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# DIPLOMATIC FOCUS

"Publishing from Pakistan, United Kingdom/EU & will be soon from UAE"

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## MOROCCO–PAKISTAN

# Royal Distinction

**Ambassador of His Majesty the King of Morocco H.E. Mr. Mustapha Salahdine commending the Special Secretary H.E. Mr. Mohammad Waheed Ul Hassan for his Royal Decoration of the insignia of the Alawite Commander Wissam as Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Morocco.**

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Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi hosted a reception in the honor of incoming and outgoing envoys to Pakistan. The event was held in the Nazara Lounge of Serena Hotel and attended by a large number of guests both from the diplomatic and the Pakistani community living in the capital.

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Editor in Chief: **Mian Akhtar Hussain**
Editor/Publisher: **Mian Fazal Elahi**
Editor in Chief **Mian Asadullah**
UK/EU Edition: 4 Ipswich Road SW 179 RH, London, +44-7961005954/ 2087694850
Executive Editor: **Muhammad Bilal Zafar**
Chairman Advisory Board: **Mr. Kanwar Muhammad Tariq**
Deputy Editor: **Muhammad Saeed Yousafzai**
News Editor: **Saba Sarfraz**
Sub Editor: **Bushra Tariq**
**Raheel Iqbal**
Creative Art Director: **M.Shahbaz Nawaz, RN Scanner Islamabad**
Art Director: **Sharyar Fazil**
Graphic Designer: **Jamil Ahmed**
**Mohsin Afzal**
Chief Photographer: **Ramzan Mughal**
Directors: **Muhammad Ali Zafar**
**Muhammad Hassan Zafar**
Business Development & Admin Executive: **Sidra Khan**

**Legal Advisor:** M. Hussain Shahbaz Advocate High Court
Mobile: +92-315-9994107
Mian Mobeen Akhtar Bureau Chief
Schengen States, Germany
00491783333912
Country Director Fazal Hussain 004540521485
Copenhagen Denmark Email: fazal1955@hotmail.com

**Javeed Iqbal Butt** Bureau Chief Australia, Newzealand
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**Resident Editors**
Eng. Moshin Ali 1st Floor Office No 50 Gulf Plazza Madina Street P.O B ox 65454 Jeddah 21556
Cell: +966-506389895

**Bureau Office**
Zahid Hussain Bureau Chief Washington DC/Merryland
Faisal Qavi Manzoor Hussain
Baltimore New York
Qaisar Masood Muhammad Athar
Northern Virginia Georgia
M. Jamil Rathore
Bureau Chief Jeddah KSA
Cell: +966-502583608
Israr Masood Mian Zafarullah
Sydney Australia Burewala

Mahtab Shehzad Shahid Akbar Toor
Wah Cantt Vehari

**Printer**
Roohani Art Press, Chughtai Plaza, Fazal-e-Haq Road, Blue Area Islamabad.
**Publisher**
Mian Fazal Elahi, House No 167, Street 58, Sector F-11/4 Islamabad.
Tel: +92-51-2101410, 2101411, News Room: +92-51-2101412
Fax: +92-51-2101410-2101413
Mobile: +92-345-5565552, +92-322-5565552
Email: mianfazalelahi@gmail.com, diplomaticfocus.isb.pk@gmail.com

Karachi Office: Mobile: +92-321-5558221
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Published from Islamabad

Mian Fazal Elahi

Complete cleansing the country from dark forces of terrorism sooner rather than later has been the unflinching resolve of Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif and he has repeatedly demonstrated this through his actions while leading from the front. In his visit to Shawal he gave the go-ahead for the final phase of operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan. This critical phase will see the soldiers chasing and hunting the terrorists in deeply forested ravines. Shawal Valley and Datta Khel are very near to international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The operation in this difficult terrain is crucial and of great significance as the outcome of it will determine country's future direction. There is no doubt on the valour, courage and skill of Pakistani soldiers as since the launch of Zarb-e-Azb operation back in June 2014, they have achieved tremendous successes against terrorists and their facilitators and abettors. Though the terrorists emerge with isolated terror attacks every now and then to make their presence felt, yet there is a marked reduction in terror attacks over last one and a half years and, of course, their back has been smashed and sanctuaries dismantled to a great deal. The international community has also applauded the successes achieved by soldiers in Zarb-e-Azb operation which has been dubbed as biggest and well coordinated operation ever conducted against terrorists. In this perspective, Pakistani people are sure their brave soldiers will stand the test of time and emerge victorious in this last and decisive phase of operation as well to ensure a peaceful and bright future for the country. As the operation Zarb-e-Azb is a war of survival, responsibility rests with whole nation including children, men and women to contribute towards eradication of terrorism.

On other side, Mr. Aziz give a strong message Mr. Kerry that Pakistan will not accept any unilateral curb on its nuclear programme and that any reduction should apply to India as well and the US should also consider Pakistan's concerns on the growing weapon disparity. He also talked about a contentious sale of F-16 fighter jets, which would strengthen Pakistan's ability to mount counter-terrorist operations and promote regional stability. Mr. Obama's administration should do more to bring Congress fully in the picture about the positive steps taken by Pakistan to further support the mutual interests and the very significant change in ground realities that has taken place in the past two-and-a-half years.

Mian Assad ullah

## Important Announcement

It has been announced for the general information that Mr. Mian Assad Ullah has been appointed as Editor in Chief of the Monthly "Diplomatic Focus" for the UK/EU Edition. He is entitled to participate official /non-officials diplomatic(engagements, events, national days, social evenings/gatherings, press conferences/interviews and can be contacted for all kinds of stuff including articles, supplements and advertisements etc). It is requested to all Diplomatic missions and government high officials of UK, please contact with Mr. Mian Assad Ullah on His mailing address, 4 Ipswich Road, SW17 9RH, London. Cell number:+44-7961005954/ 2087694850, Email: uk.diplomaticfocus@gmail.com, assadmian1@gmail.com

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DIPLOMATIC FOCUS
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MONTHLY OVERSEAS ISLAMABAD

# Envoys designate presented their credentials to H.E. Mamnoon Hussain President of The Islamic Republic of Pakistan

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

Envoys designate of Iraq, India, Czech Republic, Afghanistan, Thailand, Ireland and Cambodia presented their credentials to President Mamnoon Hussain at an impressive ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Earlier, each envoy-designate arrived at the main gate of the Aiwan-e-Sadr in a horse driven carriage. On the occasion, the National Anthem of Pakistan and their respective countries were played and the envoys designate were also presented Guard of Honour.

Later, the Ambassadors and High Commissioners separately called on the President. Speaking on the occasion, the President said that Pakistan is desirous of further promoting friendly and brotherly relations with all countries particularly with its neighbours for peace, stability and prosperity in the region. The President stated that Pakistan offers great investment opportunities adding that international investors should take advantage of its investor friendly policies. Talking about Pakistan's efforts against terrorism, the President said that Pakistan has rendered great sacrifices in fight against terrorism and is committed to end this menace. He stated that Operation Zarb-e-Azb is progressing successfully emphasizing that the operation would continue till elimination of the last terrorist.

The President felicitated the newly appointed Ambassadors and High Commissioners to Pakistan and hoped that they would work for further cementing the existing ties of their respective countries with Pakistan. The President also wished the newly appointed envoys a comfortable and pleasant stay in Pakistan.

Ambassadors and High Commissioners who presented their credentials included Dr. Ali Yassin Mohammed Karim, Ambassador of Iraq, Mr. Gautam H. Bambawale, High-Commissioner of India, Mr. Jan Fury, Ambassador of Czech Republic, Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal, Ambassador of Afghanistan, Mr. Suchart Liengsaengthong, Ambassador of Thailand, Mr. Brendan Ward, High-Commissioner of Ireland (Resident in Turkey) and Mr. Pichkhun Panha, Ambassador of Cambodia (Resident in India).

*Nishan-i-Imtiaz:*

# The people of Pakistan & Turkey are bound together

## In strong fraternal relations based on shared religious, cultural and historical affinities: President Mamnoon Hussain

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

President Mamnoon Hussain conferred the award of Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) on Admiral Bulent Bostangolu, Commander of the Turkish Naval Forces in a special ceremony held here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

The President decorated Admiral Bulent Bostangolu, Commander of the Turkish Naval Forces in recognition of his outstanding services and contributions in deepening and strengthening relations between the navies of Pakistan and Turkey for enhancing strategic cooperation between the two countries.

The special investiture ceremony was attended by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Mohammad Zakaullah, Ambassador of Turkey to Pakistan, Secretary Defence and senior civil and military officers.

Later, Admiral Bulent Bostangolu called on President Mamnoon Hussain and discussed matters of mutual interest.

The President congratulated Commander of the Turkish Naval Forces on being conferred with Nishan-i-Imtiaz (M) and appreciated his services in strengthening relations between the two brotherly countries.

President Mamnoon Hussain said that the people of Pakistan and Turkey are bound together in strong fraternal relations based on shared religious, cultural and historical affinities.

The President lauded the constructive role and efforts of Turkey in ushering in peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Admiral Bulent Bostangolu, Commander of the Turkish Naval Forces thanked the President and the Government of Pakistan on being awarded with NI (M) and hoped that bilateral relations between the two countries would be taken to new heights in future.

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Meeting Emir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani at Diwan-E-Emiri in Doha, Qatar

# Pakistan values its bilateral relations with Qatar: *PM Nawaz*

By Saba Sarfraz

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif held a meeting with Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani in Doha. They discussed ways to enhance cooperation in different fields including energy, trade, investment and defence. The two sides also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

In his remarks during the meeting, Nawaz Sharif said Pakistan offers attractive incentives for foreign investment and Qatar Investment Authority should explore the potential in different sectors particularly power generation projects.

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Meeting Emir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani at Diwan-E-Emiri in Doha, Qatar

# Qatar is second home for Pakistanis: Emir of Qatar

He said that Pakistan values its bilateral relations with Qatar and both countries enjoy friendly relations. He said Pakistan is a suitable country for investment and quantum of investment should be enhanced.

On the occasion, the premier termed the recent LNG Agreement with Qatar as a breakthrough for Pakistan's self-sufficiency in energy.

Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani on this occasion thanked the prime minister for visit and said that Qatar is second home for Pakistanis. He said Pakistanis have contributed substantially for the development of Qatar.

The two leaders also witnessed a spectacular air show of JF-17 Thunder and Super Mashshak aircraft at Doha Airbase.

Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force and Major General (Pilot) Ghanem bin Shaheen Al Ghanem, Chief of General Staff, Qatar Armed Forces were also present on the occasion. Senior government and military officials of both countries also witnessed the aerial display. It was a momentous occasion when PAF JF-17 Thunder and Super Mushshak aircraft presented spectacular aerial display in the skies of Qatar for the first time.

Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force briefed both the

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Being Received by Prime Minister of Qatar H.E. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasir Bin Khalifa Al-Thani at Hamad International Airport, Doha .

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Being Received by Prime Minister of Qatar H.E. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasir Bin Khalifa Al-Thani at Hamad International Airport, Doha .

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Observing Guard of Honour at Diwan-E-Emiri in Doha, Qatar.

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif addressing Pakistan community at Doha.

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Emir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani wintnessing the MoU;s signing ceremony at Diwan-E-Emiri in Doha.

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Emir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Bin Hamad Al Thani witnessing the MoU's signing ceremony at Diwan-E-Emiri in Doha, Qatar.

### PM Nawaz Visited Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visited the Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum, which is one of the most unique museums in the Middle East. The museum has the collection of Qatar heritage, Islamic art and vehicles including over 15,000 rare pieces from all the continents. It is a treasure of Arabic manuscripts, fine arts, unique fossils, scriptures, vintage cars, pre-historic figurines, Islamic textiles, currency and rare coins.

dignitaries about the capabilities of these indigenously manufactured aircraft. Both the dignitaries lauded the performance of PAF aircraft and later on met with the PAF contingent. 02 JF-17 Thunder and 02 Super Mushshak aircraft landed at Qatar for static and aerial display.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also held a meeting along with his delegation CEO Qatar

**Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasir bin Khalifa Al-Thani witnessed a spectacular air show of JF-17 Thunder and Super Mashshak aircraft at Doha Airbase**

Investment Authority, Shiekh Abdullah bin Muhammad Al-Thani.

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif invited Qatari investors to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan with particular focus on energy related projects, infrastructure development, and consumer based industry.

The Prime Minister invited Qatari Petroleum and Gas Companies to invest in Oil and Gas exploration and production sector of Pakistan. He said Pakistan is an agricultural country having vast fertile lands and invited Qatari businessmen to invest in the agriculture and livestock sector.

The Prime Minister said Pakistan is wholeheartedly focused on expanding its physical infrastructure such as roads, railways, educational institutions, hospitals and industry, adding that Pakistan offers most attractive incentives for FDI in these fields.

He said Pakistan attaches immense importance to its close and cordial relations with Qatar. "We are desirous of promoting, diversifying and strengthening relations in all fields of bilateral relations," the Prime Minister added.

## Qatari investors would explore the vast economic opportunities in diverse fields in Pakistan: CEO Qatar Investment Authority

He said the traditional and friendly political relations provide an excellent foundation for building mutually beneficial economic, commercial, trade and investment linkages. The Prime Minister expressed his satisfaction at the progress made during the recent visit of a delegation of Nebras Power to Pakistan. A delegation from Nebras Power, an investment company in power sector, working under the overall umbrella of Qatar Investment, conducted due diligence in Pakistan in September 2015 in connection with LNG based power projects.

CEO Qatar Investment Authority Sheikh Abdullah bin Muhammad Al-Thani lauding the liberal economic policy and favourable environment for investment in Pakistan said that Qatari investors would explore the vast economic opportunities in diverse fields in Pakistan.

During his visit he also met with head of CEO Qatar Airways Mr. Akbar Ali Bakar and discussed the matter of mutual interests.

Prime Miniser Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in meeting CEO Qatar Investment Authority Shiekh Abdullah Bin Muhammad Al-Thani at Doha.

PM Nawaz also addressed with Pakistani community in Qatar and appreciated their role for the development of Qatar and their motherland.

Finance Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Special Assistant to the PM on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi and Pakistan Ambassador to Qatar Shahzad Ahmed were also present during these meetings.

Earlier, on his arrival at Doha airport, PM Nawaz Sharif was received by his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Abdullah Bin Nasser Bin Khalifa Al-Thani along with other officials.

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visited Shahaniya Museum in Doha, Qatar.

# Pakistan & Qatar share brotherly relations: Qatar

## General Raheel Sharif Discusses Regional Security with Emir of Qatar

**Facilitation of reconciliation process in Afghanistan through Qatar office was discussed in detail in meeting of Gen. Raheel with Emir and PM of Qatar**

By Saba Sarfraz

Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif on an official visit to Qatar separately called on His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of the state of Qatar, His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah Bin Naseer Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Qatar. COAS also held separate meetings with Minister of Defence affairs, Doctor Khalid Bin Muhammad Al-Attiya and Major General Muhammad Bin Ali Al-Ghanim, Commander Qatari Emiri Land Force (QELF).

During the meetings with Emir and PM, matters related to regional security and enhanced bilateral defence cooperation came under discussion. Facilitation of reconciliation process in Afghanistan through Qatar office was discussed in detail.

Qatari leadership reiterated that Pakistan and Qatar share brotherly relations which over a period of time are transforming into strategic and mutually beneficial ties. While expressing their satisfaction at the level of defence relations between armed forces of both countries, both sides underscored the importance of further enhancing the cooperation.

The leadership of Qatar acknowledged Pakistan's role in bringing about regional stability and appreciated Pakistan Army's efforts in countering terrorism and bringing peace in the region.

