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Happy New Year
2017



H.E. Mamnoon Hussain,
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H.E. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif,
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2016 New heights in Pakistan's Relations



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17 Pakistan awaits to see Uzbekistan joining CPEC: PM Nawaz

All necessary steps would be taken to explore and exploit the huge business and trade opportunities between the two countries: Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Ulugbek Rozikulov

20 Pakistan & Bosnia-Herzegovina express satisfaction on the progress of the entire spectrum of bilateral relations

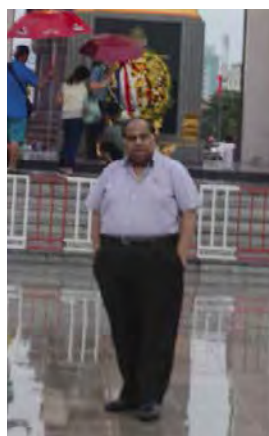
Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visited Bosnia and Herzegovina from 20-22 December 2016, at the invitation of Chairman of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister) H.E. Dr Denis Zvizdic.

32 Zardari's new gimmick

Past master in wheeling and dealing Asif Ali Zardari, has ended his self-exile and is back in the country in the hope of turning the political tide. His decision to go back to the National Assembly along with his son Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has surprised even his supporters.

58 Reshaping the Halal Foods, Thailand Halal Assembly 2016

The Halal Assembly is held annually as part of the Halal strategy set in place by the Thai government in 2001. This led to the 2003 Cabinet approval for the establishment of the Halal Science Center (HSC), Chulalongkorn University and the Halal Standard Institute of Thailand.



Special Feature Report on

Thailand & Cambodia's Visits

By Mian Fazal Elahi
CEO/Editor/Publisher
"Diplomatic Focus"



Contents

10	Credentials Presented by New Envoys to President Mamnoon Hussain
11	Message from H.E. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, The Prime Minister of Pakistan
12	140th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation, Qaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah
14	Chandelier representing China-Pakistan friendship installed at Quaid's mausoleum
16	Pakistan and Uzbekistan will work together to end extremism: President Mamnoon
17	Pakistan awaits to see Uzbekistan joining CPEC: PM Nawaz
18	General Qamar Bajwa vows to guard Holy Mosques
19	The cup is half full
20	Pakistan & Bosnia-Herzegovina express satisfaction on the progress of the entire spectrum of bilateral relations
24	Prime Minister of Pakistan visited Sehidsko cemetery and Galley "11-07-95"
26	PM Nawaz attended a business forum between BiH and Pakistan stressed that this is the perfect time to take a step forward and to strengthen economic relations and trade
27	Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens
28	An assassination in Turkey
30	Kerry: Israel Can Either Be Jewish or Democratic, it Cannot Be Both
31	Israel's Settlements Have No Legal Validity, Constitute Flagrant Violation of International Law, Security Council Reaffirms
32	Zardari's new gimmick
34	Zardari's big announcement
37	Ghazal Night with Hamid Ali Khan at Karachi Marriott Hotel
38	Paki-China Friendship, Ishaq Dar Inaugrates F-9 Park Solar Lighting Project
40	Missing the point
42	Projects proposed by Provinces, are now part of CPEC
43	Visit of Junior Foreign Trainee Diplomats to Board of Investment
44	Pakistan's Ambassador Tehmina Janjua chairs successful CCW Review Conference
45	Pakistan calls for promotion of dialogue among all religions, cultures
46	Message from H.E. Mr. Gabriel Tiel Capote, Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba
47	Pakistan winner to receive Special Award from Her Majesty The Queen
48	Pakistan and Uzbekistan should focus on establishing direct railway and air links that would go a long way in improving trade activities: Saad Rafique
49	Gandhara Exhibition in Republic of Korea
50	Good Bye 2016 & Welcome 2017, Annual Gala Dinner 2016 hosted by "Diplomatic Focus"
54	Mr. Syed Naveed Zafar (Chairman & CEO of "Ayyaan Group of Companies") hosted "Curtain Raiser" Reception
56	AGOC participated in PFOWA Charity Bazaar-2016 as "Golden Sponsor" and reiterated their strong support to Widows & Destitutes of society
58	Reshaping the Halal Foods, Thailand Halal Assembly 2016
62	SIAM NIRAMIT THEATER
64	Phnom Penh, Capital of the Cambodia
66	Honoring a Down to Earth King on World Soil Day
68	His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and the Thai Muslim community
70	BCH is one of the leading chain of hospitals in the world: Mr. Chalerm
72	Exhibition of the Original Paintings of Egbal Mehdi Organized by Karachi Marriott
73	President Gold Cup International Squash Tournament: Nine International players have entered
74	Pakistan's Bilateral Relations Thru Diplomatic Focus 2016
76	Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens
78	Marriott Activities thru Diplomatic Lens
80	Minister for Railway Saad Rafique and Minister for Human Rights Kamran Michael jointly inaugurated the Peace train at Margala Railway station in Islamabad as part of Christmas celebrations.
81	Fashion Race, Winter Episode 2016

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Printer

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Price

Pakistan	\$ 6	Middle East	8 Riyal
UK	£ 6	Schengen State	€6
Malaysia:	\$ 8	Canada:	\$8
USA:	\$6		

Published from Islamabad

Our previous Issues

December 2016



November 2016



October 2016



September 2016



Mian Fazal Elahi

There is sudden upsurge in political activities and manoeuvring following return of PPP leader Asif Ali Zardari to the country after an 18-month self-exile. As PPP has initiated a process of consultation with other political parties for the formation of an anti-government alliance, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has apparently shunned passive attitude and had a meeting with JUI-F leader Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman assigning him the task of political reconciliation.

PML-N has been pursuing the politics of reconciliation ever since assumption of power in the sense that it allowed all those parties who won mandate of the people in 2013 elections to form governments in provinces despite its ability to forge coalitions there. The PPP too has been responding positively to govt gestures and extended its crucial support during challenging times like prolonged PTI Dharna in Islamabad. However, as the country is going into election mode, the PPP, which has lost much ground to other parties, with the exception of Sindh, is now trying to regain some of the space ahead of 2018 elections. It was, perhaps, in this backdrop that in his speech on the occasion of death anniversary of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari announced to say goodbye to the politics of reconciliation and take the Government head on. However, there is marked difference between his pronouncement and actual course the PPP intends to pursue. It was heartening to hear that both Mr. Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari would contest elections and make it to the National Assembly. This is a clear message that the PPP wants to avoid politics of roads. There is also a message that PPP would wait for 2018 elections and would not press for early polls through street agitation, as it is the desire of some other parties and some elements in the PPP itself. Otherwise, the PPP needs some time to show something to the people and regain their confidence before the elections are held. Other parties too should not show impatience and follow the saner course being adopted by PPP.

[Signature]



Mian Assad Ullah

Important Announcement

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

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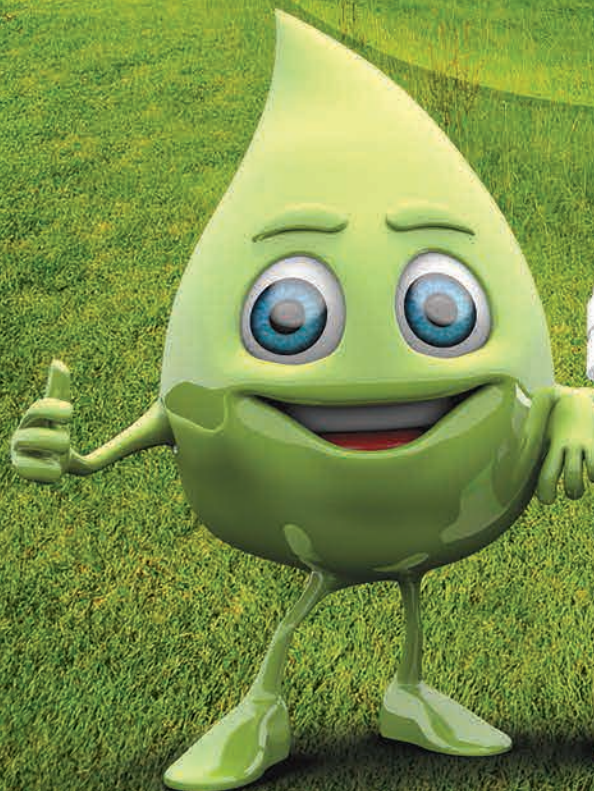
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Credentials Presented by New Envoys to President Mamnoon Hussain



Envoys designate of Yemen, Kuwait, Romania, Mali, Colombia, Mauritania and Albania presented their credentials to President Mamnoon Hussain in an impressive ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

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

Later, the Ambassadors separately called on the President. Speaking on the occasion, the President said that Pakistan is desirous of further promoting friendly and brotherly relations with all countries particularly with its neighbours for peace, stability and prosperity in the region. The President stated that Pakistan offers great investment and business opportunities and urged the foreign investors to avail them by investing in different areas. He stated that operation Zarb-e-Azb is progressing successfully which has greatly overcome the menaces of terrorism and extremism in the country and emphasized that the operation would continue till elimination of the last terrorist.

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



President Mamnoon Hussain receiving Credentials from Ambassadors-Designate of Yemen, Kuwait, Romania, Mali, Colombia, Mauritania and Albania at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad

The envoys who presented their credentials included Mr. Mohammed Motahar Alashabi, Ambassador of Yemen, Mr. Nassar Abdulrahman Jasser Al Mutairi, Ambassador of Kuwait, Mr. Nicolae Goia, Ambassador of Romania, Mr. Boubacar Gouro Diall, Ambassador of Mali (Resident in Iran), Mr. Juan Alfredo Pinto Saavedra, Ambassador of Colombia (Resident in Turkey), Mr. Saidi Mohamed Laghtaf, Ambassador of Mauritania (Resident in Qatar), and Mr. Genti Gazheli, Ambassador of Albania (Resident in Turkey).

Message from
H.E. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif
 The Prime Minister of Pakistan

31st Anniversary of **SAARC** & the 32nd SAARC Charter Day



On behalf of the people and the Government of Pakistan, and that of my own, I wish to felicitate the SAARC Members States and their citizens on the 31st Anniversary of the establishment of SAARC and the 32nd Anniversary of SAARC Charter Day.

We celebrate, today, the spirit with which our leaders, entrusted by the people, worked towards the culmination of the SAARC Charter, and the subsequent establishment of SAARC. More than three decades ago, they committed to engage in a collaborative regional effort, geared towards delivering on the promise of a better life for their people.

While SAARC has, albeit survived, it has not triumphed as had been envisaged, falling behind on the commitments and the promises that we had set out to achieve: progress and prosperity for the common good of our people.

We, in Pakistan, continue to believe in the viability of SAARC. We are convinced that only through adhering to the principles of sovereign equality and mutual respect among member states, would we be able to guide SAARC to our cherished goal of a prosperous and developed South Asian region.

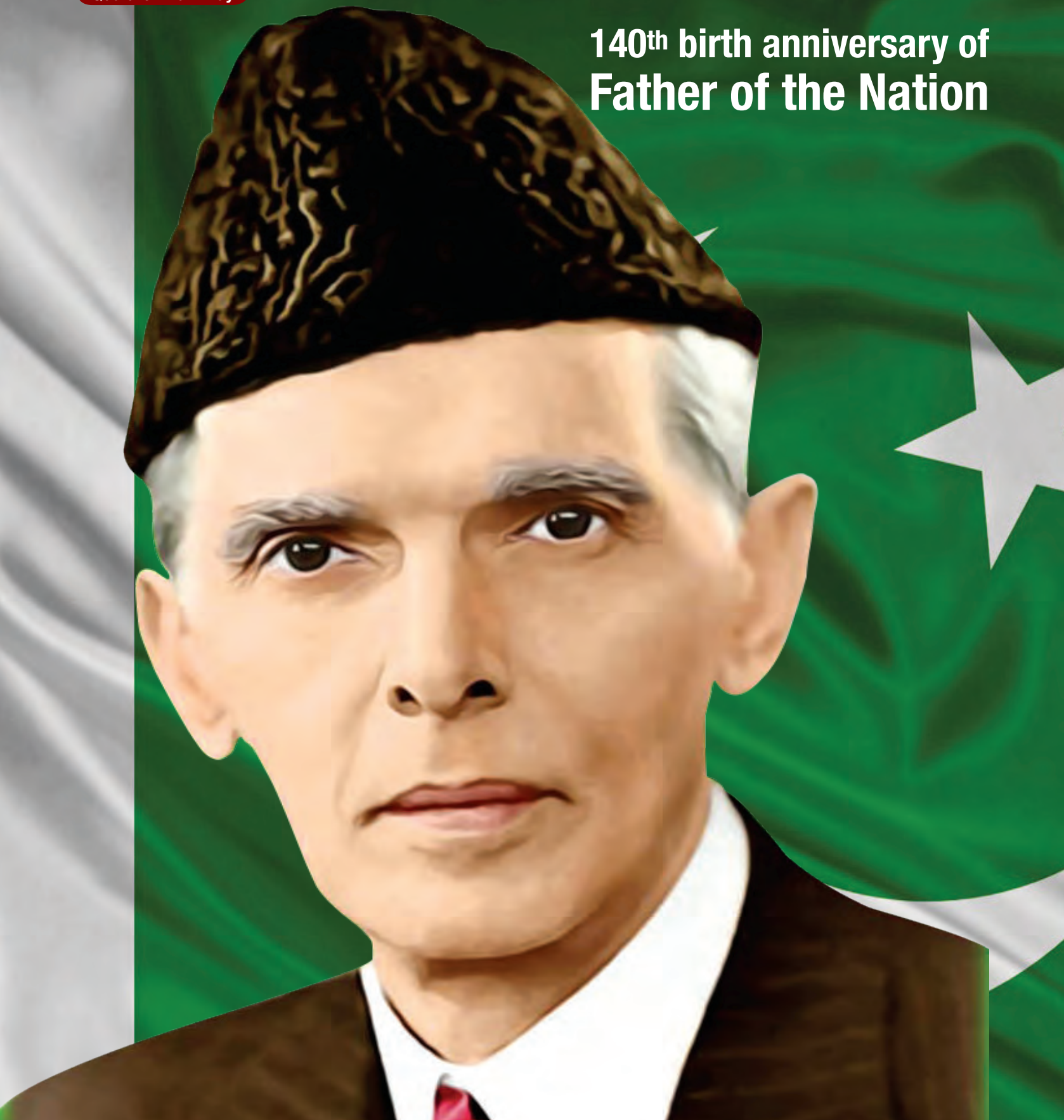
As its founding member, Pakistan stands steadfastly by the principles of the SAARC Charter. It was in manifestation of the same spirit that Pakistan had made all preparations for hosting the 19th SAARC Summit. However, the postponement of the Summit has deprived our people, once more, of the prospects of development, prosperity and regional cooperation.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to the objectives of SAARC and our journey together towards achieving our shared objectives under its umbrella.

I sincerely wish all the people of our South Asian region, happiness, harmony, peace and prosperity.



**140th birth anniversary of
Father of the Nation**



Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah
December 25, 1876



“Our object should be peace within, and peace without. We want to live peacefully and maintain cordial friendly relations with our immediate neighbours and with the world at large”

(Lahore, August 15th, 1947)



Chandelier representing China-Pakistan friendship installed at Quaid's mausoleum

By Bilal Zafar

President Mamnoon Hussain unveiled a new chandelier installed at the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Sun Weidong, Karachi Mayor Wasim Akhter and others also attended the ceremony. President Mamnoon Hussain on the installation of the

new chandelier expressed the confidence that the symbolic significance of the chandelier would always remind the importance of Sino-Pak relationship.

The president thanked the Chinese leadership and especially Ambassador Sun Weidong for the gift.

An 80-foot-long magnificent chandelier that has been one of the major attractions at the Mazar-i-Quaid for more than four decades replaced by another decorative light fixture gifted by the Chinese government. The old chandelier was also gifted by China in 1971.

The chandelier weighs 1.2 tonnes and its worth is Rs220 million with 8.3 kg gold used in its preparation. It has been designed by the Beijing Institute of Architectural Design Company Limited. The National History and Literary Heritage Department was the implementation agency from Pakistan. The 23 metre long state-of-the-art chandelier contains 40 lights in four tiers and eight lights on crystal falls.





