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Mian Fazal Elahi

## Editorial

It was a pleasant surprise that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stopping by in Lahore to meet Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Twelve years was 12 years too many for an Indian prime minister to have stayed away from Pakistan. Mr. Sharif had already demonstrated last year that a visit to the other side of the border was not only possible, it could be done on relatively short notice. Earlier in Mr. Modi said that he saw Pakistan as a potential bridge between South Asia and Afghanistan. On the other side Minister Nawaz Sharif in Lahore said: "We know that Afghanistan's success will require the cooperation and support of each of its neighbours. And all of us in the region — India, Pakistan, Iran and others — must unite, in trust and cooperation, behind this common purpose and in recognition of our common destiny." Deplorable as Mr. Modi's brinkmanship and insistence on a one-point agenda (terrorism) in talks with Pakistan is, his willingness to reverse himself and engage Pakistan should be welcomed by all right-thinking and sensible denizens of the two countries. The two states owe it to their peoples to work on normalising Pakistan-India relations. The 25th of December was an auspicious day to mark the possible beginning of a new era of stability in South Asia.

### Important Announcement



Mian Assad Ullah

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, asadmi1@gmail.com

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# Diplomatic Focus thru lens



*Ambassador-designate of USA to Pakistan, Mr. David M. Hale presenting his credentials to President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.*



*Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in a meeting with US Ambassador David M. Hale in Islamabad.*



*Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaz Aziz in a meeting with the Ambassador of USA H.E. David. Hale in Islamabad.*





# From threatening Pakistan in 2011 to holding hands with Nawaz Sharif, Modi has come a long way



**O**n Quaid's Birth Day, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a most unexpected present to peaceniks in South Asia.

In a gesture that one news outlet described as "jaw-dropping", the Indian Prime Minister paid a seemingly spontaneous visit to Lahore on his way back home from Kabul, dropping in to chat with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Sharif personally received Modi at the airport with a warm hug and they walked away from the aeroplane holding hands firmly. The two were even dressed similarly, in shalwar qameezes and short, sleeveless achkan coats.

### **Bold and brave**

While this move is bold and brave one in any context, the fact that it has been made by Narendra Modi makes it even more surprisingly.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) hardliner has had a consistently hawkish stand on Pakistan through his career. As he ran for prime





minister in 2014, he consistently attacked the Manmohan Singh government for trying to make peace with India's neighbour.

To get an idea of just how far Modi has come, one needs to watch a 2011 interview of Modi with Rajat Sharma. In it, Modi is quite blunt about his views on Pakistan. He calls it an "enemy country" and a nation of "expert liars." He also ridiculed the United Progressive Alliance's policy of trying to talk peace with Pakistan and hinted at the fact that if it were up to him, he would use force to respond to the 26/11 attack on Mumbai. "A neighbour hits you and in response you go to America!" he said. "Why don't you go to Pakistan instead? It needs to be replied back in its own coin. Stop writing love letters to Pakistan."

#### Good sign for peace

To go from this to walking down the tarmac with the Prime Minister, hand-in-hand, is an amazing change and deserves much applause.

There has been so much of bad blood between India and Pakistan since 1947 that peace between the two countries is seen as a wooly-headed, somewhat whimsical idea.

In the Indian context, "candle-holder at Wagah" has become a term of ridicule synonymous with "bleeding heart liberals"

**"Both leaders have agreed the two countries' foreign secretaries will meet in Islamabad in the middle of January to finalise the schedule for resumption of talks," Mr. Sartaj Aziz Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs**

or "singing Kumbaya by a campfire." Anyone suggesting that India and Pakistan sort out their problems using dialogue is seen to be impractical at best and malevolent at worst.



Yet, as the symbolism of this impromptu visit shows, peace, dialogue and people-to-people contact with Pakistan isn't a Wagah candle-holder's pipe dream – it's also hard diplomacy.

Narendra Modi came into office with much of the same hawkishness that characterised his campaign and cancelled the composite dialogue process with Pakistan.

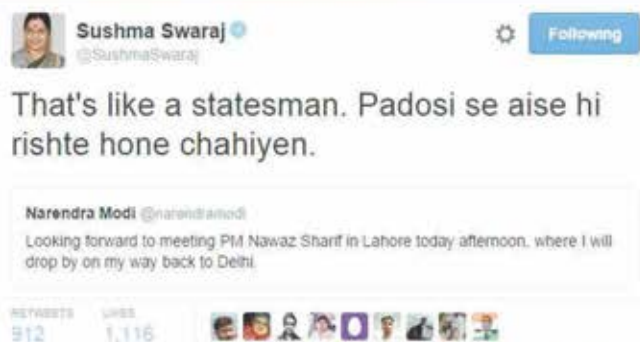
On December 9, however, the BJP went back on its decision to scrap the dialogue and, in fact, went further than even the Manmohan Singh government, by making peace with Pakistan a public event with a showmanship that is Modi's specialty. While this certainly marks a high point, this isn't the first time this government has made good relations with Pakistan a priority.

Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj's own visit to Pakistan a fortnight ago clearly signaled that the BJP government saw peace with

Pakistan to be good politics – a fact that could provide a self-sustaining momentum

**Both prime ministers agreed to enhance cooperation and work together to establish good neighbourly relations: Qazi Khalilullah Foreign Office spokesperson**

to the Indo-Pak peace dialogue. If you're a bleeding heart, Kumbaya singing, candle-holder at Wagah, this is a bit of 'Ache Din' right here. Courtesy to DAWN





# Islamabad, Kabul agree upon steps for Taliban talks



By Monitoring Desk

**COAS discusses a plan in Kabul for January meeting of Pakistan, Afghanistan, US and China**

**P**akistan and Afghanistan agreed to take first formal steps towards the resumption of reconciliation talks between the Afghan government and Taliban by convening a meeting in the first week of next month under the recently formed 'quadrilateral framework' that also involves China and the United States.

The venue and the level of representation will be decided by the four countries.

According to one source, there will be a series of quadrilateral meetings in January, leading to resumption of the reconciliation process that was suspended on July 30 after it became public that Taliban leader Mullah Omar had been dead for over two years.

The decision about the next steps towards revival of the peace talks was taken during Chief of Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif's long-awaited visit to Kabul for discussions on the reconciliation process, border management and other security matters.

During his daylong trip, Gen Sharif met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Dr Abdullah Abdullah and the US and Nato commander in Afghanistan, Gen John Campbell.

"First round of quadrilateral meeting will be scheduled in January to work out a clear and comprehensive roadmap for a meaningful peace process," military spokesman Lt Gen Asim Bajwa, who accompanied the army chief, tweeted after landing back here in the evening. The quadrilateral framework was announced during President Ghani's visit to Islamabad

this month. It was also agreed that a steering committee of the framework would oversee the process.

A spokesman for Mr Abdullah said "options to take action against those armed groups which refuse to come to the negotiating table" were discussed during the meeting with Gen Sharif.

An Inter-Services Public Relations statement emphasised that resumption of reconciliation and its success was a "shared responsibility of all stakeholders" and the coming quadrilateral meetings would clearly demarcate responsibilities of the various stakeholders at different stages of the process that would be led by the Afghan government.

"We have made it clear that Pakistan is not responsible for everything, rather all stakeholders would need to work together for ending violence," an official said.

The official, who sat in Gen Sharif's meetings in Kabul, said the discussions were candid and there was also a lot of positivity.

When asked to compare the new engagement with the process that was initiated earlier this year, the official said: "Now there was a lot more clarity and commitment than before."

**BORDER MANAGEMENT:** The army chief flagged the need for establishing a new coordination mechanism to control unauthorised movement across the long, porous border between the two countries. But, as in the past, he did not find the Afghans much receptive to the idea.

The ISPR statement recognised the 'complexities' for such an arrangement because of the large Afghan refugee population in Pakistan and the cross-border tribal linkages.

Instead of a formal coordination mechanism, the two sides settled for sternly dealing "with any elements crossing over and getting involved in violence on either side, through active intelligence sharing and intelligence-based operations".

The two countries had agreed in May on intelligence cooperation between the Inter-Services Intelligence agency and the Afghan National Directorate of Security, but the arrangement could not take off the Afghan authorities' aversion to it.

Something concrete in this regard emerged on Sunday in the shape of a decision to set up a hotline between the directors general of military operations of the two countries and to reinvigorate military exchanges.

There has been no mechanism for coordination on the border since a commission of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the coalition forces completed its mandate following the end of the International Security Assistance Force's mission in the war-ravaged country in December last year.

Border clashes have increased in the absence of the mechanism. According to a defence official, 132 border violations were committed by the Afghan forces this year in which 18 Pakistani soldiers died.

Courtesy to DAWN



# Diplomatic Focus thru lens



**Outgoing Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Mr. Dashgin Shikarov called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Alwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.**



**Turkish Foreign Minister Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Alwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.**



**US delegation headed by H.E. Mr. Antony Blinken, US Deputy Secretary of State called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House, Islamabad.**



**Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with Turkish delegation led by H.E. Mevlut Cavusoglu, Foreign Minister of Turkey at PM House, Islamabad.**



**Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with Iranian delegation led by H.E. Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of Iran at PM House, Islamabad.**



**Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif met German delegation led by H.E. Dr. Ursula Von Der Leyen, Defence Minister of Germany at PM House, Islamabad.**



**Out going Ambassador of Azerbaijan Mr. Dashgin Shikarov called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House, Islamabad.**



**Federal Minister for Finance Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in a meeting with the Ambassador of Italy Mr. Alfano pontecorvo in Islamabad.**



# India-Pakistan hopes revived

Can Pakistan and India break out of the historical cycle of hope and despair when it comes to the possibility of genuine normalisation of ties



**Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is interacting with H.E. Ms. Sushma Swaraj, Indian Foreign Minister at the Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process at Islamabad.**

*By Mian Fazal Elahi*

It is as unexpected as it is compelling — and official: Pakistan and India are to resume dialogue across a range of agreed subjects under the umbrella of what has now been labelled the Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue.

As ever, the India-Pakistan relationship has not failed to surprise — though for once in

the most welcoming of ways.

A rush of meetings over the past 10 days has achieved a most remarkable of breakthroughs, credit for which must first and foremost go to the governments of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

When politicians lead, positive change is

often achievable. Mr Modi in particular appears to have recognised the failure of his high-risk strategy of not talking to Pakistan while trying to isolate this country internationally on terrorism-related issues.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sharif stood firm in the face of fierce domestic opposition, particularly after the Ufa debacle, and kept



open the door to dialogue with India.

The Paris meeting on the sidelines of the climate conference proved to be more of a catalyst than perhaps anyone other than the two prime ministers themselves could have hoped or known.

Now, the hope will be that by the time Mr Modi visits Pakistan next September for the SAARC conference, the two governments will have achieved a meaningful breakthrough in some of the areas to be discussed under the Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue.

It will not be easy. The earlier Composite Dialogue appeared to progress smoothly, but agreement on the so-called low-hanging fruit proved elusive.

On the Indian side, the challenge will be to withstand the opposition to the resumption of dialogue with Pakistan. While Mr. Modi's supporters have appeared to be at the vanguard of the anti-Pakistan sentiment in India in recent months, there are a range of other populist and establishment forces in India that will try and scuttle or slow down the dialogue process.

Mr. Modi and his government will have to demonstrate a great deal of resolve domestically. For Pakistan, the immediate challenge is the same as it has been for a number of years now: there must be some movement on the trials here related to the 2008 Mumbai attacks. That would automatically create the space and goodwill for the comprehensive dialogue to move forward.

The question is, can Pakistan and India break out of the historical cycle of hope and despair when it comes to the possibility of genuine normalisation of ties?

Turbulent spells in the relationship in the past have sometimes been followed by unexpected bilateral peace endeavours. Unhappily, those endeavours have always failed because the leadership of the two countries found statesmanship difficult or, sometimes, populism easy.

Today, on the Indian side, Mr. Modi can surely deliver — if he wants to. On the Pakistani side, Mr. Sharif has worked out a coexistence with the military — and so could conceivably deliver. There is reason to hope again.

Courtesy To Dawn



*Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaz Aziz shaking hand with Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj at Pakistan National Council of the Arts in Islamabad.*

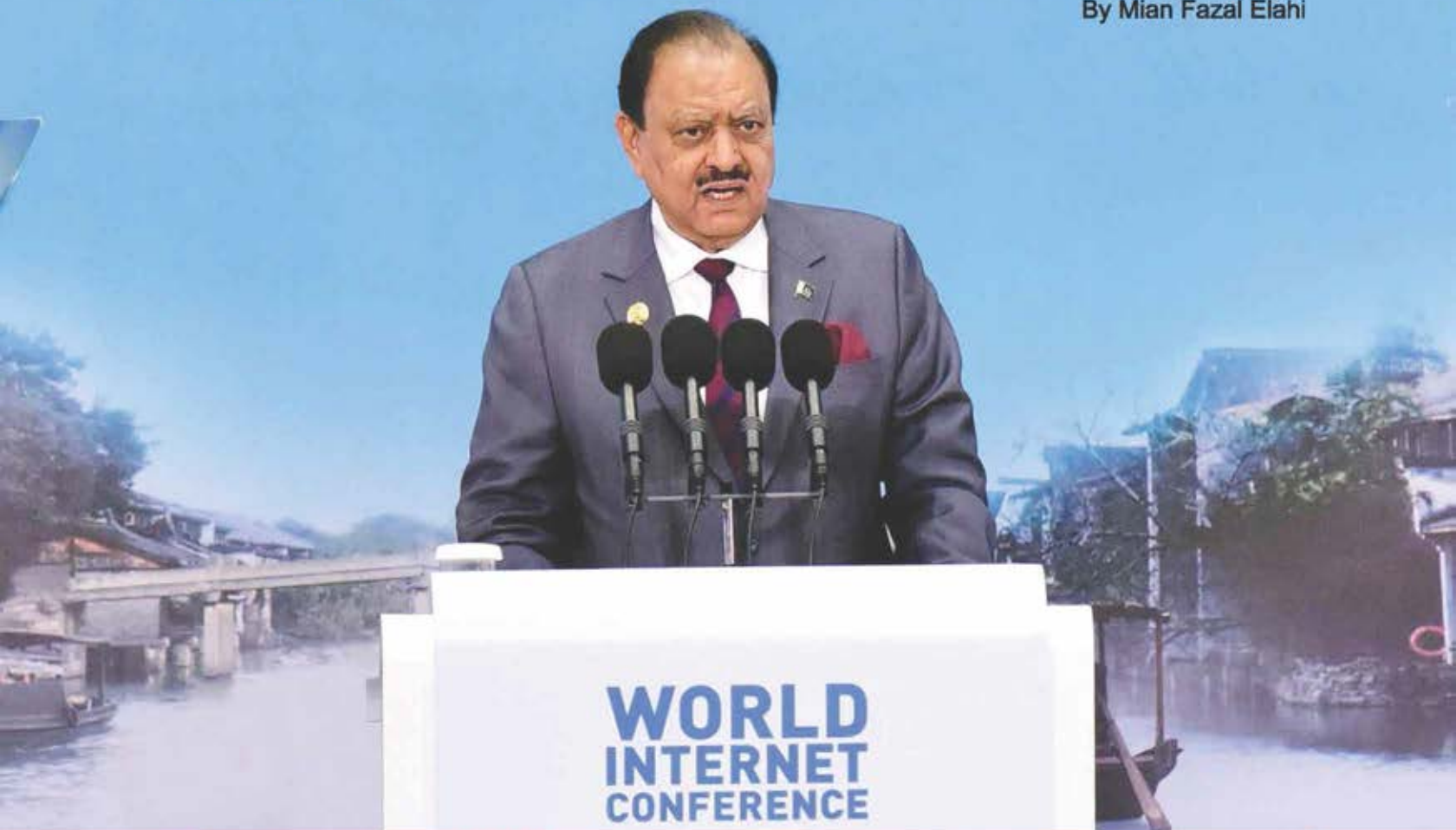


*H.E. Ms. Sushma Swaraj, Indian Foreign Minister departing for New Delhi attended the Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process at Nur Khan Air Base, Islamabad.*

### Joint Statement of Pakistan and India

1. The External Affairs Minister of India, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj led the Indian delegation to the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process in Islamabad on December 8-9, 2015. She called on the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and held discussions with Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sartaj Aziz.
2. The EAM and the Adviser condemned terrorism and resolved to cooperate to eliminate it. They noted the successful talks on terrorism and security related issues in Bangkok by the two NSAs and decided that the NSAs will continue to address all issues connected to terrorism. The Indian side was assured of the steps being taken to expedite the early conclusion of the Mumbai trial.
3. Both sides, accordingly, agreed to a Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue and directed the Foreign Secretaries to work out the modalities and schedule of the meetings under the Dialogue including Peace and Security, CBMs, Jammu & Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek, Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project, Economic and Commercial Cooperation, Counterterrorism, Narcotics Control and Humanitarian Issues, People to People exchanges and Religious Tourism.





## The growing Cyber menace has serious implications for international peace and security: President Mamnoon

**P**resident Mamnoon Hussain urged the need of collective global efforts to check the abuse of cyberspace by terrorists and criminals, having serious implications for international peace and security.

"Attacks against critical infrastructure and

information systems, an abuse of cyberspace by terrorists and criminals are a growing global menace and that dark side of internet needs to be dealt collectively through collaborative efforts of global community," he said.

The President expressed these views while

**History Made**  
President Mamnoon Hussain made history by delivering his speech in Urdu language in the 2nd World Internet Conference. It was for the first time that a Pakistani President addressed an international event abroad in Urdu, which would not only help promote the national language and pride but would also highlight the rich cultural heritage.



President Mamnoon Hussain being presented bouquet on his arrival at the Hangzhou Airport, China. The President visiting China to attend the 2nd World Internet Conference



President Mamnoon Hussain shaking hands with Liu Yunshu, member of Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of Communist Party of China Central Committee





**President Mamnoon Hussain shaking hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping before their bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the 2nd World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, China.**

speaking at the opening session of the 2nd World Internet Conference held at Wuzhen—a historic and scenic town in northern Zhejiang province of China.