Col. General Zhasuzakov Saken Adilkhanovich, First Deputy Defence Minister & Chief of General Staff of Kazakhstan called on Prime Miniter Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House, Islamabad

# Countries of the region need to work for promoting regional trade and investment: PM Nawaz

By Monitoring Desk

Colonel General Zhasuzakov Saken Adikhanovich, First Deputy Defence Minister/ Chief of General Staff of Armed Forces of the Republic of Khazakhistan called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House.

The Prime Minister said that Pakistan values close and cordial relations with Kazakhstan. Both the countries have immense mutual good will and understanding to bring both the countries even closer, said the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister stressed that countries of the region need to work for promoting regional trade and investment, which has the potential to change the destiny of the entire region. China Pakistan Economic Corridor, developed with the help of China, will be beneficial for all Central Asian States including Kazakhastan, added the Prime Minister.

**China Pakistan Economic Corridor, developed with the help of China, will be beneficial for all Central Asian States including Kazakhastan: PM Nawaz**

Colonel General Zhasuzakov Saken Adikhanovich thanked the Prime Minister and expressed the confidence that mutual relations between the two countries will be further strengthened with the continued efforts from both sides.

The delegation included Rear Admiral Zhandarbek Zhanzakov, Commander-in-Chief of Naval Forces, Lieutenant General Oleg Bizhanov, Head of Military Intelligence, Lieutenant Colonel Olzhas Khussainov, Deputy Head of International Cooperation Department and ambassador of Kazakhstan.

Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Defence, Lt Gen (R) Alam Khattak, Secretary Defence and other senior government officials were also present during the meeting.

Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for Defence Production shaking hand with Colonel General Zhasuzakov Saken Adilkhanovich, First Deputy Defence Minister of Kazakhstan in Ministry of Defence Production Rawalpindi

# Qatar signs $16 billion LNG deal with Pakistan

By M. Bilal Zafar

Pakistan's gas reserves are fast depleting due to increasing demand in domestic, power, industrial and commercial sectors. For the past few years now we have had to face gas load shedding every winter due to increased demand. Power sector's over-reliance on gas has also interlocked shortage of gas with shortage of power. Thus there was an urgent need to import gas to meet our demand-supply gap.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif lead a high-level delegation on a two-day visit to the State of Qatar, during which the two countries was signed a number of agreements in various fields including a long-term sale-purchase agreement of LNG.

## THE ACHIEVEMENT

Pakistan signed an agreement of billions of dollars with Qatar for importing liquefied natural gas (LNG) for 15 years. The Qatar Liquified Gas Company Limited would sell Pakistan State Oil Company Limited, LNG for a period from 2016 to 2031. The $16 billion sale and purchase agreement was signed by Petroleum Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi for Pakistan and Chairman Qatar gas Board of Directors Saad Sherida in Doha with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani witnessing the ceremony.

According to agreement 3.75 million tons of LNG would be imported annually on a government-to-government basis, at comparative rates, which would meet close to 20 per cent energy requirements of Pakistan. The LNG project is a game changer for Pakistan and will save the country more than one billion dollars per year when expensive energy is replaced with this cheaper and cleaner fuel.

Liquefied natural gas as a fuel for power generation over furnace oil is more efficient in power generation and has much lower operational and maintenance costs and thus is friendlier on the economy in the form of much lower electricity tariff for the masses (9 cents/kWh for RLNG versus 20 cents/kWh for diesel).

This is the reason the world is turning towards LNG. Global and emerging economies such as China, Korea, Japan, India, Thailand, Indonesia, European Union and Brazil ensure LNG remains part of its energy mix. Japan imports 80 million tonnes of LNG every year (MTPA), India imports 15 MTPA.

In addition to being cleaner and safer fuel, LNG import should be recognised as the fastest solution to ease the burden on Pakistan's economy. LNG-based power production will cost $9.5 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) as compared to energy produced through diesel, which costs approximately $18 cents per kWh while energy produced through local gas costs approximately $7.5 cents per kWh.

In Pakistan, natural gas accounts for 35pc of all power generation, 23.8pc of industrial use, 15.6pc fertiliser, 5.4pc CNG and 18.1pc household uses. Pakistan currently stands with a gas shortfall of two billion cubic feet per day (BCFD) or 33pc of its total gas demand. Pakistan's indigenous gas supply is expected to deplete to 1,500 MMSCFD in 2030 (from 4,000 MMSCFD today) and the demand/supply gap is expected to increase to a mammoth 7,000 MSCFD in the next 15 years while local gas is fast depleting.

The cost of imported fuel alternates of local gas is $17.6/mmBtu for LPG, $10.62/mmBtu for furnace oil, $20.03/mmBtu for high speed diesel and $9.37/mmBtu for RLNG. The economic cost of this gas shortage is incurring Pakistan losses of up to one billion dollar per year, as the country is forced to import expensive furnace oil, kerosene, LPG and diesel to make up for energy requirements.

Around 1,200-1500 MW of power generation capacity is under 35pc utilisation because of unavailability of gas and the government's inability to bear the fiscal impact of running these plants on diesel or furnace oil which are expensive fuels.

### Bridging shortfall

Pakistan produces 4 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day (bcfd) against the demand for over 6 bcfd. The government considers LNG as a fast-track solution to the energy shortages. Under the proposed arrangement with Qatar, the long-term contract will be for 15 years, but it will be renegotiated after 10 years. The two sides can end the contract if they fail to develop consensus over the price.

Past governments had made five attempts and floated tenders to set up an LNG terminal and import the gas but failed. According to the officials, the country has suffered a loss of $3 billion due to delay in LNG imports as it has to rely on expensive furnace oil and diesel to run power plants. Now, the country will be able to save $2.5 billion a year when LNG is consumed in power plants.

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Emir of Qatar H.H Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani Witnessing the Mou's Signing Ceremony at Diwan-E-Emiri in Doha, Qatar.

Owing to the poor energy mix, the major fuel source for power generation is oil, which results in piling up of circular debt. Since long, governments have pumped trillions of rupees into the energy sector to clear the debt and the present PML-N administration also cleared Rs.480 billion worth of debt after coming to power in June 2013. Still, the circular debt is haunting the energy sector and the national economy is losing three percentage points every year due to the power crisis.

However, the use of LNG in power plants will help to tackle the debt. The country will have a sustainable energy solution following a long-term deal with Qatar. It will help to eliminate or substantially reduce power outages, which are damaging the industrial sector and crippling the lives of ordinary citizens. The latest Economic Survey of Pakistan said the country's gas demand-supply gap would be above four billion cubic feet/day (bcfd) in the next few years.

Domestic sector tends to overcome natural gas shortage by using LPG or kerosene as substitutes. But both fuels are unsafe and expensive. For power sector, LNG is a cost-effective option, which is more efficient in power generation with lower operational, maintenance and transportation costs than other fuels.

The federal government is considering converting its inoperative electricity generation plants running on High Speed Diesel (HSD) or Furnace Oil in Sindh and Punjab to Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to boost power generation capacity. Most of the big electricity plants with diesel/LSFO/HSFO as backup fuel in Punjab including SAF, Orient, Hallmore, Sapphire, KotAddu Power Company Limited (KAPCO), Rousch (Pakistan) Power Limited (RPPL) and Fauji Kabir wala Power Company Ltd (FKPCL) were not producing electricity at full capacity because of gas shortage or expensive alternative fuel rates for many years.

The initial plan of the government is to run the inoperative electricity plants at their full capacity through imported LNG, which can easily be provided to these plants through Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) or Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) at cheap rates, these power plants can make electricity at half the cost of HSD or other fuels.

### Transparency in LNG deal

The deal with Qatar looks better when compared with a contract signed by India with the energy-rich Gulf state. Pakistan will buy LNG from Qatar at 13.37% of Brent crude price, which amounts to $4.680 per million British thermal units (mmbtu) when oil is sold for $35 per barrel. This also includes port charges of $320,000 per vessel.

On the other hand, India is buying LNG at 12.66% of Brent crude price plus $0.6 constant and $0.33 shipping cost. This is equal to $5.361 per mmbtu based on $35-per-barrel crude price. Average re-gasification charges in Pakistan stand at $0.66 per mmbtu whereas in India these are $0.90 per unit.

Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House, Islamabad

# Pakistan values its relations with the Netherlands

## both bilaterally and within the context of the European Union: PM Nawaz

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, who is also UN Secretary General's Special Advocate (UNSGSA) for Inclusive Finance for Development, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House Islamabad.

While welcoming the Queen, the Prime Minister said that Pakistan values its relations with the Netherlands, both bilaterally and within the context of the European Union. The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation on Her Majesty's devotion to promoting Financial Inclusion for Development. Queen

Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands called on Prime Miniser Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House, Islambad.

## Our government is prioritizing Financial Inclusion as a national objective through the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) and Pakistan is committed to ensure successful implementation of the Strategy: PM Nawaz

Presidnet Mamnoon Hussain shaking hands with UN Secretary General's Special ADVOCATE or inclusive finance for Development her Majesty Queen Maxima of Netherlands at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad.

Maxima's visit to Pakistan would provide an added stimulus to all stakeholders to achieve the goal with full zeal and spirit, the Prime Minister stated. The Prime Minister said that present government is prioritizing Financial Inclusion as a national objective through the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) and Pakistan is committed to ensure successful implementation of the Strategy.

The Prime Minister stated that the development agenda of the present government is based on the principle of inclusive economic growth and use of digital technology is part of the Financial Inclusion. Prime Minister's Youth Loan Scheme is yielding significant dividends in encouraging sustainable inclusive growth by investing in the country's human capital and empowering women, the Prime Minister added.

Queen Maxima of the Netherlands appreciated the successful march of Pakistan's economy under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and reiterated support for Pakistan's economic revival. While appreciating Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's efforts in ensuring use of digital technology in Financial Inclusion for Development, the Queen said that greater

UN Secretary General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Fianance for Development, Queen Maxima of Netherlands along with MoS and Chairperson BISP, MNA Marvi Memon Inaugurating an initiative BISP " BISP E-COMMERCE" during her visit to BISP filed office in Rawalpindi.

access of women to Smart phones across the country will help a great deal in empowering women in Pakistan.

The delegation included Ms. Jeannette Seppen, Ambassador of Netherlands to Pakistan, Mr. Neil Buhne, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Mr. Herman Quarles van Ufford, Dy. Director General, Ministry of General Affairs Netherlands, Mr. Joep Roest, Advisor at the UNSGSA Office, New York, Mr. Stephen Rasmussen, Head of Tech & Business Model Innovation Team (CGAP), Lt. Col. Joost de Brujin, Aide-de-Camp to Her Majesty, Ms. Maliha Hamid Hussain, UNDP Consultant.

Mr. Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Finance, Ms. Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Mr. Tariq Fatemi, SAPM on Foreign Affairs, Ms. Anusha Rehman, Minister of State for IT, Ms. Marvi Memon, Chairperson BISP, Dr. Waqar Masood Khan, Secretary Finance and Mr. Ashraf Wathra, Governor State Bank of Pakistan were also present during the meeting.

Queen of Netherland, Her Majesty Queen Maxima along with senior PML (N) leader Ms. Maryam Nawaz Sharif also visited First Women Bank Limited in Islamabad. Queen Maxima and Ms. Maryam Nawaz were briefed by Ms. Tahira Raza, President First Women Bank Limited on the opportunities of financial services for the people especially women entrepreneurs.

Ms. Maryam Nawaz and Queen Maxima also interacted with the female beneficiaries of First Women Bank Limited under the umbrella of PM youth business loan. So far 156 loans worth Rs 187 million have been sanctioned under PM youth business loan scheme through First Women Bank.

Later on Her Majesty Queen Maxima and Ms. Maryam Nawaz also interacted with the loan beneficiaries who had put up stalls showcasing their relevant successful business ventures. The Queen felt very happy to see the vibrant, energetic and thriving female entrepreneurs of Pakistan, who are showing their mettle in running successful businesses from boutique to dairy farming.

Queen Maxima also attended meeting of the National Finance Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) Council. Finance Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired the meeting.

Finance Secretary, Dr. Waqar Masood, Governor State Bank, Ashraf Mahmood Wathra, senior officials of the SECP, PTA, FBR, Secretaries of Finance of Provincial Governments were present on the occasion.

The visiting dignitary was briefed about the vision and targets of National Financial Inclusion Strategy, its goals and objectives along with the role of the NFIS Council. It was

## Queen Maxima of the Netherlands appreciated the successful march of Pakistan's economy under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and reiterated support for Pakistan's economic revival

informed that the Strategy adopted in 2015 envisions that individuals and firms can access and use a range of quality payments, savings, credit and insurance services which meet their needs with dignity and fairness.

The meeting was informed that formal financial access in Pakistan has improved remarkably since 2008 as per recent "Access to Finance (A2F) Survey 2015" conducted by State Bank of Pakistan. According to the survey percentage of financial inclusion has risen from 12% in 2008 to 23% in 2015. The percentage of women using banking services has increased from 4% in 2008 to 11% in 2015.

The meeting was apprised that the Financial Inclusion strategy particularly aims to enhance the percentage of adult population having bank accounts to 50% by the year 2020. The meeting was also informed that preparation of NFIS Action Plan by Technical Committees and implementation of World Banks Country Support Program are next steps towards Financial Inclusion Objectives.

Queen Maxima appreciated the measures taken by Pakistan for promotion of financial inclusion saying Pakistan is on the right track in this regard.

President Mamnoon Hussain met Queen Maxima of Netherlands and discussed matters of mutual interest. During the meeting in Islamabad, President Mamnoon Hussain said that welfare of masses is the cornerstone of governments development policy.He said that the government has put the economy on the right track through prudent policies.

The Queen Maxima appreciated Pakistan's stance regarding terrorism and said the cooperation with Pakistan will continue for improving the economic situation of common man.

Queen Maxima was on three day official visit to Pakistan with other high officials and this visit was conducted on the invitation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Queen of Netherlands, Her Majesty Maxima along with Senior PML (N) leader Ms, Maryam Nawaz Sharif during their visit to First Women Bank Limited in Islamabad.

Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Queen Maxima of Netherlands and World Bank President, Jim Yong KIM attending launching ceremony of Universal Finance inclusion in Islamabad.

# Parliament house switched on green

**Pakistan's parliament is now the first parliament in the world to be completely powered by solar energy**

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

Pakistan's parliament is now the first parliament in the world to be completely powered by solar energy.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the solar-powered Parliament House.

"I appreciate the initiatives of National Assembly speaker and Senate chairman for making the country's parliament the first in the world to be run entirely on solar power," the premier said while addressing the inauguration ceremony.

According to Speaker NA Ayaz Sadiq that the solar panels in the house generate 80 MW of electricity, 62 MW of which are consumed by the National Assembly and 18 MW are contributed to the national grid.

The first 'Net Metering' license in the country was also issued to the National Assembly by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority.

A Net Metering system helps in delivering and adding surplus production of energy to the national grid. The project is also environment friendly because it reduces emissions of hazardous gases.

Speaker Sadiq acknowledged the assistance by the Chinese government in supporting the solar project. The solar project was launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during the former's visit to Pakistan last year.

Knesset, the Israeli parliament also generates its own solar power but only 10 pc of its energy needs are met through solar electricity.

According to an estimate by the National Assembly Secretariat, the switch to solar power is expected to save Rs28 million per year while the cost of the project is Rs280.61 million. The project was completed in seven months at a cost of Rs280.61 million.

The power demand at the legislative house rises to 2.3MW in summers due to the additional load of air conditioners and other cooling equipment.

