alleged to have killed five "terrorists" while the local villagers have said that the deceased were innocent. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquired into the matter and has submitted its report before the Supreme Court. According to the report, it was a cold blooded fake encounter.

In fact, breaking his silence after 23 years

then Kupwara deputy commissioner S.M. Yasin said recently that he had been threatened and offered promotions to change his report on the alleged mass rapes in Konam Poshpora in February 1991. It is strange that the army has claimed that there was no such incident. The self-acquittal by the top brass has only aggravated the sense of alienation and resentment among people in Jammu and Kashmir. The government of India should still set up a judicial inquiry headed by a Supreme Court judge to investigate into what are perceived as fake encounters.

Hardly has the dust settled down on the Pathribal encounters when the story of a possible coup in January 2012 has become public. Two army units—one of which was an armoured battalion moved to Delhi from Agra. Any movement of troops in the periphery of the capital has to be with the prior permission. Still both units moved and were withdrawn only when the Defence Secretary summoned the Director General of Military Operations, Lt. Gen. A.K. Choudhary, at midnight and conveyed him that top in government was very unhappy and concerned.



Diplomatic Focus Thru lens



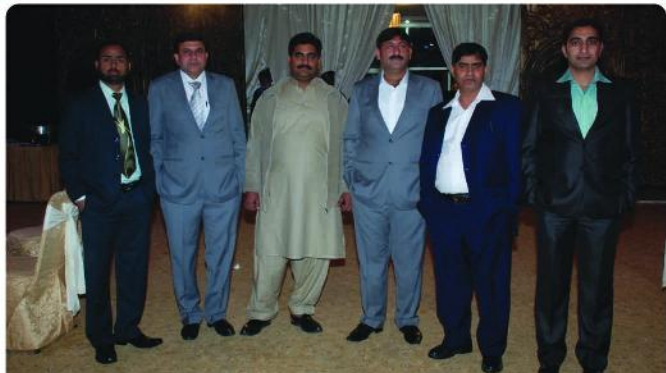
Mian Nasir with participants of wedding ceremony of Mian Furqan in Islamabad.



Ch. Amjad Warriach Chairman Pakistan National Muslim League, and Malik Akram Kashan with others during wedding ceremony of Mian Furqan in Islamabad.



Mian Nasir and Qari Amin Chishti with participants of wedding ceremony of Mian Furqan in Islamabad.



Mian Nasir with participants of wedding ceremony of Mian Furqan in Islamabad.



Group photo of Capt. (Ret) Shah Jamal, Ambassador of Pakistan to Iraq during a farewell meeting with Acting President of Iraq.



Capt. (Ret) Shah Jamal, Ambassador of Pakistan to Iraq during a farewell meeting with Acting President of Iraq.

Lessons from Tharparkar

By I.A. REHMAN

THE invasion of Tharparkar district by rich donors and relief convoys should not divert attention from the need for long-term answers to the grave problems faced, seasonally or permanently, by the people in the region. The outrage that has been displayed at images of children in the throes of death is understandable but this outpouring of grief and anger will be meaningless if remedial action is not taken.

There is no doubt that the response to the humanitarian challenge from state agencies and civil society organisations both has been prompt and ample. The confusion caused by sensationalised reporting, ill-informed commentators, and attempts to make political capital out of people's misery has been considerably dispelled by well-informed, non-state observers.

It is clearer than before that the population of parts of the Tharparkar district has had three misfortunes: first, the drought this year has been severer than in the past few years; secondly, the cold spell has been unusually long and intense; and third, arrangements for the access of affected communities to food and medical aid have been inadequate and dysfunctional.

Nature cannot be blamed for all these factors. That successive droughts cause an incremental increase in water scarcity may be a natural phenomenon but the people have traditionally overcome it by seasonal migration. The cold spell affected children because the health cover was inadequate, and the havoc caused by the administration's failures is entirely man-made.

A large number of families in Thar dealt with the situation as they have always done — they moved to other parts of Sindh where they could find water, grazing fields for their cattle, and even opportunities for casual work. (Incidentally, media reports suggest that an equal number of families — 175,000 — migrated from Thar and Cholistan desert this year.) It seems those who did not have reason to migrate have suffered the most. With the change of season the child mortality rate is likely to decline and migrants will return to their homes and, as Dr Khangharani, the doyen of Thar experts,

says all stories of death and malnutrition will be forgotten.

The issue is whether the cycle of drought, migration and symptomatic, short-term relief will be allowed to continue. If the government has the requisite will it should not be impossible to address the causes of the people's suffering year after year.