He highlighted the abuse of internet and cyberspace and said the increase in incidents related to malicious use of ICTs in cyberspace was posing risks to users from individuals to states, adding, the growing menace had serious implications for international peace and security.

The President said Pakistan fully realized the potential of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and was pursuing the vision of accelerated digitization to transform the country into a knowledge-based economy.

"We consider it (ICTs) as a key enabler to achieve efficiency, transparency, good



**President Mamnoon Hussain being warmly received by Mr. Liang Liming, Vice Governor of Zhejiang Province on arrival at the Hangzhou Airport, China. The president is visiting China to attend the 2nd World Internet Conference being held in Wuzhen.**





**Mr. Liu Yunshan, member of Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of Communist Party of China Central Committee hosted a lunch in honor of President Mamnoon Hussain on the sidelines of the 2nd World Internet conference in Wuzhen, China.**

governance and empowering the people," he added.

The Conference, organized by the Cyberspace Administration of China and the Government of Zhejiang province, was also addressed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, and some other leaders including the Russian Prime Minister.

President Mamnoon Hussain said that Pakistan's focus remained on development of ICT infrastructure across the country with special emphasis on serving marginalized segments of the society and bridging the digital divide.

"We believe in connectivity and inclusiveness for all. Special projects to empower women and girls through ICTs have been launched," he added.

The President said that as the innovation in cyberspace had resulted in commercial, economic, cultural, and social opportunities for users, Pakistan being a progressive nation fully endorsed the global vision of seamless connectivity across the world.

"We are here together to deliberate on how to make our cyberspace more responsive to our needs, more secure and reliable in use, more robust in terms of technology and more conducive for promoting innovation," he added.

The President said with the digital economy now a critically important and growing part of the global economy, internet connectivity had an intrinsic and positive correlation with economic growth and higher living standards.

"The economic impact of the internet, therefore, continues to drive innovation and investments in internet and related technologies," he added.

The President said the cyberspace

provided remarkable opportunities in the areas of e-health, e-education, e-agriculture, e-commerce, e-governance and myriad of other prospects that it created.

"The World Wide Web has made us more interconnected than at any time in human history," he mentioned.

The President, however, stressed that to fully capture the inherent potential of the internet through safe and effective

related to the Internet.

The President said Pakistan had followed the policy of free flow of information and open access to the internet, adding, "We will continue our support and assistance to initiatives aimed at achieving our shared goal of socio-economic development through safe and secure use of cyberspace."

He said Pakistan supported China in holding this important conference and would continue to coordinate its policies with China in an effort to build a cyberspace community of shared destiny.

The President also called upon the Chinese entrepreneurs to explore Pakistan's vibrant talent and its demographic potential to bring more breakthroughs in the world of cyberspace.

He congratulated the Cyberspace Administration of China and the Government of Zhejiang for successfully holding the 2nd World Internet Conference.

The President also lauded the efforts of President Xi for holding this conference, which he said would help understand some of the most critical issues relating to cyberspace and would help forge a path to shared destiny.

"The beautiful water town of Wuzhen perfectly encapsulates Chinese civilization, which has embraced modernity and technological progress while retaining traditional Chinese characteristics," he remarked.

Besides addressing the Internet conference, the President also had a bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping and attended a cultural event hosted in his honour by the Government of Zhejiang province.

**The World Wide  
Web has made  
us more  
interconnected  
than at any time  
in human history  
: President  
Mamnoon**

communication in the cyberspace, there was a need to engage with each other to build consensus around a set of agreed international protocols that ensured realization of an open, secure, and reliable cyberspace for the global community.

He said the principle of mutual respect and mutual trust held paramount importance in governance models particularly as they



2015

## A year of political balancing acts

**T**ruly speaking, 2015 was essentially about performing political balancing acts throughout the year. All the important political players seemed to be trying to find out exactly where they stood in relation to one another but while doing so, each one seemed to be trying its best not to rock the boat. Political chaos was measurably absent. No long-drawn sit-ins brought the country to a standstill like they did last year. And the state of civil-military relations, while not as tense as they were in 2014, nevertheless still appeared to be far from being friction-free.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appears to be completing the year almost unscathed politically and more in control of the situation and more confident, despite the fact that during the year the economy remained in doldrums, afflicted by massive shortages of electricity and gas as well as rising unemployment. The ruling PML-N has fully regained the province of Punjab, notwithstanding Jahangir Tareen's win in the recent Lodhran by-poll. Punjab seemed to have been slipping out of the PML-N's hands last year, with Imran Khan's PTI giving it a run for its money.

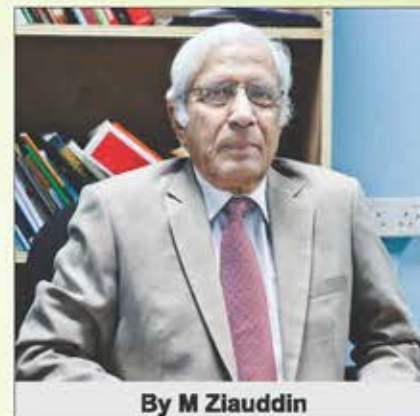
But the issue of governance has remained a matter of serious concern in all four provinces, especially in Sindh. In Balochistan, a window for political reconciliation seemed to have opened, with the provincial government contacting the estranged self-exiled leaders. Efforts were also speeded up to bring Fata into the national mainstream.

The main opposition, the PPP, despite its problems with the Rangers has averted confrontation with the federation while still complaining vociferously that it is being forced against the wall and that the Rangers were going beyond their legal and

constitutional mandate. The more vocal PTI, however, has continued to insist that the PPP has lost its right to lead the opposition because of what it calls a behind-the-scenes deal between the PPP and the ruling PML-N to 'live and let live', essentially to secure the loot the PPP had allegedly accumulated through corruption.

It was in such a political backdrop that the four provinces held local government (LG) polls, and that too for the first time on a party basis. It was for the first time in Pakistan's political history that elected provincial governments had held these polls. All the past LG polls were held under military regimes. Predictably in Punjab, Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the ruling parties — the PML-N, the PPP and the PTI respectively — swept the polls, with the MQM once again making a clean sweep of urban Sindh, including Karachi. Surprisingly, by and large, the LG polls in all provinces were held in relative peace with only a small number of incidents of violence reported.

Meanwhile, the Karachi operation that kicked off in September 2013 to root out terrorism from the megalopolis completed its first phase by the middle of August largely satisfactorily, with the law and order situation in the city improving greatly. The Rangers have now embarked on the second phase in real earnest. But by the time the incidents of targeted killings, kidnappings for ransom and other terror-related crimes went down, the confrontation between the MQM and the Rangers escalated to a dangerous point, with thousands of the party's workers arrested, their weapons ceased and the headquarters at Nine-Zero raided. So much so that at one point during this period, MQM chief Altaf Hussain went hammer and tongs against the security



By M Ziauddin

establishment, followed by Pemra banning his telephonic addresses from London. For a while it appeared as if the MQM would be ousted from urban Sindh and that it had been decided to wrench Karachi from the Muttahida for good. But as in the past, the party has come back literally with a bang, to recapture its ground through what appeared to be relatively fair and free LG polls. This seemed like a repeat of the events of 1992, 1996 and 1998. This time again, the game is taking almost similar political twists and turns with the MQM back in the saddle in urban Sindh thanks to its emphatic victory in the LG polls, while the PPP, despite having swept the polls in rural Sindh, is facing the wrath of the establishment and the media in general, on account of its alleged corruption and bad governance. The scene appears to be set for a repetition of the old story — a confrontation between the Sindh government led by the PPP and the Karachi government led by the MQM on the issue of division of powers.

Courtesy to The Express Tribune and The writer served as Executive Editor of The Express Tribune from 2009 to 2014





By Mian Fazal Elahi

# TAPI

## is a trailblazing project that will open doors for greater regional economic collaboration & integration

Construction of the \$10 billion TAPI pipeline has begun some 25 years after the inception of the project. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif attended the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline groundbreaking ceremony along with Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Indian Vice President Hamid Ansari near the city of Mary in southeastern Turkmenistan. The four leaders shoveling dirt down a chute, making hand impressions on a plaque and signing their names on a portion of the pipeline under their country's flag.

The four countries have long planned the

By December 2019, the pipeline will be completed. It will have a capacity of 33 billion cubic metres (bcm)," Turkmen President



Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif being welcomed at Ashgabat Airport upon arrival in Turkmenistan





Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in on-on-one meeting with Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov at Ashgabat

ambitious project to meet growing energy needs, but administrative issues and unrest in the region have so far delayed its realisation.

PM Nawaz, speaking on the occasion said the "vital achievement was made possible through perseverance through the patience and collective endeavours of all stakeholders", and lauded the "personal involvement and keen interest" of the Turkmen president.

"TAPI is not just a gas transit initiative connecting energy-rich Central Asia with energy-starved South Asia, but a trailblazing project that will open doors for greater regional economic collaboration and integration," the premier said.

"It holds a significant place in Pakistan's energy outlook," he said, adding that the project serves as a vital component of his government's new national energy policy and the plans for mitigating the country's energy deficiency.

He touched upon other major infrastructural projects under way in the country — Casa-1000 and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) — and encouraged other regional players to "take advantage of this transformational project (CPEC)".

"It will provide the shortest route for access to our sea ports through Central Asian republic and other states in the region," he said.

Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov also addressed the

**Pakistan and India will get over 1.3 billion cubic feet per day of gas from TAPI while Afghanistan will get 0.5 billion cubic feet, India will pay \$200-250 million in transit fees to Pakistan while Pakistan will pay the same amount in transit fees to Afghanistan. The gas link has an annual capacity of 33 billion cubic metres.**

ceremony.

"By December 2019, the pipeline will be completed. It will have a capacity of 33 billion cubic metres (bcm)," Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov said at the ceremony.

The event took place close to the giant Galkynysh gas field which is meant to provide gas for the 1,814-kilometre pipeline. Galkynysh already supplies gas for a pipeline to China, the main buyer of Turkmen gas, which imports between 30 and 35bcm per year.

The Turkmen government also said it had signed a "framework agreement" with a consortium of Japanese and Turkish companies to implement the third stage of



Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif along with Presidents of Afghanistan & Turkmenistan and Indian Vice President at the Ground Breaking Ceremony of Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Gas Pipeline.



## Bilateral Relations

expansion at Galkynysh that will boost the field's output to 95bcm a year.

The consortium includes JGC Corporation, Mitsubishi, Itochu, Chiyoda and Sojitz of Japan as well as Calik Group of Companies and Ronasans Endustri Tesisleri of Turkey. The government did not disclose any other details such as the cost of expansion.

PM Nawaz Sharif and Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov announced at a meeting in Ashgabat that the regional gas pipeline project will strengthen relations between their countries.

The Pakistani premier said the Tapi project will bring peace to the region and promote trade. The two countries reaffirmed their resolve to further strengthen their bilateral relationship.

Speaking at a conference celebrating Turkmenistan's 20th anniversary of its policy of permanent neutrality in Ashgabat, Nawaz said that Pakistan was pursuing a policy of strong cooperation with regional countries, especially with next door neighbours, for prosperity and enhanced connectivity.

Prime Minister Nawaz mentioned the CASA-1000, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and road projects with Afghanistan, which were a manifestation of his policy to enhance regional connectivity.

Pakistan and India will get over 1.3 billion

**"TAPI is not just a gas transit initiative connecting energy-rich Central Asia with energy-starved South Asia, but a trailblazing project that will open doors for greater regional economic collaboration and integration," PM Nawaz**

cubic feet per day of gas from TAPI while Afghanistan will get 0.5 billion cubic feet, India will pay \$200-250 million in transit fees to Pakistan while Pakistan will pay the same amount in transit fees to Afghanistan. The gas link has an annual capacity of 33 billion cubic metres, a Turkmen newspaper earlier reported.

For Turkmenistan, which has been hit by low energy prices and dependence on China for the vast majority of its gas sales, TAPI is a key opportunity to diversify its exports.

But uncertainty hangs over the costly project. Aside from the risks associated with a link traversing war-torn Afghanistan, the four-country consortium has yet to confirm the participation of a foreign commercial partner willing to help finance it.

The project is politically complex, requiring cooperating governments, and logistically challenging, as the pipeline would pass through areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan plagued by Taliban and separatist insurgents.

Courtesy to DAWN



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif delivering his statement at the Opening Ceremony of 20th Anniversary of the Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan conference at Ashgabat.





# Diplomatic Focus thru lens



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with the Ambassador of Cuba, H.E. Jesus Zenen Buergo Concepcion, Ambassador of Iran H.E. Alireza Haghighian, Ambassador of Egypt H.E. Sherif Shaheen and High Commissioner of Kenya Prof. Julius Kibet Bittok in Islamabad.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Syed Tariq Fatemi in a meeting with Mr. Jørgen Møller Sørensen, Political Director, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Water and Power, Khawaja Muhammad Asif in a meeting with H.E. Mr. Erlan Abdyldaev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan in Islamabad.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with Foreign Minister of Latvia H.E. Edgars Rinkēvičs in Islamabad.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz shaking hand with the Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif in Islamabad.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi in a meeting with Special Representative of Russian Federation H.E. Zamir Kabulov in Islamabad.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi in a meeting with Assistant Foreign Minister of Egypt H.E. Yasser Murad in Islamabad.



## Turkmenistan celebrated 24th Independence Day & 20th Neutrality Day

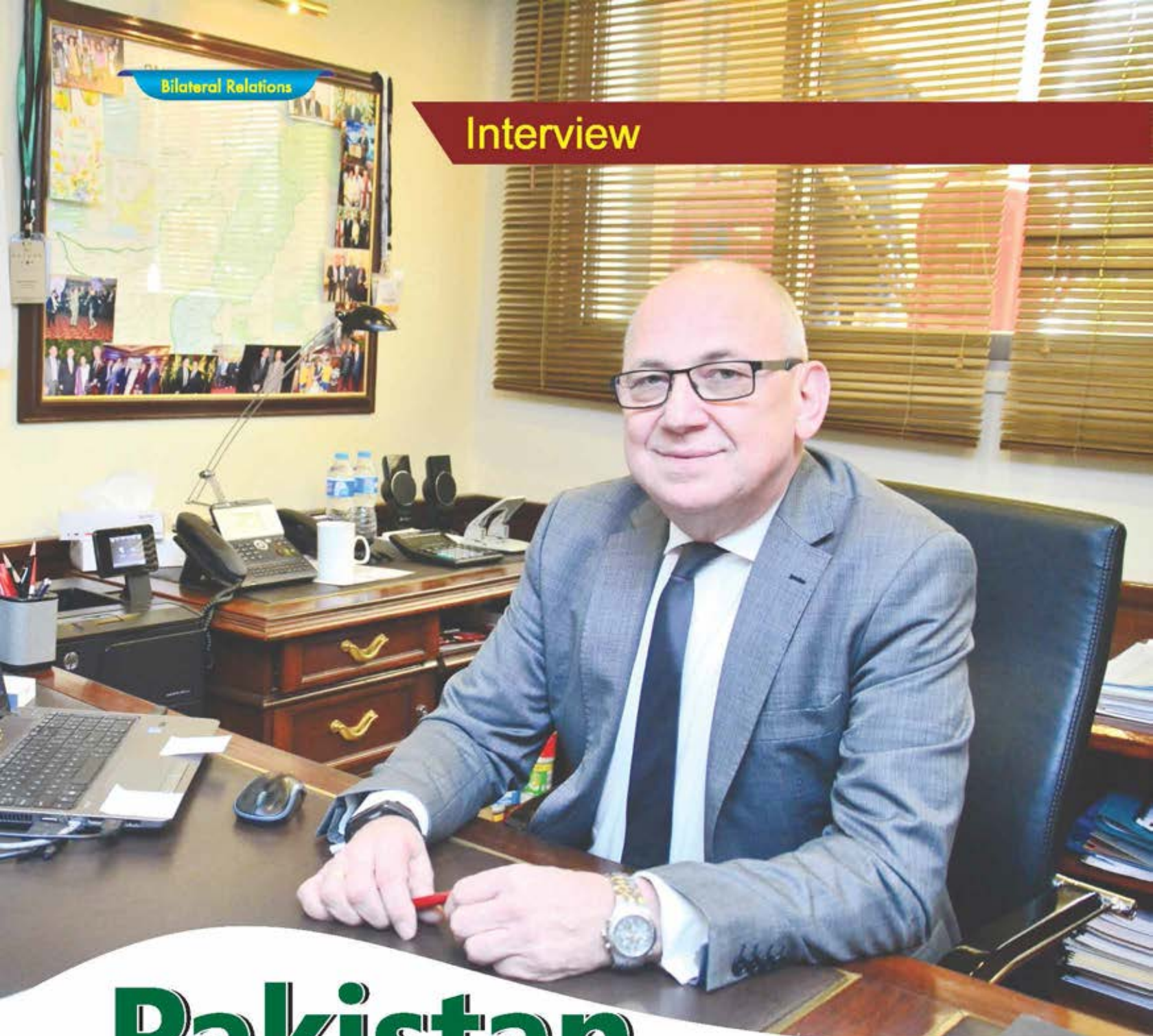
Ambassador of Turkmenistan H.E. Atadjan Movlamov and his wife Gozel Movlamova hosted a reception to celebrate 24th Independence Day and 20th Neutrality Day of Turkmenistan at Marriott hotel Islamabad. Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Riaz Hussain Pirzada was invited as the chief guest. Reception was attended by a large number of guests – mainly diplomats of different cadres.











# Pakistan

Interview By Mian Fazal Elahi

has all features which a tourists looks for

## Mr. Hartmut Noack

Regional General Manager Marriott Hotel Islamabad

**M**r. Hartmut Noack is the regional general manager of Marriott hotel Islamabad. he has been worked as chef more than 20 years in

different countries. "Diplomatic Focus" find the opportunity to talk with Mr. Hartmut Noack.

**Please share a few words about your family, education and professional life?**

I am a German citizen, 61 years old,



married to Hulya since 40 years. We have 3 sons, of ages 38, 36, and 26, of which two are associated with the hospitality industry. The youngest is still finishing his education.