The solar electrification of the parliament building will save approximately 2,500 tons of carbon dioxide per annum with a carbon credit of Rs3.4 million per annum, if the project gets registered under the Clean Development Mechanism. Parliament house was inaugurated on May 28, 1986, the Parliament House was designed by US architect Edward Durel Stone. The five-storey building has a total floor area of around 598,000 sq feet. The solar panels have been installed on the roof of the building.

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif along with Chairman Senate, Speaker National Assembly and Chinese Ambassador switched-on the Solar Plant at Parliament House.

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is briefed on the Solar Plant Installed at Parliament House.

# The two countries enjoy mutually beneficial relations: H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas

## PAKISTAN HIGH COMMISSIONER HOSTS DINNER IN HONOUR OF BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER (DESIGNATE) TO PAKISTAN

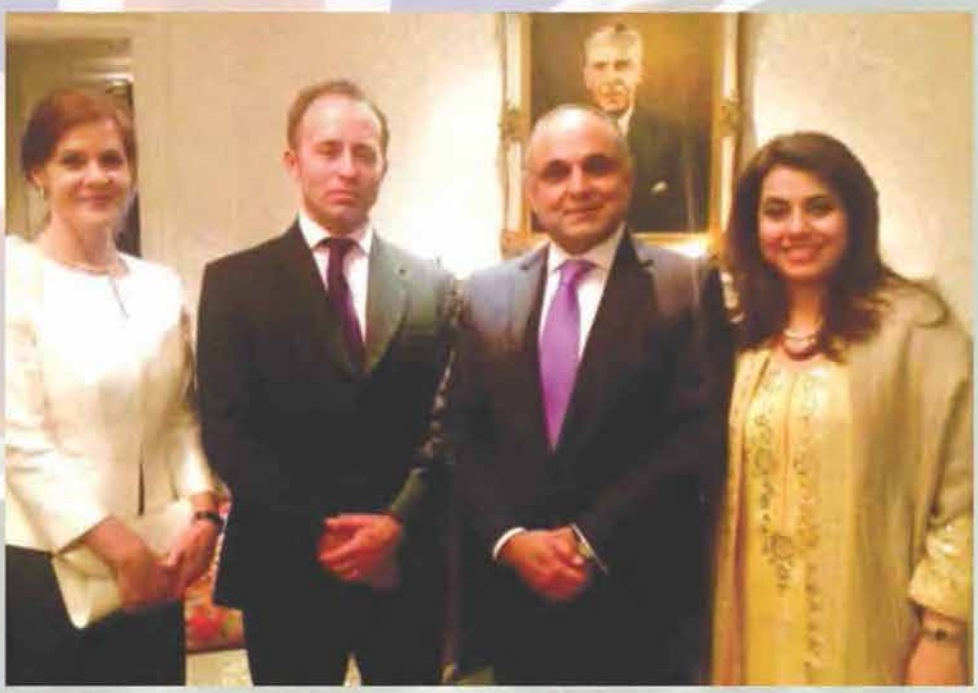
By Mian Asadullah

H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK hosted a dinner in honour of H.E. Thomas Drew, British High Commissioner (Designate), to Pakistan, at his official residence in London.

The High Commissioner felicitated Mr. Thomas Drew on his important appointment as the new High Commissioner for Pakistan. He stated that the two countries enjoy mutually beneficial relations and hoped that Mr. Drew's appointment would further strengthen the ties.

Mr. Thomas Drew thanked High Commissioner Abbas for hosting him before assuming his new responsibilities in Islamabad. He shared his vision of further promoting the bilateral relations and people to people linkages. The High Commissioner (Designate) added he was looking forward to his new assignment.

The High Commissioner expressed best wishes to Mr. Thomas Drew in his new role.



Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK and Mr Thomas Drew, British High Commissioner (Designate), to Pakistan along with their spouses at his residence.

# CPEC will benefit the entire region: Tariq Fatemi

Syed Tariq Fatemi, Pakistan's special assistant to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, paid a three-day visit to China. Pakistan is an important partner in China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative. Global Times (GT) reporter talked with Fatemi about matters of bilateral and regional cooperation during his recent visit.

**Q: How is the current situation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)?**

**Fatemi:** The CPEC is part of the vision of "One Belt, One Road" that President Xi Jinping has been presenting to the nation. It is a project that will not only bring prosperity to Pakistan, but also benefit the entire region.

As stated by Xi in his speech to the parliament of Pakistan in April 2015, the project includes three major areas of activity. One relates to energy projects, the second relates to infrastructure projects, and the third relates to the port of Gwadar.

**Peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan should be promoted and assisted by the quadrilateral consultative group**

The current total package is of about $46 billion, of which $35 billion are envisaged for energy projects, in which Chinese companies will collaborate with Pakistani companies to set up power plants, because power shortage is the biggest challenge that Pakistan is facing currently. The other $11 billion will be loans extended by Chinese financial institutions.

Now the projects will bring visible transformation in Pakistan.

**Q: Can you give us more details about building the port of Gwadar into an economic harbor?**

**Fatemi:** A major element of interest for both China and Pakistan is the upgrading of the Gwadar deep port facilities. The location of

Gwadar makes itself an ideal port for all-weather operation as it sits at the mouth of the Gulf.

The port is also ideally suited for both entry and exit of items that are of interest to Pakistan, to China and to the entire region.

We are creating an entire industrial zone around it, because the cost of manufacture in Pakistan is much lower than it is in China. Your production costs will decrease and our own people will also gain employment.

China and Pakistan will jointly build an international airport in Gwadar. Sadly, disturbances take place everywhere. In Pakistan, we recognize that we have to take special measures to ensure the safety and security of Chinese friends and China's enterprises.

We decide to create a special force of highly trained people, who will be specially trained, and we will have a special organization backing them, whose task will be to provide the necessary safety and security to the Chinese who are working in Pakistan and Chinese enterprises. The special force will be roughly about 10,000 people.

We want to take every initiative to give the necessary degree of comfort and ease to those Chinese that have come to Pakistan.

**Q: The first quadrilateral group meeting tried to advance the reconciliation of Afghanistan. China and Pakistan share many stakes in the Afghan peace process. How are China and Pakistan cooperating on this issue?**
**Fatemi:** Both Pakistan and China are neighbors of Afghanistan, Pakistan and China are also neighbors. It means that we are all interested in the peace and stability of the entire region.

China has always been a powerful factor in promoting peace and stability in the region.

With US, NATO and Western forces leaving Afghanistan, we have to sit down and determine how we have to promote peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan.

We have told Afghan President Ashraf Ghani that he is the legitimate elected head of the state of Afghanistan. He and his team have to determine what initiative they want to take, so any proposal for regional peace and stability should be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led.

As neighbors and friends of Afghanistan, we are willing and ready to play a supporting role.

Ghani has to lead the way and we are there to provide the necessary support and assistance.

During a conference of countries that have interests in Afghanistan, which is known as "the Heart of Asia" that took place in Islamabad on December 10, 2015, it was decided that peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan should be promoted and assisted by the quadrilateral consultative group, consisting of China, the US, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

**Q: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a surprise visit to Pakistan in late December. How should we view this visit?**
**Fatemi:** It was a surprise, unofficial and informal visit by Modi. He arrived on a day that happened to be the birthday of Pakistan's prime minister, so it was a very warm and friendly atmosphere.

Relations between Pakistan and India are essential, not for one but for both countries.

The prime minister's policies regarding India are very well known. There is nothing hidden about it. He publicly says he wants good relations with India and this has been his belief for many years. Every time he has come to power, he reaches out to the Indian leadership. He tries to initiate a dialogue process with India.

The important thing is that if there is even the slightest hint of an interest in cooperative relations coming out of India, we are ready to respond.

We are also hoping that very soon the meeting at the level of the foreign sectaries will also take place that will mean the beginning of formal dialogue. Neither country can afford a relationship of tension and hostility.

**Q: Pakistan and India hope to become full members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The organization will have its annual gathering in Tashkent in June. What does Pakistan expect from the SCO?**
**Fatemi:** Pakistan has been an observer in the SCO for nearly 10 years. We feel that our geographical location, political orientation, economic linkages and cultural and historic ties all lead to the conclusion that Pakistan deserves to be a member of this organization.

The issues that led to the establishment of the organization are also those in which Pakistan plays an important role: counter terrorism, counter money laundering, and promoting connectivity and economic cooperation.

*Courtesy by Global Times*

**A major element of interest for both China and Pakistan is the upgrading of the Gwadar deep port facilities. The location of Gwadar makes itself an ideal port for all-weather operation as it sits at the mouth of the Gulf. The port is also ideally suited for both entry and exit of items that are of interest to Pakistan, to China and to the entire region. We are creating an entire industrial zone around it, because the cost of manufacture in Pakistan is much lower than it is in China. Your production costs will decrease and our own people will also gain employment.**

# Lahore Mega Leather Show 2016

Italy is present with its expertise and technology! Ambassador of Italy visited the Italian stalls at the exhibition and gave opening remarks at seminar on innovations and new technologies for the leather industry.

Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico

ITA

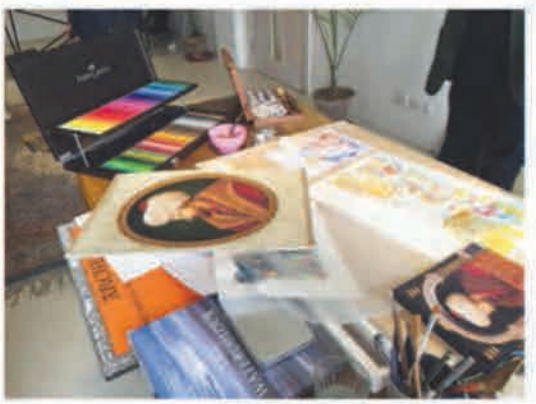
ITALIAN TRADE AGENCY

ICE - Agenzia per la promozione all'estero e l'internazionalizzazione delle imprese italiane

UNIONE

# Embassy of Italy signed a MoU with APBF

Lahore and Faisalabad are two of the major industrial areas in Pakistan. Ambassador Stefano Pontecorvo visited both cities for meetings with the local business community. He visited Italian and Italy-related companies, including members of the Italian Development Committee, Universities (LUMS in Lahore and University of Agriculture in Faisalabad) and the Chamber of Commerce in Faisalabad. Ambassador called on CM Punjab, Shahbaz Sharif, and they together set the stage for further cooperation on trade and investment. The Embassy signed a MoU with APBF (All Pakistan Business Forum) to mutually support Italian and Pakistani Business community.



Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK Syed Ibne Abbas with Chief of The Naval Staff Admiral Zakaullah, at his residence in London

# High Commissioner to UK hosts dinner in honour of Admiral Zakaullah

By Mian Asadullah

H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, hosted a dinner in honour of Admiral Zakaullah, Chief of the Naval Staff of Pakistan at his official residence. The dinner was attended by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zembellas, General Charles Vyvyan, Rear Admiral Amjad Hussain and various key MoD staff.

In his welcome remarks, the High Commissioner welcomed the guests and thanked British authourities for continued high level strategic relationship with Pakistan. He termed the existing relations between Pakistan and the UK as excellent and hoped for their further strengthening in future.

Admiral Zakaullah also thanked British government and in particular the First Sea Lord for his personal involvement in this visit that ensured meetings and fruitful discussions not only with Royal Navy command but also with EUNAVFOR and NATO Maritime Command at Northwood. The Admiral mentioned the strong linkages between Pakistan and the UK and in particular the Pakistan Navy and the Royal Navy.

Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK Mr. Syed Ibne Abbas, Chief of The Naval Staff Admiral Zakaullah, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zembellas, General Charles Vyvyan, Rear Admiral Amjad Hussain and others at a dinner at High Commissioner's residence in London.

Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK Syed Ibne Abbas is greeting with Chief of The Naval Staff Admiral Zakaullah, at his residence in London

Admiral Zakaullah was on a five-day official visit to the UK that included various meetings within MoD-UK, Naval Command Headquarters – Portsmouth, visit to Carrier Strike Group in Scotland, EU Naval Forces and NATO Maritime Command at Northwood and Defence Academy in Shrivenham.

# Chinese New Year's merriment at PNCA

Chinese ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Sun Weidong organized a cultural program at Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) to merry Chinese New Year. Acting Speaker National Assembly Mr. Murtaza Javed Abbassi was the chief guest of the program.

Martial art tricks and many other performances were made by Chinese artists. Besides representatives of diplomatic community, a large number of Chinese people and local residents of Islamabad were also there in the beautiful program.

# Mr. Elahi Honors Envoys

SERENA HOTELS

Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi hosted a reception in the honor of incoming and outgoing envoys to Pakistan. The event was held in the Nazara Lounge of Serena Hotel and attended by a large number of guests both from the diplomatic and the Pakistani community living in the capital. Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi is the Editor, CEO and Publisher of a popular diplomatic magazine "Diplomatic Focus".

He welcomed the new envoys to Pakistan and expressed good feelings for their ventures here. The incoming ambassadors include ambassador of Cuba H.E. Mr. Gabriel Tiel Capote, ambassador of Iraq H.E. Dr. Ali Yassin Mohammad Karim, ambassador of USA H.E. Mr. David Hale, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka H.E. Mr. Major General (R) Jayanath Lokuketagodage, ambassador of Czech Republic H.E. Mr. Jan Fury, Ambassador of Royal Thai H.E. Mr. Suchart Liengsaengthongm.

He appreciated the efforts of outgoing ambassadors for developing the fine bilateral relations among Pakistan and their countries. The outgoing ambassadors include Dean of Diplomatic Corps and ambassador of Argentina, H.E. Mr. Rodolfo J. Martin Saravia, Ambassador of Sweden H.E. Mr. Tomas Rosander, High Commissoner of Bangladesh H.E. Mr. Suhrab Hussain.

Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi thanks all the guests and cherished Mr. Rodolfo diplomatic tenure in Pakistan. He further added that the tenure of 12 years of the ambassador was full of remarkable memories and a good time with the diplomatic corps. Ambassador Rodolfo said that it was sad to say goodbye to someone who was not only a good friend but a good individual as well.

At the eve, all the guests enjoyed the folk music having their dinner. RBI Media Minds team show a short documentary film in the honor of H.E. Rodolfo J. Martin-Saravia, which was appreciated at large. That was not the end of the evening! Award ceremony was held, in which different shields and gifts were given to the guests for their commendable services in their respective fields.

To Say Good Bye To
To extends warm welcome to
H.E. Mr. Tomas Rosander,
Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan
H.E. Mr. David Hale, Ambassador of U.S.A to Pakistan

H.E. Mr. Gabriel Tiel Capote Ambassador of Cuba to Pakistan
H.E. Dr. Ali Yassin Mohammad Karim Ambassador of Iraq to Pakistan
Bridging The Nations to Promote Bilateral Relations Trade

# I will Strengthen Business Relations which will Contribute to Both Countries' Economy

**H.E. Mr. Suchart Liengsaengthong**
**Ambassador of the Royal Thailand to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

Interview by Mian Fazal Elahi

H.E. Mr. Suchart Liengsaengthong has been appointed this year as Ambassador of the Royal Thailand to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He is a very active and energetic diplomat.

The "Diplomatic Focus" has found the opportunity to talk to His Excellency and learn about his experiences and his role as ambassador to bring the two countries closer in terms of trade, diplomatic and educational ties.

**Q: Your Excellency! First I want to thank you for giving your precious time for the interview, kindly tell me something about your professional career.**

**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** I am a career diplomat and have been working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, for 29 years. I have served in overseas, post starting with Kaula Lumpur-Malaysia, Athens- Greece, Sydney-Australia, Yunnan–the People's Republic of China and, presently, in Islamabad-Pakistan.