The first task is to overcome the 'famine of facts', to borrow an admirable phrase from Mr Javed Jabbar. We do not know to what extent the seasonal migration is documented but from now on it should be necessary to have authentic records of the exodus and return of drought-affected communities.

An important cause of the migration is lack of fodder for livestock that constitutes most of the affected people's sole economic wealth. Will the supply of fodder from outside and an efficient network of veterinary services reduce the extent of dislocation?

In all disaster stories a lack of efficient communication, transport and monitoring systems has often been noted. Reports of an impending famine in Thar had started coming in December 2013. Were these reports shared with the authorities concerned? If they were, how did the disaster management agencies respond? Could the existence of local government institutions make a difference?

Common sense demands that measures to protect the population of Tharparkar (or Cholistan, for that matter) should be an integral part of the development plan for the region. The money spent on setting a national record for the highest number of school buildings (which is different from

having functional schools) in the district could have been better used for promoting food security and healthcare.

Tharparkar and the adjoining districts need special attention of development and community welfare agencies in view of their sizeable non-Muslim population.

Media reports are silent on how the non-Muslim citizens, particularly those still categorised as scheduled castes, have fared during the latest calamity but one should like to be reassured that they have suffered no more than their Muslim neighbours. The reason for this concern is the fact that non-Muslims do not have equal access to the medical services and income support facilities in the region.

While every effort should be made to streamline the existing administrative structure, two steps have become necessary to remove the causes of the disadvantaged community's suffering. First, the people must be given their due share in the management of their affairs. All parts of Pakistan urgently need democratic and efficient local government, and Thar, Cholistan, Kalash, Fata and Pata need it more than others.

Secondly, in spite of the government's irrational hostility to state-sponsored socio-economic development, a high-powered organisation must be created to undertake essential works in underdeveloped areas of the country. In Thar this body could build food and fodder reserves, remove infrastructure deficiencies, upgrade veterinary services and broaden the scope for people's economic activity.

This will reduce poverty which is one of the basic causes of famine and high rates of child and female mortality and ill-health. It will be good if this body has a special department for the protection and promotion of the rights of the indigenous populations who at the moment figure nowhere on the development map.

It is not good politics to shed tears when children die and ignore how they live and dole out fat cheques when a calamity hits the poor. The only worthwhile action can be to give all children hope in their future. Time to begin doing that.



Ambassador of Argentine & Dean of Diplomatic Corps H.E. Mr. Rodolfo .J. Martin visits Karachi to meet spiritual leader Khawaja Shams uddin Azzemi

When a person wants to satisfy his soul, it often happens, he identifies spiritual paths. Soul approach is always needed by every person without any discrimination of religion, colour, creed or language, for interfaith harmony.

Every person wants to talk to himself. What's it, to clarify his soul to purify his ideas, to concentrates his thinking. For this exercise, He searches a spiritual leader, he locates him, then the process of research starts.

The spiritual leader guides him, he goes on research, deep, deep and deeper, Ultimately he comes nearby to achieve his goal,. The Harmony which is nothing but satisfaction of his mind .This spiritual journey takes him to the harmony, work for good, and service for the mankind.

In previous days, Dean of Diplomatic Corp Ambassador of Argentine Embassy at Pakistan H.E. Mr. Rodolfo .J. Martin opted the same journey to Karachi to meet a living Sufi , one of the greatest spiritual leader Father of SilsilAzeema Khawaja Shams uddin Azzemi ,Who having millions of followers is always available for the "good" for mankind.

H.E.Mr.Rodolfo managed a dialogue with Azeemi Sahab at his Central Muraqba Hall Karachi. In the meeting Dr, Waqar Azeemi was also present along with Mr. Kanwar .M. Tariq Hon Consul General of Paraguay

at Pakistan. The meeting happened to be question answer session, continued till two hours. The only focus of this meeting was on the Inter faith Harmony. Azeemi Sahib humbly answered all the questions raised by the H.E. Mr. Rodolfo about spiritual pathway. And

Concluded that the mystic ways always lead every person to have a lot of Tolerance for any other person having different point of views about religion or faith, concentrates only about serving the mankind to make them real human beings, which is told by God to all of his

creations.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks from both sides.