President Mamnoon Hussain distributing shields among the Chinese and Pakistani Officials during the inauguration ceremony of newly installed Chandelier at the Mazar-e-Quaid in Karachi.

President Xi congratulates Pakistan on chandelier renewal ceremony

Chinese President Xi Jinping has sent a congratulatory message to his Pakistani counterpart Mamnoon Hussain on the chandelier renewal ceremony at Mazar-e-Quaid.

Xi said that on behalf of the Chinese government and the people, and in his own name, he would like to extend warm congratulations to the Pakistani government and the people on this occasion, Xinhua reported.

Xi noted that, "The renewal of the chandelier, a witness of the friendly exchanges between the two countries, will become an important symbol of the friendship between the two peoples from generation to generation."

"The China-Pakistan friendship benefits not only the fundamental interests of the two nations and peoples but also peace and development in the region and the world at large," he said.

Xi said he values the China-Pakistan relationship and hopes to work with the Pakistani leader to cement the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership of the two countries for further development.





President Mamnoon Hussain in a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, Ulugbek Rozukulov, who along with a delegation called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

Pakistan and Uzbekistan will work together to end extremism: President Mamnoon

By Mian Fazal Elahi

President Mamnoon Hussain has said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan will work together to end extremism adding that the people and Armed Forces of Pakistan have bravely faced the challenge of terrorism and as a result this menace has been greatly overcome.

The President said this while talking to Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, Ulugbek Rozukulov, who along-with a delegation called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad on Thursday. Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Furkat Sidikov and high officials were also present on the occasion.

The President conveyed his felicitations to His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev on his election as President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and hoped that during his tenure Pak-Uzbek relations will rise to new heights. The President also expressed condolence on behalf of the people, the Government of Pakistan and on his own behalf, on the sad demise of late President of Uzbekistan Mr. Islam Karimov. The President said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan are bound together in terms of faith, culture

and geographical proximity. The President underlined Pakistan's desire to further expand cooperation with Uzbekistan in the fields of energy, economy and human resource. The President noted that bilateral trade volume between the two countries was below potential and called for enhancing it to the benefit of the both countries.

President Mamnoon Hussain that Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoy friendly relations. He added that late President Islam Karimov was desirous of linking up with China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and hoped that the present Uzbek government will take this

Uzbekistan greatly values its friendship with Pakistan: Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Ulugbek Rozukulov

process forward. The President called for regular exchange of trade delegations adding

President Islam Karimov was desirous of linking up with China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and hoped that the present Uzbek government will take this process forward: President Mamnoon

that Pakistan is interested in benefiting from Uzbekistan's rich energy resources. The President said that both countries should benefit from each other's expertise in various fields. The President hoped that Pak-Uzbek cooperation will grow further in the future.

On the occasion, Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, Ulugbek Rozukulov said that Uzbekistan greatly values its friendship with Pakistan and both countries will cooperate with each other in various sectors.

Pakistan awaits to see Uzbekistan joining CPEC: PM Nawaz



Mr. Ulugbek Rozikulov, Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House, Islamabad.

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said that Pakistan cherishes its close, friendly and fraternal relations with Uzbekistan as both the countries are bound by strong commonalities of history, faith and culture. 'We wish to take our bilateral relations to new heights based on mutually beneficial cooperation.

His Excellency Mr. Ulugbek Rozikulov, Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House.

Welcoming the visiting delegation to Pakistan, the Prime Minister expressed the confidence that the visit will contribute towards enhancing the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The Prime Minister conveyed his heartiest felicitations to His Excellency, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev on his election as the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Pakistan is keen to further expand ties in all fields, particularly economic and energy cooperation, connectivity and human resource development', said the Prime Minister.

The Prime minister emphasized that both the countries need to make efforts to enhance cooperation in the economic and commercial fields and fully exploit the huge potential for mutual trade. The Prime Minister said that Uzbekistan's impressive annual economic growth and rich energy resources, and Pakistan's large industrial and agricultural base provide an ideal environment for expansion of trade and commercial cooperation between the two countries.

The Prime Minister proposed that both countries work together for making appropriate reforms in trade policies to facilitate trade, investment and free flow of goods and services between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. 'Both countries need to formulate a joint integrated strategy to exploit the potential of trade in the region, especially in view of China- Pakistan Economic Corridor. We need to establish Pakistan-Uzbekistan Joint Business Council and revive the Joint Commission. Pakistan also awaits to see Uzbekistan joining CPEC', underlined the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister welcomed the concrete proposals from Uzbekistan for collaboration in the field of agricultural machinery, which are

presently under consideration at the Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of National Food Security.

'On behalf of the people, Government and on my own behalf, I express our sincere condolence on the sad demise of late President Islam Karimov. The visionary leadership of President Islam Karimov had been a source of continuity, stability and strength for Uzbekistan', concluded the Prime Minister.

His Excellency Mr. Ulugbek Rozikulov thanked the Prime Minister for the warm welcome extended to the visiting delegation in Pakistan. He said that all necessary steps would be taken to explore and exploit the huge business and trade opportunities between the two countries. The Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan extended an invitation to the Prime Minister on behalf of Uzbek President to visit Uzbekistan. The Prime Minister accepted the invitation.

All necessary steps would be taken to explore and exploit the huge business and trade opportunities between the two countries: Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Ulugbek Rozikulov

We wish to take our bilateral relations to new heights based on mutually beneficial cooperation: PM Nawaz



General Qamar Bajwa vows to guard Holy Mosques

By Mian Fazal Elahi



General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army staff (COAS) called on Saudi King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud. The Saudi king and the COAS agreed that both the countries share great history of cordial relations and deep spirit of brotherhood which has transformed into an enduring partnership. It was also acknowledged that both Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are vital players in regional stability, “with significant responsibility towards the entire Muslim ummah”. Both leaders re-emphasised on the need to continue working to eliminate the menace of terrorism and reinforce the mechanism to roll back extremism with even greater vigour. The crown Prince and Foreign minister were also present in the meeting.

COAS also held meeting with deputy crown prince and the defence minister HRH Muhammad bin Salman to discuss matters related to mutual interests and bilateral security cooperation. The Defence Minister reassured the Army Chief that the kingdom supports peace and stability in Pakistan in every way. COAS reiterated Pakistan’s commitment to the security and protection of the Holy Mosques and also the territorial integrity of the kingdom.

Later General Qamar Javed Bajwa met Chief of General Staff of Saudi Forces Gen Abdul Rehman bin Saleh Al Bunyan to discuss military to military relations, defence cooperation and regional security situation. Both leaders agreed to boost mil coop and collaboration, read the Inter-Services Public Relations statement.

The cup is half full

As the year comes to a close and a new year is about to dawn it is only logical that we take a hard look at where the nation stands and how it can move forward in 2017.

General Sharif's great contribution was that he brought the insurgency under control. This was no ordinary achievement considering that Taliban and other foreign and domestic insurgents had complete control of North Waziristan and had strong pockets spread across the tribal agencies. Having succeeded in securing Fata, the military was able to stem the progression of terrorism. Consequently, the economic situation stabilised, but for attracting investment there has to be sustained peace and less bureaucratic hurdles. Predictions of pundits that Pakistan's integrity was at stake thankfully never materialised and there is relatively greater confidence about the future.

This confidence is also reinforced by the Chinese government's major economic engagement with Pakistan in the CPEC project. The CPEC could be truly a game changer if Pakistan were to faithfully implement its side of commitment. It should open up whole new vistas of economic opportunities for all the provinces provided they are able to develop compatible physical and human infrastructure. Failure to do so would undermine the project and harm our relations with China. The project would integrate our economy with China giving it a strategic dimension thereby providing greater confidence in dealing with India and external powers.

Security of the CPEC project and that of Balochistan as a whole would remain a major challenge for our armed forces for the next few years. But as economic conditions improve insurgency in Balochistan is likely to fade. Key to the future prospects of Balochistan, Fata and relatively less developed areas depends on the government's capacity to focus on their economic and political development. Involvement of local population and giving them a sense of ownership in economic opportunities will be central to erase their genuine or perceived grievances. Interestingly, there is a greater realisation both among civil and military leadership that unless the country as a whole develops it will always remain in crisis. Gains made in Punjab will be frittered away on strengthening security in other parts of Pakistan. Relations with India remained volatile as the Kashmir situation took a turn for

the worse and in their vilest phase since any time in 2002. There was a not a day when both sides were not trading fire across the LoC. India continues to accuse Pakistan of supporting militant organisations that are engaged in terrorist activity against it.

Future of India-Pakistan relations would primarily hinge on Modi's policy. The prognosis is that the situation is unlikely to change unless India engages and mellows down its hostile posture. While Pakistan on its side will have to control the militant organisations like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad not only



By Talat Masood

to satisfy New Delhi but in its own national interest. For Pakistan the priority would remain engagement on all issues, especially Kashmir. The border, however, has been relatively peaceful since General Bajwa assumed office. This may be more of signalling from New Delhi that we are willing to reset the level of hostility, or even move towards normalisation, provided it is reciprocated by controlling India-specific militants. PM Modi's facilitation on Nawaz Sharif's birthday seems to reinforce that presumption. But there is such a high level of unpredictability in this relationship that it is hard to arrive at any rational conclusion.

At the domestic level, future of political parties is linked to how they are able to reform themselves and are responsive to expectations of the electorate. Despite 70 years of independence most of them continue to pursue politics of patronage. This has thwarted national growth and led to competing and conflicting institutional and personal interests. Absence of strong institutions and poor accountability has given rise to widespread corruption. The National Accountability Bureau has not fully evolved to come up to the expectations of the

people and it will be in the national interest if it is restructured to genuinely act as a bulwark against corruption. It has to be given a fully autonomous status and depoliticised. India has succeeded in establishing a highly credible oversight organisation. A somewhat similar setup for Pakistan is needed.

Because of inefficiencies, poor governance and a history of imbalance between civil-military relations the institutions are not working within their defined boundaries. For consolidation of democracy a lot will depend on how the civil-military balance is restored and institutions function within the framework of their constitutional parameters in the years ahead. Essentially, it would rest on the civilian leadership to win back confidence of the people through improved performance. Clearly, the PML-N government has been an improvement on its predecessor PPP, but falls short on accountability, strengthening of institutions and certain critical aspects of governance.

Imran Khan's relentless drive for accountability was a huge plus for the nation. The government remained under severe pressure from the PTI as it built pressure on Nawaz Sharif to resign on the basis of his involvement in the Panama leaks. It has made the people more aware of this national malaise and would act as a deterrent for corrupt politicians and government functionaries. But where Imran Khan was found lacking that he failed to recognise the important role of a strong parliament and judiciary in reducing corruption. Hopefully, the PTI would focus more on parliament and less on streets in 2017.

Although we are an Islamic Republic, but shamefully rank amongst the most corrupt nations and our rich and powerful take pride in flouting the law of the land and refuse to pay taxes. The boundless greed of the powerful and rich is eroding the faith of the common citizen. The politically ambitious religious parties that are prepared to coexist with extremist organisations for leveraging their power also threaten us. In essence, we need to revive values that inspired the creation of Pakistan and reduce the gap between Jinnah's vision and today's reality.

The writer is a retired lieutenant general of the Pakistan Army and a former federal secretary. He has also served as chairman of the Pakistan Ordnance Factories Board



Pakistan & Bosnia-Herzegovina **expressed satisfaction on the progress of the** **entire spectrum of bilateral relations**



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is received by Bosnian Minister of Transport & Communication, Mr. Ismir Jusko at arrival at Sarajevo



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Received by H.E. Denis Zvizdic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of BIH (Bosnian Prime Minister) on arrival at Institutions Building (PM Office).

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visited Bosnia and Herzegovina from 20-22 December 2016, at the invitation of Chairman of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister) H.E. Dr Denis Zvizdic. Apart from delegation level talks with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the Prime Minister also met the Chairman and members of the Presidency, leaders and members of the Lower and Upper Houses of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Reis-ul-Ulema (Grand Mufti) of the Islamic community, Husein ef. Kavazovic also called on the Prime Minister.

While reviewing the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, both sides underlined the importance of further deepening of political, trade and economic ties, defence cooperation, inter-parliamentary linkages and enhancing cultural and educational relations. The Bosnian side evinced interest in benefiting from Pakistan's expertise in the textile sector.

Both sides agreed to exchange defence and trade delegations. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers invited Pakistan to participate in the agricultural exhibition in Mostar early next year, which was accepted. Views were also exchanged on regional and international issues, noting commonality of perspectives.

Both countries agreed to: a) sign a Visa Abolition Agreement for holders of diplomatic and official passports of two countries in the near future; b) holding meetings of the 2nd round of negotiations on Preferential Trade Agreement, Joint Economic Commission (JEC) and Joint Trade Committee in 2017; and c) finalizing additional agreements in the areas of cooperation against terrorism, organized crime, anti-narcotics, as well as cooperation in the field of culture and education.

The Prime Minister and Dr Denis Zvizdic addressed a Joint Press Conference. The two leaders also attended a Business Forum and



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif along with Bosnian Prime Minister H.E. Denis Zvizdic inspect the guard of honour at Institutions Building (PM Office).

invited members of the Foreign Trade Chamber, Foreign Investment Promotion Agency and Bosnian businessmen as well as entrepreneurs of the two countries to take advantage of the opportunities that the two countries offer in several areas. PM Nawaz said, "Denis and I have just concluded a session of most productive and detailed round of talks. We reviewed and expressed satisfaction on the progress of the

in trade, business, investment and education," he added.

At the end he concluded that the Chairman of the Council of Ministers also discussed regional and global issues at the same time his thanks for the hospitality.

"Long live the friendship between BiH and Pakistan," he said.

"Pakistan is a country that has previously helped BiH in different areas," said Chairman of the Council of Ministers Denis Zvizdic after meeting with Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif.

Zvizdic added that the need to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries, pointing out that today was talk of economic relations between countries. He said that in the last 12 months, increased foreign trade between BiH and Pakistan, which have plans to double.

According to him, at today's meeting-target the sectors that could be subjects for economic cooperation such as agriculture and military industry. He pointed out that he would soon

"Denis and I have just concluded a session of most productive and detailed round of talks. We reviewed and expressed satisfaction on the progress of the entire spectrum of bilateral relations." : PM Nawaz

entire spectrum of bilateral relations." "We have agreed to further strengthen our relations



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and the Bosnian Prime Minister H.E. Denis Zvizdic led their respective sides in the delegation level talks held at Institutions Building (PM Office).



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was welcomed by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Economy of Romania H.E. Costin Borc during a transit visit to Romania.

be established a joint commission for relations with Pakistan and it will define the sectors that have the greatest potential for cooperation.

He said he would soon come to visit the businessmen from Pakistan to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The delegation-level talks, as well as other meetings, were marked by warmth, cordiality and productive outcomes.

The Prime Minister also visited the Memorial Centre of Srebrenica and laid a wreath at the grave of founding President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alijah Izetbegovic.

Sharif invited Zvizdić to visit Pakistan, which is Zvizdić accepted.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif met Reis-ul-Ulema, Hussein Kavazovich at Centre of the Islamic Community.

“We have agreed to further strengthen our relations in trade, business, investment and education,” PM Nawaz

This was PM’s first official visit to the Balkans during this term and second to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Prime Minister had earlier visited the country in 1996 as Leader of the opposition.

The premiere invited Chairman of the Council of Ministers and other leaders to visit Pakistan. The invitations were accepted.



During the hour-long refuelling stop-over in Bucharest, Romania on 22 December, the Prime Minister was received at the airport by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Mr Costin Girgore Borc. During the course of their exchange, it was agreed to further strengthen bilateral ties between Pakistan and Romania particularly in the areas of trade, investment and defence. The visit by the Prime Minister was part of Pakistan’s continuing international outreach aimed at highlighting the advances made in the area of the economy, security and strengthening of democratic institutions. The visit also provided an opportunity to share Pakistan’s perspective and policy on a range of key regional and international issues.

“Long live the friendship between BiH and Pakistan,” Chairman of the Council of Ministers Denis Zvizdić



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visited the Permanent Exhibition of Srebrenica Bosnian Prime Minister H.E. Denis Zvizdic was also present .