**Q: Your Excellency! Pakistan and Thailand have bilateral relations since more than 60 years. How do you see these relations in the historical perspective?**

**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** The bilateral relations between Thailand and Pakistan have been smooth and fruitful and I would like to focus on further strengthening on trade and business relations which will contribute to the two countries' economy.

**Q: Pakistan and Thailand's relation have evolved into a new phase when the Commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces in 2014. Do you think that after that visit the bilateral ties b/w Pakistan and Thailand have been improved a lot?**

**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** I agree that the security situation has been improved because of firm commitment of Pakistan government and Armed forces. The Defence and Military Attaché of the Royal Thai Armed Forces has been working and coordinating with his counterparts which contributes more fruitful for military cooperation. Many delegations of the Royal Thai Armed Forces visited Pakistan and also delegations from Pakistan visited Thailand which helped to improve to the cooperation.

**Thailand welcomes Pakistani tourists to Thailand to explore Thailand's natural beauty and tourism related activities**

**Q: Your Excellency! Every ambassador goes with a policy to the host country to progress in certain matters of bilateral terms. Can you share with us your vision related to both countries?**

**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** I have presented the Letters of Credence to the H.E. Mr. Manoon Hussain, President of Pakistan on 9 February 2016 and informed the President that I would carry out more work to facilitate and promote the two way trade between Thailand and Pakistan.

**Q: Thailand economy strongly depends on export, which are the products which are being export to Pakistan?**

**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** They are many Thai products which have been imported to Pakistan such as auto parts, food and beverages.

**Q: Your Excellency! Trade between Thailand and Pakistan is amounted to 1,014 million USD in 2014 which is less than their actual**

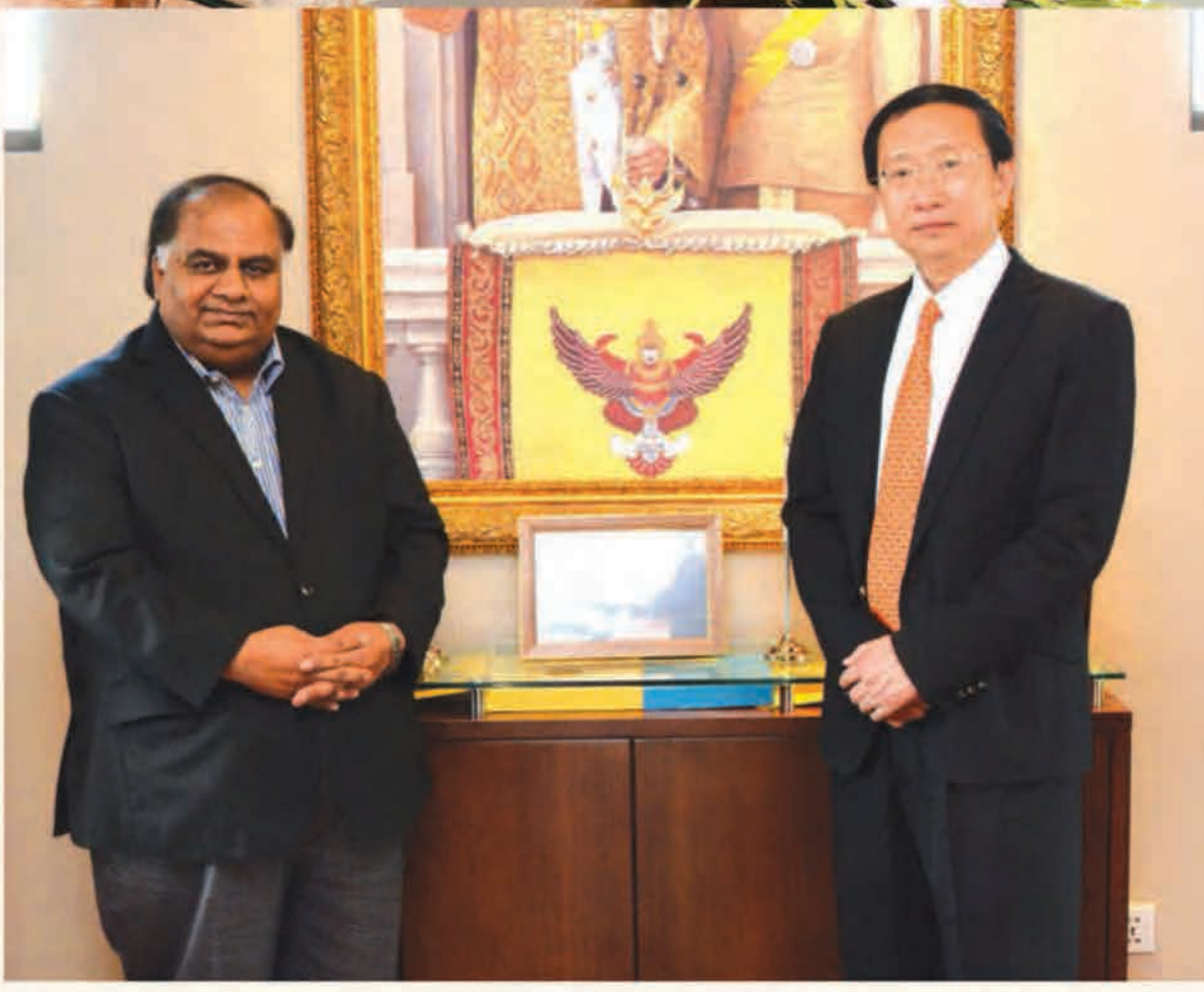
**potential. What are the further steps which should be taken to strengthen the economic ties between both countries?**

**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** I fully agree that bilateral trade between Pakistan and Thailand is about 1 billion US Dollar which is less than the actual potential and I would like to work with all the Chambers of Commerce to find ways and means to increase our bilateral trade.

**Q: As we all know that Thailand is very much famous for its natural beauty and tourism activities, what facilities are you providing there for Pakistani tourists as a large number of people from Pakistan go there for excursion?**

**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** Thailand welcomes Pakistani tourists to Thailand to explore Thailand's natural beauty and tourism related activities. I intend to facilitate the visa process to smooth and speed up the visa application and approval.

**Q: Your Excellency! There are many Pakistani business**



**men who have established their business in Thailand, what opportunities are your government providing for Pakistani investors?**
**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** Thailand is world famous in helping foreign businesses to establish their business in Thailand. The facilities which government provide for doing business there are very attractive.

**Q: What opportunities are providing by Thai government for foreign students who wish to study in Thailand?**
**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** Thailand has many universities which welcome foreign students who desire to pursue their higher studies in Thailand.

The Royal Thai Embassy, Islamabad, is ready to issue the study visa to the eligible students.

**Q: Your Excellency! Thailand is a member of ASEAN; can you share the information of the role played by Thailand in peace and progress of the region?**
**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** ASEAN has seven Embassies and High Commissions in Islamabad name include Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Philippines. Thailand supports and fosters peace and development with the neighboring countries

## I would carry out more work to facilitate and promote the two way trade between Thailand and Pakistan

which are members of ASEAN and also South Asian counties especially Pakistan.

**Q: The unemployment rate in Thailand stood at 0.84% according to Thailand's National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) in 2014. What is the secret behind of controlling the giant of unemployment which has captured the many countries of world?**
**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** The secret of Thailand for having low unemployment rate is because of the government's firm commitment, real implementation of our national economic and social development plan.

Thailand attaches great importance to small and medium scale industry which employs a lot of labour and workforces.

**Q: You have been in China as a Consul General of Royal Thai in your last assignment now you are here as Ambassador to Pakistan. What change do you see in your diplomatic position and environment?**
**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** The People's Republic of China has shared border with Pakistan and I can see that Pakistan will have a lot of cooperation and projects to work with China to attain their mutual benefit especially in the energy sector and the trade sector.

**Q: Your Excellency! What were your feelings when you reached Pakistan?**
**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** I arrived in Islamabad on 3 February 2016 and have received very warm welcome from government authority as well as Pakistani people. This impression was excellent and I can say that the real situation regarding the safety and security in Pakistan, are not the same as the foreign media is reporting.

**Q: How do you see the role of diplomatic focus magazine in promoting bilateral ties b/w Pakistan and other countries?**
**H.E. Liengsaengthong:** Diplomatic Focus magazine can play the important role to distribute the information on Diplomacy. I wish Diplomatic Focus magazine to be the No. 1 magazine in Pakistan and expand their coverage to overseas.

Thank you so much for your valuable time.

# Egypt Goal is to boost the Economic & Cultural Relations with Pakistan

## H.E. Mr. Sherif Shaheen,
### Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Interview by Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi

H.E. Mr. Sherif Shaheen has been a very active and energetic diplomat. He has been appointed this year as Ambassador of the Republic of Egypt to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The "Diplomatic Focus" has found the opportunity to talk to His Excellency and learn about his experiences and his role as ambassador to bring the two countries closer in terms of trade, diplomatic, education and cultural ties.

**Q: Pakistan and Egypt enjoy close and cordial relations which are deeply rooted in shared history, culture and heritage. How do you see the bilateral ties between the two nations over the years?**

**H.E. Shaheen:** The bilateral relations between Egypt and Pakistan are truly historical. Egypt was among one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Pakistan in October 1948 and the first Egyptian Ambassador to Pakistan presented his credentials in January 1949 and the bilateral relations have prospered ever since. Egypt and Pakistan have stood by each other in many incidents over the years. Pakistan has supported Egypt in the 1973 war whereas Egypt has provided assistance to Pakistan during the floods it has faced in 2010.

Moreover, both countries have closely worked together bilaterally and multilaterally in international forums such as the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Developing Eight to promote matters of common interest. Pakistan has always been supportive of various Arab and Islamic issues. This has all resulted in cordial bilateral relations over the decades on the political and military levels and our goal is to enhance those relations on the economic and cultural fields as well.

**Q: Excellency, How do you see the military relations between Egypt and Pakistan and their potential for expansion?**

**H.E. Shaheen:** Egypt and Pakistan enjoy excellent bilateral military relations. The

Egyptian Minister of Defense and Military Production H.E. Colonel General Sedki Sobhi visited Pakistan in April 2015 and H.E. Mr. Rashad Mehmood, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chiefs of Air and Naval Staff also visited Egypt recently and there is remarkable coordination between the two countries in this scope.

**Q: What are the various potential prospects for Pakistani investors in Egypt and vice versa and how is it possible to increase bilateral trade between Pakistan and Egypt?**

**H.E. Shaheen:** Egypt in the past has invested in various Pakistani sectors particularly the telecommunications, infrastructure and energy sectors and Egyptian investors still eye potential ventures in the Pakistani market, which is very promising. On the other hand, Pakistani businessmen have invested in the fields of textiles and infrastructure and foam in Egypt.

Both governments have signed multiple agreements in order to facilitate bilateral trade and investment, one of them establishing a Joint Business Council between Egypt and Pakistan to serve as a forum for businessmen from both countries to sit together and to discuss how to further promote mutual trade and investment. Our bilateral trade stands at approximately $300 million and it is important that both sides further enhance this number and expand the fields of mutual trade. We look forward to the enhancement of the cooperation between the private sectors in both countries. Egypt has immense expertise in the energy sector and has successfully overcome some of the major challenges it has faced in the energy field in only two years.

**Q: Excellency, the New Suez Canal was termed Egypt's gift to the world. How will the project be helpful for the Pakistani – Egyptian trade relations?**

**H.E. Shaheen:** The Suez Canal always stood as a symbol of the determination of the Egyptian people and an icon of the Egyptian national pride. The implementation and inauguration of the New Suez Canal Project in a remarkable one year signified the immense will of the Egyptian people in the post 2011 and 2013 Revolutions era in Egypt. The inauguration of the new project serves to increase the amount of traffic in the Suez Canal and to cut the time needed for ships to pass through the Canal. It also increases the connectivity between Africa, Asia and Europe and facilitates transcontinental trade. Pakistan and Egypt have huge potential to cooperate together in light of the New Suez Canal Project in Egypt

**Pakistan and Egypt have huge potential to cooperate together in light of the New Suez Canal Project in Egypt and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Project in Pakistan**

and the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Project in Pakistan.

**Q: In the present days the importance of cultural relations has increased, how do you see the Pakistani – Egyptian cultural relations and how should the two countries work together to expand these relations?**

**H.E. Shaheen:** The cultural scope is a very significant component of our overall bilateral relations. Each year Egypt receives around 30 students from Pakistan to study in Al Azhar University through scholarships whereas Pakistan provides 4 scholarships to Egyptian students in Pakistani universities.

Furthermore, the Egyptian International Center for Agriculture provides biannual training programs for Pakistani candidates and Al Azhar University provides annual training programs to Islamic preachers from Pakistan. Egypt has also recently received a traditional arts musical troupe from Pakistan that participated in an international cultural festival in Cairo and we are still looking forward to the increase of the number of Pakistani cultural groups participating in international festivals Egypt hosts.

Moreover, in 2015, three Pakistani children participated in an international competition titled "Egypt in the Eyes of the Children of the World" in which they, through paintings and artworks, exhibited the image they have of Egypt.

In addition, there are currently 19 Egyptian professors at the International Islamic University in Islamabad teaching the Arabic language, Islamic history and other domains. Let me also tell you that the Grand Imam of Al Azhar Al Sharif, H.E. Mr. Ahmed Al Tayyib himself was a member of this Egyptian professorial delegation at the Islamic University Islamabad in 1999.

So as you can see, there are various fields in which we cooperate culturally and there is even greater potential in this regard. The Egyptian and Pakistani people are very well attached by cultural and historical bonds and I believe it is imperative that we build on these bonds to further enhance our bilateral relations.

**Q: Excellency, How can Egypt and Pakistan cooperate in countering terrorism?**

**H.E. Shaheen:** Egypt currently prioritizes combatting terrorism on all levels and in all forms. The current government and the Egyptian people are determined to counter this phenomenon. Egypt has recently adopted an initiative to revise the religious discourse especially through teachings, public speeches and preaching in mosques and religious centers. Al Azhar, which stood for centuries as the minaret of Islamic teaching, is leading this initiative that serves to tackle extremist interpretation of religion and radical ideologies that trigger terrorism.

As I mentioned earlier, 19 Egyptian professors from Al Azhar University are currently teaching in the International Islamic University and their presence in Pakistan signifies Egypt's commitment to cooperating with Pakistan in spreading the moderate teachings of Islam and countering such radical beliefs.

**Q: How can Egypt and Pakistan cooperate in any other field?**

**H.E. Shaheen:** Egypt has successfully accomplished its post 2013 Revolution political roadmap in accordance with the will of the Egyptian people. The final measure of the roadmap was completed by electing a new Parliament, which convened on January 10th, 2016. I believe it is important that

**Our bilateral trade stands at approximately $300 million and it is important that both sides further enhance this number and expand the fields of mutual trade**

we build on this to promote the people to people contact by increasing the exchange of parliamentary delegations between the House of Representatives in Egypt and the National Assembly and the Senate in Pakistan.

Moreover, one of the fields that garner increased significance currently is the media. It is important that cooperation between journalists and media persons from both countries should be expanded in order to further enhance the existing relations and bonds between the people of the two countries.

# D-8 countries agree to enhance trade volume to $500b

Federal Minister for Commerce, Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan in a group photo with the heads of delegation of Trade Ministers' Council Meeting D-8 Group of Islamic Countries in Islamabad

By Raheel Iqbal / Web Desk

D-8 countries have agreed to take their trade volume to 500 billion dollars by 2018. The understanding to this effect came at a meeting of the Trade Ministers' Council of D-8 group in Islamabad.