H. E. Mr. Rodolfo J Martin Saravia, Ambassador of Argentina and Dean of Diplomatic Corps visits Karachi

Visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry



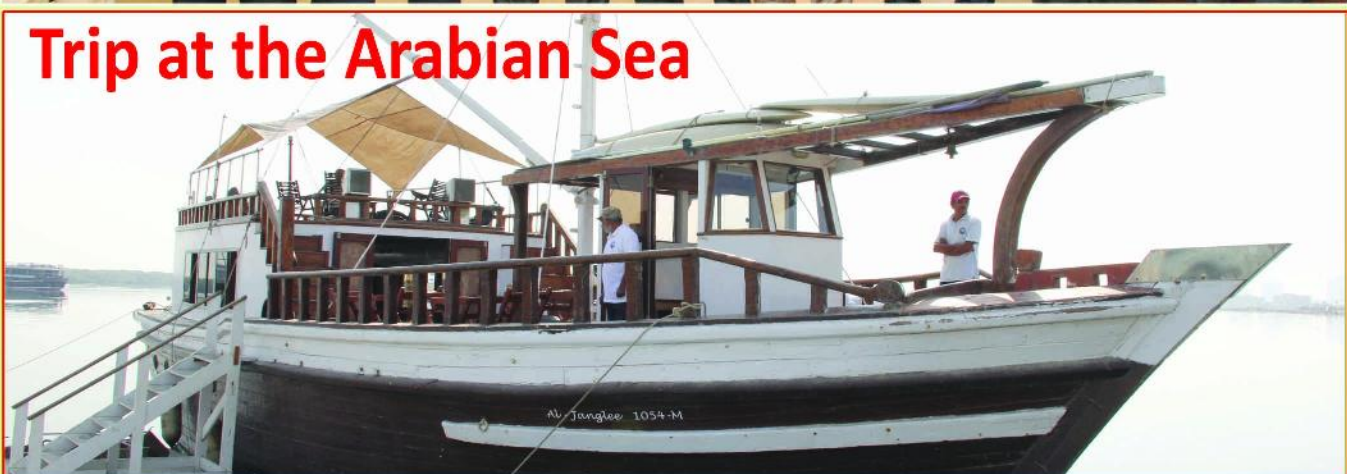
Dinner at Gym Khana



Breakfast with Dawn Group



Trip at the Arabian Sea



Pakistan Day celebrations in New Delhi



High Commissioner Abdul Basit hoisting Pakistani flag on Pakistan Day Ceremony held at the Chancery premises in New Delhi.

Pakistan Day was celebrated with national fervor and enthusiasm at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi.

High Commissioner Abdul Basit raised the Pakistan flag to the tune of national anthem in an impressive ceremony that was held at the Chancery premises.

Speaking on the occasion, the High Commissioner congratulated the Pakistani community in India and highlighted the determination of the Pakistani nation to realize its desire for peace, progress and prosperity. He emphasized that in the last 66 years Pakistan had made tremendous

progress in various spheres. "We should take pride in our accomplishments and refuse to be deterred by the challenges facing the country". He said the people of Pakistan were resolved to overcome their difficulties as nothing was beyond their reach.

The High Commissioner also reiterated Pakistan's firm determination to forge friendly and cooperative relations with all its neighbors including India. He underlined the significance of the composite dialogue process for settling all outstanding issues between the two countries in a peaceful manner. Mr. Abdul Basit also reaffirmed full solidarity

of the Pakistani nation with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters.

Earlier, messages from the President and the Prime Minister on the Pakistan Day were read out by Deputy High Commissioner Mr. Mansoor Ali Khan.

Students of the Pakistan School in Delhi sang national songs and presented tableau, highlighting the struggle for the creation of Pakistan.

At the end of the ceremony, Mrs. Summiya Basit, wife of the High Commissioner, distributed prizes and gifts among the students.

HBL



Jahan Khwab, Wahan HBL

Mera bhi tou hai.

Today we crossed another milestone in our family history, another coming of age. But this was the nearest and dearest one yet - my son. We spent the day together in my office and it was a trip down memory lane.

He explored my desktop, changed the photographs around, swiveled my chair, listened in on my calls and even ordered coffee! I bounced business ideas off him and took pride in the

beginnings of his acumen. Out of sheer habit, I asked him to call 'my bank'. He turned to look at me quizzically, one eyebrow raised in genetic replication and said, 'But Abba, mera bhi tou hai.'

You see, that sense of belonging pervades the fabric of our family. And generation after generation we proudly lay claim to the Bank that is ours.

111-111-425 www.hbl.com



JWT

National Day of Pakistan commemorated in Turkey



Flanked by Pakistani Students in Ankara, Ambassador Haroon Shaukat cutting a cake to mark the National Day of Pakistan.