Nawaz visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina was all ‘harmonised,’ says Bosnian envoy



Ambassador of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Pakistan Nedim Makarevic maintained that the doors

between the two countries were slowly starting to open and that was in the right direction.

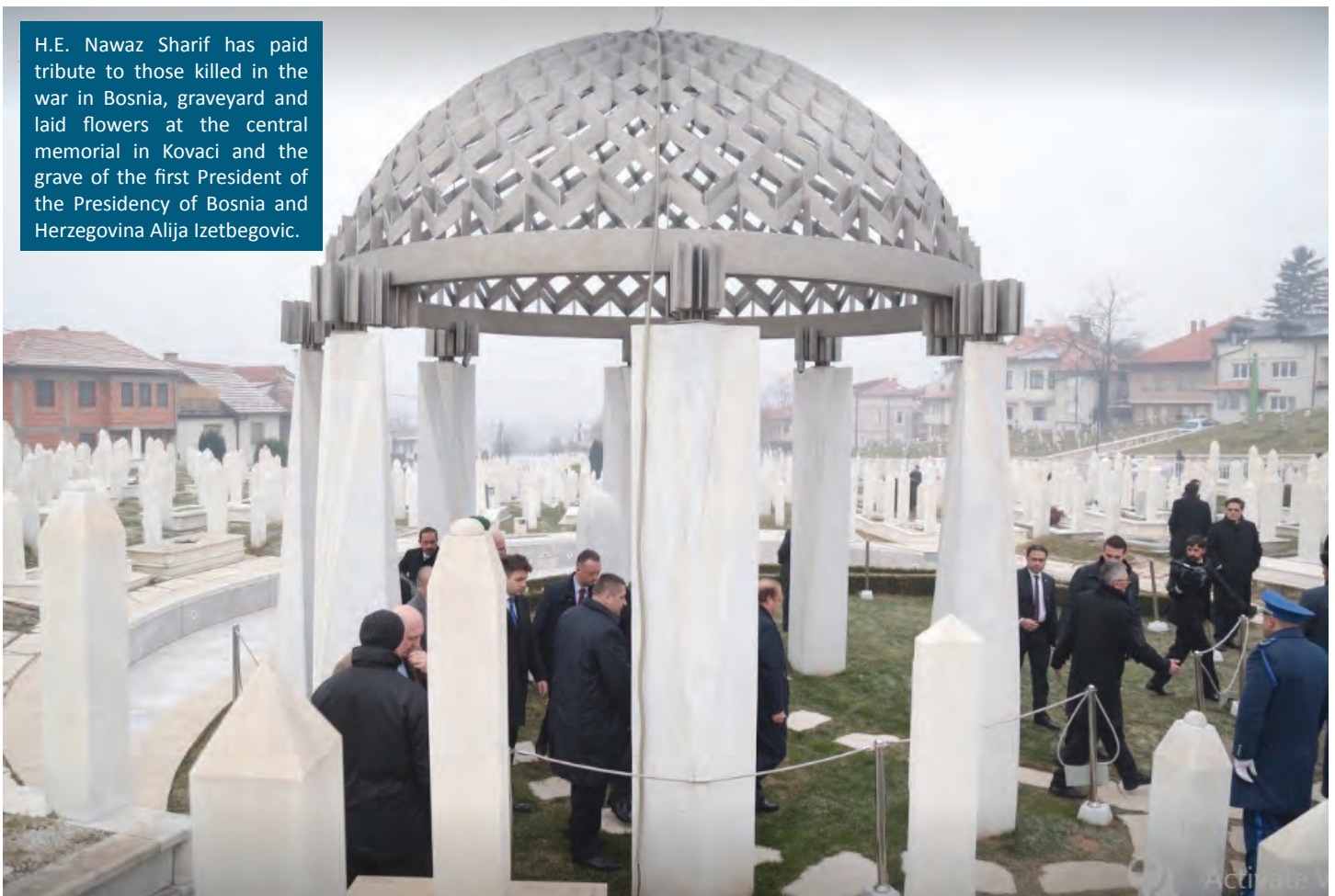


Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visited the Permanent Exhibition of Srebrenica Bosnian Prime Minister H.E. Denis Zvizdic was also present.

Prime Minister of Pakistan visited Šehidsko cemetery and Gallery “11/07/95”



H.E. Nawaz Sharif has paid tribute to those killed in the war in Bosnia, graveyard and laid flowers at the central memorial in Kovaci and the grave of the first President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Alija Izetbegovic.







Prime Minister Muahammad Nawaz Sharif met members of Collegium of both chambers of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia & Herzegovina at Institutions Building (PM Office)

PM Nawaz attended a business forum between BiH and Pakistan, stressed that this is the perfect time to take a step forward and to strengthen economic relations and trade

“I can assure you all that we will dedicate this goal. Let us join our efforts to take advantage of the huge potential of our economic relations and to ensure a healthy economic foundation for the relations of Pakistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina”, said at the meeting the Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif received by members of the Foreign Trade Chamber and Foreign Investment Agency at Foreign Trade Chamber Bosnia.

Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi in a meeting with the Ambassador of Kuwait H.E. Nassar Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi in Islamabad.



British High Commissioner to Pakistan Thomas Drew called on National Security Adviser, LT. Gen. (R) Nasser Khan Janua



High Level Delegation of Uzbekistan led by H.E. Mr. Rozukulov Furkat A. sidikov Uzbekistan called on Kh. Saad Rafique, Federal Minister for Railways in Islamabad.



Ambassador of Sweden Ms. Ingrid Johansson called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House, Islamabad.



Ambassador of Republic of Hungary, H.E. Istvan Szabo called on MOS for IT and Telecom, Mrs. Anusha Rahman in Islamabad.



Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Margaret Adamson and Secretary Economic Affairs Division (EAD), Tariq Bajwa signing an arrangement Australia-Pakistan AID



An assassination in Turkey

Andrey Karlov was speaking at a photo exhibition event in the capital when he was shot by a Turkish off-duty policeman

By Monitoring Desk

Within an hour of the assassination of the Russian ambassador to Turkey by an off-duty policeman there was speculation that the event would create a set of consequences similar to that which arose after the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand

The Russian ambassador to Turkey Andrey Karlov was a career diplomat. Karlov joined the diplomatic service in 1976. He served as Russia's ambassador to Pyongyang in 2001-2006, and later worked as the chief of the foreign ministry's consular department. He had served as the ambassador to Turkey since 2013.



in Sarajevo said in an editorial of the Express Tribune Pakistan after a day of the assassination of Russian ambassador in Turkey. The newspaper further said that, Gavrilo Princip was catalytic in the triggering of World War One. Mevlut Mert Altıntas, an officer in Ankara's riot police in murdering Ambassador Andrei Karlov has done no such thing, and paradoxically his actions may have the effect of bringing Russia and Turkey closer together despite the obvious threats to their current rapprochement. Turkey and Russia have a relationship that has in recent times been tendentious at best and toxic at worst. Turkey shot down a Russian

to be a meeting between the foreign ministers of Russia, Iran and Turkey on Tuesday 20th December to discuss the Syrian conflict, and it has been decided that the murder of Mr Karlov is no reason to delay or cancel that meeting.

There is no shortage of axes to grind when it comes to Russia and Turkey, and the fumbling incompetency, multiple and prolonged, displayed by other great powers in respect of the Syrian conflict have opened several windows through which opportunists have duly piled. Imperial Russia is foot-forwards, Iran likewise and Turkey emergent. The assassination of Mr Karlov is tragic, but it is not a modern Sarajevo moment, Express Tribune added.

In other media reports, US Secretary of State John Kerry condemned the killing and said that the United States was ready to help Russia and Turkey investigate the attack.

"The United States condemns the assassination today in Ankara of Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov," Kerry said in a statement.

"We stand ready to offer assistance to Russia and Turkey as they investigate this despicable attack, which was also an assault on the right of all diplomats to safely and securely advance and represent their nations around the world."



"On behalf of my country and my people I once again extend my condolences to Russian President Vladimir Putin and the friendly Russian people," said President Erdogan.

"The crime that has been committed is undoubtedly a provocation aimed at derailing the ties between Russia and Turkey, as well as the peace process in Syria. There is only one possible response to this - the strengthening of the fight against terror, and the bandits will feel it themselves."
President Putin

aircraft that had allegedly and briefly violated its airspace on 24th November 2015. Both countries have supported opposite sides in the fiendishly complex Syrian civil war. Both countries are powerful regional players across a spectrum of geopolitical issues, with Russia in particular seeking to establish itself in the Levant and eastern Mediterranean generally. Both countries share a common enemy in the Islamic State which may well be the thin glue that holds them together in the short term.

Express Tribune further said, The murder of Mr Karlov may be seen as part of the backlash in Turkey — there have been street protests — against Russian actions in Syria. The assassin was heard on-camera to shout 'Don't forget Aleppo' and 'Don't forget Syria' as he fired, followed by other comments in Turkish and Arabic. He was killed shortly afterwards in a shootout with police and several of his family and associates have been arrested by the Turkish authorities.

Russian President Vladimir Putin moved quickly to make it clear that the incident was to be seen as a 'provocation' and as such would not be responded to as the attacker may have hoped, thus applying the diplomatic handbrake. Further emollient was applied by Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov who called his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu. There is

British ambassador Richard Moore paid tribute to a "quietly spoken, hospitable professional."

The US Defense Department also condemned the shooting. Meanwhile, President Barack Obama was briefed by national security team

Sartaj Aziz Sends Letter of Condolence to Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the Assassination of Russian Ambassador to Turkey

on the shooting of Russian Ambassador to Turkey, said a White House spokesman.

Media reports further added that, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Monday condemned the murder of the Russian ambassador in Turkey, saying he was "appalled by this senseless act of terror."

Ambassador Andrei Karlov was shot dead while attending an art exhibition in Ankara by a Turkish policeman.

Ban is "appalled by this senseless act of terror and emphasizes that there can be no justification for the targeting of diplomatic personnel and civilians," said a statement from his spokesman. "The secretary-general is following the unfolding situation closely and wishes the other people who were reportedly injured in the attack a speedy and full recovery."

According to Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan, In a letter addressed to the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, the Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs conveyed deep shock and sadness at the assassination of the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, Andrey Karlov, in Ankara yesterday. The Adviser strongly denounced this abominable terrorist act.

The Adviser also conveyed sympathies to the family of the deceased Ambassador and solidarity with the people of the Russian Federation.

The Adviser reiterated Pakistan's condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and support to the international community in the fight to eradicate this menace.





Kerry: Israel Can Either Be Jewish Or Democratic, It Cannot Be Both

By News Desk, Monitoring Desk

SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN KERRY: Despite our best efforts over the years, the two state solution is now in serious jeopardy.

The truth is that trends on the ground – violence, terrorism, incitement, settlement expansion and the seemingly endless occupation – are destroying hopes for peace on both sides and increasingly cementing an irreversible one-state reality that most people do not actually want.

Today, there are a similar number of Jews and Palestinians living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. They have a choice. They can choose to live together in one state, or they can separate into two states. But here is a fundamental reality: if the choice is one state,

Israel can either be Jewish or democratic – it cannot be both –and it won't ever really be at peace. Moreover, the Palestinians will never fully realize their vast potential in a homeland of their own with a one state solution.

Most on both sides understand this basic choice, and that's why it's important that polls of Israelis and Palestinians show there is still strong support for the two state solution – in theory. They just don't believe that it can happen.

After decades of conflict, many no longer see the other side as people, only as threats and enemies. Both sides continue to push a narrative that plays to people's fears and reinforces the worst stereotypes – rather than working to change perceptions and build up belief in the possibility of peace.

Palestinian Diplomat Nizar Farsakh said in TV Interview that: “ I think it was consistent with American policies since 1967, and since the occupation. There is nothing new in that policy... it is just louder. It is an unambiguous statement of historic American positions, and on top of that, I think he has emphasized, as Israel's ally, the danger of continuing with the policy. Of course, he's very worried of the next administration that seems to want to depart from the American policies on settlements of the last 50 years”.



Israel's Settlements Have No Legal Validity, Constitute Flagrant Violation of International Law, Security Council Reaffirms

14 Delegations in Favour of Resolution 2334 (2016) as United States Abstains

By News Desk, Monitoring Desk

The Security Council reaffirmed this afternoon that Israel's establishment of settlements in Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, had no legal validity, constituting a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the vision of two States living side-by-side in peace and security, within internationally recognized borders.

Adopting resolution 2334 (2016) by 14 votes, with the United States abstaining, the Council reiterated its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. It underlined that it would not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the two sides through negotiations.

The Council called for immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and destruction. It further called for the strengthening of ongoing efforts to combat terrorism, including through existing security coordination, and to clearly condemn all acts of terrorism. The Council called on both sides to observe calm and restraint, and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric in order to de-escalate the situation on the ground and rebuild trust and confidence.

Also by the text, the Council called on all parties to continue to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final-status issues in the Middle East peace process, and within the time frame specified by the Middle East Quartet (European Union, Russian Federation, United Nations, United States) in its statement of 21 September 2010. It called upon all States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings,

between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

Explaining her delegation's abstention, the representative of the United States said it had been a long-standing position of her country that settlements undermined Israel's security and eroded prospects for peace and stability. She emphasized, however, that her vote today had not been straightforward. Explaining that Israel had been treated differently from other States for as long as it had been a member of the United Nations, she noted that during the course of 2016, 18 resolutions adopted in the General Assembly and others in the Human Rights Council had all condemned Israel. It was because of that bias that the United States had not voted in favour of the resolution, she said, emphasizing that her delegation would not have let the resolution pass had it not addressed terrorism and incitement to violence.

Zardari's new gimmick

Past master in wheeling and dealing Asif Ali Zardari, has ended his self-exile and is back in the country in the hope of turning the political tide. His decision to go back to the National Assembly along with his son Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has surprised even his supporters. His presence in parliament will certainly have a significant impact but it is not likely to change the political dynamics at work in the country.

Many see the move as a masterstroke that will lift the dwindling morale of the party. But one is not sure whether his return to centre stage will actually help the PPP regain its lost political space in the next elections. His past baggage is not likely to go away with his return to parliamentary politics.

Although Bilawal will also be making his debut in parliament, he will be forced to play second fiddle to his father once again. However, it remains to be seen how his return to parliament will help Zardari escape the predicament he has been facing as the noose tightens around his close aides. It was not the best of times for Zardari when he left the country some 18 months ago, perhaps feeling the heat when some of his henchmen were chased by federal investigation and law-enforcement agencies.



By Zahid Hussain

His party and the Sindh government planned a 'hero's' welcome on his return last week, but, not surprisingly, spontaneous jubilation among the supporters bussed into the airport was missing.

Zardari, perhaps, thought the pressure on him was off when he decided to return. But the raid on the office of one of his closest aides hours before his arrival seems to have dampened his sanguinity. Was it just a coincidence or a message to the former president?

It is quite apparent that Zardari is still not out of the woods and last week's raid was more serious than the previous crackdown on his cronies. This time the target was Anwar Majeed who looks after Zardari's business interests.

Anwar Majeed had left the country even before Zardari's departure last year. The Rangers claimed to have recovered a large cache of weapons from his offices and those arrested in the raid were said to have been booked under the anti-terrorism laws. The message was loud and clear. But the crafty PPP leader has kept his cool and not been provoked by the action.

Zardari must know where the orders had come from, though he pointed a finger at the federal interior minister. Besides other reasons, the Sindh government's decision to send the provincial inspector general police on forced leave brought its confrontation with the Rangers to a head.

It is very clear that Zardari would not react the way he did on the arrest of Dr Asim Hussain, another one of his close friends. His accolades for the military leadership on his arrival indicated that he had decided to tread a more cautious path and not take the route of confrontation. His options too are limited as the paramilitary Rangers still virtually control law and order in Karachi.

There are clear indications that the recent change in the army leadership has not shifted the direction of the operation in Karachi. The





PPP has lost much of its authority by giving the Rangers the power to crack down on the MQM and other groups. It is not clear whether the latest raid will force the Sindh government to review its decision. But that would not matter much as seen in the past.

Predictably, the incident has intensified the war of words between the PPP and the federal government. There is also some indication of the PPP forming a broad anti-government opposition alliance. For that, Zardari is willing to go to any extent even if it comes to appeasing the religious parties.