#### How did you start your career?

As a chef apprentice. I have been a chef for more than 20 years and have worked at various positions and countries. I have cooked in the best restaurants in Dusseldorf (three of the best one Michelin star restaurants), was the Executive Chef in Addis Ababa and Ankara Hilton. Then later, I joined the Istanbul Hilton as Deputy Food and Beverage Manager. After that, I was at Colombo Hilton as Director Food and Beverages, where I supervised nine restaurants. Then moved to Malaysia with Shangrila group, from there to Istanbul with Intercontinental Group as an assistant General Manager, in-charge of operations. The Intercontinental group in Kazakhstan was my first General Manager position, from there I moved to Dubai with Marriott. Then I left there to join Swissbel group in Vietnam Hanoi, after that I came back to Dubai to help establish the Excelsior Creek Hotel for Mohamed Ben Haider. After this venture, I started here in Pakistan in 2010 at Islamabad Marriott till 2012. Then moved to Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt at Ritz Carlton Hotel. Then since March 2014, I am back in Islamabad as Regional General Manager Pakistan. It has been 45 years since I have been a part of this industry now.

#### What makes your Hotel special among its contemporaries?

We are the best business hotel in the capital city, with the friendliest service, exceptional food quality, largest variety of ethnic restaurants with Expat Chefs for the Royal Elephant, which serves the most authentic Thai cuisines. At Zigolini's, we have the original and chef's special menu of pizza's and pastas, just like you would expect to find in Italy. Then comes the Sakura, authentic Japanese restaurant, which offers out of the ordinary items for lunch and dinner. It's most craved for specialties are the sushi bar, sashimi, tempura and tepanyaki counter. At Jason's Steak House, we serve the imported Angus beef. Our Dumpukht is the traditional Mughlai restaurant, which represents the local Pakistani heritage as for Dynasty, our famous Chinese restaurant, is renowned for its authentic Chinese cuisine with a tweak of local spice. Then we have a all in one Nadia with its very large variety of traditional and continental dishes.

#### What are your future plans for your hotel? Are there any expansions underway?

No, I think we have enough for the time being.

#### Where do you see your hotel five years from now?

We will be the best hotel for the modern business traveler in Islamabad.

#### What are the latest trends in the hospitality industry?

There are many! Our tagline says most of it, travel brilliantly. Our target primarily is to facilitate and automated approach for the technology oriented new generation, accordingly to update our property for this new generation, we have come up with innovative new ways to cater to their demands. To name a few:

1. Mobile check in; this feature offers a key less entry to rooms. Now a guest does not have to wait in a que at the reception to check in and out of the hotel. He/she can easily check in on his phone, through an app and when he arrives, his room and facilities are already set for him, he/she can directly pick up his room key card from the counter.
2. Meeting engagement on mobile App, where meeting hosts can get their demands and order fulfilled within minutes. This is as simple as texting on your mobile phone that you need your tea counter refilled.

#### What potential do you see in Pakistan's hospitality and tourism industry?

Pakistan has all the potential required to become an interesting travel destination. This country has all features which a tourists looks for, like for example the sea, the desserts, the valleys, highest mountain peaks for trekking, snowy areas, etc. These make up an excellent versatility of natural heritage, which adds value to tourism. And best of all the most genuinely friendly people, who make up the hospitality industry, are worth mentioning. The only drawback is the security issue, which hopefully will be solved soon. Pakistan needs to invest a bit on its infrastructure like roads, hotels, international health and safety standards, regular domestic flights to boost the tourism industry once again, which previously used to be on its peek before security concerns took over.

#### What are the challenges that the Pakistani hospitality industry faces?

There are many, every day we counter a new issue. To name a few;

1. Supply of quality food items
2. Hygiene and safety standards for all food suppliers
3. Trained work force
4. Not enough competition to bring up the standards

#### 5. Lack of apprenticeships and hotel schooling

#### How can these challenges be handled?

By investing in new schools, doing a joint venture with international schools from Switzerland, Germany, UK, Holland, France, US will help raise the standards. Apprenticeship opportunities and developing the hospitality industry as a professional study subject would help a lot.

#### Are you satisfied with the quality of fresh graduates being trained by hotel schools in Pakistan?

There is always room for improvement. On job trainings for the undergraduates can play a vital role in the betterment of the academic and practical segments of this industry.

#### What qualities make one suitable to serve in this profession?

One should be open minded and outgoing. Should have the passion to serve and satisfy a guest. Hospitable and considerate of guest demands, presentable and well mannered, and should also have a good grasp on his soft skills and communication skills.

#### What is the one thing that makes a guest really angry?

Ignorance! Promising service and then not living up-to it, are the most commonly felt triggering factors. This is the reason I focus on the communication skills. One should be committed to serve a guest at Marriott the way they serve their own guests at home.

#### How do you maintain work life balance?

For this is a little bit difficult as my work day is very long. I personally combine business and social life due to my commitment, my passion to my job, my job is very much part of my life. I can say, I live my job.

#### What is your present priority of life as a G.M?

Priorities are my/our associates. To provide good trainings to them, to improve on their personal and technical skills and to create confidence in our people to perform and deliver to our guests and for their own benefits as well.

#### Suggestions to young talent of Pakistan?

Take a job you really want to do, learn the ins and outs of a job, educate yourself and never stop learning, be passionate and if you don't have a passion for work then quit it because then you will never be successful in it, now will you be happy with your life and job.



**Mr. Aziz Bolani CEO of Serena Hotel Hosted a Farewell Reception in the Honor of H.E. Rodolfo J. Martin Saravia Ambassador of Argentina/ Dean Of The Diplomatic Corps in Islamabad. Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to PM on National Security & foreign policy was the chief guest.**











Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in a group photo with the participants of the Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process at Islamabad.

## Heart of Asia Working for the achievement of a peaceful neighbourhood is a Cardinal principal of Pakistan's foreign policy: PM Nawaz

By Saba Sarfraz

The opening of the 'Heart of Asia' conference in the capital, Islamabad, was marked by a warm welcome from Pakistani authorities to visiting dignitaries from India, Afghanistan, China and among other Asian countries. Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj was in the spotlight, who arrived in the capital in order to participate in discussion. Afghan President Mr. Ashraf Ghani was greeted by a full reception which included the prime minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Defence Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif, National Security Adviser Nasir Janjua, Special Assistant on Foreign Affairs Tariq Fatemi and Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif and the other high-level officials of the civil and military leadership.

The theme of the conference, jointly hosted by Pakistan and Afghanistan, was 'enhanced cooperation for countering security threats and promoting

connectivity in the Heart of Asia region.'

The Afghan Mr. Ghani arrived at the Nur Khan airbase to a resounding 21-gun salute and the melody of the Afghan and Pakistani national anthems. He was then escorted in a limousine to the foreign office, where leaders discussed Afghanistan.

It was the sort of welcome normally reserved for visits from prominent Pakistani allies like the president of China or the king of Saudi Arabia. The welcome was a clear measure that Pakistan wants to mend the frayed relationship. Mr. Ghani did smile a bit at the airport, and he profusely thanked the Pakistani prime minister for the warm welcome.

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz delivered the opening remarks at the meeting, saying "Enhanced cooperation for countering security threats and promoting connectivity is



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is shaking hand with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at PM House, Islamabad

### Elements of the Process

The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process has three main elements:

- Political Consultation involving Afghanistan and its near and extended neighbors
- A sustained incremental approach to implementation of the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) identified in the Istanbul Process document
- Seeking to contribute and bring greater coherence to the work of various regional processes and organisations, particularly as they relate to Afghanistan





**Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is accompanied by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani after the latter arrived at Nur Khan Airbase Islamabad.**

### Tiers of the Process

The Heart of Asia-Istanbul process has three-tiers:

1) Ministerial Conference (MC) (Political Tier): These conferences are held annually at the level of the Foreign Ministers and senior delegations of the participating and supporting countries and Organizations. The Ministerial Conference is the highest decision-making venue of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process

2) Senior Officials Meetings (SoMs) (Diplomatic Tier): serve as the main executive body of the process, following the implementation of the decisions made in the ministerial declarations and proposing new ideas and steps forward for adoption by the ministers. The SoMs also constitute the main platform for political consultation among the participating countries on common regional issues, and bridges between the Regional Technical Groups (RTGs) and MC monitoring CBMs implementation and their results.

3) Regional Technical Groups (RTGs) (Technical Tier): are groups of nominated experts and focal points, from participating and supporting countries as well as supporting organizations, from relevant sectors around each CBM. The RTGs meet to develop, implement and monitor CBMs activities implementation.

pertinent to the needs of the region." "Our region is mired in security challenges which are hampering our socio-economic development," he said further.

Commenting on relations with Afghanistan, he asserted that, "Pakistan wants durable peace and stability in Afghanistan. Instability in Afghanistan is not in our



**Afghan President Ashraf Ghani witnessing guard of honour at Nur Khan Airbase after his arrival in Pakistan to participate the Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process at Islamabad.**

Countries participated in the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process	Countries Supported the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process	Regional and International Organizations Supporting the Process
Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates.	Australia, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, France, Finland, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States of America	The United Nations, The European Union, AKDN, CAREC/ADB, CICA, CSTO, ECO, NATO, OIC, OSCE, SAARC, SCO





**Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in the quadrilateral meeting held at PM House. Mr. Antony Blinkin, US Deputy Secretary of State and Mr. Wang Yi, Foreign Minister represented USA and People's Republic of China in the meeting.**

interest," adding that "We will therefore continue to support all endeavors aimed at strengthening peace and security in Afghanistan."

Concluding his opening remarks, the adviser said, "Terrorism continues to be a major threat to global peace and stability. During the last few years, Pakistan has suffered huge human and economic losses due to its menace." He assured however, that, "closer regional cooperation can play an effective role in eliminating the scourge of terrorism."

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif formally inaugurated the fifth Heart of Asia ministerial conference along with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

Addressing the conference, Nawaz called for an intensification of efforts in order to move forward from a conceptual domain to tangible landmarks for the implementation of concrete ideas, projects and visions in the heart of Asia. "Working for the achievement of a peaceful neighbourhood is a cardinal principal of Pakistan's foreign policy," he said.

"We firmly believe that peace is vital for development, and development is vital for durable peace," he asserted. "Afghanistan is a sovereign state and the world community fully respects its sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said, adding the democratically-elected government in Afghanistan was the only legitimate authority in accordance with its unanimously adopted constitution.

The prime minister recalled remarks he made during a visit to Kabul in May 2015 that the enemies of Afghanistan were the enemies of Pakistan. He said that the government of Pakistan would continue to support an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process which remains the most viable option to end violence and promote stability in

Afghanistan.

"The emergence of newer and more threatening terrorist groups like Islamic State should also strengthen our resolve against terrorism," he said. "We should envisage collective and coordinated measures on the regional security front to ensure that the gains and struggle against terrorism are durable and irreversible," he said.

"Finalisation of border management standard operating procedures will be helpful in containing the movement of

quality of life for our peoples and meeting security challenges. "For us, Afghanistan is more than a neighbour. Our cordial ties are rooted in shared history, common religion, cultural and linguistic affinities and people to people relations since time immemorial. Due to these close bonds, Pakistan has always stood by Afghanistan," he said.

He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its relations with all its neighbours and regional countries, as well as promoting regional cooperation and connectivity.



**Advisor to the Prime Minister Sartaz Aziz and Foreign Minister of Afghanistan H.E. Mr. Salahuddin Rabbani during the concluding session of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process Ministerial Conference in Islamabad.**

terrorists across the border," he said. "The massive cross-border movement of refugees constitutes a security risk and is exploited by the miscreants for their nefarious designs," Nawaz said, adding that efforts for stability in Afghanistan should envisage the return and resettlement of Afghan refugees to their homeland in a dignified manner.

He said that the theme of the conference reflects Pakistan's desire for promoting regional development, increasing economic and create linkages, improving

President of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani thanked the people of Pakistan for having hosted millions of Afghan refugees over decades. "Unfortunately, recent events in Pakistan have forced us to host close to 350,000 to 500,000 Pakistani refugees on our soil. The refugee issue is a common issue, like other issues that confront us," Ghani said while addressing the Heart of Asia conference.

But later, he grimly criticized Pakistan for doing too little to deprive the Taliban of safe havens here. "We are fighting on





**Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, assisted by aides of both sides, in bilateral meeting between Pakistan and Afghanistan at PM House, Islamabad.**

behalf of all of you, but we are the ones who are suffering some of the worst atrocities," Mr. Ghani said.

"I spoke of four transitions: The political transition, the security transition, the economic transition and, most significantly, the transition to turn the culture of the state to being citizen focused," he said while recalling a speech in Beijing last year. He presented a rundown of the part Afghanistan played to establish regional cooperation in 2015, expressing gratitude to the Turkmenistan government for taking a cluster approach to the development of infrastructure.

"Turkmen railways, transmission lines, highways, gas pipelines and oil pipelines are reaching Afghanistan and eminently, we are going to inaugurate the TAPI pipeline in Turkmenistan," he said. He expressed hope that the prime minister would sign off on a transmission line from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan to Pakistan which will significantly change the energy picture in both our countries," he said.

He spoke of the gas pipeline accords, including CASA-1000, the Chabahar port which India and Iran jointly invested in, and the five-nation agreements on railways with China which are moving from conception to implementation. "In short, Afghanistan is rapidly moving towards regional integration towards Central Asia, East Asia and West Asia," he said.

"By contrast, our ambitious projects of cooperation for transit and linkages to Pakistan have still remained at the level of conception and aspiration. I hope this conference results in significant movement in this domain," he said. Earlier, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called for an intensification of efforts in order to move forward from a conceptual domain to tangible landmarks for the implementation of concrete ideas, projects and visions in the heart of Asia.

Scuttling the talks led Mr. Ghani to reject his earlier efforts to reconcile with Pakistan. Only in recent weeks have there been some early, tentative steps to restart peace talks with the Taliban, a process that Afghanistan's Western allies say requires Pakistan's support.

But Mr. Ghani's government had demanded a series of guarantees from Pakistan before resuming warmer relations, none of which it had received.



**Afghan President Ashraf Ghani being presented a photo album on his departure at Nur Khan Air Base, Islamabad.**

The exact demands are not known, but are believed to include guarantees to remove Taliban safe havens in Pakistan, improve treatment of Afghan refugees, and end the treatment of Taliban wounded in Pakistani hospitals.

Pakistani officials also had demands of their own, including that Afghanistan stop allowing Pakistani Taliban fighters to use sanctuaries on its side of the border, and to stop officials' frequent condemnation of Pakistan.

The daylong meetings included sideline negotiations with the Americans and Chinese, as well as a meeting between the Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers.

Afterward, a joint statement from

Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States called for immediate efforts to restart peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. At a news conference, the Afghan foreign minister, Salahuddin Rabbani, held out hope for the efforts on peace talks. "We very much hope that this effort will result in a result-oriented peace process where we see some policy moves in the coming weeks," Mr. Rabbani said.

While presenting his concluding remarks at the Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process Mr. Sartaj Aziz said, "Economic development cannot be achieved without a secure and stable environment". He further stated that we should, therefore, focus on collective efforts to achieve durable peace in the region with a view to fostering economic cooperation and connectivity in pursuit of a better future for our peoples. As for the past few years, terrorism has continued to be a major threat to the regional peace and security. The Heart of Asia countries have consistently reaffirmed firm commitment to fight against terrorism with full resolve and determination. Mr. Sartaj Aziz said "We have reiterated our collective determination for a resolute and coordinated anti-terrorism campaign with the aim of eliminating this scourge". Pakistan desires long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan. A stable Afghanistan is in our interest and the region. Pakistan has, therefore, consistently supported an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led reconciliation process. Mr. Sartaj Aziz repeated his firm resolution, "We will continue to facilitate resumption of the reconciliation process, if it were so desired by the Government of Afghanistan". He further said, "We are grateful to the Heart of Asia countries for their unequivocal support for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan".





Advisor to the Prime Minister Sartaj Aziz and Foreign Minister of Afghanistan  
H.E. Mr. Salahuddin Rabbani during the Joint Press Conference at Foreign Office in Islamabad.

## Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process

Enhanced Cooperation for Countering Security Threats and Promoting Connectivity in the Heart of Asia Region

# The Islamabad Declaration

1. We, the Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives of the participating and supporting countries, as well as high-level representatives of supporting regional and international organizations, held the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HOA-IP) in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 09 December 2015. The Conference was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and H.E. Mr. Salahuddin Rabbani, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

2. We express our gratitude to H.E. Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and H.E. Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, for attending the opening ceremony of the Fifth Ministerial Conference.

3. Recalling the four Ministerial Conferences in Istanbul (2011), Kabul (2012), Almaty (2013) and Beijing (2014), which have been significant milestones that marked the conception, birth and initial steps of HOA-IP, we reaffirm our commitment to the principles, objectives, and outcomes of these Conferences that have defined the parameters for the working of HOA-IP aimed at promoting regional peace and prosperity.

4. We believe that the pace of continuity demonstrated by the HOA-IP in the past few years would continue in the future,

and the endeavors made under its auspices will manifest themselves in the achievement of goals of lasting peace, security, prosperity and growth of the region.

5. We reaffirm our countries' respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence, as enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Charter to which we strongly adhere and reiterate the obligations of states to refrain in their international relations from the threat, or use of force, against the territorial integrity, or political independence of any State, or in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations Charter. Recognizing the centrality of the United Nations in international affairs, we reiterate our support to the United Nations in coordinating international civilian efforts to contribute to peace, security and development of Afghanistan, as established by UN Resolution 2210 (2015).

6. We adhere to the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States and commit to promote a multifaceted approach of regional integration based on trust, equality and dialogue.

7. We realize the importance of the HOA-IP as an important regional initiative and platform aimed at a stable, peaceful, prosperous and developed Afghanistan that continues to complement other existing regional mechanisms and processes.



8. We recognize that the situation in Afghanistan, owing to its central location at the crossroads in Asia and its history, plays a critical role in the dynamics of regional peace, security and economic growth. We, therefore, believe in a secure, peaceful, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan, with its strong commitment to Human Rights. This is not only in its own interest, but also vital to peace, stability and prosperity of the 'Heart of Asia' region as a whole, for which it is our collective responsibility to help and support Afghanistan in combating the challenges it faces.