It was also decided that the preferential trade agreement amongst the member countries will also be implemented from July this year. The member countries also renewed the commitment to continue the process of engagement for greater cooperation in different sectors.

D-8 countries have huge potential to enhance cooperation in many areas and promote intra-trade as they have a combined population of about 1 billion people with a combined national income of about $3.7 trillion. However, these countries were conducting only 7% of their total international trade among themselves which is not encouraging. The volume of current trade among D-8 countries is around $120 billion and we hope that the implementation of PTA would pave the way for the figure to reach $500 billion by 2018, as pledged by these countries.

The next meeting of Trade Ministers' Council will be held in Malaysia next year. D-8 is a group of Muslim countries comprising Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Turkey and Pakistan.

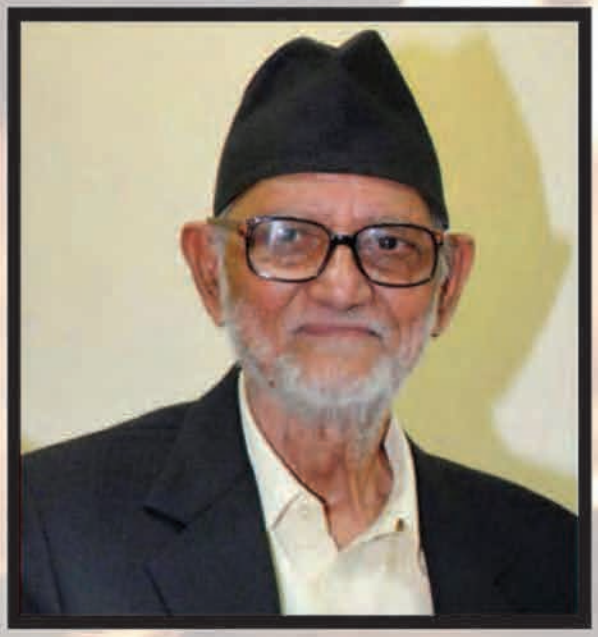
Federal Minister for Commerce, Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan in a bilateral meeting with the Turkish delegation on the sidelines of D-8 Trade Ministers' Council Meeting in Islamabad.

Federal Minister for Commerce, Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan addressing the second Trade Ministers' Council Meeting of Development D-8 Group of Islamic countries in Islamabad.

"The sad news of the passing away of Mr. Sushil Koirala has been received with deep sorrow and grief. His role in the struggle for establishing democratic institutions and promulgation of the constitution in Nepal will always be remembered"
**President Mamnoon Hussain**

"The contribution of Mr. Koirala for democracy and constitutional development and tradition inNepal. He offered condolences to the people of Nepal and the family of Mr. Koirala"
**Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif**

# Pakistan Expresses Condolences on the Demise of Former PM of Nepal, Mr. Sushil Koirala



By M.Saeed Yousafzai

The Government of Pakistan expresses its deep condolences on the demise of Mr. Sushil Koirala, former Prime Minister of Nepal. The Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sartaj Aziz signed the condolence book opened at the Embassy of Nepal in memory of the late Prime Minister.

Earlier, the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan sent condolence letters to their counterparts of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

## Countering Xenophobia through Interfaith Cooperation

# Pakistan calls for international action to combat Islamophobia

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

Pakistan has called for action to combat the forces of Islamophobia and warned that if timely steps are not taken to check this disturbing trend, it could threaten regional and global peace and security.

Speaking at an event organized at the UN by Pakistan Mission and the OIC on "Countering Xenophobia through Interfaith Cooperation", Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi said that Islamophobic acts are unfortunately happening in countries, which are the traditional champions of human rights and humanitarianism.

She regretted that some unprincipled politicians in the West have sought to build their political fortunes by spreading fear and xenophobia – promising to build walls against migrants; barring refugees, even widows and orphans; threatening to ban the adherents of a specific religion from entry to their countries' shores.

Unfortunately, she said, this campaign of hate and prejudice has received a fillip from ignorant Western media portrayals of Muslims. Initiating the discussion, as the organizer of the event, Ambassador Lodhi said that the purpose of the event– during a week at the UN, devoted to Interfaith Harmony – was to highlight the concern of Pakistan and OIC countries over certain recent developments which pose a danger to such harmony, to social cohesion and to the observance of human rights and humanitarian norms.

The instances of insults against Islam and Muslims are now legion, she said. Islam has been called unspeakable names; minarets have been portrayed as missiles. These have not been empty insults, Ambassador Lodhi said, adding, "Expressions of such hate and prejudice have provoked physical and psychological violence against Muslims and their businesses, mosques and community centers in some countries".

"Almost all Muslim communities have been subjected to such intolerance. Many live in fear. Their alienation expands the divide between faiths and cultures within and among nations".

In her address Ambassador Lodhi quoted President Obama who acknowledged during his visit to a mosque earlier this week, that "an attack on one faith is an attack on all our faiths. And when any religious group is targeted, we all have a responsibility to speak up. "

She also highlighted the plight of refugees and migrants pouring into Europe. While initially this evoked many heartwarming acts of generosity, humanity and solidarity. But subsequently the purveyors of hate have sought to turn the tide against the advocates of openness and humanitarianism, especially after the horrific terrorist attacks in Paris.

And she added, "they have equated helpless refugees and migrants with violent extremists in order to generate political support for the forces of hate, prejudice, intolerance and xenophobia". Terming such xenophobia and discrimination as a 'dangerous trend', she

warned that such profiling of entire peoples and communities by religion or ethnicity, has grave antecedents. Seventy-five years ago, this led to the Holocaust.

Ambassador Lodhi said those who have declared the denial of the Holocaust a crime should hardly argue that the freedom of expression allows insults against Islam and hate speech and incitement to violence against Muslims.

The Pakistan envoy told participants that as hate inevitably breeds hate, Islamophobia will breed its antithesis. "It is a recipe for a clash of cultures – a clash we must avoid if the world is to have any hope of collective action to end the chaos in the Middle East and eliminate all forms of terrorism", she added.

Prominent speakers at the event included interfaith activists Dr. William Vendley, Dr. Munir Al-Kaseem and Dr. Faroque Ahmed Khan, who appreciated the timely initiative by Pakistan stressed the fact that this has become a global issue which needs to be urgently addressed.

The event was attended by diplomats, senior UN officials and members of civil society.

# Royal Distinction

## Ambassador of His Majesty the King of Morocco H.E. Mr. Mustapha Salahdine commending the Special Secretary H.E. Mr.Mohammad Waheed Ul Hassan for his Royal Decoration of the insignia of the Alawite Commander Wissam as Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Morocco.

An award ceremony was organized by H.E. Mustapha Salahdine Ambassador of His Majesty the King of Morocco on the occasion of the Royal decoration of the insignia of the Alawite Commander Wissam to H.E. Mohammad Waheed ul Hassan, Special Secretary, as former Ambassador of Pakistan to Morocco on the occasion of his end of mission in Rabat.

The Moroccan envoy expressed his most sincere congratulations to H.E. Waheed ul Hassan, and highlighted his professional career with numerous and great responsibilities in Islamabad and overseas.

He emphasized that the Royal Distinction represents recognition for the various initiatives and efforts that the former Ambassador made during his two years tenure in Morocco in view of contributing to the strengthening of traditional and fraternal bilateral relations.

It also reflects the esteem and consideration that bears the Kingdom of Morocco to Pakistan and the brotherly Pakistani people, he added.

From his side H.E. Waheed ul Hassan expressed his deep gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI and presented his thanks for this prestigious Award.

He recalled that Pakistan and Morocco enjoy very close and brotherly relations , based on mutual esteem and respect, underlining that "In Pakistan, we feel proud, to see the progress Morocco is making in all spheres, particularly in improving the economy, infrastructure and social sector under the visionary leadership of His Majesty the King."

SERENA HOTEL

## Message of Islam Conference:

# Pakistanis Have Always Felt the Pain of the People of Palestine, says Mufti Azam Palestine

The participation of Mufti-e-Azam Palestines Muhammad Ahmed Hussein, ambassadors of Islamic Countries and scholars of different schools of thought in 'Message of Islam Conference'

By M.Saeed Yousafzai/Monitoring Desk

Mufti Azam Palestine Ahmed Hussain said that the people of Pakistan have always felt the pain of the Palestinians.

According to sources, speaking at an Islamic conference organized by Pakistan's Ulema Council, Mufti said that Islam's message is for the humanity, despite all the atrocities committed by Israel, Palestine will remain established. Human rights organizations are silent on the criminal atrocities in Palestine, he added. Mufti-e-Azam Palestine Muhammad Ahmed Hussein speaking on the occasion said that people of Palestine will not bow down before oppression and cruelties and with grace of Allah Almighty Palestine will get freedom one-day and Muslims will be free to say prayer in Jerusalem.

He said that people and government of Pakistan have always raised voice for the cause of Palestine and Palestinians values love of Pakistanis. He said that Muslims as well as Christian in Palestine are facing Jewish oppression and cruelties and peace-lovers of different religions and schools of thought of the world should get united against oppressions. Islam instructs for interfaith dialogue among believers and faithful of different religions and the elements that are used to ban 'Girls Education' are not representing Islam as Islam doesn't forbid girls educations.

Speaking on the occasion, President Azad Kashmir Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob said, "We are thankful to all those countries who use to raise voice for oppressed people of Kashmir, we are ready to face any sort of cruelty either it is state oppression on part of India and Israel or organized oppressions as carried out against Muslim countries". He also said that Message of Islam Conference is a positive move in right direction and this should be continued in future.

Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said that arrival of Mufti-e-Azam Palestine in Pakistan is honor for people of Pakistan. On this occasion, Advisor to Religious Affairs Qatar Dr. Meenai, Advisor to Religious Affairs Saudi Arabia Dr Majid Al-Mursal and Dr Abdullah and representatives of Bosnia, Bahrain and Kuwait were also present. Saudi Advisor to Religious Affairs Dr Majid Al-Mursal speaking on this occasion said that a specific mentality is making endeavors to create differences among Muslims and Muslim countries but Muslim Ulemas and scholars will foil all these bids of terrorism and extremism.

He also read out message of King Shah Salman bin Abdul Aziz and Minister for Religious Affairs Saudi Arabia Al-Shaikh Saleh for people and Ulemas of Pakistan, "Unity, security and Solidarity of Pakistan is very dear to Saudi Arabia and Ulemas, scholars of Pakistan should get united to fight against menaces of terrorism, extremism and Saudi Arabia is always with people of Pakistan in every difficulty. A friend of Pakistan is friend to Saudi Arabia and foe of Pakistan is like foe for Saudi Arabia".

Mufti was invited to Pakistan for the first time. It is the second visit of any Palestinian mufti to the city in the last 76 years; the first visit was paid by the first Palestinian Grand Mufti al Husseini to Lahore in 1938 where he had met Quad-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other Pakistan Movement leaders.

Message

**"Unity, security and Solidarity of Pakistan is very dear to Saudi Arabia and Ulemas, scholars of Pakistan should get united to fight against menaces of terrorism, extremism and Saudi Arabia is always with people of Pakistan in every difficulty. A friend of Pakistan is friend to Saudi Arabia and foe of Pakistan is like foe for Saudi Arabia"**

**King Shah Salman Saudi Arabia**

# A Lunch Reception for Senator Mr. Waqar Ahmed

Ambassador of Argentina and Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Rodolfo J. Martin Saravia hosted a lunch reception for Senator Waqar Ahmed at his residence in Islamabad. Diplomats from diplomatic community also attended the lunch party.

# A Dazzling Celebration
# Lahore Literature Festival

By Sidra Khan

The Lahore Literary Festival (LLF) is an international literary festival held annually in Lahore, Punjab province of Pakistan and is typically two-three days festival. This scheme was founded in 2013 by Mr. Razi Ahmad; its governance structure includes a Board of Governors chaired by Iqbal Z. Ahmed and an Advisory Board led by Nusrat Jamil.

This year's iteration of the LLF was commenced on February 21, 2016. Lahore Literary Festival was attended in full by Lahore's leading dignitaries, scholars, writers, analysts, politicians, professors, journalists and students.

This Lahore Literary Festival featured panel talks, book launches, recitals, performances, screenings and art exhibitions. In addition, there were various parallel sessions; spanning fiction, Feminism, film, music, architecture and urbanism, poetry, history, travel and more.

The festival was inaugurated by Sharmila Tagore, an iconic Indian actress and the star of the Lahore Literary Festival delivered a session named "Safar" over her career in Indian films that spanned over five decades. In conversation with Hameed Haroon she proceeded further talking about how the joint family system of that time naturally created an environment of acknowledging and respecting diversity of thought and behaviour as opposed to the nuclear-family system mostly prevalent in modern society. She believed that the "Reel Life & Real Life" shouldn't be too far apart.

Indian notable personalities that spoke at the festival included Mahesh Bhatt and daughter Pooja Bhatt, historian B.N. Goswamy, films studies expert Ranjani Mazumdar, novelist Sonia Faleiro, historian Tanika Sarkar, journalist Karan Thapar, documentary film-maker Shohini Ghosh.

Sharmila thanked the Punjab Chief Minister and the organizers for being

honored as the inaugural guest at the festival and expressed her growing fondness of the city of Lahore. She shared how she couldn't help notice the obvious shared culture from music to attire and the Chughtai painting hung in her hotel room right down to the way of life of people from both sides of the border.

This session was to be followed by a session, titled 'The World of Intizar Hussain', dedicated to the memory of the literary great who recently passed away.

The scheduled speakers at LLF 2016 include Ali Akbar Natiq, Asghar Nadeem Syed, Attiya Dawood, CM Naim, Fahmida Riaz, Hamid Ismailov, Haji Noor Deen, Intizar Hussain, Javed Majeed, Marion Molteno, Mick Conefrey, Mohsin Hamid, Ned Beauman, Rana Dasgupta, Reza Deghati, Sorayya Khan, Zehra Nigah and Zukiswa Wanner.

In addition, another session titled "Feminism in Global politics" started with a lifetime achievement award being presented to Mussarat Mirza, a renowned artist, in Lahore during the festival. The discussion was opened by Rachel Holmes, a writer, by saying that Feminism was the oldest democratic movement in the world. She also talked about the feminist movement being non-violent.

Other top-billed speakers included outspoken Egyptian-American feminist Mona Eltahawy whose vociferous denunciations of patriarchy and the politics of the hijab gave the festival some of its most energetic and controversial moments. She is a Cairo-based feminist and writer talked about her experience during the movement against Hosni Mubarak.

Anita Anand, journalist and author of 'Sophia: Princess, Suffragette, Revolutionary', spoke of the historical Suffragette movement. Dina Siddiqi talked about the imposition of western ideas which stressed saving brown women from their men. The speakers spoke candidly, addressing the issues of women sexuality openly which was applauded by the audience.

The evening performances included AR Gurney's Love Letters with Rehana Saigol and Imran Aslam, and some of the stipulated works of Ghalib by Zia Mohyeddin. LLF also exhibited the works of British-Pakistani artist Anwar Jalal Shemza, to coexist with the launch of a new monograph on the late artist.

Sessions in Second Day of Lahore Literary Festival covered topics from museums to literature, Islam, art, photography and politics. Session, titled The Power of Photography – The Human Imperative was moderated by leading photographer Arif Mahmood and Tapu Javeri with another leading photographer Reza Deghati on the panel. This particular session, was the most moving and inspirational from all as Reza Deghati highlighted the need and the importance of a good picture. He showed another photograph, where former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto looked fresh and young with determination and ambition in her eyes.