One clear example of this was his phone call to Sirajul Haq, chief of the Jamaat-i-Islami. He apparently agreed to withdraw the anti-forced conversion law recently passed by the Sindh Assembly with rare consensus. The law is primarily meant to stop the forced conversion of Hindu minor girls and their marriage to Muslim men. The issue has become a major scandal in the province.

But there is still a question mark over the party aligning itself with the PTI to go for the jugular. Even with the deadline of Bilawal's four-point demand having passed, it is hard to see the PPP taking to the streets. The party does not have street power in Punjab or in

Zardari's return has once again cast a shadow over Bilawal. From populism it is now back to political deal-making.

any other province outside Sindh that could really challenge the Sharif government that seems to be back in the saddle. Over the past one year, Zardari had taken a back seat and allowed Bilawal to take charge. For sure, the party needed a popular face that Zardari was never able to provide to inspire followers. But all the strings were being pulled from Zardari's

It is quite apparent that the former president is still not out of the woods.

home in Dubai. Even the new Sindh chief minister Murad Ali Shah would fly to Dubai

frequently to take instructions from the boss. In fact, Dubai has also become a safe haven for some members of the Sindh cabinet including Sharjeel Memon and Owais Muzaffar (Tappi) who fled the earlier crackdown.

Zardari's return has once again cast a shadow over Bilawal. From populism it is now back to political deal-making.

It is apparent that Zardari's policy of reconciliation with regard to the PML-N seems to have now been exhausted. Although the PML-N would still want to see the PPP refrain from aligning itself with the PTI as Nawaz Sharif and his family are not yet in the clear on the Panama scandal, the government is hardly prepared to go the extra mile to appease the PPP. So it is not surprising that the Sharif government paid no heed to Bilawal's four points. That leaves few options for the PPP.

It needs more than just wheeling and dealing to resurrect the party. The decision to get into parliament will certainly not be a political game changer.

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Courtesy to DAWN



Zardari's big announcement: 'Bilawal and I will contest elections, be a part of this Parliament'

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring Desk

After his return to Pakistan from an 18-month, self-imposed exile, former president and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairman Asif Zardari announced Tuesday that both he and his son, the party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, will contest elections and be part of "this Parliament".

"I want to share the good news I had promised to share: Bilawal and I will contest the election now, right now, [and sit] in this Parliament," Zardari told a charged crowd of PPP supporters as the party observed the 9th death anniversary of Benazir Bhutto in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh near Larkana.

This was Zardari's first major appearance alongside his son and party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari at a rally in three years, DawnNews reported.

Zardari said that he would contest the election from Nawabshah for the seat currently occupied by Azra Fazal Pechuho, and that Bilawal would contest the election from

Larkana for Ayaz Soomro's seat.

Zardari's announcement is being interpreted as a strategy to enter parliament through by-elections in the two constituencies. Fresh polls will have to be called if Pechuho and Soomro give up their seats in Parliament in line with the party's directives.

"We have sacrificed much for the sake of democracy and politics to save Pakistan. We will not leave this Mughal emperor [Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif] to rule," Zardari continued.

The former president hit out at the premier.

"On the one hand, you want to present yourself for accountability, but on the other, you continue to obstruct the Panama bill in the National Assembly,"
:Bilawal

"The world wants to call us a terrorist state, [and yet] people in your cabinet facilitate terrorists," Bilawal alleged while addressing the PM Nawaz Sharif

"Mian [Nawaz Sharif] Sahab we gave you this democracy as a sacred trust. We made every decision with your input. We made decisions in Parliament through consensus. It is a pity that you seem to have forgotten all your promises today," he said.

Zardari also demanded that the Supreme Court decision on Panamagate be brought to the floor of the Parliament and be vetted by all political parties.

"We would like to see you and your judges go down in history as respectable individuals, not as people who twist the law for their own



gains,” he added.

“This is our right. We will protest, exercise our democratic right and go to the parliament. Go to the courts and the bar councils, and talk about what is happening and what should be happening,” Zardari said.

In a speech, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari warned the government of the party’s preparations for a ‘long march’.

“Principally we have decided that we have to start preparing for a long march,” Bilawal announced. “I will begin making visits around the country to get my four demands met.”

However, he said, the party has yet to debate the matter in its Central Executive Committee meeting.

The PPP leader had earlier threatened the government that the party would launch a long march on Dec 27 if the government failed to meet the PPP’s four demands.

The party’s four demands include passage of the draft Panama bill, immediate appointment of a permanent foreign minister, reconstitution of the parliamentary committee on national security and implementation of the resolution on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor passed by a multiparty conference.

Bilawal earlier had said that while his party had been pressuring the government in a soft and democratic way to accept the demands, he warned that the PPP would take to the streets and launch a campaign for early elections if the demands were not met.

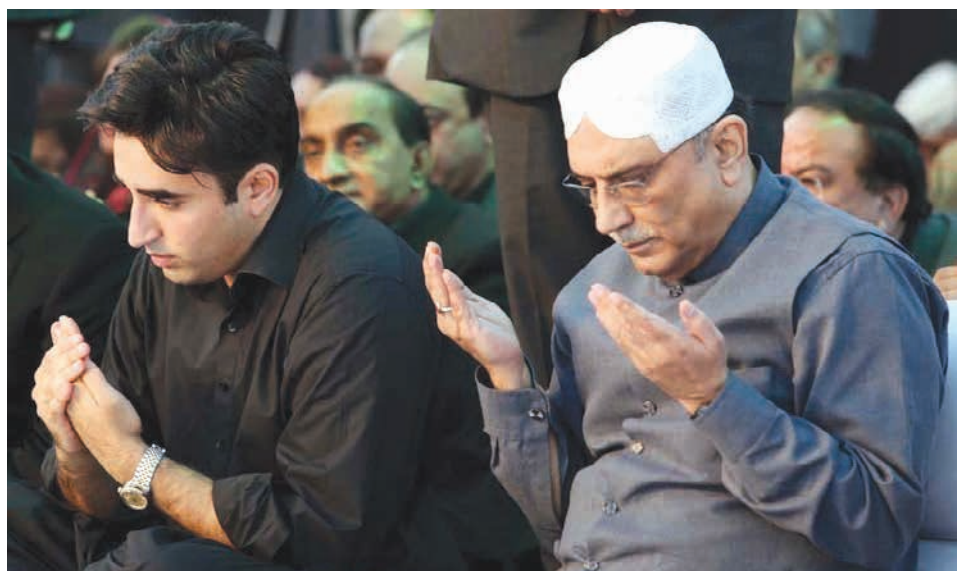
Bilawal took a strong stand on the Panamagate controversy, calling for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to present himself for accountability and allow passage of the Panama bill in the National Assembly. Despite the premier’s assertions that the party is free of scandal, Bilawal asserted the

PML-N is embroiled in scandal.

“Do you think us simple? That we don’t know you at all?” he questioned. He alleged the government is ‘full of scandals’.

“The opposition in the Senate has passed the Panama Bill. If you obstruct its passage in the National Assembly, then you will have to face the opposition’s protests,” the PPP chairman warned.

“On the one hand, you want to present yourself for accountability, but on the other,





you continue to obstruct the Panama bill in the National Assembly,” Bilawal said.

He added that the party does not want to approach the apex court without the bill.

“The courts have never delivered justice to us [the PPP],” he claimed. “Will they provide justice to the people of Pakistan?” he asked. “This is why we want to get this bill passed and go to the Supreme Court,” he said.

Bilawal lashed out at the PML-N government

can run away from this country, but the 20 crore people of Pakistan must stay here,” he added.

“My parents have taught me to respect my elders. But that does not mean we cannot disagree on our politics,” Bilawal said, adding he will not stay quiet when he sees the federation fall apart because of the government’s ineffective policies.

Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari paid tribute to his grandfather, PPP founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and his mother Benazir.

“Millions of people die every year, but the vision, the ideology and the courage of some people endures,” he said.

“BB said you can exile a man but not an idea. You can imprison a man but not an idea. You can kill a man but not an idea.”

And although the PPP’s ideology has persisted

in the past.

“The PML-N government has been unsuccessful. We cannot stay quiet any longer,” he said.

Anticipation was high through the day as workers arrived in the dusty village from different parts of the country. Reception camps were set up in Larkana and adjoining towns and participants were welcomed with party songs played at full volume.

Tricolour party flags, banners and life-size portraits of Benazir Bhutto, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Asif Ali Zardari adorn the venue of the public meeting as well as the route to the pindal.

Parking areas for the participants’ vehicles have been set up at a distance of about a kilometre from the mausoleum.

Later, the Central Executive Committee of the PPP in a meeting endorsed Zardari’s decision to seek election to parliament, the party spokesperson said.

PPP leader Farhatullah Babar told media that the supreme forum of the party also deliberated the proposed long march against the federal government.

The committee has reposed complete trust in the leadership, he added.

**“Do you think us simple?
That we don’t know
you at all?” Bilawal
questioned**

on multiple fronts, including terrorism and religious extremism.

“The interior minister is threatening people instead of resigning,” he said, accusing Minister of Interior Chaudhry Nisar of meeting with people from banned outfits.

Earlier this month, an inquiry report on the Aug 8 Quetta Civil Hospital attack slammed government inaction against militants and criticised the interior minister for meeting with the heads of some banned groups to and ‘acceding’ to their demands.

“The world wants to call us a terrorist state, [and yet] people in your cabinet facilitate terrorists,” Bilawal alleged while addressing the prime minister.

“If something were to happen tomorrow, you

**“The courts have never
delivered justice to us
[the PPP]. Will they
provide justice to the
people of Pakistan?” :
Bilawal**

and endured the test of the time, the PPP chief claimed, it is now time to ‘present a new PPP’.

“We have to present a new PPP so it can stay abreast of current challenges,” he said.

Bilawal claimed that the vision of Benazir Bhutto was even more valuable now than it was

**“Principally we have
decided that we have
to start preparing for
a long march,” Bilawal
announced**

Ghazal Night with Hamid Ali Khan

at Karachi Marriott Hotel



Karachi Marriott Hotel, with great zeal and enthusiasm, puts forward various cultural and literary, festivities and celebrations of international accord all the year around, providing its guests with pleasant, fun-filled and memorable experiences.

Karachi Marriott Hotel, in collaboration with Media Sniffers organized an impressive "Ghazal Night" at the Crystal Ball Room. The Ghazal singer on this occasion was Hamid Ali Khan. The event started off with a lavish refreshment arrangement and meet and greet, followed by brief speeches by Tahir Khan, Vice President Events, Marketing, Media & Communications, Hashoo Hotels, and Iqbal Mehmood, EAM, Karachi Marriott Hotel. Tahir Khan highlighted the vision and importance of the events and the contribution of the Hashoo hotels in this respect, whereas Mr. Mehmood shared with the audience the main features of the hotel and its forthcoming promotions. The audience was mesmerized with the ghazals of Hamid Ali Khan and the whole of the Crystal Ballroom echoed with claps.





Pak-China Friendship

ISHAQ DAR INAUGURATES F-9 PARK SOLAR LIGHTING PROJECT

"Pakistan values its friendship with the Government and the people of China."

Ishaq Dar

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

The Federal Minister for Finance Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar inaugurated F-9 Park Solar Lighting Project along with the Ambassador of People's Republic





of China, Mr. Sun Weidong, and the Mayor of Islamabad/Chairman CDA, Mr. Anser Aziz.

On this occasion, Finance Minister congratulated the Citizens of Islamabad, Chinese government and Chairman CDA on completion of the Solar power project in Fatima Jinnah Park in F-9 sector. He said that Fatima Jinnah Park project is the second gift of the Chinese government for Islamabad as the first one was for the Parliament building. The gift will benefit the citizens of Islamabad, he added.

Finance Minister said that Pakistan enjoys historic relations with China and China is a great friend. He said Pakistan values its friendship with the Government and the people of China. He thanked the Chinese Government for assistance in establishing the project. The Minister also appreciated the efforts of the Capital Development Authority and the Chinese company for the timely completion of the project.

The Finance Minister also urged the Capital Development Authority to work hard on improving civic facilities for the citizens of Islamabad.





Missing the point

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has generated competing claims among provinces on where the corridor should lie, as though counting the trucks plying on it is what really matters. This is myopic.

The significance of CPEC is in the fast connectivity it provides to the vast regions of western China and Central Asia to the Arabian Sea. This is an immense economic opportunity for the provinces if they focus instead on improving their respective connectivity to the corridor and align their economic activity to exploit that connectivity.

Over the last several decades, low private and public investments have resulted in our lacklustre economic performance. If we position ourselves well, CPEC's massive \$46 billion investment programme in key infrastructure will redress this and bump up the growth rate for several decades to come.

Although energy projects dominate the CPEC package, its main goal is to revolutionise regional connectivity via Gwadar port and the road/rail network that leads up to the port. The four CPEC pillars are thus: energy projects, Gwadar port, rail/road networks, and the associated industrial and commercial activity.

Furthermore, for CPEC-related public investment to have a lasting impact, it must stimulate private investment in a variety of sectors. The fourth pillar should thus be renamed 'linkages with domestic economic activity' — spanning industry, commerce,

**The centre
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investments.**



By Ijaz Nabi

agriculture, livestock, mining, transport and tourism.

For CPEC to be a real 'game changer', the provinces will be pivotal. The centre — responsible for trade, credit and fiscal policy — is important for ensuring that CPEC-related public investment attracts significant flows of private investment. However, the provinces must create the right investment climate to physically host such investments. In doing so, they will become partners with the federal government in managing the economy as

envisaged in the 18th Amendment, and not as mere appendages as they are now.

CPEC-related provincial investment strategies would have the following four elements:

One, align ongoing provincial development initiatives with CPEC investments. This includes establishing economic enclaves that are consistent with demographic changes in the provinces. Provinces should invest in excellent roads to connect the enclaves to CPEC road/rail networks. They must facilitate land acquisition, provide key infrastructure (electricity, gas, water, waste treatment) and promote skills development in close proximity to the economic enclaves. The National Finance Commission should design the NFC award to compensate the provinces where the cost of connecting to CPEC highways is high.

Two, reform provincial regulations and upgrade institutions to strengthen economic sectors of comparative advantage. Detailed studies have already been carried out in all four provinces, and in Gilgit-Baltistan, which specify reforms that will maximise CPEC benefits. These need to be implemented. The studies include provincial

growth strategies for KP and Punjab; various KP sector studies prepared by the USAID Pakistan Firms Project; and World Bank economic reports for Sindh, Balochistan and GB. Provincial studies on the cost of doing business are also available. The studies identify regularity and institutional hurdles that discourage investment and need to be jettisoned. They also recommend ways of engaging with the federal government to remove the hurdles under its mandate. Provincial governments must set up task forces to monitor progress on implementing the recommendations.

Three, strengthen local firms to forge joint ventures with foreign firms (including Chinese firms). Forward-looking provincial economies enabled by energy projects and Gwadar port will strengthen the negotiating power of local firms, making them attractive partners in joint ventures. Well-funded, well-staffed, modern and efficient investment authorities must be established to facilitate the joint ventures.

Four, strengthen federal-provincial coordination to develop a nationwide investment programme. Platforms such as the

Council of Common Interests and the National Economic Committee need to be strengthened for effective federal-provincial coordination in designing and implementing a countrywide investment strategy associated with CPEC. The Planning Commission, with adequate capacity and in close coordination with the provincial planning and development departments, should be the technical secretariat to CCI and the NEC. CPEC provides an opportunity to revamp these institutions.