9. We support the Government of Afghanistan's constructive approach towards regional engagement and its commitment to building an environment of trust and confidence throughout the region.

10. We consider the conclusion of International Security Assistance Forces' (ISAF) Mission in Afghanistan, an important step towards Afghan self-reliance and note the initiation of the non-combat post ISAF Mission focusing



on training, advising and assistance to Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), and hope it would, therefore, contribute to the early realization of peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region.

11. We commend the hospitality of Pakistan and Iran in hosting millions of Afghan refugees, for the last three decades, despite their own formidable challenges and limitations and we urge the international community to provide them with adequate support. We welcome the initiatives Afghanistan-Pakistan-UNHCR and Afghanistan-Iran-UNHCR Tripartite Commissions on Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan Refugees from Pakistan and Iran respectively. We urge the international community to provide adequate and sustained support and assistance including within the framework of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan refugees to enable their voluntary, safe, and dignified repatriation and sustainable reintegration and resettlement in Afghanistan. We look upon the Afghan Government to take necessary measures to facilitate this process in close cooperation with host countries.
12. We recognize that the beginning of the Transformation Decade, aimed at self-reliance of Afghanistan, marks an important milestone in its history. While reaffirming commitment to Afghanistan's independence and sovereignty, we reiterate our support for Afghanistan as it ushers in the new era of regional connectivity as enunciated by H.E. President Ghani.
13. We urge the international community to stand by its commitment made during the London Conference, of continued financial support to Afghanistan's National Unity Government, through 2017. In this regard, we note with appreciation the agreement by the European Union to host the next Afghanistan Development Ministerial Conference in Brussels in 2016.
14. We renew our support for Afghanistan which is beginning to emerge as a stable democracy, is continuing to develop a resilient security force, and is visualizing a reformative economic agenda as goals for the Transformation Decade.

#### Countering Security Threats

15. We recognize that terrorism and violent extremism are constant and serious threats to regional and international peace, security, stability and economic growth, and that Afghanistan is one of the countries at the forefront of the war against terrorism, fighting regional and international terrorist groups and

safeguarding the region against the spread of terrorism.

16. We reiterate our agreement that terrorism, extremism and separatism, and linkages among them, pose a serious challenge to many of our countries, as well as the region and beyond, which can only be addressed through our concerted efforts.
17. We believe that achieving peace and security, as well as regional integration, is a shared responsibility, in which each HOA-IP country must play its role for its own benefit, as well as for the collective benefit of the region.
18. We welcome Afghanistan's determination and efforts in steering the HOA-IP towards creating a peaceful and secure region. Since the security of the countries of the Heart of Asia region are intertwined, we believe that supporting Afghanistan's efforts in fighting terrorism is vital for safeguarding the region against terrorism.
19. We resolve to eradicate the menace of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. While recognizing the importance of international cooperation and coordination, any measure taken by States to prevent and combat terrorism must comply fully with our obligations under international law and the United Nations Charter. We commit to put into practice specific measures and steps necessary for countering and eliminating the menace of terrorism, all terrorist organizations, in particular Al Qaida, Daesh (ISIL) and their affiliates, and any support to them and their enabling networks in the HoA-IP region.
20. We recognize that extremism facilitates, encourages and justifies acts of terrorism and violence. We undertake to introduce measures to curb the spread of violent extremism and the promotion and encouragement of violence as a means of achieving political objectives.
21. We also agree on the need, and commit to put in place, specific measures and take necessary actions to deny terrorists' access to financial and material resources, to dismantle their sanctuaries and training facilities, and to curtail their ability to recruit and train new terrorists. Measures to curb terrorists' movements should also be established without prejudice to trade and legal movement of citizens and goods.
22. We give credence to the idea of resolving conflicts through peaceful negotiations and urge full support by HOA-IP countries to the Government of Afghanistan in implementing Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace and

reconciliation initiatives, and realizing its peace objectives. We urge all Afghan Taliban groups and all other armed opposition groups to enter into peace talks with the Afghan Government.

23. We believe that terrorism, transnational criminal narcotics and weapon networks, are serious regional challenges. Tackling these, offers opportunities for regional cooperation.

We recognize that a considerable share of the terrorism financing sources consists of the revenues obtained from drugs production and its trafficking. Therefore, we resolve to begin the process of identifying and countering each of these threats at national, regional and international levels.

24. We understand that the acuteness and global scale of the illicit drug threat requires appropriate international efforts aimed at intensifying measures to fight illicit production of drugs and their precursors and their trafficking, especially in the Heart of Asia region. In this regard, we resolve to intensify existing counter narcotics activities in the region.
25. We realize that the emerging security challenges are not confined to a particular country and have the potential of expanding to the entire region, if timely measures are not taken. We, therefore, stress the need for adopting a coordinated and collaborative security and counter-terrorism approach for the HOA-IP region. In this regard, we need to explore evolving a coordinated and collaborated security approach and adopting a common counter-terrorism strategy and programme. Therefore, in accordance with our instructions to our Senior Officials in Beijing (articles 20 and 21), we task the Heart of Asia relevant Senior Officials to hold a meeting, in the first half of 2016, on security issues and counter terrorism measures.
26. We realize the need for generating financial resources, developing logistical support and establishing improved information sharing mechanisms among relevant government institutions responsible for combating terrorism, illicit drug trafficking and managing border security, as part of the comprehensive regional strategy for combating terrorism and encouraging the participants of the Counter Terrorism-Confidence Building Measure to focus on these areas.

#### Promoting Economic Connectivity

27. We are cognizant that the region has vast natural resources, immense human potential, and abundant opportunities for creation of capital that, in a well-connected region, could be utilized



productively to achieve the goal of sustainable economic growth.

28. We welcome the number of infrastructure and energy projects aimed at strengthening regional economies through enhanced connectivity, trade, movement of goods and people.

29. We believe that it is imperative that regional economic connectivity initiatives improve the lives and welfare of people through improvement in quality of lives, employment generation, ease of access to basic amenities and equality of opportunities for all layers of society. Afghan youth and women are untapped potential resources, which would greatly contribute to the economic and cultural development of the entire region.

30. We note the goals and priority projects of Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan-VI (RECCA-VI), as indicated in its Chairman's Statement, and look to the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, through its two economic CBMs, to support their implementation, where possible.

31. We appreciate the cooperation among regional countries on projects that have the potential of transforming Afghanistan as transit hub in the Heart of Asia region. We particularly welcome the development of North-South and East-West energy, transport and trade corridors, as well as transit hubs/routes in the region and encourage linkages to be made to these in a manner that these provide maximum regional coverage and benefit.

32. We understand that easing of customs procedures and policies, and development and broadening of transit trade framework agreements, is imperative for removing bottlenecks and impediments to facilitate smooth movement of goods and increase the economic viability of inter and intra-regional trade. In this regard, a trade friendly environment needs to be created in the region that ensures compatibility of customs regulations, facilitation of cross-border clearances and reduction in time of legal formalities.

33. We are convinced of the need to align and bring greater coherence to existing initiatives that aim to strengthen regional connectivity. We look to the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process to play a constructive role in achieving this goal.

### Confidence Building Measures

34. We consider Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) to be important tools to link the Heart of Asia countries at various levels. We appreciate all lead

countries' efforts in organizing RTG meetings, for all six CBMs this year, and recall our commitment under article 25 of the Beijing Declaration which states: "We acknowledge the important role played by the Regional Technical Groups (RTGs) in prioritizing and following the CBM activities. In this context, we ask the lead countries of each CBM to at least convene two of these meetings each year, one within 2 months of each Ministerial Conference and the second no later than 4 months prior to the following Ministerial Conference." In this context, we expect all the RTGs to hold their meetings as per this Article's provision.

35. We understand that the Regional Technical Group (RTG) meetings are the vehicles to drive the CBMs forward and delineate the future course of action for CBMs. To this end, we task CBM participants to send technical specialists and decision makers to each RTG meeting. We also task the co-lead countries to announce the dates for the second RTG meeting for the year at the first RTG meeting, expected to take place within two months from today. The first RTG meeting should identify priority projects for the year, identifying prospective implementers and resource providers, such as supporting countries and organizations, and include these in a calendar for the year. Such annual calendars may include inputs from the relevant line ministries and institutions responsible for hosting events related to the CBMs.

36. We agree to intensify our efforts in ensuring that the targets set during the Ministerial Conferences are achieved prior to the next one. We express our commitment to generate positive, tangible and effective results, through the endeavors being made under various CBMs. We suggest that under each CBM a continuous series of activities is carried out in specific area, aimed at achieving tangible results, and limiting adhoc activities to those considered of particular stand-alone value.

37. We realize that some CBM activities need financing and allocation of sufficient time as they may yield results over a longer period of time. While expectations on these projects should be realistic, update reports should regularly be provided at each Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM).

38. We appreciate those supporting countries and organizations that contribute to the implementation of the CBMs' activities and urge them to enhance participation and contribution in implementation of all CBMs, in close cooperation and coordination of their

efforts with the CBM Member States.

### Conclusion

39. We task our Senior Officials to hold the first SOM meeting of this process, within three months of this Conference, and engage in political dialogue in accordance with our commitments in Beijing, and also to review the plans submitted by the RTGs.

40. We express our appreciation and gratefulness to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for hosting the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process in Islamabad.

41. We welcome the willingness of India to host the next Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process as Co-chair in 2016, and decide to hold the Sixth Ministerial Conference in the last quarter of 2016.

42. This Declaration was adopted in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 09 December 2015, by the Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives of the participating countries of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, People's Republic of China, Republic of India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Russian Federation, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Nations.

43. This Declaration was welcomed and supported by the Foreign Ministers and high-level representatives of the supporting countries of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process, and the high-ranking representatives of the supporting international and regional organizations: Commonwealth of Australia, Canada, Royal Kingdom of Denmark, Arab Republic of Egypt, European Union, Republic of Finland, Republic of France, Federal Republic of Germany, Republic of Iraq, Republic of Italy, Japan, Republic of Poland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States, Agha Khan Development Network (AKDN), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Collective Security Treaty Organizations (CSTO), Economic Cooperation Organizations (ECO), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).





# Diplomatic Focus thru lens



**Mr. Saqr Bin Mubarak Al-Mansouri Ambassador of Qatar called on Deputy Speaker National Assembly Nurtaza Javed Abbasi at Parliament House, Islamabad.**



**UK Prime Minister's Special Representative for Afghanistan & Pakistan Mr. Owen Jenkins called on Interior Minister Ch. Nisar Ali Khan at Punjab House, Islamabad.**



**Federal Minister for Commerce, Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan meeting with Ambassador of Egypt H.E. Sherif Shaheen in Islamabad.**



**Federal Minister for Water & Power, Khawaja Muhammad Asif in a meeting with H.E. Mr. Sirojollin Aslov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan in Islamabad.**



**Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with the Ambassador of Uzbekistan H.E. Furkat A. Sidikov in Islamabad.**



**Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in a meeting with Mr. Heroshi Inomata, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan in Islamabad.**



**H.E. Mr. Anderi G. Ermolovich, Ambassador of Belarus in Pakistan called on Federal Minister for Industries and Productions, Ghulam Murtaza Khan Jatol in Islamabad.**



**German Ambassador Ina Lepel called on Interior Minister Ch. Nisar Ali Khan at Punjab House, Islamabad.**



# International Solidarity Day with Palestine observed in Islamabad



**P**rime Minister Advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz has said, Middle East is passing through a critical time and therefore needs immediate attention of the international community. He expressed these views while speaking on the occasion of international day of Solidarity with the people of Palestine. Sartaj Aziz further said, Palestinian people have been bearing the brunt of Israeli aggression since long. He said, it was a moral victory for the Palestinian people that for the first time Palestinian flag was hoisted at the United Nations.

He assured the people of Palestine that Pakistan will continue its support for Palestine cause. Ambassador of Palestine Walid Abu Ali in his speech said, "we are victims of human rights witnessed by the international community. It is indeed a victory for the people of Palestine that for the first time the Palestinian flag was raised the United Nations". He further said, Palestinian people are greatly thankful to Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif for raising and supporting the cause of Palestine.

"In fact ties between Palestine and

Pakistan have always been strong. For those who do not know let me just highlight that both countries have even deep-rooted spiritual ties'.

Ambassador Walid Abu Ali said, "We cannot forget the time when brave Pakistani pilots came to help us against Israeli brutalities in 1973 war. Therefore the Palestinian people have a great respect for the armed forces of Pakistan.

Ambassador of Sweden Tomas Rosander said Sweden some time ago recognized Palestine as an independent state, a decision which was not liked by many. Some were of the view that Sweden should have waited for some more time while there is no dearth of certain voices that believe Sweden took long to make this decision.

He said, it doesn't mean that Sweden relations were Israel have severed. Not at all, Sweden and Israel have had cordial relations and hopefully both countries would continue to extend cooperation to each other in various fields.

Our foreign minister also underlined that good friends are always sincere in criticism. Sweden supports the EU policy

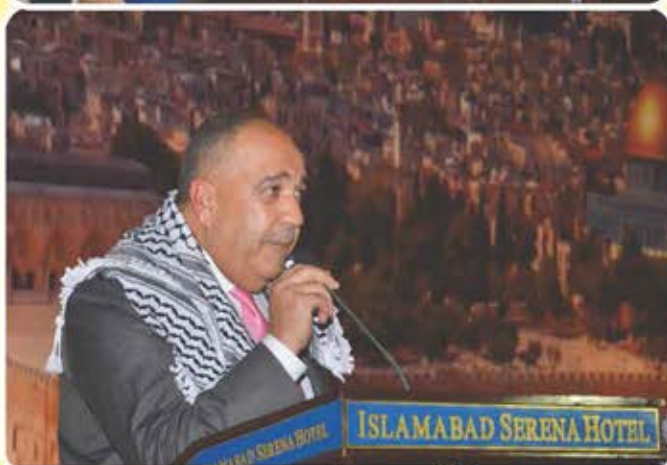
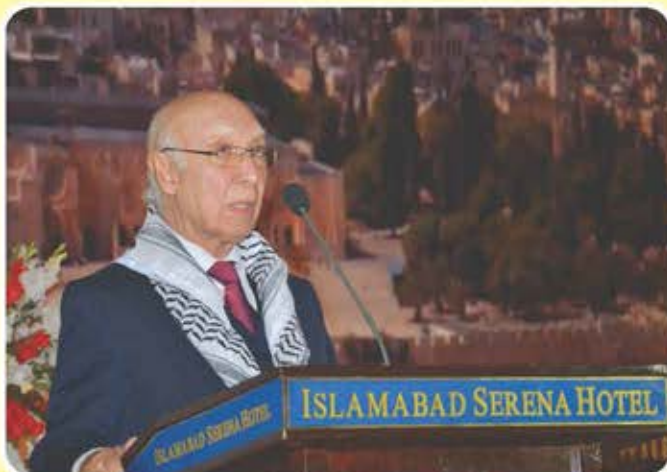
on Israel. The Sweden decision to recognize Palestine is duly in line with the international law.

He added, the international community has a special role to play in terms of an amicable solution to the Palestine issue. Talks and dialogue truly prevent any further escalation of hostilities therefore Sweden supports continuation of dialogue for resolution of issues.

**Middle East is passing through a critical time and therefore needs immediate attention of the international community: Sartaj Aziz**











# 上海合作组织成员国政府首脑(总理)理事会第十四次会议 14-ОЕ ЗАСЕДАНИЕ СОВЕТА ГЛАВ ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВ (ПРЕМЬЕР-МИНИСТРОВ) ГОСУДАРСТВ-ЧЛЕНОВ ШОС

2015年12月15日  
15 ДЕКАБРЯ 2015 Г.

中国·郑州  
Г. ЧЖЭНЧЖОУ, КИТАИ



# SCO

## has a special role to play in promoting peace and regional stability: PM Nawaz

By Muhammad Zia Ul Haq

**P** rime Minister Nawaz Sharif while attending the 14th Heads of Government Council meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in China reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to counter-terrorism and combating crime.

"We reaffirm our commitment to collectively confront the challenges of extremism, separatism, terrorism, human and drug trafficking, organised crime and environmental and natural disasters," the premier told the summit.

However, "the security situation around us remains precarious", he said, adding that Pakistan is "seeing challenges to state sovereignty, territorial

integrity".

"Armed conflicts continue to rage in several parts of the world, unleashing forces beyond the control of anyone. Militant ideologies need to be countered," he said.

Terrorism has become an "even more insidious" threat, he said.

"These developments require that we join forces and develop comprehensive strategies. SCO has a special role to play in promoting peace and regional stability."

Nawaz called for members of the SCO to identify common values and build on them.

Television footage showed Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif being received by Mr. Zhang Weining, Vice Governor of Henan Province and other Senior Chinese officials at Zhengzhou, China.



Sharif and Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Tariq Fatemi present at the summit as Nawaz addressed the conference.

Prime ministers from the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

**We have established a Special Security Division (SSD) for CPEC. SSD will be operational by December 2015 to ensure safety of Chinese nationals: PM Nawaz**

attended the summit, while Chinese Premier Li Keqiang chaired the meeting.

The prime minister of Belarus, the chief executive of Afghanistan, the vice premier of Mongolia, the minister of state for foreign affairs of India and the minister from



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif being received by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang at the 14th Heads of Government Council meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) at Zhengzhou, China.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang are leading their countries in the bilateral talks between both sides at Zhengzhou, China.





Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is addressing at the 14th Heads of Government Council meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) at Zhengzhou, China.

Iran attended the SCO meeting as representatives of SCO observers countries.

In a bilateral meeting with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called for "deeper cooperation between China National Aero-Technology Import & Export Corporation and the Pakistan Air Force on international sales."

Nawaz vowed to provide security to Chinese citizens working in Pakistan on "various projects of paramount importance to us", such as the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

"I am satisfied with the progress on CPEC projects, he said, adding that Pakistan hoped for all the projects under the CPEC to be implemented in a timely and efficient manner.