Pakistan Embassy in Ankara commemorated "Pakistan National Day" at a ceremony. The Ambassador of Pakistan to Turkey Mr. Muhammad Haroon Shaukat unfurled the Pakistan flag on the tune of National Anthem in presence of the Pakistani community, Pakistani students studying in Turkish Universities and Embassy officials. The Ambassador read out messages of the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The President of Pakistan Mr. Mamnoon Hussain in his message stated that Pakistan Day reminds us about the unparalleled democratic struggle by our ancestors which was aimed at providing the Muslims of the sub-continent a place where they could develop to the fullest spiritual, cultural, economic, social and political life in a way that they thought best and in consonance with their own ideals and genius. He urged the Pakistani nation to always hold high the banners of democracy, constitutionalism and rule of law through which this state was created. The Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr.

Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in his message said that "March 23" is a milestone in the history of Pakistan when the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent passed the historic Lahore Resolution in the 27th annual meeting of All-India Muslim League. This Resolution gave a clear objective to the Muslims and united them for the attainment of a shared goal. Our elders sacrificed their present for the sake of preserving our future. Today, we remember our forefathers and pay our gratitude to them for making extraordinary sacrifices to give us an identity. The sacrifices laid down by the founding fathers of the country demand that every effort should be made for achieving the objectives of Quaid-e-Azam's vision, said the Prime Minister. The Premier said Pakistan is passing through a critical stage in the history; however, the resilient nation has braved the daunting challenges with the spirit of one nation. Our government is committed to preserve our great cultural heritage and national identity and to making our earnest efforts for bringing

about economic and social revival in Pakistan, he added.

Ambassador Haroon Shaukat in his brief speech said that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is keen to further boost relations with Turkey in all fields. He said Turkish entrepreneurs have shown keen interest in initiating large-scale projects in the energy, infrastructure development, municipal services and agro-based industry in Pakistan. He said members of the Pakistani community and students are also the Ambassadors of their country and urged them to continue playing their active role in bringing Turkey and Pakistan further closer.

On the 24th March, the Ambassador will host a Pakistan Day reception where the Turkish leadership, parliamentarians, civil society, media and members of Pakistan community are invited to participate. Pakistan Food Festival shall also commence simultaneously where executive chefs invited specially from Pakistan's leading hotel chain will prepare food for guests at Ankara's leading hotel. Pakistan Food Festival shall continue for one week.

Pakistan Day celebrated in UAE



Consul General of Pakistan, Javed Jalil Khattak cutting cake to mark the National Day of Pakistan at Consulate Premises Dubai.



A group photo at the EVE of Pakistan National Day Reception held in Abu Dhabi.



Ambassador Asif Ali Khan Durrani hoisting Pakistan's flag at Pakistan Embassy Abu Dhabi.

National Day of Pakistan was celebrated in UAE with tradition fervor and enthusiasm. Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan at Abu Dhabi and Consulate General of Pakistan, Dubai led the Pakistan Day celebrations with flag-hoisting ceremonies, paying rich tribute to the forefathers for their epic freedom struggle and resolving to work for the country's advancement as a great nation.

Ceremonies at both the venues began with recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an. A flag hoisting ceremony to celebrate the 74th National Day of Pakistan was held at the premises of the Embassy of Pakistan, Abu Dhabi at 0800 hours. Ambassador Asif Ali Khan Durrani hoisted the National Flag as the National Anthem of Pakistan was played on the occasion.

Another ceremony in UAE was held at 0800 hours in the premises of Pakistan Consulate at Dubai. Consul General Javed Jalil Khattak hoisted the National Flag while the National Anthem was played.

A large number of Pakistanis along with their families residing in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and surrounding areas visited the Embassy and Consulate General of Pakistan to attend the ceremonies and joined in reciting the National Anthem. Messages of the President and the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan were read out to the audience on these occasions. In his message President Mr. Mamnoon Hussain urged the people of Pakistan to reiterate the pledge towards those ideals that led to creation of Pakistan. He stressed upon holding high the banners of democracy, constitutionalism and rule of law.

Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, in his message called on the people of Pakistan that every effort should be made for

achieving the objectives of Quaid-e-Azam's vision. He said that the People of Pakistan had expressed their confidence in PML-N in 2013 elections and the government was committed to implement its reform and development oriented manifesto throughout the country in letter and spirit.