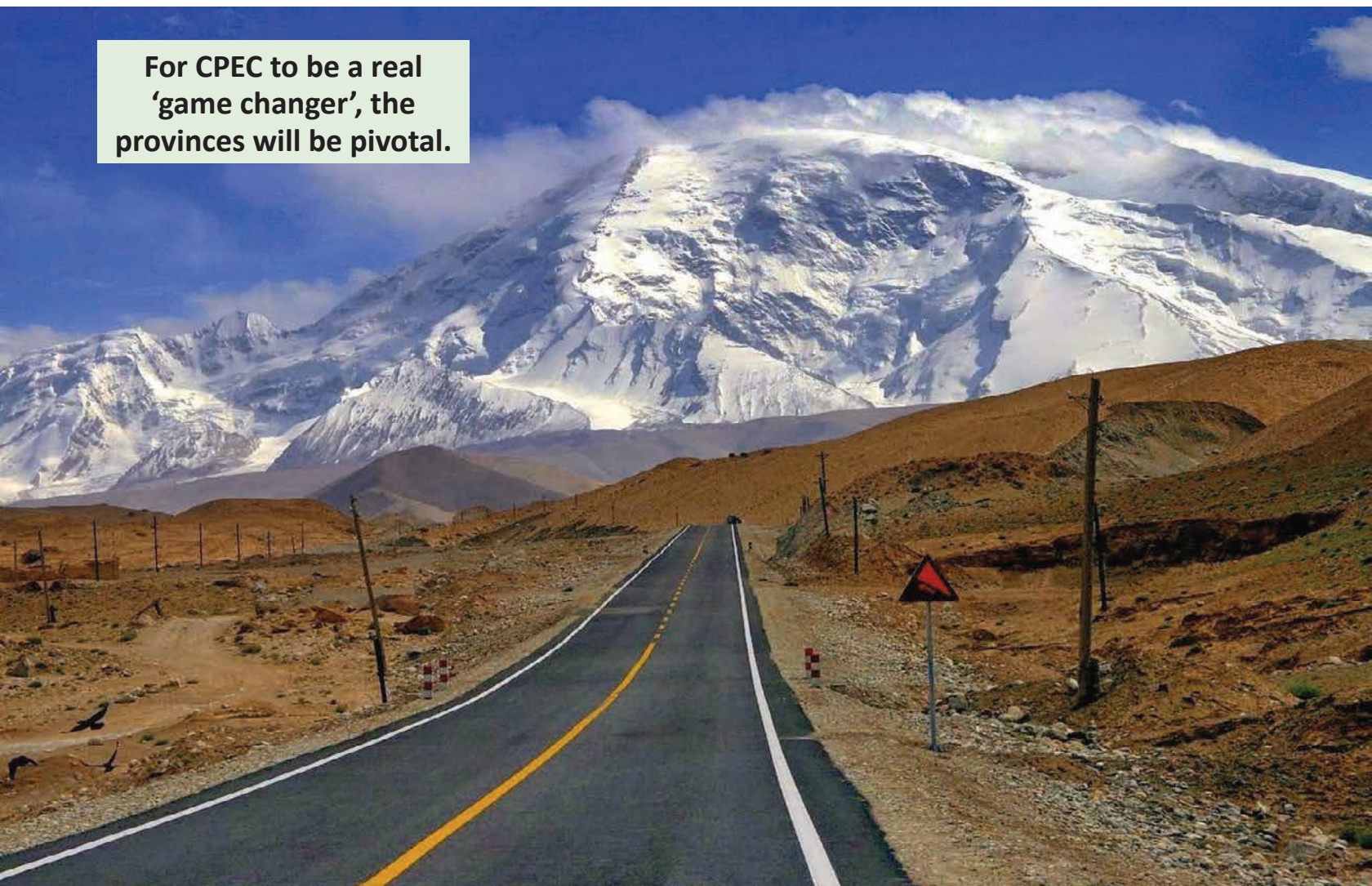
To conclude, CPEC can be a 'game changer' provided the provinces adopt sensible development strategies and align them with the opportunities provided by CPEC. Squabbling over road location misses the point altogether.

The writer is chairman of CDPR and teaches at Lums.ijaz.nabi@gmail.com

Courtesy to Dawn News

The content of this opinion article does not reflect the official opinion of the "Diplomatic Focus". Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the article lies entirely with the author

**For CPEC to be a real
'game changer', the
provinces will be pivotal.**



Pakistan-China 6th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) Meeting of CPEC



Projects proposed by Provinces, are now part of CPEC

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

Pakistani delegates headed by the Federal Minister for Planning & Development Ahsan Iqbal attending CPEC's 6th JCC at NDRC, Beijing. The meeting being attended by the Minister for Railway Khwaja Saad Rafique, PM adviser on Foreign Affairs Tariq Fatmi, Chairman BOI, Miftah Ismail, Chief Minister KP Pervaiz Khattak, Chief Minister Sindh Murad Ali Shah, Chief Minister Balochistan Sanaullah Zehri, Chief Minister GB Hafiz Ur Rehman and Minister Industries Punjab Shiekh Allau Uddin.

While addressing the 6th JCC meeting, Minister Ahsan Iqbal pleaded case for Gwadar and said that master city plan and the related projects are likely to bring socio-economic stability in the Gwadar. In addition, Minister appreciated the Chinese commitment to help and start the mass transit railway project in the provincial headquarters which will provide great facility to millions of people in Pakistan.

The minister also appreciated the consideration and inclusion of projects proposed by the provinces in infrastructure and energy to harness different opportunities and development in various parts of Pakistan to distribute fruits of CPEC to all provinces and regions. He further mentioned that one industrial zone in each province has been identified and selected on the basis of their market attraction and principles of business.

Mr. Ahsan Iqbal stated that CPEC has become the north star of friendship between China and Pakistan making the friendship even higher than skies.

China and Pakistan together will defeat all anti-CPEC forces. The participation of high level officials from the provinces in JCC is the symbol of national unity and commitment. The involvement of provinces in JCC with full spirit will help to complete the CPEC projects on fast pace: Ahsan Iqbal





VISIT OF JUNIOR FOREIGN TRAINEE DIPLOMATS TO BOARD OF INVESTMENT

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

A 37-Junior Foreign Diplomats (Foreign Service Academy) from different countries of the world visited Board of Investment, Islamabad and met with Mr. Shah Jahan Shah, Additional Secretary, BOI. The AS welcomed to Hon'able guests, who have travelled long way to take part in diplomatic training program in Pakistan.

The AS said that the need to develop a deep mutual understanding is must in today's fast changing world.

He highlighted that the country's economic outlook has altogether changed in the last few years. As a result of bold economic reforms/decisions achieved significant improvements in all major economic indicators, as well as a stable economy and improved security, law and order situation in Pakistan. Today Pakistan offers enormous opportunities for profitable investment and trade. The improved areas are as under.

- Inflation is now well below 3% the lowest in 47 years.
- Pakistan's economy is back on an upward growth trajectory and FY 2015-16, saw growth of 4.71%, the highest in a decade.
- The government has also successfully auctioned 3G and 4G spectrum licenses, opening vistas of communication and data transfer in the country.
- During FY 2016 net foreign direct investment was US\$ 1.9 billion with growth of 106 percent. The major inflow of FDI is from China, US, Hong Kong, UK, Switzerland, Italy, Norway and UAE. Oil & Gas exploration, financial business, power, communications, and Chemicals remained major sectors for foreign investors.
- Pakistan remained focused and committed to implement CPEC which is a mega project of US\$46 billion, it will provide major support for development of infrastructure in coming years.
- The successful completion of the IMF programme, the second time in our history, is a strong indicator of the health of Pakistan's economy and the authenticity of reforms undertaken.
- To improved security environment in Pakistan has already generated enhanced investor interest and enthusiasm.
- Pakistan announced a three year road map to improve its global ranking on doing business earlier this year. Consistent with that, the country completed three reforms in the past year in Registering Property, Getting Credit and Trading across Borders. The highest number in a single year over the past decade.
- Pakistan is blessed with huge energy resources (over 60,000MW of hydel potential, 340,000MW potential for wind energy and potential of 2,324 million MW for solar thermal & photovoltaic systems). In addition, 105 trillion cubic feet of shale gas reserves and 9 billion barrels of shale oil reserves are yet to be tapped. Furthermore, the country is fortunate to have 185 billion tonnes of coal reserves which can be used for power generation as well as diesel production.

On this occasion a detailed presentation was given on investment policy of Pakistan followed by questions and answers by the participants.

Mr. Shah assured them continuous cooperation of BOI and its officials for any support and facilitation to investors from their respective countries and wished them a success in this training course.



Pakistan's Ambassador Tehmina Janjua chairs successful CCW Review Conference

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

Ambassador Tehmina Janjua, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to Geneva, presided over the successful conclusion of the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Ambassador Janjua was the first woman, and the first developing country representative, to preside over a CCW Review Conference.

The Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of certain Conventional Weapons which may be excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effect (the CCW), and its Protocols deal with prohibitions, restrictions and regulation of the use of weapons such as mines, booby traps, incendiary weapons, blinding lasers and explosive remnants of war. The implementation of the Convention is reviewed every five years, in a comprehensive

manner by the Review Conference. These major Review Conferences also consider new types of conventional weapons of concern,

Ambassador Janjua was the first woman, and the first developing country representative, to preside over a CCW Review Conference

as well as technological developments that impact on the Convention.

The week-long Conference concluded in Geneva after protracted negotiations on complex issues, including incendiary weapons,

use of conventional weapons in highly populated areas, and lethal autonomous weapon systems. The discussions focused on the military utility and humanitarian concerns rising from the use of these weapons. States Parties to the Convention appreciated the successful outcome of the Conference as a welcome development on the multilateral arms control landscape. Speaking at the final session, Ambassador Janjua said that the Conference had taken "important and far-reaching decisions dealing with different substantive contemporary issues".

Pakistan's unanimous election as the President of this important Conference was recognition of the country's strong credentials in multilateral diplomacy as well as in international arms control related issues. Pakistan successful stewardship of the Conference towards a substantive outcome was widely appreciated.

Pakistan calls for promotion of dialogue among all religions, cultures

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

Pakistan called on the international community to strengthen mechanisms and actions for promotion of dialogue and understanding among all religions and civilizations in a press release from New York.

Introducing the draft resolution in the UN General Assembly on "Promotion of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace", Pakistan's Acting Permanent Representative, Mr. Nabeel Munir said that this should be done with a view to "restoring harmony" and "strengthening cooperation for peace and development".

The resolution introduced by Pakistan and Philippines and co-sponsored by 43 countries was adopted by the UN General Assembly by consensus.

Pakistani envoy said that much of the growing mistrust could be traced to the growing gap in understanding and lack of tolerance among the various religions and civilizations of the world. "Extremist and terrorist groups exploit this gap to propagate their own toxic agenda", he added.

The world today, Mr. Munir said, is afflicted with destructive conflicts, both old and new, which are fueled by lingering suspicions and mistrust across the religious and civilizational fault lines.

These conflicts, he said, not only cause immense human suffering and economic loss but also obstruct friendly interaction and

socio-economic cooperation among the various regions and nations of the world.

"We also witness a growing trend of xenophobia and religious intolerance and emergence of new extremist ideologies in different parts of the world", he added.

Pakistan appreciated the leading role of UNESCO and the valuable contribution of the UN Alliance of Civilizations in promotion of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue at the national, regional and international levels.

Pakistani diplomat said that despite differences, religions and cultures have a lot of commonality that can actually unite us. "We need to build on these shared values".

Pakistan urged the 193-member world body to join hands to eliminate prejudices, biases and stereotypes and engage in a genuine and constructive dialogue at all levels across the cultural and religious divide.

The dialogue, Mr. Munir said should be pursued in a structured, multi-layered and all-inclusive format. It should include religious and community leaders, civil society, and academic institutions.

"The ultimate objective from dialogue should

be to prevent conflict and promote peace and harmony through better understanding, moderation and a global culture of peace", he added.

Mr. Munir expressed Pakistan's belief that with enhanced dialogue and better understanding, it was possible to achieve the objective of a diverse, yet harmonious and peaceful world, standing firmly on the pillars of "peaceful co-existence" and "unity in diversity".

Pakistani envoy Mr. Munir said that much of the growing mistrust could be traced to the growing gap in understanding and lack of tolerance among the various religions and civilizations of the world. "Extremist and terrorist groups exploit this gap to propagate their own toxic agenda"

Message from H.E. MR. GABRIEL TIEL CAPOTE, AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA, ON OCCASION OF 58th Anniversary of The Cuban Revolution

On the eve of celebrating the 58th Anniversary of the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution, our National Day, it is an honor for me to address the people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Cuba. January 1, 1959 marked the beginning of a new stage in Cuba and the conclusion of our battle for independence to become a free and sovereign country.

In these 58 years, Cuba has demonstrated that it is capable of achieving great success, as evidenced by achievements in education, public health. Social security, culture, sports and scientific and technical development, recognized throughout the world. He has also shared his modest progress with other needy peoples.

Cuba has not escaped the global economic crisis, deficiencies persist but the Cuban people have known and will succeed in their great effort. The Cuban economy, foresees for the next year an increase of the Gross Domestic Product in the environment of 2% against a decrease of 0, 9% in 2016, which is very flattering. The proposal of the 2017 investment plan has as its principles to support the priority programs and investments that include the tourism development program of Havana, Varadero, the northern coast of Holguin, and the infrastructure of the Special Development Zone of Mariel. Its gradual rise continues not only in the aspects indicated but also in the defense of its sovereignty, dignity and independence.

Cuba extends its sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Pakistan for their continued support in the annual United Nations General Assembly vote calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America, still in force. We cannot forget the negative effects that this measure causes to our economy and the development of our country. An example of this is that Cuba is still unable to conduct international transactions in US dollars, which prevents the advance of multiple and important future businesses.

This year we have celebrated the 61st anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations and 11th of the presence of the Cuban Medical Brigade following the terrible



earthquake that hit Pakistan in 2005. Moreover, Cuban medical schools have graduated more than 950 doctors Pakistanis with sufficient capacity to provide the necessary medical care to the Pakistani people. We cannot forget the noble gesture of the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Pakistani people, to offer a gift of 15,000 tons of rice to the Cuban people, a ceremony that took place last October 14th. Despite geographical distance, Cuba and Pakistan maintain excellent relations based on friendship and mutual cooperation, and we hope that earlier than later, economic-trade relations can be successfully developed for the benefit of both countries.

The demise of the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, on November 25, has been painfully sad for our people. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank the authorities and the people of Pakistan, our friends and the media for their affection and solidarity towards our commander-in-chief.

Finally, I would like to express my warmest greetings to the Pakistani people, with the desire to put an end to the arms race and that peace prevails on the planet, to enjoy the happiness and prosperity we all deserve for this upcoming New Year 2017.

PAKISTAN WINNER TO RECEIVE SPECIAL AWARD FROM HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

The Queen's Young Leaders Programme delighted to reveal that 60 young people from across the Commonwealth, including Syed Faizan Hussain from Pakistan, have been selected to receive a prestigious Queen's Young Leaders Award.

The Queen's Young Leaders Awards recognise and celebrate exceptional young people aged 18 to 29 in the Commonwealth who are driving change within their communities and transforming people's lives. Now in its third and penultimate year, the 60 young people announced become part of the growing Queen's Young Leaders community, a unique network of influential young change-makers who are coming together and being supported to become an even greater force for good. They will receive their Award from Her Majesty The Queen at a ceremony in London next year. This year, Award winners are leading projects tackling global issues including education, climate change, gender equality, mental health and disability equality. Syed Faizan Hussain, 22 years old from Karachi, has been chosen in recognition of his use of technology to create solutions to health problems in his community. Syed Faizan Hussain said, "I am delighted to have received this Award and look forward to expanding my leadership

skills and engaging with people from various fields who will be sharing their ideas and experiences."

The Queen's Young Leaders Programme was established in 2014 by The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust in partnership with Comic Relief, The Royal Commonwealth Society and the University of Cambridge's Institute of Continuing Education, in recognition of The Queen's lifetime of service to the Commonwealth. Each year for four years, 60 Queen's Young Leaders receive bespoke training, mentoring and networking opportunities, and take part in a week-long residential programme in London, to empower them to build on the work they are leading in their communities which is changing the lives of others for the better.

Dr Astrid Bonfield CBE, Chief Executive of The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust



also spoke on the occasion and said: "We are delighted that these incredible young people have been selected as Queen's Young Leaders, and wish our warmest congratulations to each and every one of them. The Queen's Young Leaders Award is designed to inspire and nurture the talent of exceptional young people from all over the Commonwealth, so that they can create and lead others towards securing positive changes in communities. The work being undertaken by the latest cohort of Queen's Young Leaders is addressing some of the most crucial issues facing the Commonwealth today. We cannot wait to see how their impressive endeavours grow and develop over the course of the year to come and beyond."

BUCKINGHAM
PALACE



The Queen's Young Leader Award recognises and celebrates exceptional people aged 18-29 from across the Commonwealth, who are taking the lead in their communities and using their skills to transform lives.

Pakistan and Uzbekistan should focus on establishing direct railway and air links that would go a long way in improving trade activities: Saad Rafique

By M. Saeed Yousafzai

Uzbek Ambassador, H.E. Furkat A. Sidikov called on Federal Minister for Railways, Kh. Saad Rafique in Ministry of Railways. They agreed on mutual cooperation.

“Pakistan and Uzbekistan should focus on establishing direct railway and air links that would go a long way in improving trade activities and people-to-people contacts” said Kh. Saad Rafique.

The areas of cooperation between Pakistan and Uzbekistan are described as intervention and cooperation in existing railway system, including up gradation of Carriage factory Islamabad and Locomotive Factory Risalpur. Second area is connectivity through ML I (Karachi to Jalalabad), ML II (Kotri to Attock) and ML III (Rohri to Zahedan). Third area of interest is mutual training programmes in Lahore Railway Training Centre and Tashkent Railway University. Uzbekistan is very much interested in CPEC. For regional connectivity Uzbekistan has constructed 11 railway bridges in Afghanistan.

As of 2008, Uzbekistan had 3,645 kilometers of rail lines, about 620 kilometers of which were electrified. A large percentage of the system's track requires major repair. The main line is the portion of the Trans-Caspian Railroad that

connects Tashkent with the Amu Darya. There are rail links with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan (see Trans-Caspian Railway), Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan. Suburban traffic only exists around Tashkent.



PAKISTAN-RUSSIA CONSULTATIONS ON REGIONAL ISSUES

The first Pakistan-Russia Consultations on Regional Issues were held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 13 December 2016. The Russian side was led by Mr. Alexander V. Sternik, Head of the Third CIS Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia while the Pakistani side was led by Mr. Ahmad Hussain Dayo, Director General (West Asia), Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the Consultations the whole range of regional issues as well as key areas of mutual interest including economic cooperation and connectivity were discussed. The two sides also exchanged views on important global and regional developments. It was decided that the next round of Consultations will be convened in Moscow in 2017.



A Group photo of The Embassy of Pakistan set up stalls at the Annual Charity Fair of the Turkish Foreign Ministry's Spouses' Solidarity Association (DMEDD) held in Ankara.

GANDHARA EXHIBITION IN REPUBLIC OF KOREA



By M. Saeed Yousafzai

The National History and Literary Heritage Division signed an MoU with the Inter Art Channel, Republic of Korea to organize an exhibition of Gandhara artifacts' and sculptures from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in two cities of Republic of Korea for a period of six months starting from March next year.

The Memorandum was signed by Secretary, National History and Literary Heritage Division, Mr. Mohsin S. Haqqani and President of the Inter Art Channel, Republic of Korea, Mr. Yangsoo Kim, in the presence of Director General (Policy Planning and Public Diplomacy), Mr. Rahim Hayat Qureshi and Director General (EAP), Mr. Javed Jalil Khattak, from Ministry of

Foreign Affairs. Joint Secretary (Heritage), Mr. Mashood Ahmad Mirza, Director (Archeology and Museum Department), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Abdul Samad and Secretary of Gandhara Art & Culture Association, Islamabad, Dr. Esther Park were also present during the event.

The MoU would help strengthen the existing excellent relations between Pakistan and Republic of Korea by opening of a Highway of cultural cooperation between them. Through the exhibition not only the rich Buddhist archaeological treasure of Pakistan would be displayed in Republic of Korea but it would also project the soft image of Pakistan which would help draw religious tourists to Pakistan.

The Gandhara civilization, whose core region was located around the city of Peshawar in North-West Pakistan, was not only the centre of spiritual influence but also the cradle of the world famous Gandhara culture, art and learning. This ancient source of the region's culture has created empathy between Pakistan and other countries of Central, South and East Asia which needs to be strengthened.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as part of its Public Diplomacy initiatives aimed at promoting Pakistani culture abroad, has undertaken efforts to organize with the assistance of our Missions Abroad a series of Ancient Pakistan Exhibitions. The Ministry endeavors to arrange such public diplomacy events in order to project Pakistan's culture, heritage and ethos both at home and abroad.



Good Bye 2016 & Welcome 2017 ANNUAL GALA DINNER 2016 HOSTED BY “DIPLOMATIC FOCUS”



Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi Editor, CEO, Publisher “Diplomatic Focus” hosted an “Annual Gala Dinner 2016” in the honor of Honorable Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Karachi, Heads of Missions, Counselors, Honorary Counselors, Counselors Generals to say Good Bye 2016 & Welcome 2017 at Marriott Hotel Karachi. Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig (Dean of Honorary Consul Generals Karachi) was the guest of honor along with Mr. Sarmad Ali President All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) and Mr. Mirza Ishtiaq Baig.









Mr. Syed Naveed Zafar (Chairman & CEO Of “Ayyaan Group Of Companies”) hosted “Curtain Raiser” Reception For Mr. Rodolfo Martin Saravia, (Former Ambassador Of Argentina & Dean Of The Diplomatic Corp Of Pakistan) and Currently Working As Chief Executive Officer Of Ayyaan Group Of Companies In South Americas.

This “Welcome Reception” For Mr. Rodolfo well attended by Friends from Diplomatic, Business, Media & Government fraternity Including but not limited to Mr. Muhammad Khan Doha (MNA & Member Of Parliamentary Committee For Foreign Affairs & Defense), Mr. Zulfiqar Gardezi (Additional Secretary – Ministry Of Foreign Affairs), H.E Mr. Alexey Dedov (Ambassador Of Russian Federation), H.E Mr. Mpendulo Jele (High Commissioner Of South Africa), H.E Major General (R) Jayanath Lokuketagodage, (High Commissioner Of Srilanka), H.E Mr Claudia Lins (Ambassador Of Brazil), H.E Mr. Gautam Bombaywala (High Commissioner Of India), H.E Mr. Andrew Turner (Deputy High Commissioner Of Canada), H.E Mr. Mike (Deputy Head Of Mission In Embassy Of Kazakhstan) H.E Mr. Habib Ullah (Honorary Consul General Of Cyprus), Mr. Ghanem (Defence Attaché in Embassy Of UAE). Mr. Abdullah Gull (Chairman – Tahreek Nawjawan), Mr. Cesar Guedes (Head Of UNDCO – United Nation Drug Control), Mr. Jamil Hashmi (SP – Islamabad), Mr. Talib Dogar. (Director General – Pakistan Telecom Authority), Mr. Tariq Malik (CTO @ GHQ).







AGOC participated in PFOWA Charity Bazaar - 2016 as “Golden Sponsor” and reiterated their strong support to Widows & Destitutes of society



“Ayyaan Group Of Companies” committed & endeavoring to extend its profound support for Charity work in order to sincerely contribute back to our people & society as a whole.

AGOC Charity Work enormously appreciated by participants, friends & Well Wishers, who visited their enclosure in PFOWA Bazaar - 2016 including but not limited to.

Begum Mamnoon Hussain Sahiba. (First Lady Of Pakistan & Wife of President Mamnoon Hussain) was the chief guest of the event. Others prominent personalities were Mr. Muhammad Khan Doha (Member Of Parliament & Member Of Parliamentary Committee For Foreign Affairs & Defense), Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhary (Foreign Secretary Of Pakistan), Mrs. Najia Aizaz Ahmad (President – PFOWA & Wife Of Foreign Secretary Of Pakistan), Mr. Zulfiqar Gardezi (Additional Secretary For Asia Pacific @ MOFA), Mr. Sahebzada A Khan (Chief Of State Protocol Of Pakistan @ MOFA), H.E Mr. Sunweidong & Spouse Madam Bao (Chinese Ambassador In Pakistan), H.E Mr. Serali Jononov (Ambassador Of Tajikistan In Pakistan), H.E Mr. Mehdi Hooneerdoost (Iranian Ambassador In Pakistan), H.E Mr. Nedim Mekarevic (Ambassador Of Bosnia), H.E Mr. Piotr A Opalinski (Ambassador Of Poland In Pakistan), H.E Mr. Vlad Lako (Ambassador Of Ukraine In Pakistan), H.E Mr. Iwan Suyudhie Amri (Ambassador Of Indonesia In Pakistan), Mr. Faiez Maulana (Deputy Ambassador Of Indonesia In Pakistan), H.E Mr. Hasrul Sani Mujtabar (High Commissioner Of Malaysia In Pakistan), H.E Mr. Stefano Pontecorvo (Ambassador Of Italy) Mr. Aziz Boolani Sb (CEO Of Serena Hotels Group), Mr. Tasneem Noorani (Former Secretary Of Interior & Commerce),

Col. Catalin Cirlanaru & Madam (Romanian Defense Attaché In Pakistan), Mr. Irfan Wahab (CEO - Telenor Pakistan), Mr. Naveed Khalid Butt Sb (Vice President - Ufone), Mr. Wajeeh Anwar (EVP - North PTCL), Mr. Sohail Chaudhry (Resident Editor @ Daily Pakistan) and other Friends, Colleagues & Family Members...



Reshaping the Halal Foods

Thailand Halal Assembly 2016

By Mian Fazal Elahi



The Thailand Halal Assembly 2016 held between 9-11 December had a special meaning well beyond its overt status as the country's largest trade show for Muslim-friendly products and services. Against the backdrop of global and regional geopolitics, and the passing of the revered Thai monarch, His Majesty King Bhumibhol Adulyadej, the event showed how its importance extends well beyond to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the regional objective of ASEAN integration as well as the national goal of building inclusive societies.

Thailand has a population of roughly six million Muslims, mainly located in the southern provinces. Granted observer status in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation countries, Thailand sees the potential of harnessing the economic and social potential of its largest ethnic minority for improving its relations with the Islamic world and addressing the underlying causes of a long-running separatist insurgency.

The Halal Assembly is held annually as part of the Halal strategy set in place by the Thai government in 2001. This led to the 2003 Cabinet approval for the establishment of the Halal Science Center (HSC), Chulalongkorn University and the Halal Standard Institute of Thailand.

In his speech, HSC Director Dr Winai Dahlan recounted how this halal promotion policy was proving successful. He said that in 2001, Thailand exported US\$241 million worth of halal products to the Member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. This has now increased 18-fold to US\$5.6 billion. The figure grows even more if the value of the domestic market for halal food and the consumption of halal food by Muslim tourists to Thailand is included. The objective now is to grow this even further as part of the Thailand 4.0 economic development plan. The Thailand Halal Assembly is an important part of that strategy, but it is also serving a much wider purpose.

Another regular supporter is the Secretary General of the National Economic and Social Development Board, Mr. Poramettee Vimolsiri, who gave a comprehensive overview of how promotion of halal products and services fitted in well with King Bhumibhol's sufficiency economy concept as well as the 20-year national development plan approved by the Thai government to boost the country's competitiveness, quality of



Thailand objectives

The theme of the Thailand Halal Assembly 2016 was revamped to focus on King Bhumibhol and his painstaking out-reach towards Thai Muslims.



life and sustainability. After his speech, Mr. Porametee took the time to walk around the entire trade show. Moreover, the event gives Thai government agencies a chance to better understand the importance of the Muslim community. All the Thai agencies were represented.

The event also motivates and inspires young Thai-Muslims. Demographically, the Muslim world has a young population, which was more than apparent at the Halal Assembly turnout. One of Thailand's most prominent personalities, Dr Surin Pitsuwan, the first Muslim to become a Thai Foreign Minister as well as ASEAN Secretary-General, and a regular guest at the Halal Assembly, clearly had these young people in mind when he delivered yet another of his motivating speeches.



Dr Surin cited how Thai Muslims are contributing to the Thai tourism industry, especially medical tourism, by providing PR and translation support to the hundreds of patients from the Middle East seeking treatment in Thai hospitals. He noted that the founder/owner of the popular Thai restaurant chain, Blue Elephant, is a Thai Muslim, that many of the Thai embassies in the Arab countries would not be able to operate without the translation help of Thai Muslims who had studied in Arab universities, that when the Thai Foreign Ministry was looking for a Thai to nominate as ASEAN Secretary-General, they turned to someone who had studied in a madrassah in South Thailand (Dr Surin himself).

Thai businesses get a chance to boost their creativity. One exhibitor was selling prayer mats. These were no ordinary prayer mats. Originally a rubber company specialising in mattresses and pillows, it saw a clear opportunity to start making prayer mats with an inch-thick undercoating of rubber, targeted at the millions of aged and ageing Muslims suffering from knee problems. Thailand is



a major rubber-producer, mainly in the southern provinces. The prayer mats, a new “fusion product”, help both the rubber industry and the halal sector. They sold well at the event.

There were other examples of creativity, including an online market for halal products and a halal food delivery service. This year, for the first time, the Halal Assembly came up with a separate listing of Halal start-up companies.

The more than 200 exhibitors came, and covered herbal products to fashion items, foodstuffs and hotels. All were SMEs. This representation only scratches the surface of the Thai-Muslim businesses nationwide. Their downstream impact on poverty alleviation and income distribution has not been officially measured but it must be sizeable.

The SDG goal is gender equality and job creation for women. Most of the booths were manned by women. The attendance at the workshops and seminars also included mainly women. Hundreds of young students from Islamic schools who came to the event were girls. Many of them seized the opportunity to practise their English with the foreign exhibitors.

At a broader level, the Halal Assembly shows how Thailand is honouring its obligations under the UN's Alliance of Civilizations initiative. The rights of minorities and the principles of non-discrimination are inherent in the UN Charter and various international treaties and declarations. Foremost among these is the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. Adopted unanimously by all Member States at the General Assembly in 1992, it committed them to respect, protect and promote the rights of minorities. The Thais are doing just that.

The dance performance at the opening ceremony reflected this socio-cultural integration. It was specially chosen because the choreography, music and costumes reflected Islamic/Malay, Thai and Chinese influences, all of which can be seen in South Thailand.

The Halal Assembly attracted business exhibitors from Indonesia, Malaysia, Syria, China, Iran, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, selling products such as tea, dates, condiment sauces, perfumes, and fashion items. Some were first-time newcomers looking for distributors in Thailand. Encouraging trade amongst the Islamic countries and the developing countries as a whole is a major goal of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation countries, and also advocated by groups such as the UN Conference on Trade & Development.

Finally, the event does go a long way towards promoting a positive image of Thai Muslims. Like in other parts of the world, some sections of the Thai mainstream media and social media get hyperactive with anti-Muslim comments, especially in the aftermath of violence in South Thailand. The Thai-Muslim community knows well who is instigating this anti-Muslim campaign. The Thailand Halal Assembly goes a long way towards countering it with a powerful message that while there may be a minority of Muslims bent on creating trouble, there is a far bigger majority that is more than happy to live in peace and contribute to Thailand's social, cultural and economic development.



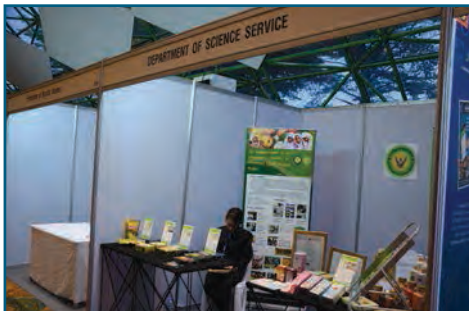
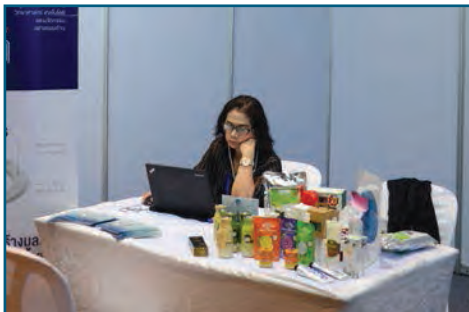




Photo by Ramzan Mughal

SIAM NIRAMIT THEATER

Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, is one of the world's top tourist destination cities. As the principal gateway for arriving visitors, Bangkok is visited by the majority of international tourists to the country. Domestic tourism is also prominent. Bangkok's sights, attractions, and city life appeal to diverse groups of tourists. Royal palaces and temples as well as museums constitute its major historical and cultural tourist attractions. Shopping and dining experiences offer a range of choices and prices.