"We have established a Special Security Division (SSD). SSD will be operational by December 2015 to ensure safety of Chinese nationals."

He said the Gwadar Security Task Force has already been mobilised under command of a Brigadier, and assured Li that military operations Zarb-i-Azb and the National Action Plan are being successfully implemented.

He requested the Chinese side to allow Pakistan to open a trade-cum-visa office in Urumqi province to facilitate CPEC implementation and people-to-people exchanges.

"I proposed the mechanism of a steering committee between Pakistan, Afghanistan, United States and China which will

supervise process of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan and coordinate efforts in this regard."

"We are in the process of evolving terms of reference and a concept paper of the proposed Committee. We will keep close co-ordination with China in that regard and in deliberations of the Committee," he said.

**"I proposed the mechanism of a steering committee between Pakistan, Afghanistan, United States and China which will supervise process of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan and coordinate efforts in this regard."**  
PM Nawaz

He apprised the Chinese premier of his recent meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Paris and Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj during her visit to Islamabad for the 'Heart of Asia' conference.

The meetings have yielded encouraging results, he said, adding that both India and Pakistan had agreed to resume the comprehensive bilateral dialogue process.

Referring to the 'Heart of Asia' conference, Nawaz said: "I proposed the mechanism of a steering committee between Pakistan, Afghanistan, US, and China which will supervise process of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan and coordinate efforts in this regard."

Pakistan and China are celebrating a 'Year of Friendly Exchanges' and next year will be the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, he said.

Pakistan was invited to become full member of the SCO at the Ufa summit in July this year and all relevant procedures are being completed for full membership.

The SCO is a security bloc led by China and Russia. The bloc was originally formed to fight threats posed by radical Islam and drug trafficking from neighboring Afghanistan.

The SCO groups China, Russia, Pakistan, India and the former Soviet republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, while Iran, Afghanistan and Mongolia are observers.

Courtesy by Dawn



# Diplomatic Focus thru lens



**Federal Minister for State and Frontier Regions, Lt. Gen. (Retd) Abdul Qadir Baloch in a meeting with Ambassador of Germany Sabine Sparwasser Special Representative of the Federal Government for Afghanistan and Pakistan in Islamabad.**



**SAPM/MOS for Law & Justice, Ashtar Ausaf Ali in a meeting with Mr. Jean-Francois Caution, EU Ambassador who called on him in Islamabad.**



**Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi in a meeting with US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Richard Olson in Islamabad.**



**Deputy British High Commissioner, Patric Moody called on Special Assistant to PM to Law/MoS Ashtar Ausaf Ali in Islamabad.**



**Federal Minister for State and Frontier Regions, Lt. Gen. \* Abdul Qadir Baloch in a meeting with H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Inomata, Ambassador of the Japan to Pakistan in Islamabad.**



**Ambassador of Egypt Sherif Mohamed Kamalddin Shaheen called on Minister for Defence Productions Rana Tanvir Hussain in Rawalpindi.**



**South Korean Defence Delegation headed by Major General Won Jin Oh called on Federal Minister for Defence Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain in Rawalpindi.**



**Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with the Ambassador of Azerbaijan Dashgin Shikarov in Islamabad.**



## Exhibition of photographs on Cuba

Cuban Ambassador H.E. Mr. Zenen Buergo Concepcion and his wife Madam Dulce Maria Rodriguez hosted an exhibition of photographs on Cuba by photographer Zulfiqar Ali at their residence in Islamabad.





# H.E. Rodolfo J. Martin Saravia

**Ambassador of Argentina & Dean of Diplomatic Corps  
hosted a bid farewell reception to H.E. Mr. T.C.A Raghavan and Madam,  
High Commissioner of India at his residence in Islamabad.**







**"Magnificent country,  
magnificent culture.  
Lovable, kind and warm  
people, joy of life and  
colors. Pakistan for me is  
simply beautiful color of  
life. I would return anytime  
to Pakistan. I love this  
country and its people.  
I love you all"**

**Cristiana Ioana Ion**

Ambassador of Romania H.E. Emil Ion's pretty  
granddaughter, 13-year-old Cristiana Ioana Ion



# Cigar Club Event

Managing director of Freeline Movers, MR. Alamgir Shah organized cigar club event at his residence. The Dean of diplomatic Corps, Ambassador Rodolfo Martin Saravia, Ambassadors of Austria, Japan, Italy, Hungary, Charge de Affairs of Portugal, Mr. Naveed Qamar MNA, Mr. Mohammad Ali, Regional Chief H.B.L. Mr. Anwar Saifullah Khan and various businessman and elite of city who are member of Islamabad Cigar Club joined the evening.







# GCC chases

## 'Gulf union' dream

By M.Saeed Yousafzai



UAE



Bahrain



Saudi Arabia



Oman



Qatar



Kuwait

**S**audi King Salman bin Abdulaziz inaugurated the 36th summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Riyadh, saying solidarity among council members was vital to counter foreign threats.

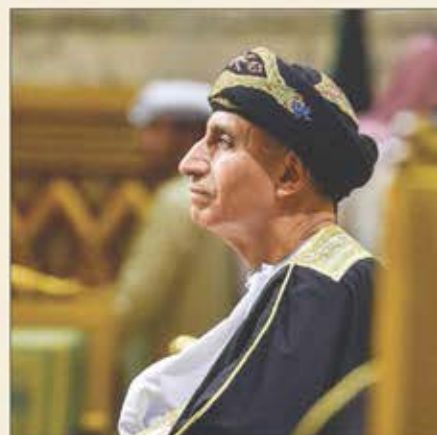
"The region is passed with very complicated conditions, challenges and ambitions which require us to stand and work together to continue to fortify our countries against foreign threats," the king said in his opening remarks carried by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

He also said GCC members and other Arab states taking part in the Saudi-led war against Houthi militias in Yemen aimed to restore stability in the war-torn nation.

"The coalition countries are keen to achieve security and







stability in Yemen under the leadership of its legitimate government. We, the GCC states, support a peaceful solution in order to enable Yemen overcoming the crisis and restoring its march towards construction and development."

With regard to Syria, King Salman spoke of the current

Riyadh-based summit hosting Syrian opposition representatives aiming for a political solution to the country's five-year crisis.

His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and his accompanying delegation

attended the second day of the summit. A communiqué issued by the leaders said the summit focused on the concept of integration - economic, political, social, military and security - that would ultimately lead to a union. The communiqué said it was agreed to complete the remaining requirements for the customs union and a GCC common

market set forth in Article I of the Economic Agreement between the GCC countries. GCC Secretary-General Abdul Latif Al Zayani, who delivered a speech at the end of the summit, called for boosting interaction among GCC citizens. He said the customs union is slated to be completed in 2016. "Decisive measures have been taken to simplify the customs procedures at border check points in a bid to remove them ultimately," he noted.

The leaders also agreed to form a common judicial authority by next year, and finalise a unified trade law and economic integration rules. They said the international community should assume a shared responsibility in the fight against extremism and terrorism and its elimination irrespective of its source. They added that the GCC countries have done a lot in this regard and will continue their cooperation and coordination with brotherly and friendly countries.

"Terrorism has no religion, and our tolerant religion rejects it. Islam is the religion of moderation and tolerance," the





## Bilateral Relations

leaders stressed. The leaders also called for accelerating security and military cooperation to develop a defence shield against any foreign threat.

They endorsed a "political solution" for war-ravaged Syria, under an international framework agreed on last month. They said they "support a political settlement... that guarantees the territorial integrity and independence of Syria." The meeting follows an agreement last month in Vienna between diplomats from 17 countries, including Saudi Arabia, for a political transition and end to the Syrian war. The GCC "welcomed the conclusions of the Vienna meetings", the Gulf statement said. The Vienna plan set a January 1 target for peace talks and would see a transitional government set up in six months and elections in 18 months.

Later at a Press conference, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al Jubeir said Syrian President Bashar Al Assad has two choices, "either to leave through negotiations" or be forcibly removed from power. The summit called for an international reconstruction conference for Yemen after any deal to end its civil war, which has killed 6,000 people and caused widespread damage to the country's economy and infrastructure. Gulf Arab leaders condemned "hostile, racist" remarks against Muslims and Syrian refugees in a statement issued on Thursday, days after Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump called for a US ban on the entry of Muslims.

"The supreme council expressed its deep concern at the increase of hostile, racist and inhumane rhetoric against refugees in general and Muslims in particular," the Gulf Cooperation Council said. The condemnation figured prominently in the final communiqué issued by the GCC after the concluding session, which was chaired by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman.

**"Terrorism has no religion, and our peaceful religion rejects it. Islam is the religion of moderation and tolerance,"**





**GCC leaders slam  
'hostile, racist' rhetoric  
against Muslims  
refugees**

**Syrian President Bashar  
Al Assad has two  
choices,  
"either to leave through  
negotiations" or  
be forcibly removed  
from power:  
Saudi FM Adel Al Jubeir**

**"The region is passed  
with very complicated  
conditions, challenges  
and ambitions which  
require us to stand and  
work together to  
continue to fortify our  
countries against  
foreign threats," King  
Salman Bin Abdulaziz**

**The summit focused on  
the concept of  
integration - economic,  
political, social, military  
and security - that  
would ultimately lead  
to a union**







# Pakistan included in **Saudi Arabia's** **34-state Islamic** **military alliance** against terrorism

**S**audi Arabia announced the formation of a 34-state Islamic military coalition to combat terrorism, according to a joint statement published on state news agency SPA.

"The countries here mentioned have decided on the formation of a military alliance led by Saudi Arabia to fight terrorism, with a joint operations centre based in Riyadh to coordinate and support military operations," the statement said.

A long list of Arab countries such as Egypt, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, together with Islamic countries Turkey, Malaysia, Pakistan and Gulf Arab and African states were mentioned.





The announcement cited "a duty to protect the Islamic nation from the evils of all terrorist groups and organizations whatever their sect and name which wreak death and corruption on earth and aim to terrorise the innocent."

Shia Muslim Iran, Sunni Saudi Arabia's arch rival for influence in the Arab world, was absent from the states named as participants, as proxy conflicts between the two regional powers rage from Syria to Yemen.

The United States has been increasingly outspoken about its view that Gulf Arab states should do more to aid the military campaign against the Islamic State militant group based in Iraq and Syria.

In a rare press conference, 30-year-old crown prince and Defence Minister Mohammed bin Salman told reporters on Tuesday that the campaign would "coordinate" efforts to fight terrorism in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt and Afghanistan, but offered few concrete indications of how military efforts might proceed.

"There will be international coordination with major powers and international organisations ... in terms of operations in Syria and Iraq. We can't undertake these operations without coordinating with legitimacy in this place and the international community," bin Salman said without elaborating.

Asked if the new alliance would focus just on Islamic State, bin Salman said it would confront not only that group but "any terrorist organisation that appears in front of us."

Saudi Arabia and its Gulf Arab neighbours have been locked in nine months of warfare with Iran-allied rebels in neighbouring Yemen, launching hundreds of air strikes there.

Especially after a rash of attacks on Western targets claimed by Islamic State in recent months, the United States has increasingly said it thinks that firepower would better be used against IS.

As a ceasefire is set to take hold in Yemen on Tuesday alongside United Nations-backed peace talks, Riyadh's announcement may signal a desire to shift its attention back towards the conflicts north of its borders.

Islamic State has pledged to overthrow the monarchies of the Gulf and have mounted a series of attacks on Shia Muslim mosques and security forces in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Courtesy to DAWN & Express Tribune

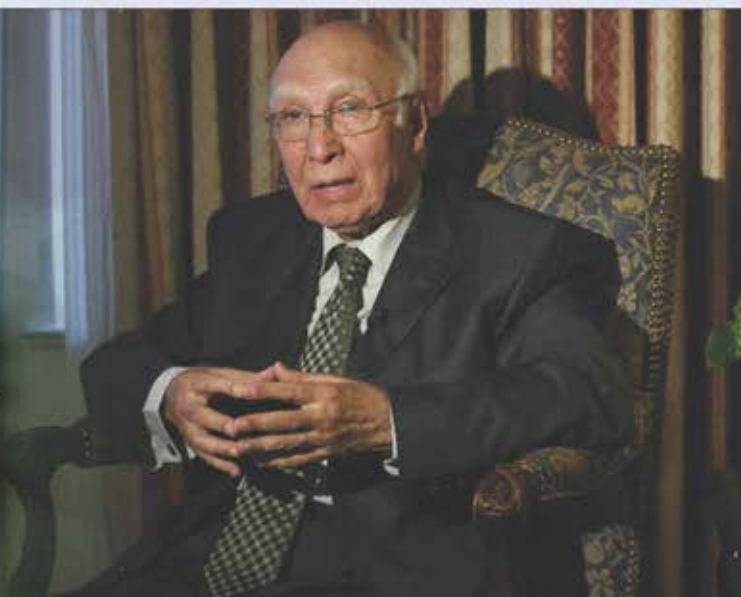
## The 34 countries are:

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan , the United Arab Emirates ,the Islamic Republic of Pakistan , the Kingdom of Bahrain , People's Republic of Bangladesh , Republic of Benin , the Republic of Turkey , the Republic of Chad , the Republic of Togo , Tunisia , the Republic of Djibouti , the Republic of Senegal, Republic of Sudan , the Republic of Sierra Leone , the Republic of Somalia , the Republic of Gabon , the Republic of Guinea , the State of Palestine , the Islamic Federal Republic of Comoros , State of Qatar , Cote d'Ivoire , Kuwait , Lebanon , the State of Libya , Republic of Maldives , the Republic of Mali , the Kingdom of the Federation of Malaysia , the Republic of Egypt and the Arab , the Kingdom of Morocco , the Islamic Republic of Mauritania , the Republic of Niger , the Federal Republic of Nigeria , the Republic of Yemen .

There are also more than a dozen other Islamic countries expressed their support for this alliance and will take the necessary measures in this regard , including the Republic of Indonesia .



# Full details of Saudi-led coalition not yet available: Sartaj



**A**dviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz admitted on the floor of the Senate that Pakistan was still unaware of full details of the Saudi-led coalition against terrorism and cautioned parliament against "complicating" the process by "prematurely" discussing it.

Taking note of the remarks, Senate Chairman Raza Rabbani reminded Mr Aziz that "we are discussing the matter in parliament and not at any other forum".

Mr Aziz could not give satisfactory answers to specific questions of the chairman and some opposition members on the issue.

Tahir Mashhadi of the MQM walked out of the house saying that the adviser had not replied to questions raised in his speech.

"I may clarify that it is not an alliance, but a coalition because alliance is more formal. We will come to parliament once details are available," said Mr Aziz in reply to the speeches made by senators during a debate on the motion seeking discussion "on the government's foreign policy with reference to its success and failure".

"So you have joined a military alliance about which you are still foggy," the Senate chairman remarked.

The adviser said every country had to decide which activity it was going to participate in, "so there is no compulsion of doing XYZ".

"We are working out... consultations are in progress to work out as to which kind of activities are we going to participate. There is intelligence sharing, capacity-building ... we are yet to decide which activity is desired. We support every action against terrorism," he added.

The house witnessed an exchange of remarks between Mr Rabbani and Mr Aziz over the issue of bypassing parliament

while taking major decision

"You have decided to become part of a coalition without being able to inform parliament about its details?" said Mr Rabbani.

**"I may clarify that it is not an alliance, but a coalition because alliance is more formal. We will come to parliament once details are available," said Mr Aziz**

The adviser gave an interesting reply, saying: "All the 34 countries, including Turkey, have done the same thing."

"I am not interested in 33 other countries. I am interested only in the 34th country

**"So you have joined a military alliance about which you are still foggy," the Senate chairman remarked**

which is Pakistan," the chairman said in a harsh tone.

Asked about the ministry's viewpoint on the exclusion of four countries, which were subject to terrorism and fighting the militant Islamic State group, from the alliance, the adviser said that the matter

would be discussed at the OIC forum in February.

Mr Aziz claimed that the discussion on the proposal had been going on for a couple of months. "So we know a little bit about it. But rest assured that we are not going to deviate from the (foreign) policy and details would be shared with the house when they became available.

He said terrorism was an important issue for the Muslim world and, therefore, they should not pre-judge the matter and allow the process to go on.

"It is important that today all trouble spots are in the Islamic world. If we don't take the measures, they will come to our side. Our main interest is that IS does not find space in South Asia," he said. "It is important for us to join (coalition) according to whatever priorities we have."

Earlier, opposition members criticised the government for not appointing a full-time foreign minister and bypassing parliament over major decisions.

Tahir Mashhadi asked the adviser to tell the house against whom this coalition had been formed. He termed the decision to join the alliance a violation of the decision of a joint sitting of parliament on the Yemen situation.

Saudi Arabia announced that it had forged the 34-nation alliance of Muslim countries for fighting terrorism and extremism, which included Pakistan.

Senior officials at the foreign ministry initially expressed surprise over Pakistan's inclusion in the new group, and said Riyadh had not taken Islamabad on board. But subsequent developments revealed that Saudi Arabia had been given a secret commitment regarding joining the alliance, about which the Foreign Office was not aware.



# HC expresses solidarity with flood affected families in UK

**"The floods are unprecedented and devastating; we must help the affected families in our communities to alleviate their sufferings." H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas**



**H**.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, has expressed solidarity with the flood affected families and appealed to the Pakistani diaspora to come forward and extend all possible help to thousands of people who have been affected by floods in Northern England and Scotland over the past few days.

In his message, the High Commissioner called upon the volunteers to liaise for assistance with the rescue centres, relief organizations and other aid agencies, already working in the affected areas. He said: "The floods are unprecedented and devastating; we must help the affected families in our communities to alleviate their sufferings."

Moreover, the High Commissioner has instructed the Consuls General/Consuls in all the four Consulates of Pakistan at Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester and Glasgow to mobilise the community for voluntary work wherever needed. He also advised the officials to visit the flood affected areas to meet community members to offer support/assistance.