A session "Mobilising New Readers" was moderated by writer and editor Asif Farrukhi with Alexandra Pringle, Oxford University Press Managing Director Ameena Saiyid, writer and illustrator Ashok Ferrey and publisher Chiki Sarkar as panelists. Asif Farrukhi stressed how it was important for Pakistanis to read literature and not just bad news, which comes out in the newspaper every day.

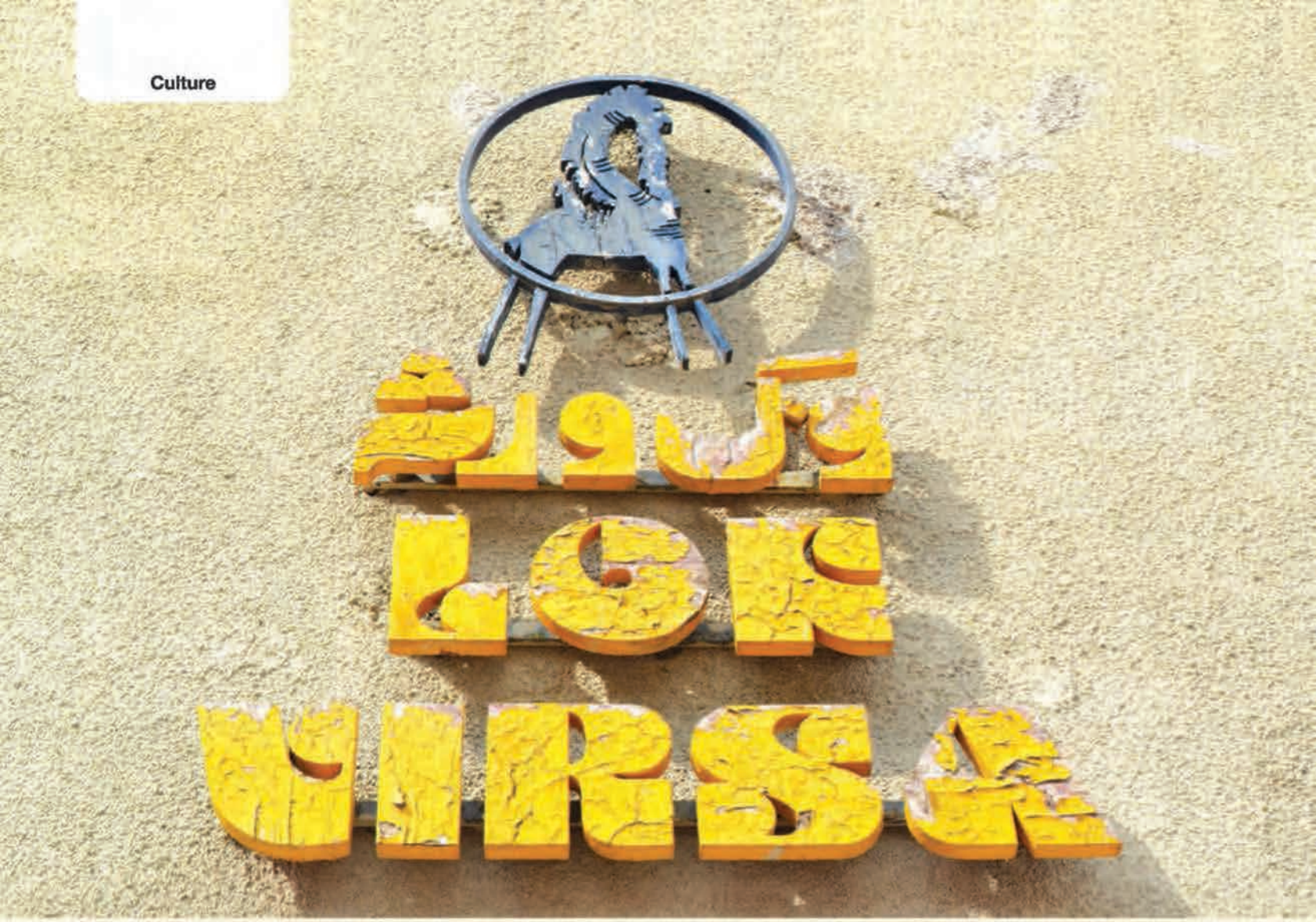
Chiki Sarkar urged writers to touch topics which are a mystery to regular citizens. She mentioned the story of Arushi Talwar, who was found murdered in her home. She shed light on the kidnapping of Shahbaz Taseer, and what a mystery and tragedy it was for the entire family.

Moreover, day two of the LLF brought politics in the South Asia in the forefront. Discussing freedoms amidst restraints, well known Indian

intellectual and jurist A. G. Noorani traced the subcontinent's history, asserting that democracy was planted without respecting views.

Media experts, journalists and speakers at a session on 'Future of TV news: Journalism or Mirch Masala?' said that TV news channels with driving current approach in representing issues of the masses led towards complete 'self-destruction', and that it was high time to reorient the editorial approach of channels.

Writing about love and transgressive fiction is difficult," Alexandra Pringle began the session 'The Passion for Love Literature', where they discussed their writing as and about women. Attendees were particularly happy to see an all-women panel. Pringle discussed the reason literary festivals were doing so well all over was because readers needed a physical connection with the writer and authors they read about and admire. LLF 2017 is eagerly awaited now.




# Our Languages Our Identity

## Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival

By Saba Sarfraz

A two-day Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival held at National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage, Lok Virsa to highlight the value of languages in Pakistan.

The event has been organised by Lok Virsa in collaboration with Indus Cultural Forum (ICF) and Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO) on the theme of "Our Languages Our Identity".

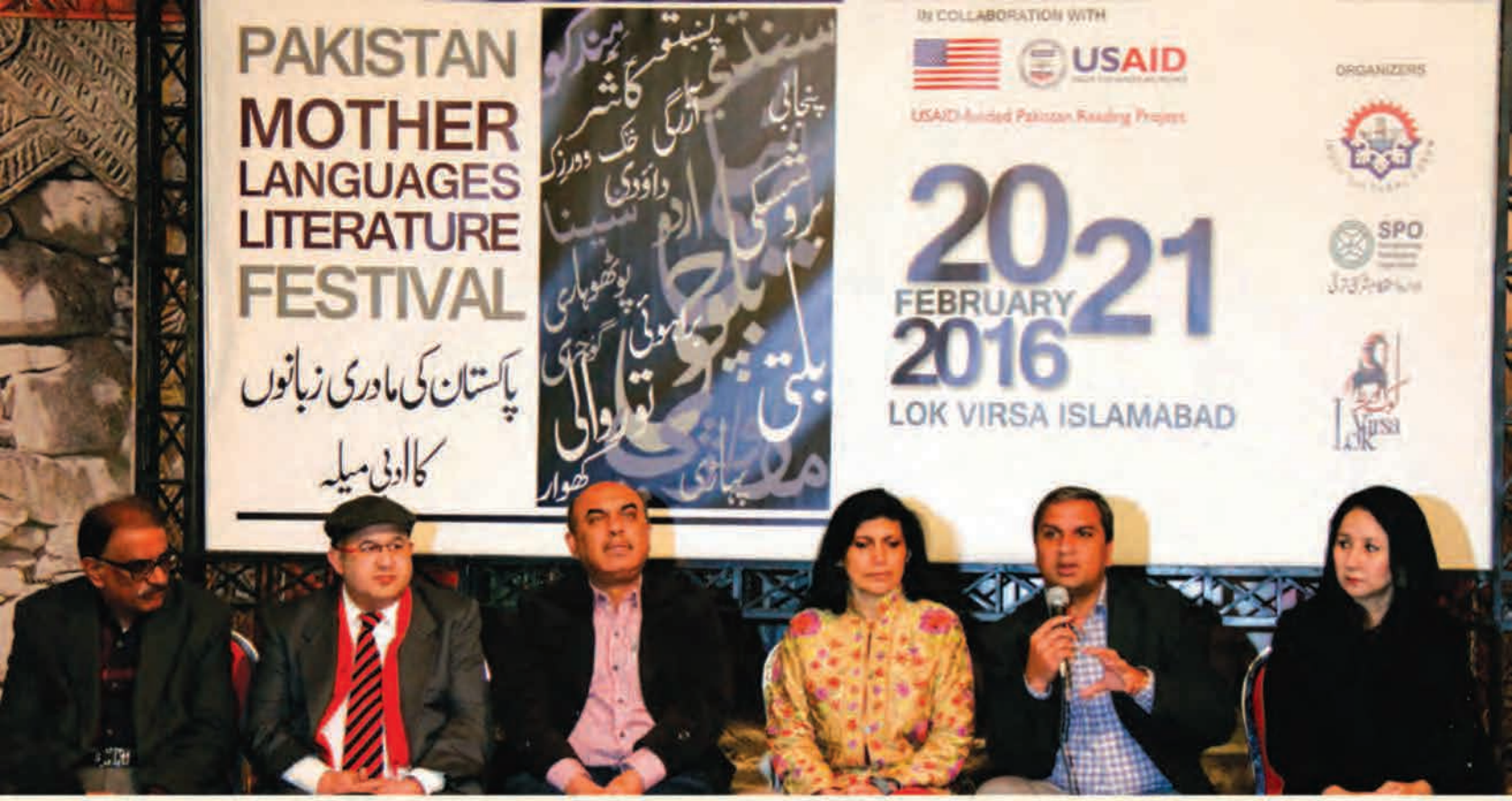
The festival was planned to coincide with the International Mother Languages Day, which is celebrated on February 21 declared by UNESCO. More than 150 writers of over 15 Pakistani mother languages participated in the event as speakers and moderators and discuss the importance to retain and nurture our mother languages which were dwindling in many cases, not withstanding the social pressures and the significance of drama, prose, poetry, story telling, television, promoting folk culture and other aspects in mother language.

**The objective of the festival was to promote Pakistan's linguistic and cultural diversity as an instrument of social harmony, peace, tolerance and encouraging reading culture in mother languages**

The objective of the festival was to promote Pakistan's linguistic and cultural diversity as an instrument of social harmony, peace, tolerance and encouraging reading culture in mother languages.

The major attractions of the festival included mother languages, Mushaira, musical evening, discussions on languages, literature and culture, audio-visual screening, cultural performances, mother languages bookstalls, food courts, cultural exhibitions and mobile library.

Most of the festival's proceedings were in Urdu language while the participants were




encouraged to dress up in their respective cultural attire reflecting the identity of their area and language.

The organisers said that the festival could be an occasion to showcase a wide range of literary works in these languages.

The official said that out of the 69 languages spoken in Pakistan, 27 have been declared endangered by the UNESCO and are at the verge of extinction. Out of these 27 endangered languages, 18 are native to Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral, he added.

Meanwhile, International Mother Language day 2016 was observed across the globe including Pakistan with its theme "Quality education, languages of instruction and learning outcomes".

This underlines the importance of mother languages for quality education and linguistic diversity to take forward the new 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

On the occasion, UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova said, "Mother languages in a multilingual approach that are essential components of quality education, which is itself the foundation for empowering women and men and their societies".

International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by the general conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in November 1999 and proclaimed 2008 as the international year of languages to promote unity in diversity

**27 out of the 69 languages spoken in Pakistan, have been declared endangered by the UNESCO**

and international understanding through multilingualism and multiculturalism.

International Mother Language Day is observed every year since February 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage.

Lok Virsa has the mandate to promote and preserve the intangible and tangible cultural heritage of the country while the Indus Cultural Forum aims to provide multi cultural space to celebrate cultures of Pakistan.

All moves to promote the dissemination of mother tongues served not only to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education but also to develop awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue.

Different organisations also held programmes including walks, seminars, and cultural events to highlight the cultural and linguistic diversity.

# March to Peace in March?

**The QCG member states invite all Taliban and other groups in the first round of direct peace talks with the Afghan government expected by the first week of March 2016**

By M. Saeed Yousafzai

The fourth round of the key Quadrilateral meeting on the Afghan peace process and drafting of a roadmap to find a political solution to the lingering security crisis was held in Kabul. The delegations were led by Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing and U.S. Charge d'Affaires, David Lindwall. The meeting has fostered hope among war-weary Afghans that lasting peace in their war-torn country may finally be a viable possibility.

The QCG members welcomed the strong statement by H.E. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, on 15 February in which he once again underlined the strong commitment of the Government of Afghanistan for peace and reconciliation with Taliban groups and Hezbi Islami Hekmatyar, the support of the Afghan nation for this national priority and his call on the Taliban and other groups to join early direct talks with the Government of Afghanistan.

Taking note of the joint statement of February 06, 2016 and building on the outcome of the previous meetings of the QCG, the group reviewed progress in the implementation of the Roadmap for the Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process. Towards this end and also in line with the desire and support of the QCG member countries for lasting peace in Afghanistan, the QCG endorsed and expressed strong support for the upcoming direct talks between the Government of Afghanistan and authorized representatives of the Taliban and other groups.

Afghan Foreign Minister Salahudin Rabbani in his opening remarks at the four-nation talks described the role of Pakistan in the Afghan peace process as "very important" and called upon Afghanistan's neighboring states and

major powers to support the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace talks.

The QCG member states invite all Taliban and other groups to participate through their authorized representatives in the first round of direct peace talks with the Afghan government expected to take place by the first week of March 2016. Pakistan has graciously offered to host this round of talks in Islamabad. The participation of the U.S. and China in the talks is significant to push for peace in Afghanistan through political dialogue.

The QCG also welcomed the decision by Afghanistan and Pakistan to constitute a bilateral joint working group to work with the honorable Ulema of Afghanistan and Pakistan for their support to the Afghan led and Afghan owned peace and reconciliation process, including through Fatwa's against the ongoing senseless violence.

The QCG agreed to continue joint endeavors as part of their shared commitments to advance the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan.

On its part as facilitator of Afghan-led and Afghan owned peace and reconciliation process and QCG member, Pakistan is also helping to unite and bring the Taliban to the negotiation table.

This is evident from the fact that Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff General Raheel visited Qatar and took the Qatari leadership on board over Afghan peace and reconciliation process and the regional security.

The four nation group in December agreed to resume the reconciliation process which was suspended in July last year after the news of

the death of Taliban Chief Mullah Omer.

On February 6, Pakistan told the third meeting of the quadrilateral group meeting that as many Taliban groups as possible must be persuaded to join any upcoming peace discussions with the Afghan government.

Pakistan's advisor for foreign affairs Sartaj Aziz said a joint effort would help persuade the Taliban to join the process and lead to a "significant" reduction in violence.

"We believe our collective efforts at this stage, including through supportive CBMs (Confidence Building Measures), have to be aimed at persuading the maximum number of Taliban groups to join the peace talks," Aziz said during his opening statement at the third-round of talks. "In our view, a clear, well-defined and actionable roadmap for the peace process between the Afghan Government and Taliban groups is important."

The first round of the roadmap talks was held in Islamabad last month, where delegates began laying the groundwork for direct dialogue between Kabul and the Taliban group. A second round was held in Kabul on January 18 which urged the Taliban groups to enter into early talks with the Afghan government without preconditions.

Following the death news of Mullah Omer, his deputy Mullah Akhtar Mansur took over the leadership of the Taliban amid criticism by some of the fellow Taliban commanders about the legitimacy of his leadership. Since then tension remained high between him and the dissident Taliban commanders.

Afghan political experts optimistically believe that the talks could facilitate the face-to-face meeting between the Afghan government and the Taliban outfit and eventually lead to sustained peace in the country.