Siam Niramit has state-of-the-art cultural performances which have achieved international standards. It uses special techniques integrated with drama to depict the history of each region of Thailand including depictions of hell, the forest of Himmaphan, heavens, and lands beyond imagination from Thai literature. There is also a spectacular performance of Thailand's arts and cultural heritage. The show is staged by more than 150 performers in a luxurious theatre with a capacity of more than 2,000 seats.

Journalists from Pakistan visited to Siam Niramit during their stay in Thailand to attend the "Thailand Halal Assembly 2016" on the invitation of Thailand Government. The group was accompanied by Thai ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Suchart Liengsaengthong.

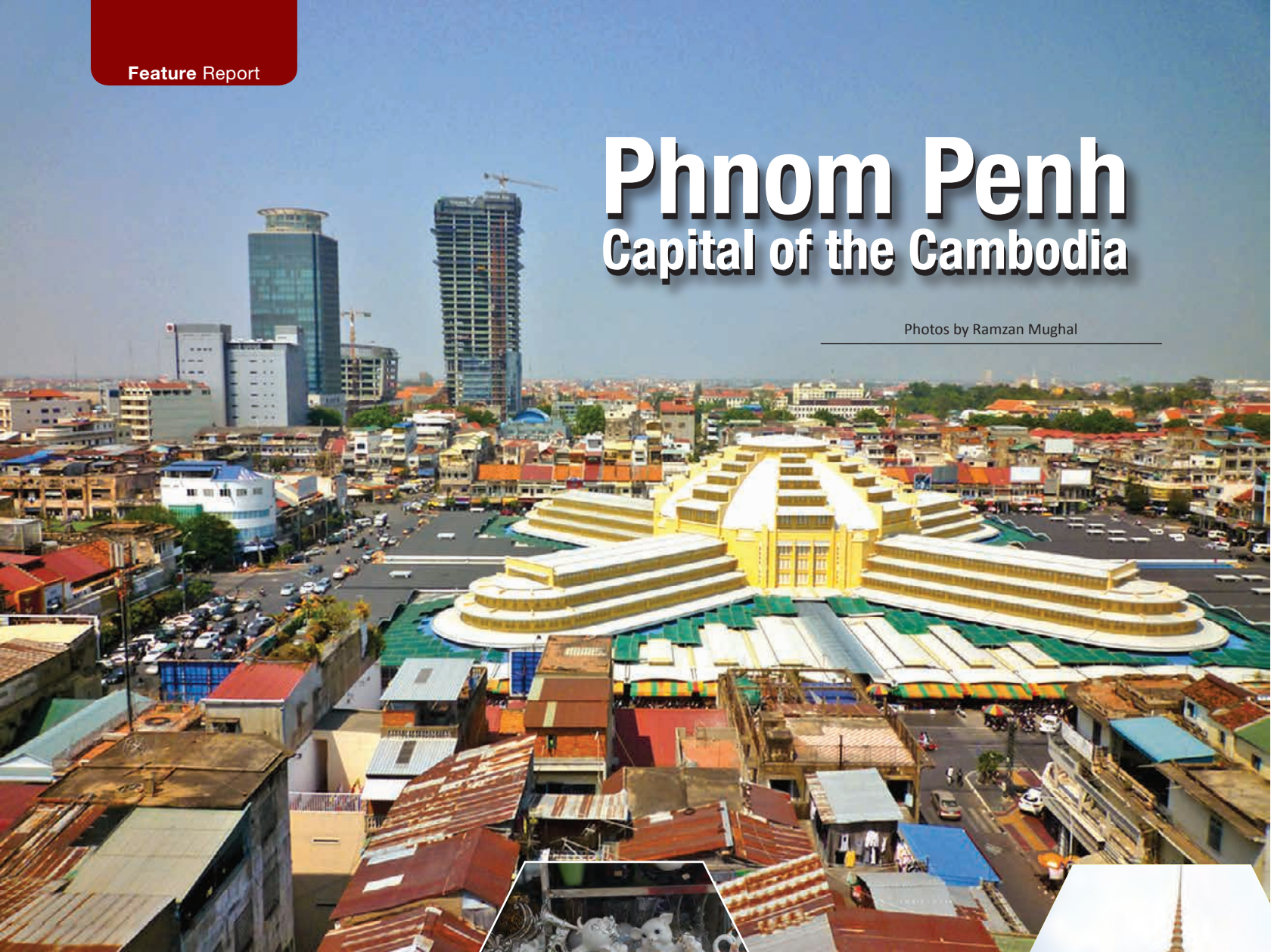




Phnom Penh

Capital of the Cambodia

Photos by Ramzan Mughal



By Mian Fazal Elahi

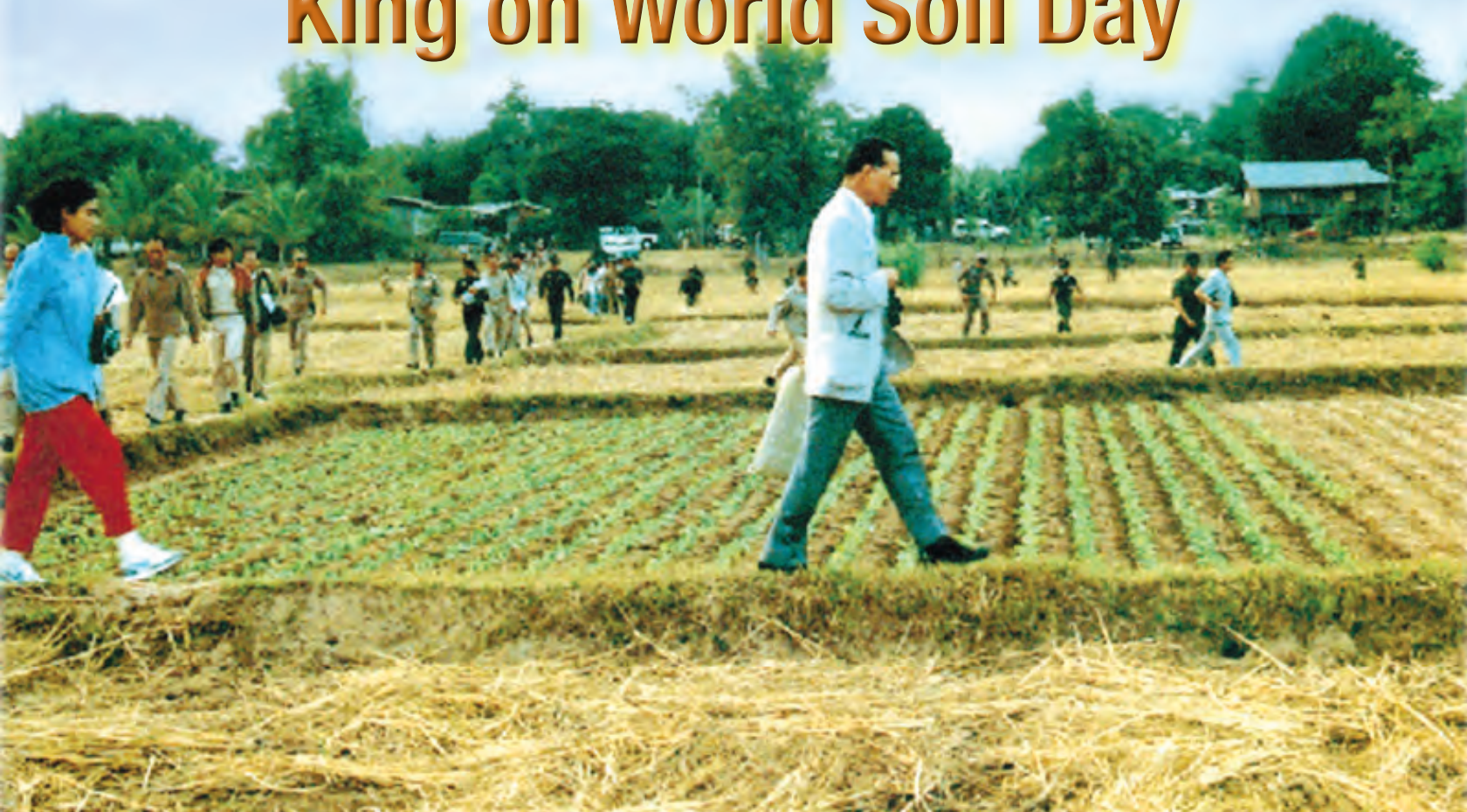
Cambodia is a Southeast Asian nation whose landscape spans low-lying plains, the Mekong Delta, mountains and Gulf of Thailand coastline. Phnom Penh, its capital, is home to the art deco Central Market, glittering Royal Palace and the National Museum's historical and archaeological exhibits. In the country's northwest are the ruins of Angkor Wat, a massive stone temple complex built during the Khmer Empire.

The Cambodian capital is all this and more. Truly one of the undiscovered gems of Asia, the city is a metropolis that manages to hold onto its enchanting history. There is no other place in the world like it, and there is something for everyone in the vibrant city.





Honoring a Down to Earth King on World Soil Day



He sat at the pinnacle of His society, but constitutional ruler King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand was a monarch and a man who was down to earth. For much of His 70 years on the throne – the longest reign of any monarch at the time of His passing – King Bhumibol traveled to the poorest and most remote corners of His Kingdom, sitting on the ground with farmers and villagers, listening to their problems and responding with over 4,000 sustainable development projects to better their lives. Many dealt with improving water, agriculture, livelihoods and health. As one of His closest aides said, however, “we were always confronted with soil issues.”

Those issues could be vexing. But the late King’s innovative solutions to soil problems earned him the first Humanitarian Soil Scientist award from the International Union of Soil Science in 2012. In 2014 the United Nations designated His Majesty’s birthday on December 5th as the annual World Soil Day and the year 2015 as the International Year of Soils, with events held in New York,





only a limited period. It was a problem plaguing farmers in many parts of the world.

King Bhumibol initiated a holistic program to restore the area. Today, Huai Sai is a mixture of thick forests with abundant wildlife, family farms and gardens, along with agricultural, environmental and community projects. The late King's approach encompassed principles He would later crystalize in His theory of Sufficiency Economy in 1998. Rooted in the Buddhist ethos of moderation and balance, the Sufficiency Economy is a set of principles designed to minimize risk and build resilience to internal and external shocks. Its principles can be applied not only to family farms, but also to national economies and other professions.

In 2007, the United Nations Development Programme wrote the "Sufficiency Economy has great global relevance during these times of economic uncertainties, global warming and unsustainable use of natural resources. It places humanity at the center, focuses on well-being rather than wealth, makes sustainability the very core of the thinking."

The approach advocates diversification. Farmers are urged to build ponds for fish breeding and irrigation. Instead of one cash crop, they grow and rotate several using natural, organic fertilizers and pest management. Diversification protects against fickle markets, and sustains soil health. "He always says 'use nature to restore nature,'" said Sumet Tantivejkul, who oversees the King's projects at the Chaipattana Foundation, a non-governmental organization implementing developmental projects that are in line with royal initiatives.

In northern Thailand the late King planted rows of vetiver grass – dismissed by some as a weed – to prevent the erosion destroying vital watersheds. He would use it in the Northeast where vetiver's deep roots and ability to draw nitrogen into the earth would hold the dry, sandy soil in place and enrich it, increasing yields for poor farmers. In the Deep South, He would use other innovative methods to turn tens of thousands of hectares of peat swamp into productive farmland.

Even though King Bhumibol is no longer with us on this December 5th, millions of Thais and others who appreciate His legacy turned out to honor and show their love for him at home and abroad. Many will commemorate His achievements in sustainable development, science and even the arts. And many will also realize the day is World Soil Day, when environmentalists and soil scientists in every corner of the earth pay tribute to the late King whose name, Bhumibol, means "Strength of the Land."

Rome, Bangkok and cities around the world. In a message to the UN, the late King said that in order to ensure "viable, long-term food security and a sustainable ecosystem, [soil] issues must be addressed as an urgent priority."

Most people take soils for granted. Soils, however, are as essential to life as the air and water. Healthy soils support food production. The forests and fields they nourish host one quarter of the world's species, and are a source of fuels, medicines, fibers and animal feed. Soils store and filter water, and play a crucial role in preventing and mitigating climate change by absorbing and storing massive amounts of carbon. Healthy soils are essential for a sustainable future.

But soils are a finite resource. Just 22 percent of the earth's land surface can be used for producing 95 percent of our food. One third of that has been degraded by erosion, contamination and desertification, with much of it damaged in the last half century. "The world status of soils is quite scary," said Claire Chenu, a soil scientist at AgroParisTech. As Jose Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization noted, it can take up to one thousand years to form one centimeter of soil. "And this same centimeter can be destroyed in only a few minutes."

That type of destruction was evident to King Bhumibol when He visited the community of

Huai Sai in the province of Petchaburi in 1983. The late King looked out at a former forest reserve and saw a dry and barren landscape – except for rows of pineapple plants. "This place will become a desert," He predicted. In



their desire to earn more income, farmers had plunged into mono-cropping – planting a single crop while eliminating all other vegetation and upsetting the natural balance of the ecosystem. The soil had been sapped of its vital nutrients, and chemical fertilizers could restore them for

His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and the Thai Muslim community

Much has been written about the love that Thai people have towards His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who during His 70-year reign had dedicated Himself to improving His people's lives. His Majesty stood by the oath which He gave during the coronation ceremony, that "We shall reign with righteousness for the benefit and happiness of the Siamese people." Nevertheless, little did anyone know of the close relationship between His Majesty King Bhumibol and the Thai-Muslim community living near Thailand's southern borders that made up part of the country's overall population.

According to the late Thanpuying Samorn Bhuminarong, a prominent leader of Thailand's Muslim community, a strong bond had been maintained between His Majesty the King and the Thai-Muslim community during His reign. For many Muslims in Thailand, the King was and continues to be a source of inspiration, guidance and support. The King tirelessly worked to promote religious and cultural diversity in Thailand, constantly stressing the importance of peaceful coexistence among the country's different religious, cultural and ethnic groups.

His Majesty's and the Royal Family's uniquely special, deep-rooted bond with the Thai Muslim community was the product of not just support and guidance, but rather His Majesty's actions that reflected a genuine respect and interest in the religion and most importantly the will to promote acceptance and enhance tolerance throughout the country.

The late King Bhumibol, known to be fond of languages, was a key force behind the publication of a Thai edition of the Al-Quran. His Majesty's fascination of Islam's holy scripture of the faith was initially sparked in 1962 when He was presented by the Consul of Saudi Arabia with a copy of the English edition of the Quran. After studying the text, His Majesty expressed a desire to commission a Thai edition. The King proceeded to ask Thailand's Islamic spiritual leader, the Sheikhu Islam (Chularajmontri), to prepare a direct Thai translation of the original Arabic version so that copies can be distributed to all parts of the Kingdom.

In 1968, Their Majesties the King and Queen presided over the ceremony to commemorate the 1,400th anniversary of Quran, despite that Thailand is not a majority-Muslim country. On this occasion, the first Thai edition of the Quran was published and copies were royally



conferred to masjids across the country. His Majesty also explained the importance and benefits of translating the holy Islamic scripture into Thai, as it will allow Thai Muslims with limited or no knowledge of Arabic to study and gain a deeper understanding about the principle teachings and practices of Islam.



His Majesty had openly developed a keen yet genuine interest in Islamic culture and history. Every year, the King or a member of the Royal Family, as His Majesty's representative, participates in the ceremony commemorating Mawlid al-Nabi, known as the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.

His Majesty and the Thai Royal Family engaged in steps to acknowledge and prioritise the concerns and needs of minority Thai-Muslim

communities that often perceived themselves as neglected. To increase Their presence, Their Majesties the King and the Queen travelled to the South to reside in the royal palace located in the province of Narathiwat. The palace was built with the intention of enabling Their Majesties to be closer in proximity to the Thai Muslim communities.

Having a residence in the south enabled Their Majesties to conveniently meet with local communities in order to best understand their concerns and needs. Such knowledge had then eventually formed the basis of various royal development projects aimed at improving the lives and welfare of Thai-Muslims in Thailand.