**By Mian Asadullah**





**Mr. Faisal Mushtaq Chaudery CEO of Roots Millennium Schools and his better half Mrs. Ana Chaudery hosted a dinner reception in the honor of Pakistan Ambassador designate to France, Mr. Moin-ul-Haq in Islamabad. A large number of guests from the diplomatic community, businessmen and civil society of twin city attended the eve.**









# 97th National Day of Romania celebrated

Ambassador of Romania H.E. Emilion Ion hosted a reception to celebrate the 97th anniversary of National Day of Romania at Marriott hotel Islamabad. Special Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Waheed-ul-Hasan was the guest of honour, with a large number of people both from the diplomatic community and Pakistanis attend the affair. The national anthem of Romania was sung by a visiting Romanian vocalist, Tudor Turcu and the ambassador's pretty granddaughter, 13-year-old Ilona Cristiana Ion. She looked cute, wearing a typically Romanian head dress of colourful flowers.









## 88th Royal Birthday Anniversary of H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej Celebrated

The Charge d Affaires of the Kingdom of Thailand to Pakistan and Mrs. Leochai Jantarasombat hosted a reception to celebrate 88th Royal Birthday Anniversary of H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej at Marriott hotel Islamabad. Federal Minister for Provincial Coordination and Support Mr. Riaz Hussain Peerzada was the chief guest on the occasion. Large number of diplomats and civil society attended the eve.











## 2nd Councilors Convention-2015 at Bradford

By Mian Asadullah

# Success of the community celebrated, challenges discussed Narrative about Pakistan is changing: Syed Ibne Abbas

The High Commission for Pakistan in London organized the "Second Councilors Convention-2015" at Bradford Consulate of Pakistan. This was in continuation of series of "Councilors Convention"—an initiative of the High Commission to reach out and connect with British Pakistani community. The first Convention of this series was held in London in September this year.

A large number of British Pakistani Councilors/Mayors attended the Convention. Several MPs, MEPs, community leaders, business leaders, professionals, academicians, students and media persons were among the 200 guests of the event.

The purpose of the Convention was to celebrate the success of the British Pakistanis in various fields like politics, business, academia, social work, and other professions. The event also aimed to provide a platform to the elected representatives of the British Pakistanis to effectively address the challenges and work for common causes related to the Pakistani community.

While appreciating the contribution of the British Pakistanis in the social and economic life of Britain, panellists emphasized on the enhanced focus on education for children and pro-active role of parents as well as extended family in providing guidance to them; active role of women in various walks of life; and respect for plurality and diversity while retaining one's own cultural identity and heritage. It

was noted that there were great opportunities on offer for the Pakistani community, particularly young generation, which must be benefitted from, to better integrate into the mainstream British society.

The High Commissioner, addressing at the

Convention, thanked the guests for their overwhelming participation in the event, which he termed as a part of High Commission's efforts to connect with the community and forge better understanding on issues of common interest and evolve strategy to address the challenges faced by





the community.

The High Commissioner said: "Narrative about Pakistan is changing. Pakistan is on the move on all fronts including economy and security. Let's be confident and celebrate our successes." The key message to the community given by the High Commissioner on the occasion was to "move forward with optimism as there was a lot to celebrate about British Pakistanis as well as Pakistan."

The guests highly commended the initiative of holding the Convention by the High Commission in Bradford, which is the home for hundreds of thousands of British Pakistanis. They expressed a genuine desire for more such events in order to discuss and debate on issues of common interest. The panellists included Naz

Shah MP; Imran Hussain MP; Amjad Bashir MEP; Richard Corbett MEP; Councillor Kaneez Akhtar; Dr Mohammad Khursheed Khan from University of Bradford; Val Slater, Deputy Leader Bradford Council; Councillor Abid Hussain; Councillor Nusrat Muhammad; Jawaid Akhtar, Deputy Chief Constable \*; Nadira Mirza from University of Bradford; Ghazanfar Khaliq and Councillor Khadim Hussain.

Ms Syima Aslam and Ms Itrat Ali moderated the sessions.

The High Commissioner commended Mr Khalil Ahmed Bajwa, Consul of Pakistan at Bradford, for his hard work in successfully holding the Convention.

The guests were served with traditional Pakistani cuisine at the end of the event.



The Convention was divided into two main sessions and thematic discussions, relevant to the Pakistani community, took place along the following lines:

1. Role of family as an institution for pro-active and positive participation in socio-economic life in UK; and
2. Role of community leadership in helping youth identify and avail opportunities to excel professionally and to meet societal challenges



Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK speaking at the dinner hosted in honour of British Pakistani MPs Ms Naz Shah and Mr Imran Hussain in Bradford





*Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, addressing at the Candlelight Vigil for APS martyrs at the Pakistan High Commission London on 16-12-2015*

By Mian Asadullah

# APS martyrs' sacrifices united the entire nation: H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas

Peshawar School Shuhuda remembered at the Pakistan High Commission London

## APS student Ahmad Nawaz receives Tamgha-i-Shuja-at for his Shaheed brother at PHC

**O**n the first anniversary of terrorist attack on the Army Public School Peshawar (APS), Shuhuda were remembered at the High Commission for Pakistan in London.

Hundreds of people from cross-section of the British society turned up to honour the memory of the martyrs by participating in the Candlelight Vigil held on that occasion and observed one-minute silence.

H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, conferred Tamgha-i-Shuja-at on APS student, Ahmad Nawaz, who received this award on behalf of his younger brother, Shaheed Haris Nawaz of APS. The Government of Pakistan had announced the conferment of this award for all martyrs of APS last year. Paying tribute to the martyrs, the High Commissioner said:

"APS martyrs' sacrifices united the entire nation on a single point agenda to defeat the forces of darkness and their extremist ideology. Since that fateful day, our national narrative has changed. The entire nation is united and steadfast to revive the vision of Quaid's tolerant, modern and pluralistic Pakistan.

"The progress and resilience of our nation is reflected today by the presence of these





*Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, giving a laptop to APS student Ibrahim Khan at the Candlelight Vigil for APS martyrs at the Pakistan High Commission London on 16-12-2015*



*Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK giving Tamgha-i-Shuja-at to APS student Ahmad Nawaz on behalf of his martyred brother Haris Nawaz at a commemoration ceremony at the Pakistan High Commission London on 16-12-2015*



*Attendees at the Candlelight Vigil for APS martyrs at the Pakistan High Commission London on 16-12-2015*

brave children, Ahmed Nawaz and Ibrahim Khan, who despite their ordeal are fully determined and steadfast to continue their education. Today, they have proved that extremists have miserably failed to defeat the ideology of a modern, educated and forward-looking Pakistan. We as a nation swear by the blood of 132 innocent children that their sacrifices shall not go waste. Insha Allah, we shall not rest until we fulfil the dream of Quaid's Pakistan."

In his speech, Ahmad Nawaz narrated his ordeal during the attack and his resilience with which he is coping with the physical and psychological trauma after the attack. He vowed to work for peace, tolerance and education. Ahmad said it is through education that the terrorist ideology can be defeated. He made an appeal to the nation to get united against the menace of terrorism and extremism. Ahmad thanked the Government as well as the High Commissioner for looking after him and his family.

Senator Najma Hameed, Members of the National Assembly of Pakistan Mrs. Tahira Aurangzeb and Mrs. Belum Hasnain, as well as representatives of the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), attended the commemoration ceremony. Besides, two injured students of APS, Ahmad Nawaz and Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, who are currently under treatment in the UK, participated in the Vigil along with their families.

The High Commissioner and the officers of the High Commission, as a token of their affection and admiration for Ahmad Nawaz and Ibrahim Khan, presented them laptops to supplement their educational pursuits.

The High Commissioner held separate meetings with the two affected families and assured them of all possible support while they are in the UK.



## Shahana Restaurant new Opening & Mahfil-e-Melad

H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas Pakistan High Commissioner in London as chief guest of the eve inaugurated the Shahana Restaurant in London. Mr. Mian Assad Ullah Editor In-chief of the Monthly "Diplomatic Focus" for UK/EU Edition along with Pakistani community and Friends from UK beautify the Evening.







## A premiere for Karachi, Chinese afternoon tea at Suzie Wong

Karachi Marriott Hotel takes pleasure in announcing the launch of the Chinese Afternoon tea in the sensuous splendor of exquisite Suzie Wong that is another feather in the cap for Karachi Marriott. Suzie Wong being a pioneer in authentic Chinese cuisine is further extending its meal period offerings with afternoon tea to the already successful lunch and dinner meal periods. The innovative Afternoon Tea is introduced after a brain storming session between the Chinese Chef Bruce Huanying Yan and some regular guests in order to provide Chinese heritage dishes available for the title tattle socialites in Karachi. The concept of Chinese tea is, all the food is served at the table that enables the guests to keep the conversation on without interruption. The introductory price is Rs. 890/- plus tax per person only, that is actually too kind for the amount of food that is served in abundance including the brimming dessert trolley. Initially the afternoon tea is served on Fridays and Saturdays that are the most popular days eating out for karachites and later it will be served throughout the week. The

afternoon tea rejuvenates and inspires with freshly prepared cold noodle soup, fried chicken won ton, mixed spring rolls, red bean cake, steamed shrimp dumplings, stir fried rice with duck and much more.

The delights of afternoon tea are served with Fujian jasmine tea in several flavors. Last but not the least, Suzie Wong is also available for exclusive private parties on weekdays only.





## 82nd Birthday of the Emperor of Japan Celebrated

Ambassador of Japan H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Inomata and Madam hosted a reception to celebrate the 82nd Birthday of His Majesty Akihito The Emperor of Japan in Serena hotel Islamabad. Minister Abdul Qadir Baloch graced the occasion as a Chief Guest. Galaxy of eminent personalities belonging to Pakistani society including important Ministers, politicians, parliamentarians, a large number of envoys, businessmen, media men, members of civil society, professionals and friends of Japan thronged the show to share greetings and moments of happiness with Japanese Ambassador and his spouse Madam Midori Inomata. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Commerce Minister Khurram Dastgir Khan, Minister Baleegh Rehman, Ch. Shujaat Hussain, Liaqat Baloch and Ejazul Haq were among the prominent politicians.









## 72nd anniversary of Lebanese Independence Day commemorated

Ambassador of Lebanon Mrs. Mona El Tannir hosted a reception to commemorate the 72nd anniversary of the Independence Day of her country in Islamabad. Federal Minister (retd) Lieutenant General Abdul Qadir Baloch was the chief guest. Large number of diplomats and civil society attended the eve.









# 52 Years of Kenya Independence Celebrated

High Commissioner of Kenya in Pakistan Prof. Julius Kibet Bitok hosted a reception to celebrate 52 Years of Kenya Independence at Serena hotel Islamabad. Large number of diplomats and civil society attended the eve.











## Interview

# Pakistan is very important country regionally & internationally

## H.E. Dr. Andreas P. Kouzoupis,

Ambassador of Republic of Cyprus to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

**H**.E. Dr. Andreas P. Kouzoupis is recently appointed as the non-resident Ambassador of Republic of Cyprus to Islamic Republic of Pakistan and resident Ambassador to Iran. He has been a very active and energetic diplomat. He is a Ph.D. in International Law. He joined Diplomatic mission as he finds International Law and International

Relations quite similar.

The Diplomatic Focus has found the opportunity to talk to His Excellency and learn about his education, career, experiences and most importantly his role as ambassador in bringing Cyprus and Pakistan closer in terms of trade, diplomatic, education and cultural ties.

**Q: His Excellency! First of all, we are thankful to you for giving us time. Can you describe your country for the people of Pakistan?**

Cyprus is located south of Turkey, west of Syria and Lebanon, northwest of Israel, north of Egypt and east of Greece. Cyprus is member of European Union since 1st





May 2004. Our Currency is Euro. People are very highly educated. They have been study abroad and gotten the degrees in Masters and PhD's and is our source of national richness. We have very much invested in natural resources and we have five star tourist spots where we provide services for tourists from all over the world. We have a very wide shipping industry. We have been emphasizing a lot on human resources, God has been very kind to us, and many resources of hydrocarbons were discovered last year. So this is a new era for Cyprus, many multinational companies are now stationed in Cyprus and are very promising in the search of more resources.

**Q: His Excellency! Kindly tell us about your academic profile and diplomatic career.**

It's really a little bit strange what's really happened as by academia and my diplomatic career, I did my post graduate study in International Law from UK and I reached the level of Ph.D. International Law and International Relations are quite relevant, after few years of my job practice in 1990's I was appointed to India. So I got my first appointment in India. Then I was posted in Middle East, I was twice appointed in Egypt. I represented my country in Palestine, Oman and Lebanon too. It is pleasant experience to be in Islamabad now. I am a resident ambassador to Islamic Republic of Iran. It's been really honored and pleasure for me to represent my credentials to President of Pakistan, H.E. Mamnoon Hussain as a non-

resident ambassador of Republic of Cyprus.

**Q: His Excellency! What is the reason that Republic of Cyprus did not establish its mission in Pakistan? Do you have any planning to establish your embassy in Islamic Republic of Pakistan?**

I will say that Pakistan is very important country regionally and internationally; one

**We have to build a frame work of the relations not only between governments but also within business communities of both countries**

of the countries in the world who defeats terrorists and a country with large human resources. It is doing great in trade and it is a beacon of security in Asia. It is a country where we would like to start our residence mission but it's still under consideration to open our embassy here in Islamabad. Unfortunately Republic of Cyprus is a small country who cannot send missions abroad to all over the world due to financial reasons.

**Q: Before coming to Pakistan you must have any agenda to promote the bilateral relations and trade between two countries. Do you shortly brief us about upcoming projects and meetings?**

I deliberately postponed my presentation of credentials few months ago to combine my meetings and presentation of credentials to President of Pakistan. As I want to make my visit more productive for bilateral relations and trade.

I had very interesting meetings during my short stay in Islamabad where I met different ministers and we discussed different bilateral matters. There are valued agreements under considerations examined by both sides and I think we are making progress with the key interest to increase bilateral relations. We have to build a frame work of the relations not only between governments but also within business communities of both countries.

That's why I had meeting with Federal Commerce Minister of Pakistan. It was a very warm and productive meeting. We have already set various lines of corporation where we can enhance the trade and the business environment between two countries. It would be a kind of Memorandum of Understanding between our Chambers and Premier's at first, mutual support by both participations in various exhibitions by both countries. So we are doing necessary frame work and our business people will come up there and have a very productive co-ordination and corporation. Let me emphasized on



another important factor, Cyprus is a member of European Union (EU) since 2004. We have been very supportive and it is acknowledged by government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The essential role is played by Cyprus in signing of GSP plus status of Pakistan with the European Union (EU). So these multilateral agreements will prove a very important of our bilateral relations concerning trade between two countries.

**Q: His Excellency! Which kind of facilities your government is offering to the foreign investors if they would invest in your country to promote the bilateral relations between two countries? Furthermore, is your government providing immigration facility to foreign investors?**

Cyprus is the member of European Union (EU) and we have a very good transparent system and very good environment on island where investors can come to invest in various sectors, we have services industry, tourism industry, hydrocarbons resources industry. People are very much interested in investing in these industries in Cyprus. We have a certain criteria, the people who become eligible according to that criterion, can not only get residence in Cyprus but they can also move to other European Union (EU) countries. But there are proper criteria for obtaining even a citizenship of Republic of Cyprus. So people should come over there to get advantage from the opportunities as the economy is going very well at the moment with a steady growth rate so I will encourage Pakistani Citizens to come and achieve the benefit from potential of Cyprus.

**Q: His Excellency! Is there any planning of exchanging of any high level delegation between Pakistan and Cyprus in future?**

We are working on it on government level. Firstly we are working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will enable us to conduct visit on regular basis and further we are working on visit of Foreign Minister of Pakistan. And the meetings on the level of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and government officials are also under consideration. We are interested in arranging meetings whether it's in UN level concerning two countries. Secondly we have a plan to exchange the delegations from Commerce and Business Industry in near future.

**Q: The Republic of Cyprus is very much popular for its good level of education, what do you think about its reason and what is the number of Pakistani students in your country? Do you have any scholarship program for Pakistani students?**

We have five universities recognized by European Union (EU), the entire Western world and United States. We have a lot of



emphasis on higher education. When we were deprived in education, we had been going abroad for higher studies in massive number. So in Pakistan there is a huge number of universities where programs are being taught in English language, a very good English understanding environment is very important, we are on the same line. We are member of Common Wealth countries; there is a very peaceful and friendly environment for studies in

universities will be kind themselves to provide scholarships to Pakistani students on regular basis.

**Q: His Excellency! It is the part of your designation to promote the tourism; do you have any plan for Pakistanis tourists which can attract them and promote the tourism between two countries?**

Cyprus is always welcome tourists from all over the world that's why a large number of tourists take a journey to Cyprus everywhere. Cyprus is such a country which is very peaceful and very secure. People enjoy themselves without any worry. Our island has four seasons and it is very close to Pakistan as compared to other European countries. I think Pakistan and Cyprus should have a direct flight as Pakistanis travel to Cyprus through a long route nowadays via UAE. For the promotion of the tourism, the direct connectivity plays a very important role which we are lacking at the moment.

**Q: Do you want to give any message to the Pakistani businessmen community and people in Pakistan?**

I want to give the message to the people that governments of both countries are trying to make a necessary frame work where the businessmen and people can get access and work in a very comfortable environment in each other's countries. I am sure that the Cyprus businessmen are also very much interested in seeking business in Pakistan but they just need a slight motivation. Here in Pakistan is the great potential. We are working on the agenda to bring close the business community of both countries. We should also take the advantage of the GSP Plus status of Pakistan in European Union (EU). Everyone should take the advantage of this golden opportunity that exists at the moment.

## Universities work on provision of scholarships independently in Cyprus.

Cyprus for foreign students in English language. Concerning your later questions about the number of Pakistani students studying in Cyprus, I cannot provide the exact number but the number of Pakistani students is increasing in Cyprus.

Universities work on provision of scholarships independently in Cyprus. We don't have the system like other countries where the government offers scholarships, but in our system government have nothing to do with scholarships. Secondly, we will have increase in the number of students in future, I am sure that the



# Message of

**H.E. Mr. Bakhytbek Shabarbayev,**  
Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan



It gives me great pleasure to make message on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of National Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

After the independence, Kazakhstan under the leadership of the President Nursultan Nazarbayev started reconstruction and development of the new country. Kazakhstan has built its infrastructures: hospitals, factories, universities, road networks. Currently, there is a remarkable improvement in social, health, education and cultural sectors. As a result Kazakhstan is witnessing financial and economic growth.

For these 24 years of independence we implemented a lot of administrative social and economic reforms as well as developing programs.

One of such programs which introduced by President Nazarbayev is 100 Concrete Steps to Implement Five Institutional Reforms. This "Plan of the Nation" would be developed to radically change the country.

The approaches outlined in the "100 Concrete Steps to Implement Five Institutional Reforms" gives the country a clear sense of the direction for peace and prosperity.

The concrete steps, which are shorter and more precise measures, are grouped under the following five institutional reforms: formation of a professional state apparatus; the rule of law; industrialization and economic growth; identity and unity; formation of accountable government.

More over on 30th November 2015 at the Palace of Independence in Astana Nursultan Nazarbayev gave a new annual address to the nation which is a new way for development in new world reality.

The President discussed external factors and challenges currently facing Kazakhstan and specified measures that need to be taken in order to overcome them.

President Nazarbayev said: "A new global reality with different opportunities and risks is taking shape. The challenges of the new global reality must be set against a comprehensive strategy of action based on our real opportunities."

Kazakhstan needs to implement comprehensive anti-crisis and structural changes in different areas such as: stabilization of the financial sector, optimization of fiscal policy, privatization and the promotion of economic competition, creation of a new investment policy framework, a new social policy designed to improve the lifestyle of Kazakhstan's people.

The diversification of the economy to reduce dependence on the export of raw materials has been stepped up. Major

investment to modernise national infrastructure has been found. This has been coupled with far-reaching modernization of the country's key institutions.

I would like to mention here, that the existing relations between our brotherly countries Kazakhstan and Pakistan are warm and friendly.

In light of new realities, it is time to start a new page in the bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. The Kazakhstan is interested to start a new page of cooperation with Pakistan due to unfolding new developments in the region. There is no doubt that both countries have closed political, economic and security relations. Both countries are important in terms of their potential and can benefit from each other's experience. We share common views on major regional and international issues and cooperate closely in multilateral forums including the UN, SCO, ECO and OIC.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to Kazakhstan in August 2015 was considered very successful as he held very important and result oriented meeting with President Nursultan Nazarbayev. The leadership of both countries expressed their resolve to further reinforce bilateral trade, investment and build long-term economic cooperation. According to a joint statement issued after the visit, the two countries would cooperate in the field of energy such as oil and gas, civil nuclear cooperation and renewable energy.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I would like to wish well-being as well as prosperity to the people of Kazakhstan and Pakistan.



## 24th National Day of Kazakhstan Celebrated

H.E. Bakhytbek Shabarbayev, Ambassador of Kazakhstan hosted a reception to celebrate the 24th National Day of his country at Marriott Hotel Islamabad. In a beautiful setting, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Defense Production was the Chief Guest. Number of politicians, parliamentarians, Ambassadors, retired civil servants, businessmen, members of civil society, professionals and media persons beautify the eve.









# National Day of the State of Qatar Celebrated

## H.E. Mr. Saqr Bin Mubarak Al Mansouri,

Ambassador of the State of Qatar hosted a reception to celebrate National Day of his country at Serena hotel Islamabad. Large number of diplomats and civil society attended the eve.









## 44th National Day of UAE Celebrated

H.E. Essa Abdulla Al Basha Al Noaimi Ambassador the United Arab Emirates hosted a reception to Celebrate the 44th National Day of his country at Serene hotel Islamabad. Mr. Sartaj Aziz National Security Advisor was the Chief guest of the Eve. The event was attended by diplomats; defence advisers and attaches and Pakistanis from different walks of life.





## Nazria Pakistan Council (NPC)

arranged photo Exhibition on Quaid-e-Azam Day in Islamabad.  
Senator Pervez Rashid the Minister of Information, Mass-media Broadcasting,  
and National Heritage, Inaugurated the Exhibition as Chief Guest.





## Interview:

# REBORN OF THE UKRAINIAN ARMY

## 24th anniversary of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

### General Stepan Poltorak, the Minister of Defense of Ukraine

Ukraine's Army Day, also known as the Day of the Armed Forces, celebrates the efforts of the country's armed forces on December 6 each year. In 1991, a decree was signed regarding the establishment of Ukraine's armed forces. Ukraine's Day of the Armed Forces first appeared in the Ukrainian calendar in 1993 after being set by a parliamentary resolution. Ukraine's armed forces consist of the Ground Forces, the Air Force, and the Navy. The armed forces aim to protect Ukraine and ensure the safety of its citizens. In just a short period of time, Ukraine have managed to do much more for the defense than it was over the past twenty years. History taught that many lessons as the people of Ukraine were capable of breaking the yoke of outlanders and becoming the masters of their own land only with a well-trained army. The General of Army of Ukraine Stepan Poltorak, the Minister of Defense of Ukraine, talks to the Journalist on achievements and prospects of the development of Armed Forces.

**Q. Mr. Poltorak, how would you describe the changes in main priorities for the protection of national security and defense over the past two years?**

When we have started the ATO and faced with Russia's aggression it became clear that the system of national security as it was could not function effectively. Therefore, the leadership of our country has started the course for Euro-Atlantic integration to become a key factor in determining our security and territorial integrity. In the same time, such a return in terms of the Alliance requires Ukraine to introduce a number

of amendments to conceptual documents on national security and defense.

We have already developed the National Security Strategy of Ukraine, which laid the foundation to the comprehensive planning of activities to be taken by public authorities in the field of national security. All of our military-political, military-strategic, military-economic and military-technical solutions as well as respective concepts and

European state with the defense policy aimed at restoring national interests – preserving the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of national borders.

**Q. What are the new provisions of the Military Doctrine of Ukraine adopted by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine in early September?**

The Military Doctrine deals with basic principles of the National Defense Policy. For the first

to seek EU membership and enhance cooperation with NATO. The document additionally sets the total military expenditures to a level of three per cent of the forecasted GDP for the corresponding year.

**Q. What is the level of cooperation with NATO member-countries and what is the status of implementing NATO standards into the Armed Forces of Ukraine?**

This is one of our present aspirations supported by foreign partners. Indeed the NATO and its member-countries highly estimated a considerable progress in the reformation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine during the NATO-Ukraine Commission in summer.

Today we are setting new ambitious goals. This October, I've approved the Plan for the transition of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to NATO standards, which includes certain activities with clear deadlines for the period up to 2020.

We have already introduced 115 NATO standards as a basis for the development of 64 national and military regulations, and adopted a list of 402 top priority NATO standards.

The NATO Summit in Wales resulted in the establishment of NATO-Ukraine Logistics and Standardization Trust Fund for three years. Another important success is the deployment of the Joint Multinational Training Group at the International Center for Peacemaking and Safety in Yavoriv, which is providing the general military and special training to units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. All these is done to build a Ukrainian army that will be on a par with world's best armies, guided by the relevant



programs in the field of national security are based on the new Military Doctrine of Ukraine and approved by the President. These documents outline the main priorities in guaranteeing national security and facilitate the development and adaptation of our defense capabilities with NATO standards to the maximum possible extent. This is how we demonstrate the openness and transparency of our military policy to the international community and position Ukraine as a peace-loving and

time since the independence of Ukraine, we have recognized the Russian Federation as a military adversary and marked the high risk of large-scale application of military forces against our country as the major threats to national security.

Among the other changes introduced into the text of the Military Doctrine are the refusal of Ukraine from its non-alignment policy and the start of integration into the political, economic and legal environment of Europe in order



standards and procedures, and will be able to perform any task to protect the country from any aggressor.

We have more and more new challenges but I am confident of our success. Every soldier both on the frontline and in the rear will feel the results of the outlined reforms and intentions.

**Q. Mr. Minister, what results of radical reforms in the Armed Forces of Ukraine have you already achieved?**

What has happened to Ukraine over the past two years has changed the attitudes and approaches to the place and role of the army. We have started radical reforms and already achieved some positive results. In just a short period of time, we have developed the Program on Optimization and Restructuring of the Armed Forces of Ukraine as the basis for the Draft State Target Defence Program of Optimization and Reorganization of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2015-2017. We have managed to increase our combat potential and establish the necessary formations over the most threatening avenues of approach under condition of the special period. The new command and control system is built with consideration of the ATO experience in order to counter a possible large-scale aggression. We continue to enhance the effective combat strength of the Army by improving the striking capabilities of the highly mobile airborne troops and establishing the Special Operations Forces. Significant changes have been introduced into the system of training. Today it includes the individual training for the conscripted and mobilized personnel as well as the operational coordination of units. The work on the restoration of the Navy continues.

We have managed to create a personnel reserve of over 1.5 thousand soldiers with ATO experience. We have established five NATO-Ukraine Trust Funds for the total amount of 5.2 million euros.

The Ministry of Defense is the first and the only ministry to introduce the Anti-Corruption Program for 2015-2017. We have established the Council of Reforms to facilitate the reformation process of logistics and promote its implementation. Among other achievements is the introduction of electronic bidding, which allowed to save money on procurement, the development of over thirty specifications on items of property in accordance with NATO standards, the establishment of the Centre for Development and Support of Logistics of the Armed Forces of Ukraine based on the US equivalent and many others.

We are receiving a tremendous amount of assistance from our foreign partners in the implementation of our projects. The Concept for the Development of Armed Forces of Ukraine until 2020 was drafted in cooperation with foreign advisors from the

NATO Liaison Office. Besides, we have received a set of recommendations on further reformation of the defense sector prepared by the experts from RAND Corporation.

We are planning to work on their implementation in the nearest future, as the proposed measures are extremely important for approaching the Armed Forces of Ukraine to NATO standards. Among the priorities for the reformation in the upcoming period are the development of unified logistics, manning, reserve and the system of training. Our main goal is the development of modern, equipped and powerful armed forces capable of repelling any aggression.

**Q. Mr. Poltorak, how would you assess the level of logistical support to the army during the ATO? What is the status of logistical and medical doctrines? What are the goals of these doctrines?**

I think it is worth recalling the previous years in order to understand what positive changes have been introduced into the system of logistics. For example, the clothing allowance in 2013 was only 3% of the required level. There were only 100 contracts totaling 32.2 million UAH. This year the funding was increased to over 60%. We have concluded 619 contracts for the total amount of 2.95 billion UAH. Yet the production and supply of clothing, shoes and other items of property for the Armed Forces continues. The National Defense Procurement Plan for 2015 provided for the procurement and supply of 1,768 new and refurbished pieces of materiel as well as over 400,000 rockets and ammunition for the purposes of the ATO. This year we have already adopted 17 new types of materiel and another 7 are to be adopted until the end of the year.

The level of materiel supply to the Armed Forces has increased 1.5 times if compared with 2014. Besides, we are expecting to receive over 2.5 thousand pieces of materiel until the end of 2015. In this case, the level of materiel supply would be four times higher.

With all those quantitative changes, we do not forget about the quality. We have established a Working Group on the development of new high quality and modern types of uniform. We have introduced new pieces of uniform and our soldiers and officers will soon be able to feel all of those changes. One of them is the new model of combat boots already provided to our soldiers on the front line. Our pilot project on subsistence support continues. We are to engage even more units to the project since the beginning of next year.

Military Medics have drafted the Military Medical Doctrine of Ukraine. It determines the strategy and main directions for the development of medical support in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. We have also

established a working group on Logistics Doctrine. This document would facilitate the effective and efficient logistical support of the Armed Forces in peacetime and in times of crisis.

**Q. Many changes have been introduced into various training programs for the cadets of Higher Military Educational Institutions since the beginning of the ATO. What is provided under the Draft Concept for the Development of Military Education and what are the main goals of this document?**

A lot of special attention of the Ukrainian leadership is now attracted to military education. This year we have increased the age limit from 23 to 29 years for contracted and mobilized military personnel, who participated in ATO and expressed a desire to obtain a military profession. Besides, the military personnel can apply to the university upon the results of examinations without EIT certificates. This year we have 584 soldiers with ATO experience, who started their education at Higher Military Educational Institutions.

The contracted personnel with combat experience who suffered injuries can apply for a part-time education to get a degree in civil specialty.

The training programs for military experts are being constantly reviewed based on the situation in the Eastern Ukraine. We have introduced new disciplines into the curriculum. Some of them are military management, combat survival, military medical training, etc.

We are continuously reviewing the curriculum based on our combat experience. More attention is paid to practical and combat training, as we have to teach our officers to take bold and wise decisions. Today the major requirement to professors teaching military subjects is the availability of practical combat experience. In order to improve our system of training, we have established a Working Group in the Ministry of Defense to draft the Concept for the Development of Military Education. It will be submitted to the Board of the Ministry of Defence for review in early 2016. This document provides for an increase in practical training of cadets, traineeship in the end of every training year, change in requirements to faculty, optimization of the system of Higher Military Educational Institutions and many other activities. On this day – the Day of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – I would like to thank every soldier and every commander for their soldierly spirit, professionalism, and valor. My words of gratitude and respect go to mothers and fathers of our dead brethren. Their deeds are already in the history of our country and their names will remain forever in the memory of our future generations.

**Thank you for your service!**



# Swat

the Switzerland of Pakistan





**S**wat valley is one of the major tourist attractions of Pakistan. It has one of the oldest civilizations histories and one of the beautiful scenery one could ever see. The valley of Swat is situated in the north of K.P.K. and is enclosed by the sky-high mountains.

Chitral and Gilgit are situated in the north, Dir in the west, and Mardan in the south, while Indus separates it from Hazara in the east. Swat can be divided into two physical regions: 1) Mountainous Ranges 2) Plains.

Swat lies in the lap of **Mountainous Ranges**, which are the offshoots of Hindukush, so the larger part of Swat is covered with high mountains and hills, the crests of which is hidden by everlasting snow. Though these gigantic Ranges run irregularly; some to the west while the others to the east, but the general direction is North-South. These ranges enclose small but very enchanting valleys.

**Plains** of valley of Swat start from the foothill of Malakand from Landakay to

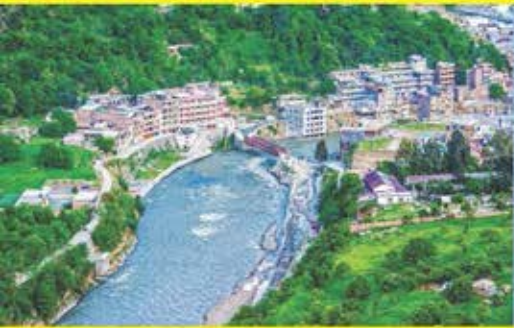
Gabral (Gulabad), the area within the administrative boundaries of Swat. The length of the valley from Landakay to Gabral is 91 miles. Two narrow strips of plains run along the banks of Swat River from Landakay to Madyan. Beyond Madyan in Kohistan-e-Swat, the plain is too little to be mentioned. So far as the width concerns, it is not similar, it varies from place to place. We can say that the average width is 5 miles. The widest portion of the valley is between Barikot and khwaza khela. There are some subsidiary valleys, which help to increase the width of the main valley. These subsidiary valleys are called "Daras". A Dara a narrow passage between mountains, and sometimes, the upper course of a river is also called Dara. If we imagine the main valley as a stem of a tree the subsidiary valleys form its branches. Swat River and its tributaries drain Swat. Therefore, the whole valley is the outcome of running water. Anyhow, the whole plain of Swat valley is strewn by the running water, and is made up of fine alluvial soil.

**River Swat** is a clear water river starting from the Ushu range of mountains to the valley of Swat. It is one of the greenest valleys of the Northern Pakistan. It is more fertile valley than the other valleys further north because it lies within the monsoon belt. In Lower Swat, the valley is wide, the fields on either side of the river are full of wheat and Lucerne, and the villages are prosperous and surrounded by fruit trees. In Upper Swat, the river tumbles through pine forests hemmed in by snow-capped mountains. The Swat River and its tributaries gush through rocky gorges and are particularly known for trout fishing. The houses of the small villages in the area are stacked one on top of the other up the mountainsides, with the roofs of one level of houses used as a front street for houses on the next level.

Swat valley is well connected to the rest of Pakistan. There are regular flights from Islamabad to Swat and back. One can also go there either from Peshawar (160 KMs) or Islamabad (250 KMs). The main town of







the valley is Mingora and Saidu Sharif.

Swat is a place for leisure Lover, Hikers, and archeologist. There are many comfortable hotels where one can stay a while to relax. In Kalam upper Swat there are some very pleasant walks since weather is pretty pleasant one can easily walk over the hills for hours and enjoy the unspoiled nature. For the sportsman and trekker, it offers good fishing and hiking.

The Swat is garden of Ashoka and was a prosperous land in the Buddhist times (2nd BC to 5 AD) There are at least over 100 archeological sites in the valley less than 10% of those are excavated. One can explore some of those sites in a half day tour of Swat. For the historical and amateur archaeologist, Swat offers several hundred archaeological sites spanning 5,000 years of history.

Swat Valley is full of historical treasures and tales. It was at this pass that the Emperor Akbar lost most of his 8000-man army in an abortive attempt to invade Swat in 1586. The 45 km-long road from Pir Baba (RA) to Barikot passes through Mount Ilam rising through mature pine forests to Karakar Pass. Worth visiting are the valley's graveyards, which have been used for 3,500 years. Some of the archaeological sites that one can visit on tour to Swat Valley include Butakara 1 and Butakara 2, Shingardar Stupa and Udegaram. Mount Ilam (2,811m, 9,222 ft) has been considered sacred since prehistoric times. A trek to the top brings visitors to a group of 741 massive square blocks of stone, which archaeologists guess were used as an ancient altar.

**Swat valley is divided into two parts; upper and lower Swat valley**

Lower Swat Valley has been occupied for the last 3000 years. The area between Chakdara Bridge and Saidu Sharif is littered with the remains of pre historic Aryan's Gandhara grave culture, Buddhist shrines and buildings of the Hindu Shahi Period. These archaeological sites are concentrated around three towns; Birkot, Udegaram and Saidu Sharif.

Near Chakdara Bridge there are ruins of Hindu Shahi Period and stupas at Haibatgram, Top Dara and Landakai.

About 25 kilometres from Chakdara Bridge, Birkot is the site of ancient town Bazira sacked by Alexander in 326 BC. This town is situated on ancient route on the River Swat from Nawa Pass. Here ancient route take a turn to south through Karakar Pass into Buner which further lead to Shabaz Garhi in Peshawar Valley. Mutlitan, Gumbat Stupa, Utrot, Gabral Valleys, Udegara, Saidu Sharif, Kabal and Mingora are the famous areas of Swat valley.

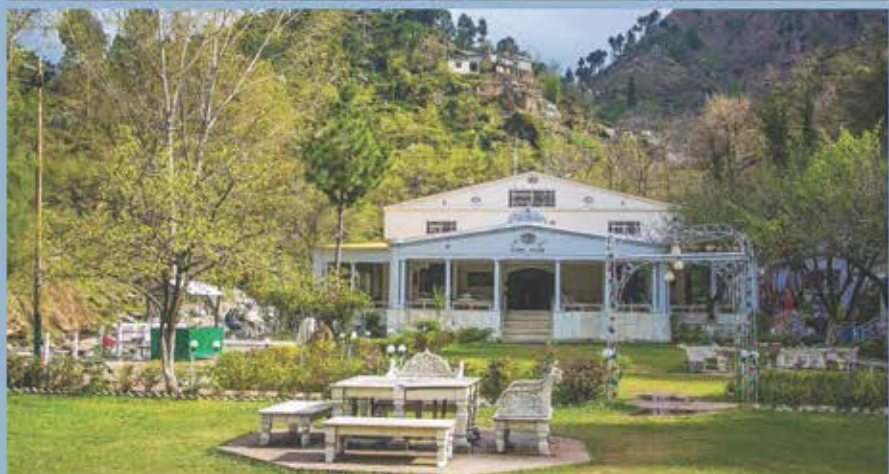
#### Mingora

Mingora is the district headquarter and commercial centre of Swat. The Swat Museum, located between Mingora and Saidu, has a rich collection of Gandhara art

which is worth viewing. Mingora is one of the most important towns of the Swat Valley. It is situated 2km from Saidu Sharif. On the other side of River Swat near Mingora Airport a site of Gandhara Grave Culture was discovered by Italians at Aligrama. The site was dated to 1000 BC. Near Mingora in Jambill River Valley a lot of Buddhist remains and carvings are found.

**Saidu Sharif** is just two Kilometer away from Mingora, it is an ideal picnic spot for visitors. There is White Palace Hotel to stay and enjoy the scenic beauty of this area.

**Kabal** is a golfer's paradise: an eighteen-hotel course is open all year round and







anyone can play there by paying the green fees.

**Swat Museum** is on the east side of the street, halfway between Mingora and Saidu. Japanese aid has given a facelift to its seven galleries which now contain an excellent collection of Gandhara sculptures taken from some of the Buddhist sites in Swat, rearranged and labeled to illustrate the Buddha's life story. Terracotta figurines and utensils, beads, precious stones, coins, weapons and various metal objects illustrate daily life in Gandhara. The ethnographic section displays the finest

level and this magnificent point has really worth for visit. Anyone can have a stroll in the villages and enjoy the green scenery. It is outstanding place for skiing and other activity. There is a chairlift also.

**Kalam**, 29 kilometres (18 miles) from Bahrain and about 2,000 meters (6,800 feet) above sea level, the valley opens out, providing rooms for a small but fertile plateau above the river. In Kalam the Ushu and Utrot rivers join to form the Swat river. Here, the metal led road ends and shingle road leads to the Ushu and Utrot valleys. From Matiltan one gets a breath-taking

hidden from the eyes of the common people due to their far-flung locations and take three to seven hours trekking to reach from the last village on the road. Exploring these miracles of nature demands endurance, patience, and courage and above all love for natural beauty. Those who posses aesthetic sense and have thirst for natural beauty ventures to explore and unravel these extravagant bounties of nature. Pari (Khapiro) lake, Mohodand lake, Kundalo lake, Bashigram lake, Spin Khwar (White Stream) lake, and Daral lake are famous lakes in Swat valley.



examples of local embroidery, carved wood and tribal jewelry.

#### Upper Swat Valley:

The Swat Valley becomes more beautiful the higher you go. In mid-winter it is sometimes blocked by snow above Bahrain, but in summer you can drive up beyond Kalam and from there trek North to either the Chitral Valley or the Gilgit Valley. From Khuwaza Khela, the road across the Shangla Pass to the Karakoram Highway is usually open only from April to December. Bahrain, Madyan, Miandam, Khuwaza Khela, Ushu Valley, Malam Jaba and Kalam are famous areas in upper Swat valley.

**Malam Jaba** is above 7000 ft. from sea



view of the snow-capped Mount Falaksir 5918 meters (19,415 ft.), and another unnamed peak 6096 meters (20,000 ft.) high.  
**Lakes of Swat Valley:**

The valley can truly be called the Valley of Lakes, which not only feeds the emerald Green River Swat but also provides ideal camping sites for adventurous people and nature lovers. Most of these lakes are

**Mohodand Lake** is on a jeep trek from Kalam passing through Ushu Jungle and Mutiltan Valley. It is a very worth seen place. You can see many water falls on the way to Mohodand Lake.

**Kundalo Lake** is in Utrot valley. One day trek from Kalam will take you to Kundalo Lake. It is still untouched lake. It is full of trout and one can do fishing in it.





A photograph of two raised fists against a blue sky with white clouds. Each fist is wrapped in a thick, light-brown rope. The rope on the left fist is broken and hanging down. The rope on the right fist is also broken and hanging down. The fists are positioned as if they are breaking through the ropes, symbolizing liberation and empowerment.

## High Commission of Canada Organizes Forum on Women's Economic Empowerment

**T**o support Pakistan in achieving its development and gender equality goals and to help stimulate sustainable economic growth, the High Commission of Canada is organizing a Forum on Women's Economic Empowerment at the Serena Hotel, Islamabad.

The Forum brings together a wide range of development professionals and partners, rural women, the private sector, government representatives, experts on gender and economic participation, as well as practitioners. Cross-fertilization of ideas, sharing of best practices and innovations, challenges and lessons learned helps inform programming and policy in the field of Women's Economic Empowerment. It is an important forum to update and blend practical and theoretical knowledge on the state of women's economic participation in

**"The ongoing marginalization of women is a key barrier to sustainable economic growth," Heather Cruden**

Pakistan.

"The ongoing marginalization of women is a key barrier to sustainable economic growth," said High Commissioner Heather Cruden. "It is my hope that more women can become literate and informed wage-earners who can then make better choices for themselves and their children. When women and girls are empowered and have equal access to economic opportunities, poverty decreases, opportunities for

development expand, and entire families, communities and countries benefit."

The Women's Economic Empowerment Forum has been an annual event since 2011 and has evolved from a meeting of active partners sharing their programming successes and experiences to a larger meeting of stakeholders with sector-wide Women's Economic Empowerment programming objectives in Pakistan.



## Ambassador of Argentina, H.E. Rodolfo Martin Saravia's Lunch Party

A lunch party was organized by Dean of diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Argentina, Rodolfo Martin Saravia in honor of Pakistan Ambassador designate to United States, Mr. Jalil Abbass Jillani. Pakistan Representative to the United Nations, H.E. Dr. Maleeha Lodhi, Japanese Ambassador Mr. Hiroshi Inomata and his wife, CEO of Serena Hotel, Mr. Aziz Boolani and other prominent figures from diplomatic community attended the party.





# Wait is Over

New Year is bringing the most awaited event of Sports

## "Pakistan Super League"



Pakistan Super League season will be started in February

**T**he Pakistan Super League T20 is finally on and with the Habib Bank Limited being announced the title sponsors for the first 3 years of the league, it sure sounds like it is here to stay!

The HBL PSL is the premier professional T20 cricket league in Pakistan which has been in the pipeline for years now. The trophy will be awarded annually to the league playoff champion at the end of each season.

After years of battling security concerns and inner hassles, the authorities have lined up a set of spectacular contests. The matches will be held, 24 in all, from February 4-24, 2016 just before the World T20. The authorities have intelligently chosen February as it doesn't hold any other T20 event in the main. Every step is being taken to ensure smooth transactions of PSL tickets; sale of merchandise, building up of brand equity and smoothing the broadcasting rights.

The inaugural edition of the PSL Pakistan

Super League 2016 will see five teams participating in it with each team representing a city. However, plans are in place for an expansion of the PSL to be a 10-team league within the next five years.

80 players including 25 graded international players will make their presence felt in the tournament that

The website [www.tickets4pk.com](http://www.tickets4pk.com) is the official online ticketing partner for the event. The prices of Tickets for the inaugural tournament have been priced at 250 AED for league matches while for The Pakistan Super League final tickets are priced 300 AED.

promises \$1, 00, 000 to the winning team. It also promises plenty of excitement as teams from Islamabad United, Karachi Kings, Peshawar Zalmi, Quetta Gladiators and Lahore Qalanders take part in the PSL.

Of course, what takes priority is the level of cricket played. Given that each team is allowed a maximum of 16 players, 80 players will participate in the PSL, of which 55 will be local players while the other 25 will be internationals. Quality international coaches have been roped to manage the five teams with precision and bite. South African Mickey Arthur is Head Coach for Karachi Kings while Mushtaq Ahmed is Bowling Coach. For Lahore Qalanders, Paddy Upton is Head Coach. For Peshawar Zalmi Mohammad Akram is Head Coach and Andy Flower is Batting Coach. For Islamabad United Dean Jones is Head Coach. Moin Khan is Head Coach while Ian Pont Bowling Coach for Quetta Gladiators.

The league will use a draft system – similar to the National Football League in the United States for player recruitment as opposed to the auction system which is used in other popular T20 leagues across the world. The teams will be like franchises with private and corporate owners and at least 2 ambassadors from the showbiz







industry. ARY Group purchased Karachi Kings for \$2.6 million. Qatar Oil purchased Lahore Qalandars for \$2.4 million. Leonine Global Sports purchased Islamabad for \$1.5 million. Haier purchased Peshawar for \$1.6 million. Omar Associates purchased Quetta for \$1.1 million.

The Pakistan T20 league will not be played in Pakistan but instead will be based out of UAE. All matches would be played at two

In the event of tied scores after both teams have faced their quota of overs, a super over will determine the winner, even in the group stage. In the group stage, teams will be ranked on the following criteria:

- Higher number of points
- If equal, higher number of wins
- If still equal, net run rate

- If still equal, lower bowling strike rate
- If still equal, result of head to head meeting.

The PSL Squads list containing 16-member squads for each team participating in Pakistan Super League T20 Tournament. There are five teams participating in the inaugural season of PSL and each team will consist of 11 local and 5 foreign players.

**Former Pakistan captains Wasim Akram and Ramiz Raja have been roped in as brand ambassadors of the tournament for the next three years.**

grounds – Dubai and Sharjah cricket stadiums which were confirmed by the PCB in September 2015. Earlier there were plans for the tournament to be played in Doha but that was changed back to UAE where the tournament will be played now.

A total of five teams will play the other team twice before qualifying for the semi-

**For PSL Logo Launch, a star studded ceremony was held in Lahore already where PSL logo & anthem were unveiled. Celebrities from showbiz spotted at the event while Ali Zafar sang the official anthem, composed by him, the event proved to be the start of a new entertainment filled cricket era.**

finals through ICC points system.

The PSL Points Table is based on the ICC System where each team is awarded 2 points for win during group stages. In case of a draw during the group stage, winner shall be decided through super over. Top four teams will qualify for semi-finals before a final match.

Teams	Final Draft Picks for 2016 Season
<b>Peshawar Zalmi</b> 	Shahid Afridi, Wahab Riaz, Darren Sammy (WI), Kamran Akmal, Mohammad Hafeez, Chris Jordan (ENG), Tamim Iqbal (BAN), Junaid Khan, Jim Allenby (ENG), Aamer Yamin, Dawid Malan (ENG), Imran Khan Jr, Shahid Yousuf, Abdur Rehman, Musadiq Ahmed, Hassan Ali Supplementary: Brad Hodge, Israrullah, Taj Wali
<b>Karachi Kings</b> 	Shoaib Malik, Shakib ul Hasan (BAN), Sohail Tanvir, Imad Wasim, Ravi Bopara (ENG), Lendl Simmons (WI), Mohammad Aamir, Bilawal Bhatti, James Vince (ENG), Ifikhar Ahmad, Nauman Anwar, Mushfiqur Rahim (BAN), Usama Mir, Sohail Khan, Mir Hamza, Saifullah Bangash Supplementary: Tillakaratne Dilshan, Shahzaib Hassan, Fawad Alam
<b>Islamabad United</b> 	Shane Watson (AUS), Andre Russell (WI), Misbah ul Haq, Samuel Badree (WI), Mohammad Irfan, Brad Haddin (AUS), Sharjeel Khan, Mohammad Sami, Khalid Latif, Baber Azam, Imran Khalid, Kamran Ghulam, Umar Amin, Sam Billings (ENG), Rumman Raees, Aneez Butt Supplementary: Ashar Zaidi, Saeed Ajmal, Umar Siddiq
<b>Lahore Qalandars</b> 	Chris Gayle (WI), Dwayne Bravo (WI), Umar Akmal, Mohammad Rizwan, Yasir Shah, Shoaib Maqsood, Mustafizur Rehman (BAN), Kevon Cooper (WI), Cameron Delpert (RSA), Zafar Gohar, Hammad Azam, Zia-ul-Haq, Zohaib Khan, Azhar Ali, Naved Yasin, Adnan Rasool Supplementary: Abdul Razzaq, Mukhtar Ahmad, Ehsan Adil, Imran Butt
<b>Quetta Gladiators</b> 	Kevin Pietersen (ENG), Sarfraz Ahmed, Ahmed Shehzad, Anwar Ali, Jason Holder (WI), Luke Wright (ENG), Zulfiqar Babar, Umar Gul, Elton Chigumbura (ZIM), Bilal Asif, Asad Shafiq, Mohammad Nawaz, Saad Nasim, Mohammad Nabi (AFG), Akbar-ur-Rehman, Bismillah Khan Supplementary: Kumar Sangakkara, Aizaz Cheema, Ramiz Raja Jr.



## "Rawul Pindee- The Raj Years" was Launched

A book launch ceremony was held at Islamabad club by Murree Brewery. "Rawul Pindee- The Raj Years" is first coffee table book on the history of Rawalpindi city. This book is written in English by the famous historian Ali Khan. Mr. Ali Khan especially thanked Chief Executive Murree Brewery & Member National Assembly Asfanyar Bhandara and said that this book could not have been completed without his help. Many famous people related to history and society, as well as member of civil society and journalists took part in this event.







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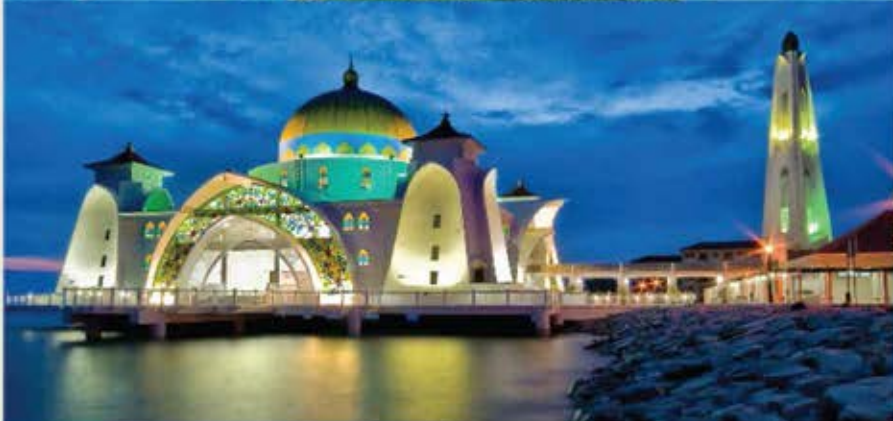




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- Experienced multi-lingual chauffeurs
- Online bookings & customer apps

### خدماتنا:

- فريق على درجة عالية من الخبرة و الكفاءة.
- خدمات نقل للمطارات.
- VIP خدمات لمقابلتك و الترحيب بكم.
- خدمات نقل مميزة للهيئات و الشركات.
- سائقين متعددي اللغات.
- Online & customer apps إمكانية الحجز.

## Our Vehicles

- Executive – (Mercedes E Class – BMW 5 – Audi 6)
- Luxury – (Mercedes S Class – BMW & Audi 8)
- VIP – (Bentley – Rolls Royce – Maybach)
- MPV – (Mercedes Viano – VW Transposter)
- Minibus (8 – 16 – 29 – 34 seat executive buses)

### أسطول سياراتنا

- مدراء (مرسيدس إي كلاس – ب م دبليو ٥ – أودي ٦).
- فاخرة (مرسيدس إس كلاس – بي إم دبليو ٨ & أودي ٨).
- بنيتلي – رولز رويس – ميبايكش (VIP).
- متعددة الأغراض (مرسيدس فيانو – فولكس فاجن ترانسبوتر).
- ميني باص (٨ – ١٦ – ٢٩ – ٣٤ راكب)

## Our Customers

- Corporate – Allianz, Publieurope, Motorella
- 5 Star Hotels – Mandarin Oriental, The Royal Garden, Chelsea Harbour
- Prestigious Clubs – The Sloane Club
- Embassies & Consulates – The Russian Embassy.
- Travel Agencies & Tour Operators.
- Individual private Account Holders.

### عملائنا:

- شركات (الأياتز – بابلي يروب – موتورولا).
- فنادق خمس نجوم (ماندرين أورينتال – رويال جاردن – تشلسي هاربر).
- أندية ذات سمعة (ذي صالون كلوب).
- سفارات و قنصليات (السفارة و القنصلية الروسية).
- وكالات سفر و سياحة.
- أفراد بحسابات خاصة.



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