Ghani had formally invited the Taliban and the Hel for talks during his speech in Kabul in mid of February, 2016. It is believed that the Taliban's heavy inroads made in recent months indicate their reluctance towards the talk. Moreover, The Taliban and the Hizb-e-Islami (Hel), the second largest resistance movement in Afghanistan, have given a negative response to the diplomatic efforts for peace negotiations before the fourth round meeting. According to media report, Taliban sources with the organization's Qatar office also said they did not plan to join the talks "unless they get a positive response to their calls for certain steps ahead of the negotiations". The Taliban want reopening of their political office in Qatar, lifting of travel curbs on their leaders, release of their prisoners and end to "propaganda in Afghanistan".

"It is a positive step that the participants of the four-nation talks set a date and a venue for the direct negotiation between the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan," renowned political and military analyst General (Ret.) Atiqullah Omarkhil told to a china based media.

Though, nevertheless, none of the Taliban groups have expressed their intention to join the peace process according to news reports but the ongoing struggles for peace in Afghanistan would benefit the whole region and the world at large including Pakistan, U.S and especially for its neighbors.

**No one should be much optimistic about any dramatic breakthrough and a quicker solution to the Afghan conflict. Taliban, however, have yet to express any green light to join the peace talks.**

# A Farewell Reception Hosted by High Commissioner of Malaysia

High Commissioner of Malaysia H.E. Mr. Dr. Hasrul Sani Mujtabar hosted a farewell reception for Ambassador of Argentina and Dean of Diplomatic Corps, H.E. Mr. Rodolfo J. Martin Saravia at his residence in Islamabad. Some other diplomats with their spouses were also present at the occasion.

# Happy Valentine's Day at Marriott Karachi

MARRIOTT

**Nadia, Dumpukht**
**&**
**Suzie Wong**

# His Majesty the King of Morocco Mohammed VI Chairs Official Commissioning Ceremony of Noor-Ouarzazate Solar Complex's First Plant, Launches Construction Works of 2nd & 3rd Plants

His Majesty King Mohammed VI chaired, recently in the Ghessate municipality (province of Ouarzazate), the official commissioning ceremony of the first plant of the Ouarzazate solar complex (Noor I), and the official launch of the construction works of the second and third plants of this megaproject (Noor II and Noor III).

His Majesty King Mohammed VI launched the official commissioning of the Noor I plant. Built on an area of about 480 hectares, the 160 MW power plant is equipped with thermo-solar cylindrical parabolic troughs and has 3 hours of energy storage capability. The project required an investment of 686 million euros. Then, the Sovereign launche cond and third plants of the Ouarzazate solar complex (Noor II and Noor III).

Built on area of 680 ha, Noor II (810 million euros) is a 200 MW power plant with thermo-solar cylindrical parabolic troughs and 7 hours of energy storage capability. Noor III is an installed capacity of 150 MW which will employ central tower technology with salt receivers and 7 to 8 hours of energy storage capability and will require a budget of 645 million euros.

These three projects, combined with the photovoltaic phase (Noor IV), will make Noor Ouarzazate the largest multi-technology solar production site in the world with a capacity of 580 MW and a total investment of over 2,3 billion Euros, excluding common infrastructure developed by Masen and ONEE for the needs of developers. These infrastructures meet the needs of electric connection, road transport, and supply of raw and potable water, drainage, telecommunications and security.

The Noor Ouarzazate complex will house a 16-hectare theme park whose layout reproduces the map of the Kingdom, as well as structural facilities, including a multipurpose building with spaces dedicated to the operation and functioning of the site, an auditorium, a media library and an observation tower offering panoramic views.

# Uzbekistan Airways
## To Resume Its Flights to Lahore

Director Tourism from the "Holidays Planners", the company which is serving as GSA for Uzbekistan Airways in Pakistan, Mr Hamid Mahmood had a meeting with the officials from "Uzbekistan Airways" in Tashkent and it was decided that there would be two flights a week from Lahore to Tashkent starting from July 20, 2016. The number of flights can be increased in future.

Recently launched in conjunction with the Boeing Corporation, the Center for Repair and Maintenance of Aircraft Composite Components is expected to become a key factor in this process.

Uzbekistan Airways Technics is Central Asia's only and most advanced aircraft service center. There is no repair facility of this level in the region within 5,000 kilometers. That is why the airlines of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and China rank among the major and potential customers. Moreover, Iran might become a huge market for Uzbekistan, as it has announced a large-scale program of procurement of modern aircrafts.

With over 90 years on the aircraft repair and maintenance market, the enterprise never lacked experience. Over the years, it has overhauled more than 80,000 aircrafts. No foreign company claimed complaints during independence. About 20 planes are annually provided repairs and maintenance services in Tashkent. Half of them are owned by foreign carriers.

It is important that Boeing intends to promote services of the Uzbek enterprise. As the Boeing Regional Sales Director for Central Asia and Europe, Serdar Gurz, stated, they have already mapped out specific plans in this direction.

**In the next five years, Uzbekistan Airways intends to significantly increase the volume of services for foreign aircrafts**

According to him, the airlines reinforce their fleet with new Boeing-787 Dreamliner, more than 50% of which consist of composite materials. This is a huge market where the Uzbek Center might play a significant role as the only center in the post-Soviet space, which is certified by all FAA and EASA standards and requirements for the repairs of Boeing 757, 767 and 787 aircraft.

Meanwhile, composite materials are used not only in Dreamliners. Today, they are used in almost all modern aircrafts. This suggests that Uzbekistan Airways Technics will not be limited to repairs of solely aircrafts by the American corporation.

The economic viability of repair is the only problem in terms of capacity utilization, because in the conditions of the current global economic crisis no airline will fly empty to Tashkent for repairs. Normally, air carriers try to adjust their schedules and bring passengers, and then undergo maintenance services. So far, the company will work with a big list of those who fly in Uzbekistan. Later, when the situation changes, the portfolio of orders may increase substantially.

# Message

## Ambassador of Republic of Uzbekistan

**H.E. Mr. Furqat Sidiqov**

With Great pleasure I would like to announce that in order to materialize agreements reached during the visit of H.E. Mr. Nawas Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, as well as for further to enhance passenger air services National Airways of Uzbekistan expressed its readiness to open regular «Tashkent-Lahore-Tashkent» direct flights starting July 20, 2016 with a frequency of 2 times a week (the 3 and 5th days of the Week) on the aircraft A-320.

I am confident that resuming air linkage between Pakistan and Uzbekistan will serve to further strengthening and enhancing trade, touristic, cultural and people to people contacts as well as for the benefits of peace and prosperity of our Brotherly Nations.

I would like to inform you that international airports in Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Urgench, Navoi and Fergana have been modernized. Today there are 11 international air harbors in Uzbekistan. National air carrier "Uzbekistan Airways" has the most modern airliners, Boeing and Airbus, which carry out regular flights to over 50 cities of Europe, Asia, Middle East and North America. This year, National Airlines expects replenishment in its fleet with two new-generation airliners Boeing-787 Dreamliner, which will be an important step in raising the level of quality of travel services provided by our country.

# Dean of Diplomatic Corps & Mr. Aziz Boolani's Farewell to the Outgoing Ambassadors

SERENA HOTELS

Ambassador of Argentina and Dean of Diplomatic Corps H.E. Mr. Rodolfo J. Martin Saravia hosted a farewell reception with the collaboration of Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotel Islamabad for the outgoing ambassadors of United Kingdom H.E. Mr. Philip Barton and ambassador of Sweden, H.E. Mr. Tomas Rosander. Different people from diplomatic as well as the local community of Islamabad attended the event.

# Vietnam Embassy Celebrated Traditional Lunar New Year

Vietnam's ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Nguyen Xuan Luu arranged a dinner at his residence in which diplomatic community, media persons and high dignitaries were invited. The dinner was arranged to celebrate the traditional lunar new year of Vietnam.

# Sri Lanka High Commission celebrates the 68th National Day

MARRIOTT

H.E. Major Gen. (R) JayanathLokuketagodage, High Commissioner hosted a reception to celebrate the 68th anniversary of Independence of Sri Lanka. Mr. Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister of Defence Production of Pakistan was the Chief Guest and Hon. Kamran Michael, Federal Minister of Ports and Shipping graced the occasion as the guest of honor.

The event gathered more than three hundred people representing from the Diplomatic Corps, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, several other Ministries and Government Institutions, International Organizations, different Chambers of Commerce, Business communities and Sri Lankans who are living in Pakistan.

# A Dinner Reception for Grand Mufti of Palestine

Palestine Ambassador H.E. Mr. Walid Abu Ali hosted a dinner reception for Grand Mufti of Palestine Sheikh Mohammad Hussain at Marriott Hotel Islamabad.

He delivered a highly thought provoking address focusing on core issues confronting the Muslim world and the need for their just resolution for the sake of regional and global peace. A large number of diplomats and Ulema from Pakistan were also present at the occasion.

# Karachi Marriott Hotel has installed solar panels

**Marriott International is the first major hotel chain to calculate the carbon footprint and launch a plan to improve**

Karachi Marriott recognizes the responsibility to reduce consumption of water, waste and energy in hotel and therefore, they are focused on integrating greater environmental sustainability throughout business. Marriott International is the first major hotel chain to calculate the carbon footprint and launch a plan to improve. Working in partnership with the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) and the Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI), Karachi Marriott Hotel has installed solar panels as an alternate energy source which is a first step towards green energy. This is a mere start and there are several energy saving projects that are lined up for the near future. Marriott hotel have also started replacing the usual light bulbs with the LED bulbs. According to Marriott hotel officials, we don't just educate our associates to save energy but we encourage our guests as well to participate in energy conservation. We are sure that our Green initiative will inspire other organizations to switch towards alternate energy sources for preserving the environment.

# Chief Justice SHC visit to Marriott Karachi

The General Manager Karachi Marriott Hotel, Mr. Jan Verduyn warmly greeted the Chief Justice of Sindh High Court in the main lobby. The Chief Justice, Mr. Syed Sajjad Ali Shah was invited as the Chief Guest for the Orientation program of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, University of Law. Mr. Jan escorted the Chief Justice to the Marquee that was main venue of the event. The faculty members of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto University of Law greeted the Guest of Honor at Marquee and the event concluded with an award distribution ceremony of the faculty members.

# Mirza Ishtiaq Baig Hon. Consul General of Morocco hosted a farewell reception in honor of H.E. Rodolfo Martin Saravia, Ambassador of Argentina attended by Diplomats, leading Industrialists, Senior Government Officials and dignitaries of the city

Dr. Ikhtiar Baig, Hon. CG of Yemen with CG of Indonesia H.E. Hadi Santoso & wife, host Ishtiaq Baig & Rehan Pirzada.

Zoya Imran, Mrs. Hadi Santoso, Sandra, Perveen, Khushbakht Shujaat, Yasmeen & Shireen Saleem.

Ijaz Nasir, H.E. Dall'Orso François CG of France, Dr. Ikhtiar Baig, Ishtiaq Baig, Arif Habib, Tariq Kirmani, H.E. Rodolfo Martin, CG of Russia, H.E. Oleg N. Avdeev, H.E. Hadi Santoso CG of Indonesia & CJ (R) Agha Rafiq.

Ishtiaq Baig, Dr. Junaid Shah, Mirza Omair Baig & Ikhtiar Baig.

H.E. Rodolfo Martin, Jia Ali, Munna Mushtaq & a friend.

Muhammad Rajpar, Ikhtiar Baig, Arif Habib & Waseem Akhtar.

# Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry

# (RCCI) hosted a farewell party

For acknowledging the meritorious services of outgoing Ambassadors, including Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Argentine Ambassador, Rodolfo J. Martin-Saravia who served for twelve years in Pakistan, the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) hosted a farewell party.

President RCCI Mian Humayun Parvez in his welcome address said Pakistan has always endeavored to promote friendly relations with all countries on the basis of mutual respect, interest, and cooperation. The newly appointed envoys of different countries, other diplomats and business community also attended the event.

RAWALPINDI CHAMBER OF CO
RAWALPINDI CHAMBER OF CO

# Vestas puts Pakistan's largest wind project on track

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

As part of the Government of Punjab's ambitious plan to host the largest wind energy project in Pakistan, Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister Punjab today issued a Letter of Interest (LOI) to Danish company Vestas - a global frontrunner on wind energy - regarding the first 250 MW stage of the proposed Quaid e Azam Wind Park in the south-west of the province of Punjab.

The LOI ceremony was held at the CM House and attended by CM Punjab, Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen, Political Director for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark and Mr. Gerard Carew, Vice President Sales, Pan-Asia region, Vestas, along with other senior officials.

In late 2014, Vestas identified the potential for 4 x 250 MW indigenous wind power projects in Southwestern Punjab using the industry-leading Site Hunt® technology. The Government of Punjab and Vestas later on signed a MoU in February 2015 in which Vestas with the support of the Danish Embassy, will work with the Government of Punjab to facilitate securing approximately 2.2 Billion USD of investment for these projects.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Sorensen, who also served as Ambassador to Pakistan in 2013-2015, explained that Pakistan is emerging as an interesting market for Danish companies, especially in the energy sector. He stated that Pakistan was increasingly moving toward renewable energy solutions, where Danish companies are particularly strong, as Denmark has long been a pioneer of wind energy.

The Danish government plans to engage with the relevant government stakeholders in Pakistan to transfer Danish experiences in

the areas of wind policy, technical integration of wind, and financing.

The first 250 MW project is targeted to start commercial operation in 2018.

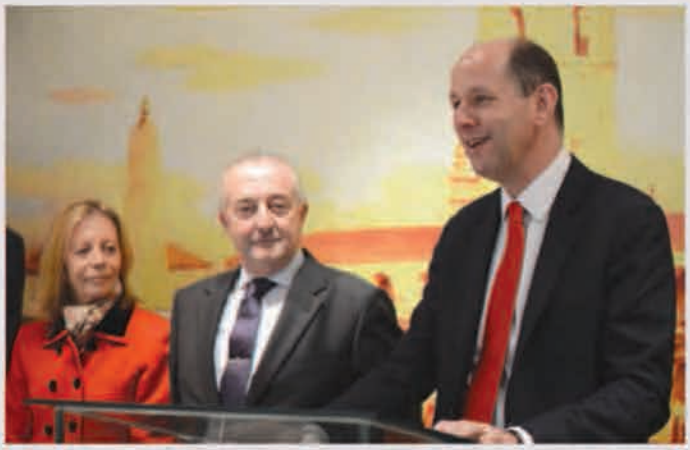
# Chinese New Year Hosted by Marriott

The Chinese New Year's dinner party was hosted by administration of Marriot hotel Islamabad. Mr. Hartmut Noack, CEO of Marriott arranged the event in which Chinese ambassador H.E. Mr. Sun Weidong was the chief guest of the event. Diplomatic as well as business community of Islamabad was also the part of the event.

# Reception for Outgoing Ambassadors of UK, Sweden & Japan

Dean of Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Argentina, Rodolfo J. Martin Saravia hosted a reception to say goodbye to the outgoing diplomats including Swedish Ambassador Tomas Rosander, Japanese Ambassador Hiroshi Inomata and High Commissioner of the United Kingdom Philip Barton.

This was the last reception which was hosted by the dean as he is leaving Pakistan next month after staying about 12 years in the country. Many diplomats along with their wives graced the event.