The late King Bhumibol's work approach was based on the principles of "Understand, Access, and Develop", which stressed that all parties concerned, including government officials and local communities, must be on the same page in understanding the issues. This would enable issues to be resolved more efficiently and pave way for development. In practice, it is an approach that focuses on citizens' participation.

For example, some areas in the Southern provinces faced challenges such as drought and soil conditions of high salinity and acidity content. His Majesty's solution was to provide specific species of plants and animals that were suitable for breeding in drought and poor soil conditions. This enabled agricultural workers to be able to feed themselves and have regular sources of income.

The worldly King's public embrace of minority



cultures and values sets a strong example for all Thais to respect cultural and religious differences. This ultimately propelled the nation towards greater tolerance and pluralism.

His Majesty had recognised the importance of forging personal ties with local representatives in the South. The most famous example was his friendship with Uncle Wahdeng PuTeh or “PohDeng”, known as the “Friend from Saiburi.” Uncle Wahdeng was a local fruit farmer whom His Majesty first met during a trip to the Saiburi district in Pattani Province in 1992. His Majesty was impressed with Uncle Wahdeng’s humility, honesty and local knowledge, and asked Uncle Wahdeng to show Him around the area, asking him about the needs of the local communities. During subsequent visits to the Southern Provinces over the years, His Majesty would always request to meet with “PohDeng”, and “PohDeng” would often send the best produces from his fruit orchards as gifts to His Majesty. Their friendship continued until Uncle Wahdeng passed away peacefully in 2012 at the age of 96.

His Majesty visited local religious schools and masjids across the country and made personal contributions from His own funds to support their activities and causes. The King also provided medical supplies and sent royal doctors to visit and treat ill patients.

His Majesty encouraged the Thai Government to build a Central Masjid in each of the Southern Border Provinces and then personally attended

the opening of each Central Masjid. In 1990, when His Majesty went to reside at His seaside palace in Hua Hin, He visited a local Muslim community in an area that had a small masjid, the Masjid Nurul Ehsan, which was built on a very small plot of land. Upon being made aware of the needs of the local community, His Majesty



granted additional land to the community for the masjid. Subsequently in 1996, His Majesty made contributions from His own funds for the construction of a new Masjid Nurul Ehsan on the same site, which was completed in 1999.

Last but not least, His Majesty saw great importance in improving the education system for Thai Muslims. His Majesty appealed to educators and relevant agencies to consider ways and means for providing a strong religious education with a methodical curriculum so that Thai Muslims can thrive in society.

The late King Bhumibol also initiated development projects to assist Thai Muslims in their career development. Development Centers were set up in various parts of the country, including the Phetchaburi and Narathiwat provinces, enabling the once impoverished populations to have an opportunity to become self-sustainable and improve their welfare.

The late King’s personal attention and care to the Thai Muslim community over the years, along with the support for the various Royal initiatives and projects for the community, were testament to His respect and support for Islam and devotion to all His subjects who practice the faith. Such was reflected by not only the reverence that Thai Muslims have towards His Majesty and the Thai Royal Family, but also the acknowledgement and respect from Islamic communities in other countries including Saudi Arabia and Iran. The beloved King Bhumibol Adulyadej’s passing on 13 October 2016 brought together in unity Thailand’s Muslim population and the rest of Thailand to embrace their common love by mourning their revered King, whose generosity, self-sacrifice, wisdom and grace had touched the hearts of all Thais.



BCH is one of the leading chain of hospitals in the world: Mr. Chalerm



BCH is one of the leading chain of hospitals in the world said by Mr. Chalerm Harnphanich, CEO BCH during a meeting with Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi Editor, CEO & Publisher of "Diplomatic Focus" Islamabad. Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi visited to Bangkok Chain Hospital Public Company Limited (BCH) and said that we heard about the facilities and services of BCH in Pakistan and its great pleasure for me to have visit to BCH.

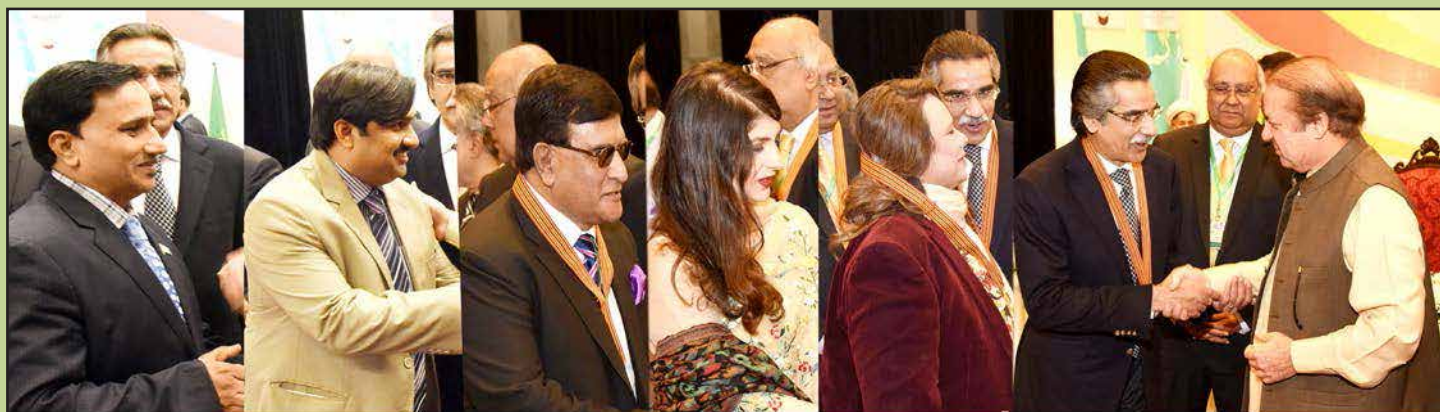
Mr. Chalerm Harnphanich briefed the delegation about the services and structure and said that BCH is committed to provide full range of medical services with advanced medical technology, high quality and professional care to ensure our good service and care. Bangkok Chain Hospital Public Company Limited (BCH) has listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand since 10th November 2004. In 2014, BCH operates 11 hospitals within the network, under 3 brands including:

- World Medical Center (1 hospitals), targeting premium market and international patients
- Kasemrad brand (6 hospitals), targeting mid – income patients
- Karunvej brand (4 hospitals), targeting social security patients

Mr. Chalerm Harnphanich added that we put our trust in the health service. The hospital is one of my patients. We work with partners to optimize various aspects of creative success together and to develop the potential of the work. He further added that we are creating a good relationship to society and the community. The company focuses on corporate culture in the workplace by encouraging employees to conduct values.

Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi appreciated the BCH. The delegation was accompanied by Thai ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Suchart Liengsaengthong.

PM Nawaz Sharif being presented with a souvenir by President FPCCI, Abdul Rauf Alam at the occasion of 40th FPCCI Award Ceremony at Pak China Center Islamabad. Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif also awarded the best performance exporters of Pakistan at the occasion.



Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, Chairman Baig Group receiving FPCCI Excellence Award 2016 from Mian Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister Punjab, also seen Iftikhar Ali Malik, S.M.Muneer, Abdul Rauf Alam, President FPCCI at a function held at Chief Minister House Lahore.

Exhibition of the Original Paintings of Eqbal Mehdi Organized by Karachi Marriott



Karachi Marriott organized an exclusive exhibition of the original paintings of late Eqbal Mehdi. The Exhibition was organized in the brand new Governor Hall. Distinguished dignitaries who were invited to the exclusive exhibition were delighted to see the detailed work of the late artist. Mr. Harmut Noak, Regional General Manager, Karachi Marriott Hotel, briefed the guests about the life of Eqbal Mehdi and how is painted all these paintings while staying at the hotel in the year 1980-81.





President Gold Cup International Squash Tournament: Nine International players have entered

By Sports Desk

Pakistan has ruled the world of Squash over three decades. The legacy brought by legendary players like Qamar Zaman, Jahangir and Jansher Khan requires to be maintained. For this, Pakistan Air Force along with Serena Hotels are jointly working to keep country's flag high in the world.

PSF arranged many squash events during the year 2016. In the first half of the year an International Tournament for Women was organized followed by FMC International at

Lahore and Parco Roshan Khan Open at Karachi with US\$ 15,000/- prize money each and the Pakistan – Egypt Squash Series at PAF Museum Karachi for which our efforts have been lauded worldwide.

Subsequently from September onwards, PSF has also hosted three International Tournaments the COAS International, CNS International and CAS International, at Islamabad with US\$ 25,000 prize money each. A handsome number of around 50 international players from abroad, also participated. As a result of these tremendous efforts, Pakistani

players have given some outstanding results by winning Gold Medal at Asian Senior as well as World Junior Team Championships along with getting title of PSA International Tournament at Islamabad.

PSF in collaboration with Serena Hotels under the banner of Sports Diplomacy is organising President Gold Cup International Squash Tournament at Mushaf Squash Complex, Islamabad. A group of nine International players from Egypt, Hong Kong, Kuwait and Malaysia have entered.

Pakistan's Bilateral Relations Thru Diplomatic Focus 2016



President Mamnoon Hussain shaking hands with the President of Turkmenistan Mr. Gurbanguly Malikgulyevich Berdimuhamedov at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad on March 16, 2016.



President Mamnoon Hussain shaking hands with the President of Iran Mr. Hassan Rouhani at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad on March 26, 2016.



President Mamnoon Hussain greeting President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan upon his arrival at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad on November 16, 2016.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif shaking hands with the President of Turkmenistan Mr. Gurbanguly Malikgulyevich Berdimuhamedov at PM House, Islamabad on March 16, 2016.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif shaking hands with the President of Iran Mr. Hassan Rouhani at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad on March 25, 2016.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif shaking hands with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at PM House, Islamabad on November 17, 2016.



President Mamnoon Hussain in a one-on-one meeting with President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad on October 05, 2016.



President Mamnoon Hussain shaking hands with UN Secretary General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development Her Majesty Queen Maxima of Netherlands at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad on February 11, 2016.



President Mamnoon Hussain shaking hands with President of Mauritius Dr. Bibi Ameenah Firdaus Gurib Fakim at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad on April 18, 2016.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif held one-on-one meeting with H.E. Mr. Alexander Lukashenko, President of Belarus at PM House, Islamabad on October 05, 2016.



Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House, Islamabad on February 9, 2016.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif shaking hand with Mr. David Miliband, former British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, who called on him in New York on September 22, 2016.



President Mamnoon Hussain shaking hands with Indonesian President Joko Widodo on the sidelines of 5th Extraordinary OIC Summit on Palestine & Al-Quds Al-Sharif in Jakarta, Indonesia on March 07, 2016.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud prior to their meeting at the Royal Palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif meeting with Emir of Qatar H.H. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani at Aiwan-e-Emiri in Doha, Qatar on February 10, 2016.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif meets Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang along with delegation on the sidelines of 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 21, 2016.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev during a meeting held at Zagulba Presidential Palace, Baku Azerbaijan on October 14, 2016.



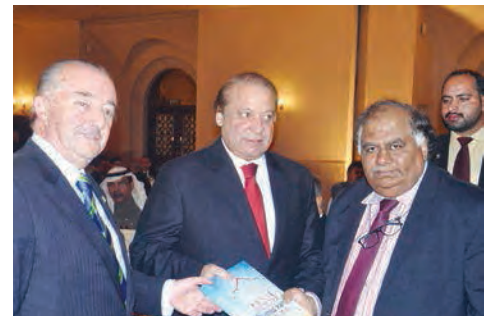
Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in meeting with President Azerbaijan Mr. Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of World Economic Forum at Davos.



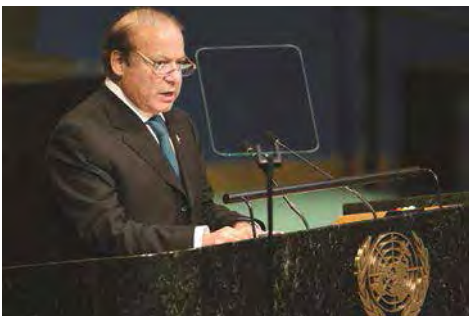
Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif shaking hand with Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs on his arrival at PM House, Islamabad on March 08, 2016.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif shaking hand with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at New York on September 20, 2016.



Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi, CEO Diplomatic Focus presenting book "Bonds of Friendship between Argentina Pakistan 1951 - 2016" to Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan.



Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif address to UN General Assembly 71st Session.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addressing the joint session in Parliament House, Islamabad November 17, 2016.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani arriving for the meeting of leaders of Pakistan, the United States and Afghanistan.

Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in a meeting with Ambassador Johannes Matyassy, Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and Pacific, Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with the Ambassador of Columbia, H.E. Juan Alfredo Pinto Saavedra in Islamabad.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with the Ambassador of Kuwait H.E. Nassar Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi in Islamabad.



Call on Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar by Mr. Jean Francois Cautain, Ambassador of European Union to Pakistan in Islamabad



Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan, H.E. Mehdi Honardoost called on Federal Minister for Commerce, Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan in Islamabad.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz in a meeting with the Ambassador of Sweden H.E. Ms. Ingrid Johansson in Islamabad.

Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus, H.E. Mr. Andrei Ermolovich called on Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan in Islamabad.



High Commissioner of Canada in Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Perry Calderwood called on Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan in Islamabad.



High level delegation of Chibna Ieb by Vice Governor of Sichuan Province Professor Yang Xingping called on Minister of State for National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination Mrs. Saira Afzal Tarar in Islamabad.



H.E. Takashi Kurai, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan called on Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister of State for Information, Broadcasting & National Heritage in Islamabad.



Ambassador of Norway, H.E. Mr. Tore Nedrebo called on MOS for it & Telecom, Anusha Rahman in Islamabad.



Mr. Irfan Siddiqui, Advisor to Prime Minister on National History and Literary Heritage in a meeting with Mr. Tarik Ahsan High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Islamabad.





Minister for Railway Saad Rafique and Minister for Human Rights Kamran Michael jointly inaugurated the Peace train at Margala Railway station in Islamabad as part of Christmas celebrations.



Fashion Race, Winter Episode 2016 bringing forth an extra ordinary display of Collection from Islamabad.

Gathered looks from the November runways where designers from Islamabad sent collections on the ramps with color-play heavily influenced by the hazy seventies and many checking off pantone's fall 2016 list.

Pakistan Fashion Industry has come a long way. There is immense amount of talent in this country. The mindset of designers and customers have transformed in the past few year for the better. We are being pushed to do better work year by year.

By Arooj Fatima

Photo by Sheikh Arif

FASHION RACE, WINTER EPISODE 2016



The World Medical Center

Your World of Health & Happiness
by Bangkok Chain Hospital PCL

www.theworldmedicalcenter.com



The World Medical Center (WMC)

The World Medical Center (WMC) is the brand for a new hospital group in the premium tertiary care category by Bangkok Chain Hospital PCL (BCH), a leading hospital company in Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) and a Forbes Asia's 200 Best Under A Billion in 2009.

The World Medical Center (WMC) is located on Chaengwattana Road, a new affluent area in the northern part of Bangkok, which is easily accessible from the city center and Suvarnabhumi International Airport via the express way system. International Medical service center is located on floor-1 on the right from the front entrance of the hospital. It provides the most convenient first contact for new patients and customers where information is given regarding registration, patient care issuing and appointments are done. The World Medical Center has multi-languages translators to be convenient for the International customers.

The World Medical Center is a Joint Commission international accreditation standard hospital and premium medical quality for patient safety. It also has the credit of being the Asia's first DNV-GL hospital for health care quality and clinical certified hospital.



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E-mail: info@theworldmedicalcenter.com

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Dr. Shahid & Associates



Dental Profiles

**What makes
Dental Profiles Different?**

At Dental Profiles a group of dentists specialized in various disciplines of dentistry, consult each other for every patient to provide specialized dental care best suited to the individual's needs.

Dental Profile is a state of the art dental health facility in Islamabad, providing high quality care in all disciplines of dentistry.

Our facility is equipped with cutting edge CBCT 3D digital radiography and intra oral cameras which substantially reduce the amount of X-ray radiation delivered to patient.

Our level of infection control strictly adheres to the international standards and recommendations.

Dr. Shahid Mahmood

B.D.S, P. Endo and C. Implantology
(University of Texas at San Antonio)
Member American Association of Endodontist.
Former Head of Dentistry,
Shifa International Hospital

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