The Prime Minister reiterated his resolve that no effort would be spared to ensure respectable status for the country in the comity of the nations. He expressed his government resolve to preserve cultural heritage and national identity and pledged making earnest efforts for bringing about economic and social revival in Pakistan.

Addressing the community members, Ambassador Asif Durrani said the 1.2 million Pakistanis living in the United Arab Emirates make a significant contribution to the nation's development by remitting over US\$ 3 billion per annum. He urged them to rely on banking channels to enhance the remittance levels and further assist Pakistan's economic progress. He also urged the need to raise education standards in order to prepare the coming generation to compete in the world. Ambassador Durrani said even though Pakistan faces a number of challenges, it is a strong country with functioning democratic institutions, stable macro-economic indicators and a vibrant working class that have the potential to deliver. Pakistan Day ceremonies at both places concluded with prayers for progress, prosperity and solidarity of the country. The Ambassador Asif Ali Khan Durrani and Consul General Javed Jalil Khattak held cake cutting ceremonies before the conclusion of the ceremonies, which were attended by the children, members of the Overseas Pakistani community, and staff of the Consulate to commemorate Pakistan National Day.



Ukraine signs EU trade pact as Russia finalizes Crimea annexation



Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk signed the political elements of a trade pact with the European Union, even as Russian lawmakers finalized annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region.

The signing in Brussels signals Europe's solidarity with Ukraine -- and carries additional symbolic force because it was the decision by Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich in November to ditch the trade pact in favor of closer ties with Russia that triggered the protests that led to his ouster in February and spiraled into the current crisis.

It also comes a day after the European Union and the United States slapped sanctions on Russian lawmakers and businessmen; Russia responded with its own list of sanctions against a number of U.S. lawmakers and officials.

In another sign of defiance, Russian President Vladimir Putin, flanked by the speakers of both houses of Parliament, signed a treaty finalizing the accession to Russia of the Crimea region and its port city of Sevastopol.

The upper house unanimously approved ratification of the treaty a day after Russia's lower house of Parliament, the State Duma, passed it by an overwhelming margin. Russia's moves to annex Crimea, following a contested referendum last weekend in the Black Sea peninsula, have turned a confrontation with Europe and the United States into the biggest crisis in East-West relations since the Cold War.

In a sign that Western sanctions are already weighing on Russian authorities, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said that the government will have to pay more to borrow money, state news agency ITAR-Tass said.

Russia "will look at our oil and gas revenues. If the situation is like it is now, we will probably have to give up external borrowings and cut domestic ones," Siluanov said.

Yatsenyuk: EU speaking in one voice Moscow has doggedly pursued its own course even as Western leaders have denounced its actions as violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and a breach of international law.

Though Russia insists that its actions are legitimate, Ukraine's interim government has said Kiev will never stop fighting for Crimea.

Human Rights Watch said in a statement Friday that it has concluded that the international law of occupation applies to Russian forces in Crimea. "The occupying party is ultimately responsible for violations of international law committed by local



authorities or proxy forces," it said.

While in Brussels, Yatsenyuk held talks with European Council President Herman Van Rompuy and European Commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso.

He said Russia's ratification of the treaty annexing Crimea is less important than the EU trade pact he has signed with EU leaders.

"Frankly speaking, I don't care about Russia signing this deal; I care about Ukraine, Ukrainians and our European future," he said. "This deal covers more existential and most important issues, mainly security and defense cooperation."

Yatsenyuk said the European Union would "speak in one single and strong voice" to protect its values and defend Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Van Rompuy said the deal "shows our steadfast support for the course the people of Ukraine have courageously pursued."

EU travel bans, asset freezes

The European Union confirmed details of the sanctions against 12 Russian officials agreed to late Thursday at the EU Heads of State or Government summit.

WHO WINS/WHO LOSES, WHO CARES - AS LONG AS WE ARE TOGETHER!

Goodwill Match Brought Closer the Diplomats and Rootians

Whether on village green or town recreation ground, the friendly cricket match is a quintessentially British past time. Preserving the tradition and promoting the noble cause of improving the international image of Pakistan Roots International Schools collaborated with Canadian High Commission yesterday. Opening a door way to collaboration, mutual peace, trade and education linkages the match brought together the young old, novices and experts. One could surely find the serenity and sportsman spirit in the air.

The match was played on crisp Saturday morning under the lovely weather near the Murghzar ground, Saidpur village. The diplomats and representatives from various countries played against young Rootians during the match and it rained sixes and fours. Though the men battled it out on the ground, a far younger team of RIS had a comfortable win. While The Canadian High Commission set the score of 56 in 6 overs,

RIS under the captainship of ShahzadQaiser successfully chased the scores in 5 overs and notched the winning trophy. Affan Dar, a student of A-levels in RIS was declared as the "Man of the Match" and it was a very well played match.

Mr. WalidMushtaq being one of the partners in the match encouraged and emboldened the collaboration with Canadian High Commission saying "This friendly cricket match is just a quest to bring various cultures together to promote cultural diversity and harmony. Professional cricket can be left with the experts, league cricket is for those motivated by glory and the result. Friendly cricket is a refuge for those who prefer sportsmanship and camaraderie. We all have joined hands to promote a noble cause".

Peter Heyward, Ambassador of US H.E. Mr. Richard Olsen, Raven Judith Cultural Attaché US Embassy Islamabad, Head of European Union delegation in Pakistan H.E. Mr. Lars-Gunnar Wigemark, Canadian high commissioner H.E. Mr. Greg Giokas along with other



diplomats participated and rejoiced making the match an enthralling and worth watching event.

H.E. Mr. Richard Olsen praised the sportsman spirit of Rootians and said that he is looking forward to having many more events with Roots International Schools. He said it was great to watch Pakistani and foreigners playing in a bid to encourage other foreign teams to come to Pakistan.

H.E Mr. Greg Giokas, Canadian

High Commissioner congratulated RIS and said that Pakistan is a safe place and we wish that foreign teams start playing in Pakistan grounds like before. This Goodwill cricket match between Rootians and Diplomats brought forth the best of sporting skills of both the sides.

The friendly match was a perfect day out for all the participants and the spectators.

Mr. WalidMuhstaq at Global Education & Skills Forum 2014

Mr. WalidMushtaq attended the Global Education and Skills Forum 2014 which addressed the global priority to put education first. It aimed to strengthen the ties between the public and private sector in the field of education, and also increase the involvement of the private sector in education. Mr. WalidMushtaq CEO Roots International Schools shared stories of success, spoke on scaling solutions for the prevalent issues faced by nations regarding education. State Minister for Education Mr. Baleegh Ur Rehman also attended the event.

Mr. Walid said that, "Two-day event explored how governments and the private sector can work together in constructive partnerships to jump-start much-needed efforts that will place education first. It provided an open forum to explore how to create real, sustainable and scalable change at global and local levels".

Education, Employment and Equity are



often looked at in isolation from each other. The Global Education and Skills Forum tested this conventional wisdom by examining the transformational impact expanded educational opportunities can have on social and economic development.

The Forum brought together Heads of Government, over 30 education Ministers, NGO leaders, youth groups, Board Chairs and Chief Executives of businesses and multi-lateral agencies and industry leaders



to learn about innovative approaches.

the guests and speakers included Former U.S. President Bill Clinton to Ananth Agarwal (President of edX), Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Tony Blair, Nick Fuller (former Head of Education for the Olympics 2012), Jim Shelton, Acting Deputy Secretary at U.S. Department of Education and Geoffrey Canada, President and CEO of Harlem Children's Zone.

Pakistan spends \$500 million on the socio-economic

Development of Afghanistan: Ambassador Abrar Pakistan Day celebrated at Pak embassy Kabul



Pakistan Ambassador to Afghanistan Syed Abrar Hussain hoisting Pakistan Flag on the eve of Pakistan Day in Kabul on 23rd March, 2014

Pakistan Day was celebrated at Pakistan Embassy, Kabul, with zeal and fervor to commemorate the passage of historical Lahore Resolution on 23rd March 1940 which laid the foundation stone for the creation of an independent country for the Muslims of the Sub-continent. The Pakistan Day ceremony started with recitation of The Holy Quran followed by the national anthem and hoisting of Pakistan

flag by Ambassador, Syed Abrar Hussain. A large number of Pakistanis from all walks of life including engineers, doctors, senior executives, businessmen and academicians attended the ceremony.

While addressing the participants of the ceremony, Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain highlighted the immense sacrifices rendered by our forefathers in pursuit of their struggle for a separate homeland. He said that the

Pakistan's Resolution of 23rd March 1940 paved the way for an independent country. The Ambassador said that we need to pay rich tributes to the Father of Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah whose untiring efforts led to the realization of Muslims' dream for a separate country. He further stated that it was incumbent upon the present generation to strictly adhere to the guiding principles of the Father of the Nation i.e. Unity, Faith and Discipline.

Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain also underlined the need for promoting closer cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan so as to meet the security and economic challenges faced by the two neighbours. The Ambassador said it was the earnest desire of Pakistan to see Afghanistan a prosperous, peaceful and stable country because a peaceful Afghanistan was not only in the interest of Pakistan but of the entire region. He informed the participants that the Prime Minister of Pakistan,

Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, was taking keen interest in strengthening relations with this brotherly nation and has increased the portfolio of development fund for Afghanistan from \$385 to \$500 million. These funds are being used for various projects in education, health and infrastructure and include construction of roads, hospitals, schools, etc. The Ambassador said that the number of scholarships for the Afghan students was increased from 2000 to 3000. In order to improve road connectivity with Afghanistan, Pakistan was working on Peshawar-Jalalabad Motorway, Chaman-Kandahar and Peshawar-Jalalabad Railway link as it is committed to the economic betterment of the people of Afghanistan.

Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain urged the Pakistani community and Embassy officials to work with renewed commitment and dedication to serve their homeland.

Pakistan Day observed in Tehran

Pakistani community celebrated the 74th day of the passing of the Pakistan Resolution here in Tehran. Ambassador Noor Muhammad Jadmandi hoisted the national flag at Pakistan House to mark the occasion.

The messages of the President and the Prime Minister were read out. The students of the Pakistan International School and College, Tehran presented national songs and delivered speeches on the occasion.

The Ambassador paid rich tribute to the father of the

nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other leaders of Pakistani movement. The Ambassador

called upon the Pakistani community to renew their pledge to work for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan and

to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.



Pakistan High Commission London celebrates Pakistan Day

To celebrate Pakistan Day, a flag hoisting ceremony was held at the Pakistan High Commission in London. High Commissioner Mr. Wajid Shamsul Hasan hoisted the national flag and the messages of the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan for this occasion were read out by Deputy High Commissioner Muhammad Imran Mirza and Counsellor Shozab Abbas. In his address the High Commissioner said that Pakistan came into existence as a result of countless sacrifices in blood, toil and tears of the masses who remained steadfast in their commitment to pursue the destiny chosen for them by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal and those great leaders who braved worst possible persecution to keep alighted the torch of democracy. The final goal for Pakistan was decided on March 23rd 1940 in Lahore under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he said. The Quaid's unflinching faith in the democratic destiny of the nation for a socio-economic egalitarian system, he said, helped the Muslims of the

Sub-continent achieve it in a short span of seven years. The High Commissioner paid rich tribute to the sacrifices made by the people and the armed forces of Pakistan in war against terror. He also expressed satisfaction on the continuity of democracy in Pakistan. On this occasion, Mr. Hasan lauded the role of the Pakistani diaspora in the development of Pakistan. He urged them to work hard for the positive image of Pakistan. The school children presented popular national songs and tableaux on this occasion. Begum Zarina Wajid Hasan distributed the prizes among the children. A large number of Pakistani Diaspora and media representatives attended the ceremony. Pakistan Day is being celebrated today throughout the country as well as around the world wherever Pakistanis are living with traditional fervour. During the day, special prayers are held for security and prosperity of the country at all places of worship.



Pakistan High Commissioner to UK, Wajid Shamsul Hasan hoisting Pakistani flag to commemorate Pakistan Day at Pakistan High Commission London.

Pakistan National Day celebrated in China

The 75th National Day of Pakistan was celebrated with immense enthusiasm and fervor amid a gathering of Pakistani community, officials of the Embassy, their families and other distinguished guests attending the ceremony. Similar ceremonies were also held simultaneously in Pakistan's Consulates in Shanghai, Chengdu, Guangzhou and Hong Kong.

Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Masood Khalid hoisted the national flag as the national anthem was played. He read out messages of the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan on the occasion. Students from the Pakistan Embassy College also sang national songs to mark the day. Ambassador Masood Khalid highlighted the historical significance of Pakistan Day and spoke about the evolution of

Pakistan-China all-weather and time-tested friendship—which moves from strength to strength with each passing day – during his interviews to Chinese media present on the occasion. He said Pakistan and China are strong strategic partners. The two countries are investing in strengthening economic ties and the people-to-people contacts characterized by warmth and sincerity. We are working hand in hand to pursue the common goals of economic development, well being of our people, and ensuring peace and security in the region. We are excited by the economic potential which our country offers, he said, adding that both the countries have a legacy of excellent cooperation in all sectors and enjoy an all-weather, time-tested friendship.



Pakistan's Ambassador to China Masood Khalid awarding 'Tangha-i-Pakistan' on behalf of President of Pakistan to renowned journalist from China Radio International, Madam Zhao Qiao in Beijing.



Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Masood Khalid hoists the flag at Pakistan National Day ceremony in Beijing.



Ambassador of Pakistan to USA, Jalil Abbas Jilani hoisting the National Flag on Pakistan Day at Embassy of Pakistan Washington, DC.

Pakistan Day celebrations at Washington DC

Embassy of Pakistan in Washington DC celebrated the 74th Pakistan Day with traditional zeal and fervour at an impressive ceremony at the Chancery.

Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani hoisted the national flag, national anthem was played on the occasion. The proceedings began with the recitation of the Holy Quran. Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani read out messages of the President and the Prime Minister. It concluded by prayers for progress, prosperity and solidarity of the

country.

Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani, while congratulating the attendees on 74th Pakistan Day said the government is focused on overcoming challenges faced by the country and there is significant positive turn in all sectors. He expressed his optimism about the future of Pakistan in coming days and months.

Diplomats, staff of the embassy and children attired in traditional Pakistani dresses attended the ceremony.

Pakistan Day celebrations in Jakarta

A large gathering of resident Pakistanis, Indonesian, embassy officials and their families gathered to celebrate the National day at the Embassy compound in Jakarta on 23 March. A group of over thirty children sang the national anthem, while officers of the Armed Forces, under training in Indonesia, presented the salute as the flag was hoisted by Ambassador Attiya Mahmood.

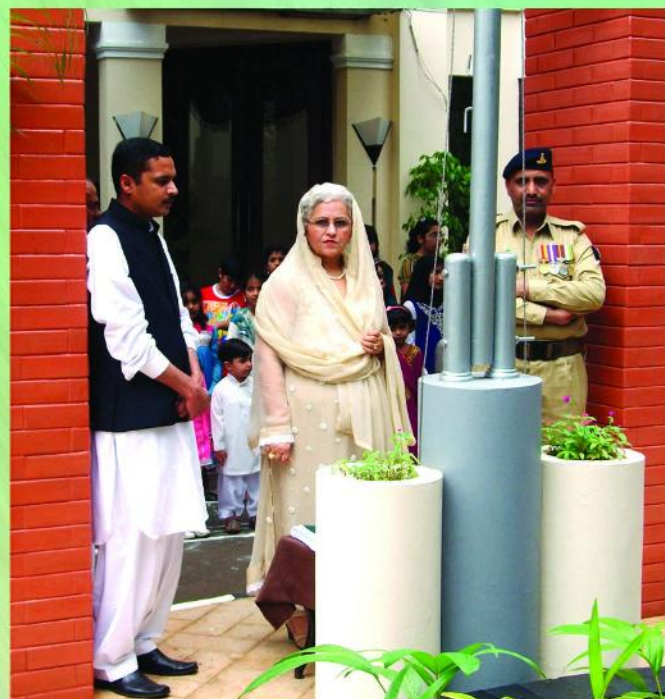
The message of the President, reaffirming our pledge to sincerely follow the principles of Unity, Faith and Discipline as a guiding force to face all the challenges and make collective efforts marked by patriotism, sincerity, commitment and honesty to help us steering this country towards greater prosperity and glory was read out by the Ambassador. Prime Minister's message that no effort will be spared to ensure respectable status for the country in the comity of the

nations and our government is committed to preserve our great cultural heritage and national identity and to make earnest efforts for bringing about economic and social revival in Pakistan was also read out by DHM.

While addressing the community, Ambassador Mahmood recalled the sacrifices of the people who lost their lives during the struggle for independence. It was imperative, she said, that Pakistan builds its future on the strong foundations on which it was created. Those ideals and principles form the backbone of the country and should not be forgotten. She also thanked the community for the support that they always extended to the Embassy. She encouraged them to strengthen their contacts with the Embassy so the two can work together for improving and enhancing relations between the two biggest Muslim Countries. The children also sang national

songs at the end of the function, when sweets were

distributed amongst them.



Pakistan's Ambassador to Jakarta, Attiya Mahmood hoisting Pakistani Flag at Pakistan National Day ceremony in Jakarta.

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**H.E. Mr. Rodolfo J. Martin Saravia, Ambassador of Argentina
& Dean of Diplomatic Corps being conferred Hilal-e-Pakistan by
H.E. Mr. Mamnoon Hussain, President of Pakistan**