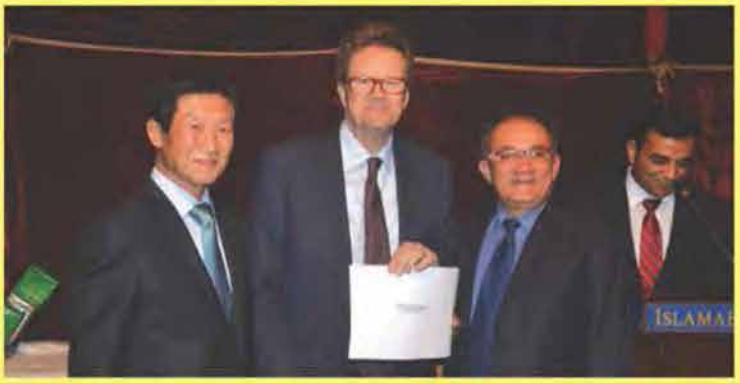
# South Korean Ambassador Organizes Golf Match

South Korea's ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Jong Hwan Song organized a Golf Match for Dean of Diplomatic Corps and ambassador of Argentina H.E. Mr. Rodolfo J. Martin-Saravia and other diplomats. Diplomats showed great interest in playing Golf. At the end of match, prize distribution ceremony was also held.

# South Korean Ambassador Dinner Reception

SERENA HOTELS

South Korea's ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Jong Hwan Song hosted a farewell reception in the honor of the outgoing ambassadors of Argentina, UK, Bangladesh and Sweden. H.E. Mr. Rodolfo J. Martin-Saravia Dean of Diplomatic Corps and ambassador of Argentina, H.E. Mr. Philip Barton ambassador of UK, H.E. Mr. Sohrab Hussain ambassador of Bangladesh and H.E. Mr. Tomas Rosander ambassador of Sweden attended the event with full zeal. Other diplomats were also present along with their spouses.



# Thailand Tourism

Thailand is a country on Southeast Asia's Indochina peninsula known for tropical beaches, opulent royal palaces, ancient ruins and ornate temples displaying figures of Buddha, a revered symbol.

Tourism is a major economic factor in the Kingdom of Thailand. Thailand's popularity as a tourist destination owes a great deal to its benign climate. Thailand predominantly has a tropical wet and dry or savannah climate while the South and the eastern tip of the East have a tropical monsoon climate.

Thailand's attractions include shopping, diving sites, sandy beaches, hundreds of tropical islands, traditional Thai massage, nightlife, archaeological sites, museums, hill tribes, flora and bird life, palaces, Buddhist temples and several World Heritage sites.

Diving is a leading activity on the island and has a number of professional dive centers, which offer top-notch courses and guidance. We only recommend the top instructions in the region.

The most popular tourist destinations of Thailand are Bangkok, Phukat, Pattaya, Koh Samui, Krabi etc.

Phuket FantaSea is a world famous cultural theme park with spectacular shows every hour, an array of restaurants, and a shopping street all inspired by Thai mythology, folklore and legends.

Nightclubs in Phuket offer non-stop entertainment and live performances, and the place is crowded throughout the night. The Chinese-style table tops and tuk-tuk roof decoration creates a unique theme for an eclectic style of entertainment.

Be sure to try a banana pancake from mobile vendors all around town. The pancakes are spread with condensed milk, stacked and then cut into wedge with coconut cream and flakes.

The Samui Aquarium and Tiger Zoo has Thailand's tropical favourites above and below the water. This is the ideal place for animal lovers, who can see an array of beautiful animals they have never seen before.

The Snake Farm showcases impeccable shows with snake wranglers that goad the most poisonous and scary snakes in Asia.

The Sky Fox Cable Ride is ideal for those who desire speed and thrill. People can experience pure freedom as you fly like a bird, and slide along the cables from platform to platform.

Thailand is fast becoming the "health holiday" capital of the world. Some of the world's finest Spas are found in Thailand. Build in serene Settings, often in lush green gardens, wild jungles or by sea side, Thailand's spas are rewriting the book on holistic philosophy. Treatment ranges from ancient Eastern healing and relaxation techniques to European rejuvenation therapies. It is easy to drop in to a shop and get a foot massage, hand massage, neck and shoulder massage and facials and skin treatments.

Beaches in Thailand are great for a swim during the day as well. At night the right side of the beach is lit up with restaurants and bars serving Thai and international cuisines.

Thailand is also a hub of international conferences, expos, meetings, trainings of multinational companies, firm, NGOs and as well as of United Nation's several departments.

Thailand's ability to attract foreign investment has been a key driver of its economic success.

The Kingdom is among the top ten global destinations for foreign direct investment, according to a survey by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Thailand is well established as a manufacturing powerhouse in Asia. But now, Thailand is working on its next stage of development, building an advanced, knowledge-based and creative economy.

# Flowers & Smiles
## welcomed the Ambassadors

By Saba Sarfraz

The newly appointed Ambassador of Arab Republic of Egypt to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Mr. Sherif Shaheen visited the office of Diplomatic focus in Islamabad. The CEO/Publisher/Editor of the magazine Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi welcomed him with flowers and smile.

Both discussed some bilateral issues and the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Egypt. Ambassador H.E. Mr. Sharef Shaheen appreciated the efforts of Diplomatic focus magazine and also the efforts of Mr. Fazal Elahi in the field of journalism. Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi appreciated the endeavor of Arab Republic of Egypt in promoting relations with the Muslim world. H.E. Mr. Kim Thae Sop, Ambassador of Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan also made a visit to the office of Diplomatic focus in Islamabad. The CEO/Publisher/Editor of the magazine Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi greeted him warm heartedly. They discussed the matters of mutual interests. Ambassador of North Korea was honored by a souvenir.

# German archaeologists visit to Mohenjo Daro

By Saba Sarfraz

Professor Michael Jansen from RWTH Aachen University and Dr. Dan Tidten, Head of Press and Cultural Section from the German Embassy Islamabad, visited the archaeological sites of Mohenjodaro in Sindh. They met the members of the Technical Consultative Committee (TCC), National Fund for Mohenjo-Daro.

"Mohenjodaro is one of the most impressive archaeological sites in this world. Pakistanis have every reason to be proud of their immense cultural heritage. We encourage the Pakistani Provincial and Federal Governments to make every effort to preserve this treasure," Dr. Tidten said.

Professor Michael Jansen from the renowned German RWTH Aachen University is a specialist on the Indus Culture, on which he has been working for decades. He has been chairing the Technical Consultative Committee since long. The Indus Culture, which flourished about 4000 to 5000 years ago, is considered as one of the three ancient civilisations of mankind.

Germany has made various contributions to preserve and protect the rich cultural heritage in Pakistan: The very first international UNESCO exhibition on the Indus Civilization was inaugurated in Aachen in Germany in 1985. Germany co funded the UNESCO Mohenjo Daro campaign in the 1990s with 1 Mio. DM, sent experts on preservation to various public museums in Pakistan and has been supporting the work of scholars like Professor Michael Jansen. Recently, several German museums organised the internationally renowned exhibition "Gandhara - the Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan" in Germany and other countries. Furthermore, Germany is currently funding restoration works in the Nekropolis of Makli Hill near Karachi with more than 11 Mio Rupees.

# Ambassador of Japan & His Wife Hosted Farewell Reception

A farewell reception was hosted by Ambassador of Japan H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Inomata and his wife Mrs. Midori Inomata. Dean of Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Argentina H.E. Mr. Rodolfo J. Martin Saravia and different other diplomats with their spouses graced the event. The representatives from media and high dignitaries of Islamabad also joined the evening. All of them appreciated the diplomatic endeavor of H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Inomata.

# Pakistan Wins PSL...!

## The final match was played between Islamabad United and Quetta Gladiators which was in favor of Islamabad United.

**Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif congratulated Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on successful arrangement and execution of Pakistan Super League (PSL)**

By Raheel Iqbal

Islamabad United became the first Champion of the Pakistan Super League PSL T20, 2016 by defeating the strong Quetta Gladiators by 6 wickets.

Islamabad United team captain Misbah ul Haq won the toss and elected to field first. Russell took the 3 wickets of Quetta Gladiators for 36 runs. Mohammad Irfan took two wickets of Quetta Gladiators. While Badree and Mohammad Sami took one wicket each. Quetta Gladiators gave a target of 175 runs to win in the 20 over's match. Ahmed Shehzad scored 64 runs while Sangakkara scored 55 runs.

Replying to a total of 175 runs to win Islamabad United started its inning but lost the wicket of Sharjeel Ahmed who played a vital role in the last match for making their way to final. Smith played a vital role in helping Islamabad United achieve a big total of 75 runs. Smith scored 73 runs just from 51 balls. Zulfiqar Babar took his wicket. Later wicket keeper Haddin also played

a superb inning, scored 63 runs from 31 balls and remained not out.

The final match of the Pakistan Super League 2016 was played at Dubai International Cricket Stadium Dubai UAE. Islamabad United qualified for the final of PSL by defeating Karachi Kings in the playoff round. Quetta Gladiators qualified for the final of the PSL by defeating Peshawar Zalmi team in the 1st playoff qualifier for the final.

Pakistan Super League (PSL) was held in Dubai from 4th to 23rd of February. There were five teams participating in the inaugural season of the Pakistan Super League which include Peshawar Zalmi, Karachi Kings, Islamabad United, Lahore Qalandars and Quetta Gladiators. Habib Bank Limited (HBL) was the main sponsor of the event. The Pakistan Cricket Board has announced that for the first 3 years, the league will consist of five teams with a total of 16 players. Team will include 5 foreign players and 11 Pakistani nationals including at least two emerging players.

Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif appreciated the endeavor of Pakistan cricket board for such a successful event. He extended his heartfelt congratulations to all participating players and teams for enthusiastically playing throughout the tournament.

PSL has provided an excellent opportunity of rejoicing to cricket lovers in the country rather the world over; apart from affording ample chances for young players to demonstrate their talent and learn from senior players. The government is supportive of all such healthy sporting initiatives which help in highlighting a positive image of Pakistan, stated the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister appreciated the role and efforts of Shahryar Ahmed Khan Chairman PCB, Najam Sethi and all those who played a role in successfully arranging the event. Saying that no one loses in sports but all who play are the winners.

The league was very supportive for introducing new talented players, as Pakistani cricket was suffering from past few years and there were no such events that would help out to find capable talent and to provide entertainment for the people of Pakistan. PSL helps a lot in this regard, the league not only introduce new emerging players but also gives a warm smile on the faces of all the Pakistanis.

After a spectacular display of fireworks lit up the final of the Pakistan Super League in Dubai, Dwayne Smith was awarded as man of the match and Andre Russel was awarded top wicket-taker award of the tournament and best bowler of the final match, Umer Akmal was awarded three awards for his remarkable performance including best fielder, best batsman and leading run-scorer, Ravi opara was awarded the most valuable player of the tournament.

Commercially, the tournament was also a hit, with record television viewing figures as well as a steady increase in match attendances as the tournament progressed and captured interest. There is no doubt that PSL is an important feather in the cap of the PCB, and will have a positive impact on the development of Pakistani players and make the team more competitive. It also provided the people of the country some much needed entertainment and escapism that is also commendable.

## PSL Highlights

Dwayne Smith was awarded as Man of the Match.

Andre Russel was awarded Top Wicket-Taker Award of the Tournament.

Umer Akmal was awarded three awards for his remarkable performance including Best Fielder, Best Batsman and Leading Run-Scorer.

Ravi Bopara was awarded the Most Valuable Player of the Tournament.

# Orange Festival

Mr. Zaildar Ahsan Shah hosted "Orange Festival"under the leadership of Ambassador of Romania, H.E. Mr. Emilion Ion at Taxila. The chief guest of event was Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage Senator Pervaiz Rashid. Different diplomats with their spouses and children attended the festival.

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# DIPLOMATIC FOCUS

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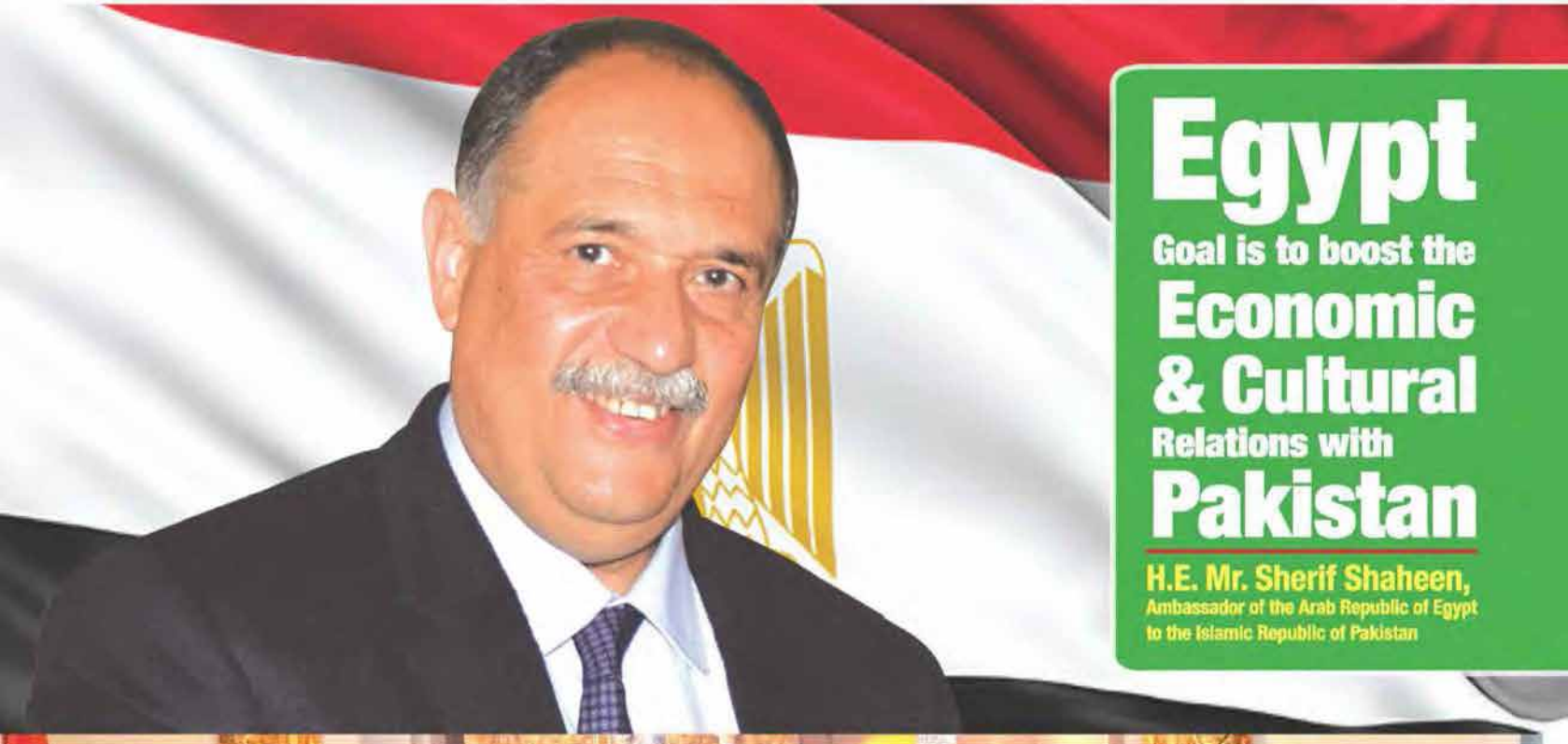

## Egypt

### Goal is to boost the Economic & Cultural Relations with Pakistan

**H.E. Mr. Sherif Shaheen,**
Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

## Strengthening the Business Relations will Contribute to Thailand & Pakistan Economy

**H.E. Mr. Suchart Liengsaengthong,**
Ambassador of the Royal Thailand to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan