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President of Turkmenistan



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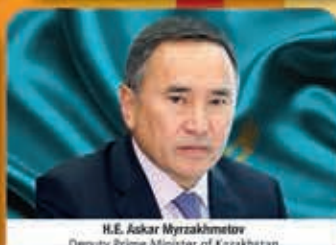
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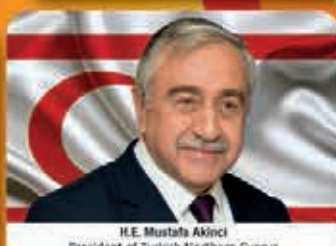
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13th ECO Summit 2017 Islamabad

"Connectivity for Regional Prosperity"



"Pakistan's strategic location at the crossroads of the Middle East has always been prized for South Asia, Central Asia and its economic potential. The current performance of Pakistan's economy is living up to its promise..."

PM Muhammad Nawaz Sharif

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**12 13th ECO Summit 2017, Islamabad
"Connectivity for Regional Prosperity"**

"Pakistan's strategic location at the crossroads of the Middle East has always been prized for South Asia, Central Asia and its economic potential. The current performance of Pakistan's economy is living up to its promise...."

**24 Pakistan willing to join Lapis Lazuli,
Central Asia-Middle East corridors**

President of Turkmenistan H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif after the conclusion of the 13th ECO Summit.

**28 Pakistan Azerbaijan to expand
cooperation in trade, S&T, Education,
defence**

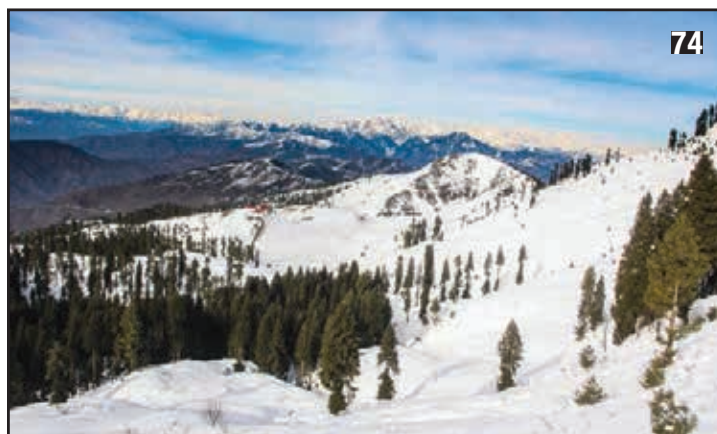
President Mamnoon Hussain and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on Tuesday agreed to expand cooperation between the two countries in the fields of trade, education, science and technology and defense

**34 PM Nawaz visit would further
deepen the time-tested, unparalleled
& historic ties between the two
brotherly countries**

"The Prime Minister's visit to Turkey and the convening of the 5th Session of HLSCC would further deepen the time-tested, unparalleled and historic ties between the two brotherly countries and would impart a strong impetus to their flourishing cooperation in diverse fields,"

**74 International skiers stunned by
Malam Jabba's sublime beauty**

Foreign skiers at a skiing championship held on Malam Jabba's slopes were left stunned by the hill station's ethereal beauty, with some calling it "a skier's paradise" and others honouring it as "one of the most beautiful slopes in the world".



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| Editor/Publisher: | Mian Fazal Elahi |
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| | Justin Plaza 3, 3411 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey-CR4 4BE |
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| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Country Director | Fazal Hussain 004540521485 |
| Copenhagen Denmark | Email: fazal1955@hotmail.com |
| Javeed Iqbal Butt | Bureau Chief Australia, Newzealand |

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| Resident Editors | |
| Eng. Moshin Ali | 1st Floor Office No 50 Gulf Plaza Madina Street P.O B ox 65454 Jeddah 21556 Cell: +966-506389895 |

Bureau Office

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Roohani Art Press, Chughtai Plaza, Fazal-e-Haq Road, Blue Area Islamabad.

Publisher

Mian Fazal Elahi, House No 167, Street 58, Sector F-11/4 Islamabad.
Tel: +92-51-2101411, 2101412, News Room: +92-51-2101413
Fax: +92-51-2101410-2101413
Mobile: +92-345-5565552, +92-322-5565552
Email: mianfazalelahi@gmail.com, diplomaticfocus.isb.pk@gmail.com
www.diplomaticfocus.org
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Mian Fazal Elahi

Citizen's celebrated PSL final like a festival in the provincial capital as the whole nation, regardless of any party, seemed on same page by showing spirit to defeat terrorists. Civilian and military officials worked together to draw up a comprehensive plan and then implemented it in close cooperation. People from all walks of life enjoyed the moments, especially youths and children celebrated the day. With such type of events, Pakistan can become the choice destination of investment both for the domestic and foreign investors. And now Pakistan is the best option for global investors making the economic outlook of country on an extremely positive side. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) program is a lifetime opportunity for Pakistan to catch up the economic growth even to leave behind other countries in the region. It may be described as an economic boon for Pakistan, if it is handled wisely it has the potential to completely change economic scenario of the country.

Pakistan is turning a corner and able to deliver on its regional and international hosting responsibilities.

The decision by Afghanistan to downgrade its participation in ECO and send only its ambassador to Pakistan to both the Council of Ministers meeting and the final summit is a regrettable decision. The grievances of Kabul regarding Pakistan are well known, but the ECO is a regional gathering and Pakistan was only the host. Indeed, on a day that Kabul was once again attacked by the Afghan Taliban, the absence of President Ashraf Ghani, even his foreign minister, from the Islamabad summit sent a signal that the Afghan government is in a mood to play spoiler rather than seek cooperative solutions. Pakistan has legitimate security concerns and Pak-Afghan border management is a vexing problem that will require years of trust-building to resolve. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has been consistent in his message of regional peaceful coexistence, connectivity and trade.

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



Mian Assad Ullah

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Envoys designate of Morocco and Kyrgyzstan presenting their Credentials to President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad

Envoys designate of Morocco, Kyrgyzstan present credentials to President Mamnoon Hussain

Envoys designate of Morocco and Kyrgyzstan presented their credentials to President Mamnoon Hussain during credentials ceremony at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Later, ambassadors separately called on the president.

Speaking on the occasion, the president said Pakistan was desirous of further promoting friendly and brotherly relations with all countries particularly with its neighbours for peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

He said Pakistan's economy was improving and the country offered great investment and business opportunities and urged the foreign investors to avail them by investing in different areas.

He said Pakistan was committed to eliminate terrorism and extremism and emphasized that action against terrorists 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. He also wished the newly appointed envoys a comfortable and pleasant stay in Pakistan.

The envoys who presented their credentials included Mohamad Karmoune Ambassador-designate of Morocco to Pakistan and Erik Beishembiev Ambassador-designate of the Kyrgyz Republic to Pakistan.

CPEC is a game changer which will transform lives of billions: PM Nawaz

“Connectivity for Regional Prosperity” would provide an opportunity to emphasize the strategic benefits of CPEC for the ECO region and beyond: Yesui Zhang



Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif says China Pakistan Economic Corridor is a game changer which will transform the lives of the billions of people of the region.

He was talking to executive vice Foreign Minister of China Yesui Zhang, who called on him in Islamabad. Nawaz Sharif thanked the Chinese Government for their support on the NSG and at the UNSC 1267 Committee. The Prime Minister said that Pakistan and China are iron brothers and friendship with China is the cornerstone of our foreign policy. He appreciated China's diplomatic and material support to Pakistan in its fight against terrorism. The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude to the leadership and brotherly people of the People's Republic of China for their all weather support that is getting stronger with each passing day and also welcomed participation of the Executive Vice Foreign Minister as a Representative of the Government of People's Republic of China in the ECO Summit on special invitation.

He said that the theme of the Summit is “Connectivity for Regional Prosperity”, which is convergent with China's One-Belt-One-Road and with our bilateral flagship initiative, China Pakistan Economic Corridor, it would provide us an opportunity to emphasize the strategic benefits of CPEC for the ECO region and beyond.

He said that he will visit China in May this year

to participate in the “Belt and Road Forum” for International Cooperation (BRF) at the invitation of President Xi Jinping.

Executive Vice Foreign Minister of People's Republic of China, Zhang Yesui called on Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Foreign Affairs, Syed Tariq Fatemi, in his office. They discussed Pakistan-China relations, ECO Summit and regional situation. Zhang is on a visit to Pakistan to participate in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Summit as the Representative of the People's Republic of China. The SAPM highlighted that the theme of ECO Summit “Connectivity for Regional Prosperity” was also convergent with China's “One Belt One Road” and with Pakistan-China flagship project of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He highlighted the huge advantages that could flow from a close cooperation between China's OBOR and the ECO Members states.

The SAPM reiterated that Pakistan and China were iron brothers and friendship with China is the corner stone of Pakistan's foreign policy. He thanked him for China's strong support against the recent spate of terrorist attacks in Pakistan. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the continued progress in bilateral relations in all fields and expressed their resolve to work towards further solidifying political relations, deepening economic bonds and security cooperation and closer people-to-people



contacts. Zhang conveyed appreciation of the Chinese Government for the special invitation to participate in ECO Summit and congratulated Pakistan on the successful holding of the Summit.

He reiterated that China attaches great importance to its relations with Pakistan, and supports its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

He thanked Pakistan for its consistent support to China on issues of its core interests. He also lauded the sacrifices rendered by Pakistan and its security forces in its fight against terrorism and extremism, which has also helped to maintain regional peace and stability.

13th ECO Summit 2017, Islamabad

25th anniversary of ECO expansion



“Pakistan’s strategic location at the crossroads of the Middle East has always been prized for South Asia, Central Asia and its economic potential. The current performance of Pakistan’s economy is living up to its promise.... The adoption of the Islamabad Declaration and the ECO Vision 2025 during this Summit will reflect the consensus and resolve of ECO Member States to collectively take on the contemporary economic challengesw.”

H.E. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif
PM of Islamic Republic of Pakistan



Special Report By
Mian Fazal Elahi



“Connectivity for Regional Prosperity”

STATEMENT BY H.E. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN INAUGURATION SESSION OF 13TH ECO SUMMIT



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif while giving opening remarks at the 13th ECO Summit held in Islamabad.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalam-o-alaikum,

On behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan, I have great pleasure in welcoming all our distinguished guests to Islamabad. It is an honor to host the 13th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization and to assume the Chair of this important regional organization.

I wish to convey my deep appreciation to H.E. President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan for ably steering the ECO since the 2012 Summit in Baku.

I would also like to thank Secretary General ECO Halil Ibrahim Acka and the entire ECO Secretariat, for the support they have extended in making this Summit a success.

I also wish to express my gratitude to our special guests from the People's Republic of China and the United Nations. The choice of our Special Guests has direct salience to the theme of this Summit.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Summit marks the 25th anniversary of the Organization's expansion. It is a welcome occasion for us to renew our commitment to the ECO's founding principles and ideals. At its heart, the ECO has always subscribed to a people-centric agenda. At this Summit, we

want to focus on greater connectivity and trade linkages amongst our countries, in order to deliver progress to the people of the ECO region.

The ECO region is not an insignificant geographical area. It represents a vast expanse of territory that is home to nearly a sixth of all humanity. Though the region has enormous potential, and accounts for 16% of the world's population, we generate only 2% of the world's trade. And, trade within the ECO region is a small fraction of our trade with the rest of the world.

These numbers are not commensurate with what we could achieve through greater integration and connectivity. They are also at variance with our rich historical legacy. This region was once synonymous with the fabled "Silk Road." It was a melting pot of civilizations; a conduit for trade and commerce, as well as a corridor for culture and ideas. We are the proud heirs of Al-Beruni, Farabi, Saadi, Rumi and Iqbal, to name just a few of our glorious ancestors.

It is now time for us to reclaim our historic role as Asia's center of economic and trade activity. Thus the theme of this Summit, "Connectivity for Regional Prosperity", is both inspired by our shared past and evidence of our commitment to a future of shared prosperity.

The ECO can be an example of regional cooperation, which touches upon and enriches the lives of our peoples. What makes the theme especially relevant is that more countries in the region are already making large investments in connectivity projects. Central Asia is fast emerging as a Trans-Eurasian land bridge. Oil and gas pipelines across deserts and mountains are linking our markets, while railroad networks are harbingers of our commitment to connectivity. But we can and should achieve even more, by pooling together our individual efforts for greater synergy. The whole is always greater than the sum of its parts.

I believe that the ECO's time has truly come. It is primed to make momentous advancement. There has never been a more opportune time to realize our dream of "Connectivity for Regional Prosperity."

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since assuming office in 2013, it has been the aim of my Government to pursue a policy of "peaceful neighborhoods." Our vision of "peace for development" has consistently guided our efforts, to help create a conducive environment in which we can all achieve our true economic and development potential. Peaceful settlement of longstanding disputes would go a long way in advancing this noble goal. There is little doubt that as we find ways to strengthen mutual cooperation, we would be experiencing shared prosperity.

Enhancing trade and promoting transport connectivity in the region and beyond, are at the core of our vision.

Perhaps no project better symbolizes Pakistan's conception of win-win cooperation through connectivity, than the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. It is gratifying that CPEC is now being recognized as a catalyst for energy infrastructure, transport connectivity and trade in the whole of South and Central Asia.

And why stop at just energy, or transport, or trade? We can and we must strive for loftier goals. Cooperation across a vast spectrum of areas – in agriculture, in culture, in education, and in science and technology – should all be on our agenda. After all, the Silk Road provided a medium for exchange of knowledge, as much as of goods.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pakistan's strategic location at the crossroads of the Middle East has always been prized

H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Halil Akca, Secretary General ECO called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.



for South Asia, Central Asia and its economic potential. The current performance of Pakistan's economy is living up to its promise. Indeed, Pakistan's economy has come to be acknowledged as one of the great success stories of recent years by global financial institutions and observers. Last year, Pakistan had the best performing stock market in South Asia and the fifth best in the world. Our economic indicators are up and pointing in the right direction. Inflation is low and GDP growth has been robust.

Pakistan not only boasts a consumer market of 200 million people, with a large and growing middle class, we will soon be providing easier, quicker and cheaper physical access to markets in the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

But returning to the theme of this Summit,

Pakistan has the location, the political stability, and, now increasingly, the physical infrastructure to achieve our common vision for making ECO a powerful economic bloc and an engine of growth. To that end, we need to work on streamlining our institutional mechanisms. The ECO Trade Agreement needs to be operationalized, while respecting and accommodating each Member State's interests and concerns.

Meaningful trade in the region cannot take place without better cooperation on transport infrastructure among Member States. The existence of efficient trade, transit and transport corridors across the region will guarantee economic development and prosperity of our people. Ladies and Gentlemen,

The adoption of the Islamabad Declaration

and the ECO Vision 2025 during this Summit will reflect the consensus and resolve of ECO Member States to collectively take on the contemporary economic challenges.

Sustained focus on the key areas identified in the Islamabad Declaration namely trade, transport and energy can lead to transformative change across the region.

Vision 2025 provides a realistic and achievable roadmap for accelerating economic integration that works to the common good of all our people.

Let us all strive towards transforming ECO's enormous potential into reality. It is up to us to seize this historic opportunity and make this region a citadel of peace, progress and prosperity.

Once again, I welcome our honourable guests to Islamabad and wish them a productive and pleasant stay.

I thank you.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif meets President of Turkey H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the 13th ECO Summit held in Islamabad.



Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of Turkey called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House, Islamabad.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in a Group photo with Heads of States/Governments and representatives of ECO member states at the 13th ECO Summit held in Islamabad.

13th ECO Summit ISLAMABAD DECLARATION

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization, gathered on the occasion of the thirteenth ECO Summit Meeting, in Islamabad under the theme “Connectivity for Regional Prosperity”, at the invitation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on the first day of March 2017, to review the objective conditions and progress in implementation of ECO programmes and projects and to exchange views on regional and global issues of common interest to the ECO Region with the aim of consolidating ECO as an organization, bolstering cooperation and building on shared values and mutual interests;

We, therefore, while:

Reiterating our political will and strong

commitment for realizing the aims and objectives of the Organization for economic development, common prosperity, regional integration and peace and stability in the ECO Region;

Celebrating the silver jubilee of the expansion of the membership of the ECO that ushered in a new era and prospects of enhanced regional cooperation for development, and Welcoming further enlargement and outreach of the Organization through full membership to the interested states, and observership to the interested states/organizations, on case to case basis, adding value to the Organization;

Reaffirming our commitment to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Treaty of Izmir, and Attaching great importance to the cooperation frameworks developed under the different agreements concluded between the Member States and the momentum created in different fields of cooperation which can underpin and complement each other for meeting the objectives of the Economic Cooperation Organization;

Recalling our commitment to the purposes



On the conclusion of his visit to Pakistan, photo album is being presented by Principal Information Officer Rao Tehsin Ali Khan to the President of Turkey H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan.



President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan being received by Federal Minister for Planning Development & Reform, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal at Nur Khan Airbase, Rawalpindi.

and principles of the UN Charter including in particular the respect for political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, development of friendly relations among nations, and pacific settlement of disputes;

Sharing our assessment of the constantly evolving global and regional environment and new developments that present multiple challenges and opportunities;

Resolving to work together, including by positioning the ECO to effectively address these challenges and to seize the opportunities for the collective benefit of the region and its people;

Noting the positive political, economic, cultural and technological developments that can facilitate the realization of the long-held dream of trans-Eurasian connectivity, including in the ECO Region;

Approaching connectivity as a dynamic concept that encompasses multiple dimensions including cyber, energy, rail, road, and ports and shipping;

Encouraging further development of educational and scientific linkages, and cultural and people to people contacts;

Underlining the significance of fully exploiting the complementarities offered by shared geography, history and culture, and the comparative advantages and diversity of resources of member states to bring about greater connectivity and economic integration in the ECO Region;

Appreciating the value and importance of a steady and flexible approach to regional connectivity and integration that enables Member States to contribute to, be part of and benefit from the various connectivity and integration programs in a gradual and

progressive manner according to their respective state of preparedness;

Recognizing the existence of various connectivity initiatives in the ECO region, and welcoming that these projects feed into the overall vision of comprehensive ECO connectivity and integration;

Reiterating commitment to promote intra-ECO trade as an instrument of enhanced economic cooperation and revitalization in the Region;

Underlining the importance of the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the role that can be played by the ECO Member States for achieving the goals and targets set out therein and in this context Recalling that promotion of conditions for sustainable development through mobilization of economic and social potential of the ECO Region requires further strengthened cooperation and collaboration especially through enhanced trade and connectivity among the Member States in order to further strengthen the deep-rooted historical and cultural ties among the peoples of the Region;

Recognizing the importance of moderation as an approach to counter all forms of extremism and promote dialog, mutual respect, understanding and social harmony, thereby contributing towards the achievement of sustainable and inclusive development, equitable growth, stability and prosperity in the ECO Region;

Acknowledging the importance of Afghanistan for ECO Region and Reiterating our continued support to the national, regional and global efforts for reconstruction and sustainable development as well as peace and security in Afghanistan;

Welcoming the recently adopted United Nations General Assembly Resolution (A/

RES/71/222) on proclaiming International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" 2018-2028;

Welcoming the adoption of the ECO Vision 2025 as a comprehensive document outlining the core principles and areas of cooperation within ECO, and Resolving that Member States as well as ECO Secretariat, ECO Specialized Agencies and Regional Institutions will take necessary steps for implementation of ECO Vision 2025 in a timely and effective manner;

Have agreed to:

- Ensure continued and enhanced cooperation in the areas of common interest through effective, timely and result-oriented projects and programmes in the Organization.
- Undertake to implement the long-term sectoral priorities of ECO on development of transport and communication infrastructure; facilitation of trade and investment; and effective use of the region's vast energy resources and to consider ways and means to promote ECO's connectivity with other regions in these areas.
- Underscore the three core principles of ECO Vision 2025, i.e. sustainability, integration and conducive environment; and Emphasize the need to augment cooperation in the areas of trade, transport and connectivity, energy, tourism, economic growth and productivity and social-welfare and environment as identified in Vision 2025.
- Envision a more efficient and effective ECO, equipped with required capabilities and resources, to better serve the noble objectives of the Organization; and hereby Task our relevant Officials and the ECO



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and President of Iran H.E. Hassan Rouhani held a meeting after the 13th ECO Summit in Islamabad.



President of Iran H.E. Mr. Hassan Rouhani being received by Federal Minister for Safran, Lt. Gen (RET) Abdul Qadir Baloch at Nur Khan Airbase.

Secretariat to take necessary and effective measures, using inside and outside resources, to bring about necessary reforms in the Organization.

- Encourage Member States to accede to relevant agreements developed within the ECO framework in order to achieve the objectives set forth under the Treaty of Izmir and the ECO Vision 2025; and Task hereby our relevant Ministers and authorities to consider joining these agreements.
- Enhance ECO-wide connectivity in terms of transport and transit; telecommunications; cyber; and all forms of energy; as well as people-to-people exchanges, including through regional tourism arrangements.
- Welcome in this regard the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a far-reaching initiative that would act as catalyst for the development of the entire region.
- Encourage giving priority to, and cooperate on full implementation of the TTFA and its' annexes as ECO's approved and most comprehensive and well-studied Transit Transport Framework for ECO Region.
- Note that the multi-dimensional connectivity in road, rail, energy, trade and cyber and associated infrastructure and industrial development can promote integration and economic development of the wider region. And to Encourage all relevant international and regional financial institutions to actively cooperate with ECO Member States in financing the development of ECO transport corridors,

related connectivity and energy projects.

- Work to double the current level of intra-ECO trade within the next 3-5 years, including through implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and other ECO trade-related arrangements; as well as identification and elimination of physical and non-physical barriers to this end.
- Acknowledge the crucial role of financing projects on regional development, appreciate the ECO Bank's growing scope of activities in this regard and Underline the need to further strengthen the Bank through augmenting its resource base, as well as increasing its membership.
- Call for making ECO Reinsurance Company operational at the earliest and Encourage other Member States to join it.
- Enhance regional cooperation in energy sector, focusing inter alia, on energy efficiency; energy infrastructure development including oil and gas pipelines, intra-regional energy trade, particularly electricity trade; and access to affordable energy resources, including renewable energy resources by promoting green energy investment and the development of environmentally friendly energy technologies; and Task respective authorities to consider possibility of pursuing the ongoing initiative of establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market with the widest possible intra-regional power grid interconnection.
- Support the coordination of measures in the field of sustainable growth including,

inter alia, the use of environmentally friendly, renewable energy and clean energy, the conservation and efficient use of water and energy resources.

- Develop, operationalize and commercialize the ECO intra-regional transit networks as well as corridors connecting ECO Region with other regions in line with the ECO rail and road development plans, with a view to building the required infrastructure needed for bolstering trade and transport connectivity within the Region and beyond.
- Express satisfaction at the successful implementation of corridor-based strategy among the Member States, further Express appreciation for the ECO Secretariat for its active role in the execution of the TTFA.
- Stress the importance of strengthened and continued cooperation among all stakeholders to build and run information structures in order to bridge the digital divide in the region.
- Recognize that information and communication technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster economic growth, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help expedite the integration of all Member Countries into the global economy, and in this context, Welcome the joint Study undertaken by ITU and ECO on the ICT in the ECO Region, which would be



On the conclusion of his visit to Pakistan, photo album is being presented by Principal Information Officer Rao Tehsin Ali Khan to the President of Iran H.E. Hassan Rouhani.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif meets H.E. Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan at the 13th ECO Summit held in Islamabad.

presented to the 2nd ECO ICT Ministerial Meeting in Azerbaijan for its approval as well as its subsequent Action Plan.

- Develop a robust regional tourism industry, built on the vast natural endowments and cultural resources, as potential contributor to the economic growth and sustainable development of ECO Region, and to the strengthened affinities within our nations; and, therefore, Task our tourism and other related authorities to ensure that a multi-sector and multi-purpose tourism industry will be in place in the ECO Region as per ECO Vision by the end of 2025.
- Express concern about the existing unresolved conflicts in the ECO region, including Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, which hinder the economic growth and realization of the full economic potential of the region and impede the development of economic cooperation on regional as well as broader level, and Stress the importance of making increased efforts for the earliest resolution of these conflicts based on the norms and principles of international law, in particular the principles of respect to sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- Acknowledge the internationally agreed norms and principles, concerning sovereignty and Express concern over the attempts by certain quarters to threaten democracy discriminatory immigration policies by some states and use of unilateral economic sanctions and coercions by some states. Further Acknowledge the need for supporting measures to immediately address the threats to democratic governments, including coup d'états

aimed at overthrowing the democratically elected governments and constitutional orders of the Member Countries and the foreign occupation of the territories of the Member States, including economic strangulation, which undermine the role of the legitimate democratic governments in pursuing their socio-economic development and programmes.

- Recognize the inter-linkage between development, peace and security for lasting prosperity and stability in the Region and expressing grave concern over the security challenges of the region, including inter alia terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations which pose a great threat to individuals' lives and national, regional and global security, Reiterating that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnicity and expressing our resolve to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.
- Recognize that the expansion of regional cooperation has, direct or indirect, impacts on safety, prosperity and welfare of our peoples and societies, including environment and climate change, health, food security standards, disaster risk reduction and education, which continue to be on the agenda of the Organization; and Task our relevant Ministers and officials as well as ECO Secretariat to streamline these important issues and concerns in the activities/projects of the Organization.
- Support the efforts of the government of Republic of Azerbaijan aimed at promoting

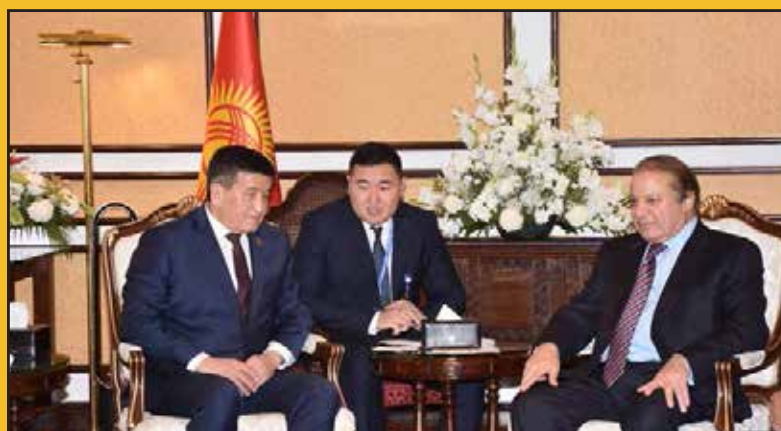
and strengthening Islamic solidarity among Muslim States and in this regard note with appreciation that proclamation of 2017 as the Islamic Solidarity Year in

Azerbaijan by the President of Republic of Azerbaijan. To this end, Call Member States to actively participate in this event to be organized within the framework of the Islamic Solidarity Year in Azerbaijan, as well as in the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games and 4th World Forum on Inter-Cultural Dialogue to be held in May 2017 in Baku.

- Take note of the establishment of Islamic Organization for Food Security aimed at the developing cooperation among ECO Member States in agriculture.
- Welcome the "International Day of Nowruz" as a factor contributing to the strengthening of friendship between nations, and in this context, urge the Member States to actively participate in the celebration and preparation of joint events.
- Acknowledge the important role that can be played by the National Parliaments of the Member States in giving more effect to the agreed frameworks within the ECO and Welcome the offer by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 2nd Parliamentary Conference of Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization (PAECO) at Islamabad in 2017.
- Recognize the important role of the small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) in the economic growth of the Member States and the Region as a whole and Task our relevant authorities to undertake necessary measures to strengthen the SMEs, including those that enhance women entrepreneurship and knowledge based enterprises.
- Ensure that the existing regional arrangements and programmes in ECO to combat the menace of drugs and transnational organized crimes, including, inter alia, human trafficking, are in place and continue to function and that effective regional mechanisms for cooperation in law enforcement, judicial issues, capacity building, as well as other relevant areas



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif meets H.E. Askar Myrzakhmetov, Deputy Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan at 13th ECO Summit held in Islamabad.



Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif after the 13th ECO Summit here at Islamabad.

are established.

- Renew our strong desire for a secure, prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan, and recalling our recent commitments made in the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, Taskour relevant authorities and the ECO Secretariat to develop a comprehensive ECO advocacy programme for Afghanistan in the upcoming “ECO Special Conference on Afghanistan” to be held in May 2017 in Kabul.
- Express support to the implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/71/222) on International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development” 2018-2028, adopted on December 21, 2016, and Instruct the relevant authorities as well as the ECO Secretariat to consider this issue in the framework of the activities and projects of the Organization.
- Appreciate the initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic to host 1st and 2nd World Nomad Games on 8-14 September 2014 and 3-8 September 2016, respectively, and Encourage Member States to actively participate in the 3rd Games scheduled for 2018, which will contribute to the cooperation between Member States.
- Welcome the International Exhibition EXPO 2017 to be hosted in Astana, Kazakhstan from 10th June to 10th September 2017 and OIC First Summit on Science and Technology to be hosted in Astana, Kazakhstan on 10th -11th September 2017, and Encourage Member States to actively participate in these Events.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif while giving opening remarks at the 13th ECO Summit held in Islamabad.

President Mamnoon Hussain hosted a State Banquet in honor of Heads of States/Government participating in the ECO Summit here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was present on the occasion. President Mamnoon Hussain received the worthy dignitaries at the main entrance of the Aiwan-e-Sadr. On the occasion, children clad in traditional dress presented bouquets to the visiting dignitaries.

Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning & Development Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for SAFRON Abdul Qadir Baloch, Minister for Science & Technology Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs and senior officials were also present on the occasion.

During the State Banquet, tunes of folk music of Pakistan were played and before the departure of worthy guests band performance was also presented which was appreciated by visiting leaders and dignitaries.



First Lady Begum Mahmooda Mamnoon Hussain, Begum Kalsoom Nawaz, First Lady of Republic of Turkey Mrs. Emine Erdogan and First Lady of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Mrs. Meral Akinci during luncheon hosted in honour of visiting dignitaries at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. Minister for Information, Broadcasting & National Heritage Maryam Aurangzeb is also present.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif while giving opening remarks at the 13th ECO Summit held in Islamabad.

CONCLUDING REMARKS OF **Muhammad Nawaz Sharif** PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN, AT 13TH ECO SUMMIT

Dear Excellencies, Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
It gives me great pleasure to bring to closure the 13th ECO Summit. I would like to express my profound gratitude to all the participating Presidents, Prime Ministers, Leaders of the Delegations, Observers and Summit's Special Guests for their kind presence. Your participation, brothers, has ensured the success of our Conference. Insightful comments and thought provoking views shared by all of you, have indeed added value to our deliberations. Being a founding member of the organization, Pakistan is committed to ECO objectives. Our Summit has underscored collective desire for regional integration. ECO initiatives demand commitment and tangible actions for achieving desired goals. The Summit provided us with an opportunity

to reaffirm our collective commitment to progress and prosperity for the ECO region. It also allowed us to identify new areas of cooperation while cementing the progress on matters currently under process. I believe that the ECO region has enormous potential for enhancing regional cooperation, based on the solid foundation of commonality of interests, economic complementarities, common cultural heritage and geographical proximity. Located at the crossroads of important regions, the ECO region has both the potential and the capacity to function as a bridge between North and South, Europe and Asia. Its favorable geo-economic location can be better utilized for the development and prosperity of the region. Peace is essential for sustainable development as has been highlighted by my distinguished

brothers and colleagues. I would also like to underscore the importance of solidarity within the Islamic world, to address the challenges that confronts the adherents of Islam.

My government's commitment to a peaceful neighborhood has been repeatedly demonstrated. To this end, peaceful settlement of longstanding disputes, like Jammu and Kashmir and alleviating the sufferings of the Kashmiri people would greatly help in advancing the goals of stability and development of the entire region.

The successful holding of the Summit is a manifestation of the desire and commitment of the Member states to transform ECO into a vibrant regional block.

It is also a testament to Pakistan's commitment to act as a harbinger of positive changes and meaningful development in the region.

In wishing the organization sustained everlasting progress, I earnestly hope that the member-states will continue to work in harmony for the continued prosperity of our peoples. Thank you.



On conclusion of his visit to Pakistan, photo album is being presented by Principal Information Officer Rao Tehsin Ali Khan to the H.E. Askar Myrzakhmetov, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan.



On the conclusion of his visit to Pakistan, photo album is being presented by Principal Information Officer Rao Tehsin Ali Khan to the H.E. Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan.



President of Tajikistan H.E. Emomali Rahmon called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif after the 13th ECO Summit at PM House, Islamabad.



On the conclusion of his visit to Pakistan, photo album is being presented by Principal Information Officer Rao Tehsin Ali Khan to the President of Tajikistan H.E. Emomali Rahmon.



First lady of Republic of Turkey Mrs. Emine Erdogan and First lady of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Mrs. Meral Ankinici called on First lady Begum Mahmooda Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. Begum Kalsoom Nawaz and Minister for Information, Broadcasting & National Heritage Maryam Aurangzeb are also present.



First lady Begum Mahmooda Mamnoon Hussain and Begum Kalsoom Nawaz in a group photo with First lady of Republic of Turkey Mrs. Emine Erdogan and First lady of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Mrs. Meral Akinci at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.



A New Era In Pakistan-Turkey Relationship

By KASWAR KLASRA

On November 17, 2016, there was pin drop silence in Pakistan's Parliament as the country's most respectable guest rose to deliver a historic address to the parliament. He was none other than Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"Honorable National Assembly Speaker, Honorable Chairman of the Senate, esteemed Members of the National Assembly and Senate, dear brothers and sisters, I would like to extend to you my most heartfelt greetings, affection, fondness and respect on behalf of myself, my delegation, my country and my people. I brought wholehearted salaam to you from Turkey," his voice echoed in the parliament. It was the third time that Mr Erdogan had done so, a record for any foreign dignitary.

Hundreds of thousands across Pakistan were glued to television sets at home, offices and

restaurants to listen to their special guest.

Led by Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, the most popular prime minister in the history of Pakistan, government had pulled out all the stops for the two-day visit by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Pakistan.

With an increasingly aggressive geopolitical environment in the South Asia region, Pakistan needs to sustain and deepen its ties with nations with whom it has traditionally enjoyed stable alliances. And Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif played his cards wisely to inculcate into Erdogan's mind that Pakistan, a country of 200 million people, was eager to take the Pakistan-Turkey friendship to new horizons. Erdogan's two-day visit to Pakistan laid the foundation for transforming the friendship into a strategic relationship.

Three months later, when Sharif landed at Esenboga International Airport, he was warmly welcomed by Turkish authorities. It was the

beginning of a new era in Pakistan-Turkey relationship. His three-day visit to Ankara played an important role in boosting Pakistan-Turkey bilateral relations. It is important to note that Sharif visited the Turkish Parliament "to reaffirm Pakistan's unequivocal support and solidarity" with the government and people of Turkey against the failed coup attempt in Turkey on July 15, 2016.

Widely known as having strong nerves, Sharif's government was toppled in October 1999 due to a military coup. He had to spend years in exile until the people of Pakistan voted his for party to secure majority in the 2013 general elections, which resulted in Sharif becoming Pakistan's third time Prime Minister. Both Sharif and Erdogan have at least one thing in common—both have had serious problems with the military.

During his visit to Turkey, Prime Minister of Pakistan won the hearts of the government and



Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of Turkey called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif at PM House, Islamabad.

people of Turkey by affirming his determination to combat the Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ) network in Pakistan, stressing that Turkey's enemies are also Pakistan's enemies.

Pakistan and Turkey reaffirmed the strategic dimension of bilateral relations as Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım co-chaired the 5th Session of the Pakistan-Turkey Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) in Ankara last week.

Established in 2009, the Pakistan-Turkey High Level Cooperation Council (HLSCC) serves as a framework for consultations at the highest political level between the two sides and consists of six Joint Working Groups (JWGs) in the areas of energy; trade; banking & finance; education; communications & railways; and culture and tourism. So far 60 Agreements/MoUs have been signed under the HLSCC framework in various areas.

Analysts in Pakistan believe that the warm relationship between the two brother Islamic countries of Pakistan and Turkey not only have

touched new heights but also paved a way to form a powerful block comprised of China, Russia, Pakistan and Turkey.

There are signs that the making of some kind of a bloc, or superpower rectangle is likely in near future. In the past, Erdogan had expressed interest in joining forces with China and Russia in the SCO. However, what is preventing him from formally requesting to join the bloc is that it would disrupt Ankara's long-standing EU membership bid.

As Russia and Turkey take time to improve ties, China and Pakistan are enjoying very close and prosperous ties with Ankara. China has already brought two cold-war era foes (Pakistan and Russia) together. Well-informed sources say that China is also bringing Turkey and Russia closer.

Analysts believe if the four nations decide to formally show the world their intentions to stand by each other forming the Pakistan-China-Russia-Turkey rectangle – it would be a diplomatic, military and economic game-changer for the whole world.

Courtesy to VALUE WALK

With an increasingly aggressive geopolitical environment in the South Asia region, Pakistan needs to sustain and deepen its ties with nations with whom it has traditionally enjoyed stable alliances.



President of Turkmenistan H.E. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif after the 13th ECO Summit at PM House.

Pakistan willing to join Lapis Lazuli, Central Asia-Middle East corridors

By Mian Fazal Elahi

President of Turkmenistan H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif after the conclusion of the 13th ECO Summit. The Prime Minister thanked the Turkmen President for participating in the ongoing ECO Summit and making valuable contributions towards its deliberations. Congratulating the Prime Minister on the successful hosting of the Summit, the President of Turkmenistan

stated that he was pleased with the Summit's outcome for it has identified the path for the ECO's future progress and development.

The Prime Minister fondly recalled his very productive visit to Ashgabat in November 2016. The two leaders discussed the progress of the decisions taken during that visit and expressed satisfaction on the implementation of those decisions.

He reiterated Pakistan's strong commitment to cooperation with Turkmenistan in energy and transport infrastructure. He underscored

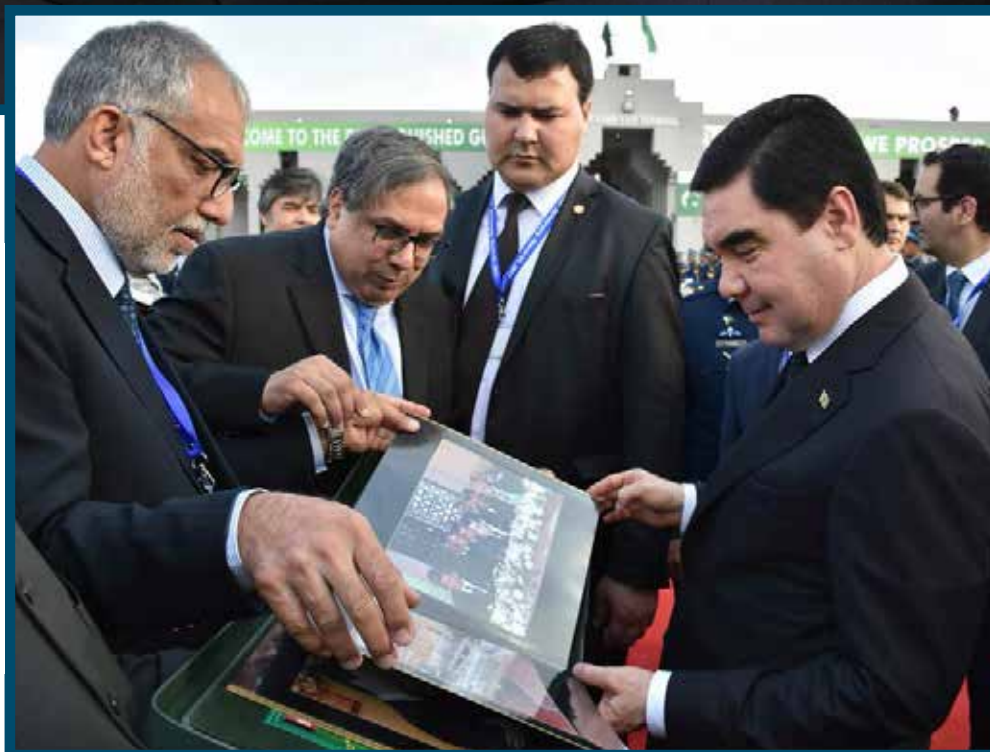
the need for early operationalization of TAPI gas pipeline project. Pakistan has already expressed willingness to join the Lapis Lazuli corridor and the Central Asia-Middle East corridor. Both sides also agreed to enhance the bilateral trade.

The Turkmen President thanked Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for the warmth and hospitality extended to him and his delegation.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif meets President of Turkmenistan H.E. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow at the 13th ECO Summit held in Islamabad.

On the conclusion of his visit to Pakistan, photo album is being presented by Principal Information Officer Rao Tehsin Ali Khan to the President of Turkmenistan H.E. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow.



President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov participated at the Summit of the ECO in Islamabad



President of Turkmenistan participated in the XIII Summit of the Heads of the States of the Economic Cooperation Organization member-countries.

Current meeting of the Heads of States and the Governments, high-rank representatives of the ECO members and international organizations will be important phase in the activity of the Organization for analyses of the past work and definition of perspective future directions.

The forum takes place in Serena Hotel. Official joint photography ceremony was held prior the start of the session.

We should not politicize this organization, should not allow deviations from its economic substance as a primary mechanism for cooperation of states seeking to implement joint projects aimed at building capacity and achieving success in the name of the general interest: President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov

Speaking at the Summit, Turkmen Leader stated that 20 years ago, on March 15, 1995, here in Islamabad there was the 3rd Meeting of the Heads of states and the Governments of the ECO member-countries, on the outcome of which the Islamabad Declaration had been adopted, where all member-countries supported the initiative of Turkmenistan to gain its status of neutrality.

President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov also declared that Turkmenistan recognize the system of energy supplies on international level as one of generating component of the global economy. Having made relative proposal and relying on the support of the United Nations, our country steadily implement this initiative.

Formation of modern transport and communication system is one of the priority directions of Turkmenistan state policy, said President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov.

The national program of Turkmenistan transport system development is connected with the expansion of regional and international cooperation in this direction, says the President, stressing that the country initiates large-scale infrastructure projects and implements them jointly with foreign partners.

Speaking of large-scale regional projects initiated by Turkmenistan, President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov noted that the establishment within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization energy and transport-transit corridors encourages the implementation of other infrastructure projects. In particular, it was noted the possibility next to pipelines being built to lay new electrical and other communications.

For implementation purposes of the decisions of the high-level conference the President of Turkmenistan called for increased cooperation in the framework of ECO, offering in this regard

20 years ago, on March 15, 1995, here in Islamabad there was the 3rd Meeting of the Heads of states and the Governments of the ECO member-countries, on the outcome of which the Islamabad Declaration had been adopted, where all member-countries supported the initiative of Turkmenistan to gain its status of neutrality: President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov

to hold a meeting of transport ministers of the member-countries of the Organization this year in Ashgabat.

President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov noted that, in December 2015, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan signed a trilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of electricity, according to which, for deliveries of the electricity from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan, the formation of appropriate infrastructure had been foreseen.

Noting that on 14-15 November, 2017 in Ashgabat seventh Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan will be held, the President said that during the forum it will be available in more details to get acquainted with the implementation of these and other projects of regional significance.

“We should not politicize this organization, should not allow deviations from its economic substance as a primary mechanism for cooperation of states seeking to implement joint projects aimed at building capacity and achieving success in the name of the general interest,” the Turkmen leader said.

As a result of high-level forum a press conference had been held.





Pakistan, Azerbaijan to expand cooperation in trade, S&T, education, defence

Special Report By Mian Fazal Elahi

President Mamnoon Hussain and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on Tuesday agreed to expand cooperation between the two countries in the fields of trade, education, science and technology and defense.

The two leaders also agreed to continue to extend support to each other on issues of Nagorno-Karabakh and Jammu and Kashmir respectively.

The President said this in a meeting with President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. President Ilham Aliyev is visiting Pakistan to attend Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Summit. The two Presidents had one-to-one meeting, which was followed by delegation level interaction. Speaking on the occasion, President Ilham Aliyev underlined the need to impress upon the world that Islam is a religion of peace.

He called for initiating joint ventures in the fields of textile, agricultural and appliances. President Aliyev said that his country will hold Islamic solidarity sports this year.

President Mamnoon Hussain said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan will continue to work together for regional peace, progress and prosperity.

President Mamnoon Hussain stressed upon the need to further enhance the volume of bilateral trade. He stated that Azeri investors have an excellent opportunity to benefit from



President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev being presented a bouquet by a child clad in traditional dress upon his arrival at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

Pakistan's liberal investment policy and its big market.

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said that Pakistan was his second home and his country is keen to expand cooperation with Pakistan in various sectors. He stated that Azerbaijan and Pakistan will work together for regional progress and development. President Aliyev said that both countries share similar views on regional and international issues.

The visiting dignitary thanked President Mamnoon Hussain for according warm welcome to him and to his delegation and said that his country is keen to benefit from Pakistan's expertise in different sectors.

Earlier, upon arrival, President Ilham Aliyev was warmly received by President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. On the occasion, children clad in traditional dress presented bouquets to the visiting dignitary.

The Azeri delegation included Minister for Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov, Advisor to President on Foreign Affairs Navruz Mammadov, Minister for Economy Shahin Mustafayev, Minister for Energy Natig Aliyev and Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Ali Fikrat Oglu Alizada.



President Mamnoon Hussain welcoming President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev upon arrival at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.





Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan led their respective sides in the delegation level talks held at PM House, Islamabad.

Pakistan & Azerbaijan entered in new era of bilateral relations

By Mian Fazal Elahi

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met with Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

President Ilham Aliyev thanked Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for high hospitality. The head of state recalled Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's successful visit to Baku.

They hailed the high level of friendly and brotherly relations between the two countries. The sides discussed Azerbaijan-Pakistan political ties, and stressed the importance of mutual support in international organizations.



President of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev being received by Minister for Defence Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain at Nur Khan Airbase.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif escorts H.E. Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan on arrival at PM House, Islamabad.



They emphasized that Azerbaijan and Pakistan show resoluteness in supporting each other's fair positions on the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Kashmir problem. President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif discussed specific projects in the fields of defense and defense industry. They reached agreement on Azerbaijan's importing modern defense industry products from Pakistan. The sides noted the significance of increasing trade

between the two countries. They said an Azerbaijani export mission consisting of nearly 20 companies visited Pakistan this month in order to increase exports from Azerbaijan to Pakistan. The President of Azerbaijan and the Prime Minister of Pakistan discussed energy cooperation issues, describing today's signing of an agreement on energy cooperation between the two countries as a successful step. They also discussed humanitarian and cultural

ties. President Ilham Aliyev thanked Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for the high-level organization of the Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization. The Azerbaijani President and the Pakistani Prime Minister then were joined by their delegations for an expanded meeting. The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan then signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of energy.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan witness the MoU signing ceremony. Mr. Natiq Aliyev, Minister of Energy of Azerbaijan and Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Minister for Petroleum & Natural Resources of Pakistan signed the Inter Government Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Energy at PM House, Islamabad.

Regional players unhappy with CPEC: PM Nawaz

Pakistan wants peaceful relations with India: PM



By Monitoring Desk

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has expressed that the US and west were not conspiring against the multi-billion dollars CPEC however some regional powers were unhappy with the project.

Talking to newsmen in Ankara on the final day of his three-day official visit, he shrugged off any conspiracy hatched by western powers and claimed some of them were keen to join game changer China-Pakistan economic corridor.

‘Turkish participation in the CPEC along with Central Asian states would give a boost to the project’ said Nawaz Sharif.

He expressed that his future vision was to establish linkages with the Central Asian



republics from Khunjarab to China to Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

Regarding Pak-Afghan relations, he opined that Pakistan was helping Afghanistan in bringing stability and peace and was still prepared to do the same.

‘Peaceful Afghanistan was in the interest of Pakistan and the region’ he reiterated.

The premier maintained that Pakistan believed in decency and never responded to Afghan allegations in the same coin and refrained from using obnoxious language about it.



22ND MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE ECO

The COM adopted the ECO Vision 2025

The Council of Ministers (COM) of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) held its 22nd meeting in Islamabad on 28 February 2017.

The Meeting chaired by H.E. Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, was attended by the Foreign Ministers and Representatives of the ECO Member States and Observers. Representatives of International Organizations also attended the COM as Special Guests. The Secretary General of ECO, Mr. Halil Ibrahim Akca represented the ECO Secretariat.

The Meeting deliberated the progress made since the last COM. Secretary General Akca briefed the Council on the recent activities of the Secretariat and progress made in various fields, inter alia, trade and investment; transport & communications; agriculture and food security; energy and environment; and international relations.

The Meeting also discussed the developments of ECO since its expansion and exchanged views on the possible reforms needed for keeping pace with the evolving requirements of regional cooperation.

The COM adopted the ECO Vision 2025 as

recommended by the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM). The Vision document focuses on sectoral priorities of the Organization and serves as a roadmap/guideline for the medium-term success of the Organization.

The COM recommended to the Summit adoption of the Islamabad Declaration 2017. The Declaration focuses on the Summit's theme "Connectivity for Regional Prosperity" besides

the salient points of cooperation among the members of ECO in the fields of connectivity, trade, transport, energy etc.

The meeting participants renewed their commitment to promote regional economic integration among the ECO member states and resolved to play an active role for the realization of the Organization's aims and objectives.



Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz chairing the 22nd ECO Council of Ministers meeting in Islamabad.



PM Nawaz visit would further deepen the time-tested, unparalleled & historic ties between the two brotherly countries

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visit Turkey and participated in the 5th Session of the Pakistan-Turkey High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC).

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The premier, who was received at the airport by Turkish sports minister, accompanied by Begum Kalsoom Nawaz, Minister for Petroleum Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Minister for Commerce Khurram Dastgir and PM's Special Assistant on Foreign Affairs Tariq Fatemi.

"The Prime Minister's visit to Turkey and the convening of the 5th Session of HLSCC would further deepen the time-tested, unparalleled and historic ties between the two brotherly countries and would impart a strong impetus to their flourishing cooperation in diverse

This year also marks the
70th year of
Pakistan-Turkey
Diplomatic Relations.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Begum Kalsoom Nawaz escorted by Turkish children upon arrival at Ankara.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif waving before boarding the flight after completion of official visit to Turkey.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Being seen off by Turkish Minister of Science, Industry and Technology Faruk Ozlo at the Esenboga Airport in Ankara.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif inspecting the Guard of Honour at Cankaya Palace in Ankara, Turkey.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif arriving at Atatürk's Mausoleum at Anıtkabir to lay floral wreath.

fields," a Foreign Office statement said.

PM Nawaz Sharif along with Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım co-chaired the HLSCC meeting.

A Joint Declaration issued at the conclusion of the meeting and a number of MoUs are expected to be signed.

The Pakistan premier held talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on bilateral, regional and international issues. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan hosted a family dinner in honour of the prime minister.

Turkish First Lady Emine Erdoğan and Begum Kalsoom Nawaz also joined their spouses at the dinner, held at the residence of Turkish President.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif termed Turkey his second home and said it was always a pleasure to visit this friendly and brotherly country. On the failed coup in Turkey in July 2016, the Prime Minister said that Pakistan reaffirmed solidarity with the Turkish government and nation for upholding the spirit of democracy.

He strongly condemned the 'heinous attempt' against democracy and said that Pakistani nation had all prayers for the 248 Turkish martyrs who lost their lives for their motherland.

He said the Turkish nation's stance stood "mightier than the roaring tanks and guns" and their sacrifice would be remembered.

Calling the Turkish prime minister "my brother", Nawaz Sharif said they together held a very productive session of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC), with focus on joint commitment to stronger partnership.

He expressed satisfaction that the friendship of Pakistan and Turkey friendship was flourishing with time and the two countries had excellent cooperation in education, energy, culture and defence.

He hoped that the Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding Agreements and MoUs signed would further contribute to strengthening of relations between Pakistan and Turkey.

Nawaz Sharif said Pakistan and Turkey were celebrating 70 years of their diplomatic relations, which he said would further intensify

and enrich the people-to-people relationship.

He lauded the leadership of Turkey for their support on the Kashmir issue and said Pakistan stood by Turkey on the issue of Cyprus.

He also thanked Turkey for its principle position on strategic stability in South Asia and said that Pakistan was committed for peaceful neighbourhood including having friendly relations with India.

Nawaz Sharif stressed the need to intensify joint efforts to combat Islamophobia. "Pakistan and Turkey are committed to global peace and together we can work for peace to make the world a better place".

PM Sharif also visited the Turkish Parliament to reaffirm Pakistan's unequivocal support and solidarity with the Government and people of Turkey against the failed coup attempt in Turkey.

A bilateral road transport agreement signed between Pakistan and Turkey in 2003 is likely to become operational this year, it was decided after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif reached Ankara.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Begum Kalsoom Nawaz hosted by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and First Lady Emine Erdogan at Presidential Palace Ankara.

The second meeting of Pakistan-Turkey joint commission on transit system was held under the framework of bilateral road transport agreement between Pakistan and Turkey signed in June 15, 2003.

Turkey will be assisting for the road infrastructure project while Turk bank will finance for the 147 kilometre Quetta-Taftan road.

An optic fibre will be laid connecting Pakistan, Iran and Turkey with China.

Both sides discussed various issues of mutual interest for strengthening bilateral relations in the fields of roads and transit system.

In recent years the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Turkey have witnessed remarkable growth in economic partnership, defence collaboration, and growing educational and cultural links.

This year also marks the 70th year of Pakistan-Turkey Diplomatic Relations. Nawaz Sharif claimed that his visit to Turkey was significant in strengthening bilateral ties and economic prospects.



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visiting Turkish Parliament that was damaged during failed coup at Ankara.



5th MEETING OF PAKISTAN TURKEY HIGH LEVEL STRATEGIC COOPERATION COUNCIL

“JOINT DECLARATION ON PAKISTAN-TURKEY STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP FOR PEACE AND PROSPERITY”

By M.Saeed Yousafzai, News Desk

Reaffirming close, friendly and brotherly ties which are deeply rooted in history and a shared culture;

Desirous of giving further impetus to the already existing strategic cooperation between two countries, by taking concrete and significant steps in all areas of bilateral cooperation;

Underlining the common vision of both countries for establishing peace, stability and prosperity in their region;

Condemning in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks in both countries, and expressing condolences at the loss of precious lives as a result of such heinous attacks;

Reiterating their common resolve to fight the scourge of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as well as the threat of extremism, and to support the relevant initiatives in this regard at regional and international platforms;

Reiterating strong condemnation of the heinous coup attempt in Turkey on 15 July 2016, paying tribute to the brave and resilient

Turkish people who stood resolutely in defence of democracy against the forces of darkness;

Expressing firm resolve to continue their strong mutual support to each other on issues of core national interest, and in defence of the peace and prosperity of the two nations;

Taking note of the commitments made in the ‘Joint Declaration on the Future Directions of Pakistan-Turkey Strategic Relationship’ of 17 November 2016;

Recalling all the previous Joint Declarations signed between the two sides under the framework of Pakistan-Turkey High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC), and the decisions made therein;

Expressing satisfaction at the progress achieved under the framework of the Pakistan-Turkey High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC), and endorsing the outcomes of the meetings of the Joint Working Groups of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council held in Ankara on 22 February 2017;

We, the Co-chairs of the Fifth Meeting of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council, held in Ankara, on 23 February 2017, with the

participation of Ministers and Deputy Ministers as well as other prominent dignitaries and officials have agreed as follows:

Political Cooperation:

- The High Level Strategic Cooperation Council shall continue to be the main political forum that guides bilateral relations in all fields.
- Effective implementation and follow-up of the decisions taken at the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council meetings shall be ensured. To this end, a Political Coordination Joint Working Group shall be formed between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The Political Coordination Joint Working Group shall be responsible for coordination of the activities of other Joint Working Groups.
- Intensive exchanges at the leadership level, parliamentarians, businessmen as well as civil society and media representatives shall be furthered.
- Close cooperation at regional and international fora, particularly the United Nations, the Organization of



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Turkish Binali Yildirim co-chairing 5th meeting of Pakistan - Turkey high level strategic cooperation council at Ankara.

Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and the D-8 Organization, through inter alia mutual support for joint initiatives, policies and candidacies shall be strengthened.

- In this context, remaining concerned over attempts to link Islam with terrorism, Pakistan and Turkey share the resolve to continue working together on issues of common interest, including the multilateral initiatives to combat growing trends of racism, Islamophobia, as well as discrimination based on religion and stereotyping against Muslims.
- Welcome the holding of the 13th ECO Summit on 1st March 2017 in Islamabad as it would contribute towards making ECO more effective, in the goal of realizing prosperity and development by enhancing regional cooperation and collaboration.
- The consultations covering various fields between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries shall be further intensified and broadened.
- The need for resolution of all outstanding differences between Pakistan and India, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir, through a sustained dialogue process and in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions is once more underscored.
- The need for making the United Nations Security Council more representative, democratic, transparent, effective and accountable through comprehensive United Nations Security Council reform process, based on widest possible consensus is reiterated.

Security and Defence Cooperation:

- The military cooperation between the two countries shall continue to be intensified, and be focused on joint defence production and research and development activities.
- The two sides would expeditiously complete

the work on developing a comprehensive, long-term and forward-looking framework for defence cooperation.

- Cooperation shall be enhanced to further promote global disarmament and non-proliferation objectives which will help safeguard and strengthen international as well as regional security and promote strategic stability, including in each other's respective regions. In this connection, Turkey appreciates Pakistan's announcement of adherence to the guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) which will further the global non-proliferation objective.
- Cooperation between the police agencies of the two countries shall continue to be expanded to include the capacity building and police training activities.
- Through effective cooperation in combatting against cyber-crimes and transnational organized crimes, mutual information exchange shall be developed to prevent these crimes.
- In order to effectively fight against the Fetullah Gülen Terrorist Organization/ Parallel State Structure, the cooperation and information sharing shall be enhanced.
- Existing cooperation on implementation of the Agreement on Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorization shall be strengthened, as well as the cooperation on travel documents of irregular migrants exiting from Turkey.

Energy Cooperation:

- Enhancement of cooperation in the field of energy is a priority.
- Cooperation in the fields of coal, electricity transmission and development of the electricity infrastructure shall be further advanced.
- Cooperation in the field of hydrocarbons, exploration and production, supply and

trade of petroleum products, LNG and petroleum infrastructure development shall be strengthened and cooperation between the relevant organizations shall be encouraged.

- The investments of private sector in Pakistan in the field of renewable energy resources, especially in wind and solar energy are welcome and the cooperation in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency shall be further developed.

Trade Cooperation:

- The efforts towards increasing the current trade volume between Turkey and Pakistan reflecting the level of their excellent political relations and the real potential of their respective economies shall be continued.
- Pakistan-Turkey Free Trade Agreement (FTA) which covers trade in goods, and services and investment is currently under negotiation between the two countries. Five rounds of negotiations have been held so far. Further discussions will be conducted taking into consideration the sensitivities of economies of both countries. The FTA shall be finalized within the projected timeframe. Its early conclusion will constitute an important step towards the enhancement of trade between the two countries.

Finance Cooperation:

- Cooperation in the fields of finance and banking including insurance, capital markets, anti-money laundering, budgeting, financial reporting and auditing shall be enhanced.
- Cooperation between two countries in Islamic finance shall be furthered.
- Exchange of information and experiences between Pakistan Stock Exchange and Borsa Istanbul shall be encouraged.
- The development projects in the

government of Pakistan's priority sectors will be carried out under US \$ 300 million credit line on terms and conditions as may be agreed upon by the two sides".

Transportation and Communication Cooperation:

- As the number of passengers travelling between two countries is growing welcomingly, necessary arrangements shall be made by increasing the frequency of flights to meet the passenger demand.
- Islamabad – Tehran – Istanbul (ITI) Container Train Line shall be kept open and matters regarding operation of the train line shall continue to be discussed at the high level working group established for this purpose.
- The efforts to strengthen the cooperation in road transportation shall be furthered within the framework of the meeting of Joint Commission on Road Transportation that took place in Islamabad on 26-27 July 2016.
- The cooperation between the postal administrations of two countries shall be intensified to include the fields of e-trade, postal payment systems and to increase the postal dispatches.
- "Turk Telecom International" shall continue to cooperate with its Pakistani counterparts to develop the telecommunication infrastructure between two countries.

Development Cooperation:

- The projects between TIKa, which has a Program Coordination Office in Islamabad, and its Pakistani counterparts on development of basic education capabilities, water supply and hygiene, enhancement of production infrastructures, capacity building and enhancement in vocational training and health sectors, development of administrative and physical infrastructures shall be continued.
- Combating the adverse effects of climate change and global warming, cooperation regarding sustainable use of water resources, combating desertification, achieving land degradation neutrality and sustainable land management shall be the main areas in strengthening cooperation in the field of preservation of the environment.
- Housing Development Administration (TOKI) shall provide necessary assistance to the relevant Pakistani authorities in the field of development of social housing projects, with technical expertise, experience sharing and exchange of experts.

Agriculture Cooperation:

- The Action Plan prepared by the Pakistan-Turkey Agriculture Executive Committee shall continue to be implemented and the activities envisaged in the Plan shall be expedited.

Education and Science Cooperation:

- Interaction between universities and academic institutions shall be promoted and in this regard, collaboration on higher education scholarships shall be continued.
 - Turkish Maarif Foundation, with support and cooperation of the Pakistani authorities, will contribute to the development of relations in the field of education between two countries through opening and running schools in Pakistan.
 - Exchange of information on support and incentives for research and development programs implemented in both countries, enhancement of cooperation in these areas and development of joint projects on technological fields that are of primary importance for both countries shall be promoted.
 - In order to develop the cooperation in the field of science, TUBITAK and Pakistan Science Foundation shall commence bilateral cooperation for funding of projects in 2017.
 - In the light of the "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation Between The Foreign Service Training Centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and the Foreign Service Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan", signed on 25 October 2009, cooperation in the field of training of diplomats by encouraging participation in their existing training programs; organizing bilateral short term programs and study visits for the diplomats of both sides, exchange of information, best practices, curricula, documentation, teaching material and conference speakers as appropriate, shall be fostered.
 - Both sides shall work towards recognizing degrees and diplomas within the framework of the laws and regulations of their countries and exchange necessary information on the subject.
- ### Cultural and Tourism Cooperation:
- On the occasion of 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Pakistan, various cultural activities will be held in both countries throughout 2017.
 - On the occasion of 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations

between Pakistan and Turkey, a joint commemorative stamp will be issued.

- Cultural relations between the two countries shall be strengthened through Yunus Emre Cultural Centers which are to commence functions in Karachi and Lahore as well as Pakistani Cultural Centers which are to be established in Turkey.
- Organizations including art and art exhibitions (except for those of historical heritage), festivals, meetings and conferences which promote cultural events with the participation of cultural delegations shall be supported.
- Visits of experts in the fields of archaeology and museums as well as conservation and restoration of archaeological sites, historical sites, historical monuments, museums and conservation laboratories shall be mutually organized.
- Translation and publication of classical and contemporary literary works shall be mutually promoted.
- In order to strengthen the cooperation in the field of tourism the meetings of "Joint Tourism Commission" shall be held annually.
- Strengthening cooperation in the field of press and information, in this context organization of mutual activities in the field of press and information with the participation of both countries' media institutions and members shall be promoted. Designation of permanent representatives from state agencies as well as private media outlets shall be encouraged.
- Renewal of the Cooperation Protocols among Turkish Radio Television Corporation (TRT), Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) and Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) shall re-establish the necessary framework for further cooperation in the field of press and information.

Follow-Up

- The seven Joint Working Groups of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council shall continue their work to develop specific programmes and projects.
- In this regard, the Joint Working Groups, will meet before the meetings of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council at least two times in Ankara, in Islamabad, or through video conference.
- The next meeting of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council shall be held in Islamabad in 2018. The dates shall be agreed upon through diplomatic channels.

MESSAGE

PM Muhammad Nawaz Sharif,
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN



Pakistan Navy Multinational Exercise AMAN-17

I wish to extend a very warm welcome to all the participants who have travelled from across the seas to participate in Multinational Exercise AMAN-17. I am glad that through AMAN series of Exercises, Pakistan Navy has been able to act as a bridge in the maritime domain by bringing together the Navies of East and West on one platform.

Pakistan's geo-strategic prominence capitalized with the launching of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, will become a 'Game Changer' for the region. This mega project offers multitude of regional and trans-regional economic prospects especially in the maritime sphere. The growing reliance on maritime highways with their enormous economic benefits have accentuated the need for keeping a safe and secure environment at sea.

The maritime security challenges in the Indian Ocean are both multidimensional and multifaceted. Threats like maritime terrorism, drug trafficking and piracy have acquired international dimensions. Cooperation between international navies therefore, is imperative to counter these emerging threats. Pakistan being a major stakeholder in maritime security of Arabian Sea is fully committed to ensuring freedom of navigation and lawful maritime order. I am confident that AMAN-17 will be a big stride towards this direction.

I extend my gratitude to the participating navies for joining us at AMAN-17 in such large numbers. I also appreciate the enthusiastic and vigorous efforts of Pakistan Navy for successfully organizing AMAN series of Exercises since 2007. I look forward to a successful and rewarding exercise and thank all participating Countries for taking part in this endeavour of readiness for the promotion of peace.





Foreign Minister of Bahrain, Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalif called on President Mamnoon Hussain at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad

Bahraini FM Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed calls on PM Nawaz & Vows to extend bilateral ties



Foreign Minister of Bahrain, Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalif called on Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad

By Monitoring Desk

Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Al Khalifa called on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at the PM House.

During the meeting, he conveyed the special greetings of His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The Bahraini Foreign Minister visited with a high

level government delegation that also included members of the royal family of Bahrain.

The visit by the Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid highlights the growing bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bahrain.

He informed the Prime Minister that the relations between both countries have been upgraded to Joint Ministerial Commission and the first session of the JMC held in Islamabad

The visit by the Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid highlights the growing bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bahrain.

in which both countries have comprehensive discussions to expand diplomatic, economic, trade, strategic and cultural ties.

Nawaz Sharif welcomed the important step of establishing the Joint Ministerial Commission and said that this would send a strong message that Pakistan values its ties with Bahrain.

The Prime Minister also appreciated the performance Pakistan's Ambassador Javed Malik, and expressed confidence that relations will continue to grow between both sides.

He underscored the importance of expanding bilateral trade between both countries.

Soon after his arrival, both sides held a meeting

[Joint Ministerial Commission] would send a strong message that Pakistan values its ties with Bahrain: PM Nawaz

to review the dynamism and scope of existing relations between the two countries, a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here said.

The meeting was also attended by Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi as well as Secretaries of the Ministries of Defence and Overseas Pakistani besides other senior officials from both sides.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and Foreign Minister of Bahrain H.E. Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa signing MOUS at Foreign Office in Islamabad.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi in a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Bahrain H.E. Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa in Islamabad.

The Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appreciated the performance Pakistan's Ambassador Javed Malik



Javed Malik, Ambassador of Pakistan to Bahrain meeting Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid Al Khalifa prior to his visit to Pakistan

Pakistan invites Bahrain To take advantages of Business-friendly environment in Pakistan

Pakistan has become a more attractive country for investment with the improved security situation: Bahrain FM



By News Desk

Pakistan has invited Bahrain to take benefit of improved business environment and invest in energy, infrastructure and agriculture sectors.

Advisor to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz extended the offer during the Pakistan-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission meeting on Monday, Radio Pakistan reported.

Later, talking to newsmen along with Foreign Minister of Bahrain Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmad Al Khalifa, the Advisor said that Pakistan has become a more attractive country for investment with the improved security situation. He said that Pakistan was committed to protect and facilitate foreign investors by providing equal opportunities. Aziz said that the CPEC will open new avenues of enhanced trade and economic activities in the country. He said that special economic zones are to be established along the routes of the CPEC and this will offer attractive incentives both to domestic and foreign investors. He said Bahraini companies and investors are welcomed to consider these opportunities.

He said the two countries have agreed to increase cooperation in energy, defence,

agriculture and higher education. They have also agreed for early activation of business council between federations of commerce of the two countries. Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain said that two memorandum of understanding (MoUs) were signed on cooperation in agriculture and diplomatic service training, adding that various MoUs were also in the pipeline. He said there should be frequent interaction between Pakistan and Bahrain to forge collaboration in different fields. He said the two sides have good cooperation in defence, economy and political consultations.

The Minister said besides discussing further mutual collaboration they also discussed Pakistan-GCC cooperation. Sartaj Aziz said that terrorism was a global menace and collective efforts were needed to eliminate it fully from the face of the earth. He said that Pakistan was ready to cooperate with Bahrain in extending its experience in counterterrorism.

H.H. Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, also held a meeting with Syed Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs today. Welcoming the Bahraini Foreign Minister, Mr. Fatemi underscored the importance attached to the bilateral relations which



Foreign Minister of Bahrain, Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmad Al Khalifa being welcomed at the airport by Javed Malik, Ambassador of Pakistan to the Kingdom of Bahrain & Dr. Irfan Yusuf Shami Additional Foreign secretary upon his arrival in Islamabad.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz shaking hand with the Foreign Minister of Bahrain H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalifa in Islamabad.

The CPEC will open new avenues of enhanced trade and economic activities in the country. Special economic zones are to be established along the routes of the CPEC and this will offer attractive incentives both to domestic and foreign investors. Bahraini companies and investors are welcomed to consider these opportunities:

Sartaj Aziz

are based on shared perceptions and views on several regional and global issues. He appreciated the visionary leadership of His Majesty Shaikh Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa that led Bahrain to impressive development, besides his efforts to achieve more stable and peaceful regional environment. He added that the degree to which the leadership on both sides shared views on important issues was amply reflected during the high level exchanges during last two years.

H.E. Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalifa expressed his gratitude for warm hospitality extended to his delegation and highlighted Pakistan's support in the development of Bahrain, especially in building its defence and security capabilities.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and Foreign Minister Bahrain H.E. Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalif addressing the joint conference in Islamabad.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Syed Tariq Fatemi in a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Bahrain H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalifa in Islamabad.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz and Foreign Minister of Bahrain H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalif Co-Chairing the meeting of Pakistan-Bahrain joint Ministerial Commission in Islamabad.

Belarus offers transfer of Technology, Joint Ventures

Both sides have potential to increase bilateral trade to \$ 1 billion by 2020

[I am] convinced that the relation and cooperation between the Belarus and Pakistan will be vibrant in future:

Mian Raza Rabbani

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

Belarus has offered to implement construction projects and initiate joint ventures with Pakistani companies to enhance the economic cooperation between the two countries, as there are real opportunities for raising the bilateral trade to \$ 1 billion by 2020.

This was deliberated during the meetings of Pakistani Parliamentary delegation headed by Mian Raza Rabbani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan with the President and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus. The Parliamentary delegation includes Senators Najma Hameed, Rubina Khalid, Muhammad Usman Khan Kakr, Sajjad Hussain Turi and Secretary Senate Amjed Pervez Malik.

Chairman Senate expressed the confidence that the current visit to the Belarus and meetings with the President, Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Council of Republic will be the first step toward closer parliamentary, social and economic cooperation between the two countries. He invited the Chairman of Council of Republic and Belarusian Parliamentary delegation to visit Pakistan at any time of convenience during the current year.

While talking to the President of Belarus Mian Raza Rabbani said that he is convinced that the relation and cooperation between the Belarus and Pakistan will be vibrant in future. Pakistan and Belarus have managed to create the legal framework for this cooperation by signing more than seventeen agreements in different fields including economy.

The Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko said that Parliament play a big role in the two countries and asked the Chairman Senate to monitor Pakistan's efforts to implement the agreed roadmap for short and medium term cooperation. He said that we should go ahead of declaration and should work to achieve the target by mapping out specific cooperation areas and establishing the quantum of goods



President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko exchanging views with Chairman Senate, Mian Raza Rabbani in Minsk, Belarus.



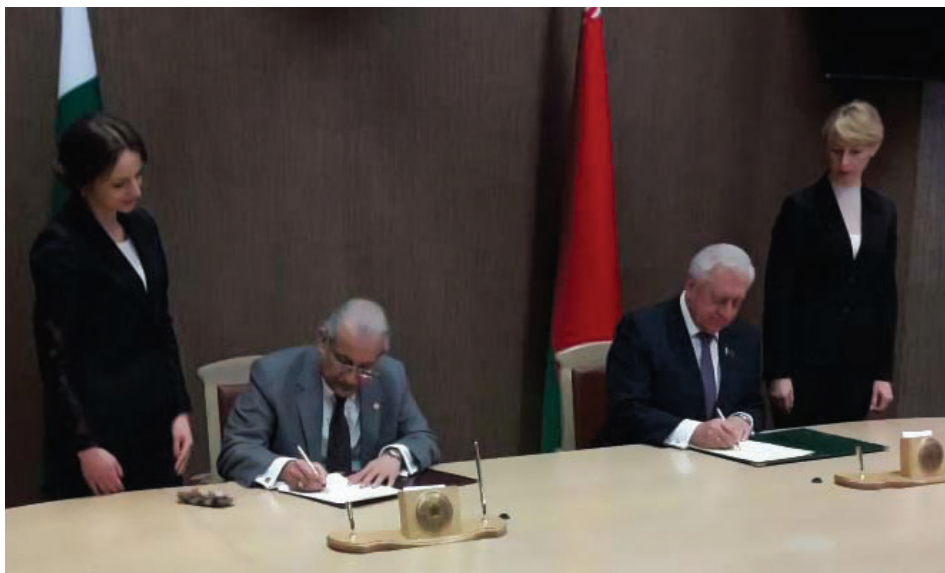
Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus Andrei Kobyakov in a meeting with Chairman Senate, Mian Raza Rabbani along with Pakistani Parliamentary Delegation in Minsk, Belarus.



Chairman Senate, Mian Raza Rabbani presenting Souvenir to the Chairman of Council of the Republic of National Assembly of Belarus, Mr. Mikhail Myasnikov in Minsk, Belarus.



Chairman Senate, Mian Raza Rabbani shaking hand with the Chairman of Council of the Republic Assembly of Belarus, Mr. Mikhail Myasnikov in Minsk, Belarus.



Chairman Senate, Mian Raza Rabbani and Chairman of Council of the Republic of National Assembly of Belarus, Mr. Mikhail Myasnikov signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Senate of Pakistan and Council of the Republic of National Assembly of Belarus in Minsk, Belarus.

that we can sell to each other. He expressed the hope that the Parliamentarians of the two countries will step up their efforts to materialize the bilateral cooperation.

The Belarusian Prime Minister Andrei Kobyakov while talking to Parliamentary delegation said that his country is ready to implement turnkey projects to build industrial, civil, agricultural and power generation facilities. In field of industrial cooperation Belarus can supply ready tractors, automobiles and to consider options for setting up of assembly plants in Pakistan. He said that in view of the special importance of agricultural economy of Pakistan, Belarus will share modern technologies in production, storage and processing of agricultural production. Belarusian Prime Minister said that

his country owing to its strategically important position in Europe can offer the opportunities for Pakistani companies to boost their presence in Belarus through joint ventures. He said that Belarus can become springboard for Pakistanis companies who would like to promote their products to the Europe Union Countries and gate way to more than one eighty million strong market of the Eurasian economic union. He said that Belarus considers Pakistan as an important and promising partner in South Asia. Both countries have similar position on key issues on international agenda. He said that involvement of Belarusian companies in China Pakistan Economic Corridor Project will fill the bilateral relations with great economic content.

MoU signed between Senate of Pakistan, Council of the Republic of National Assembly of Belarus

In a first ever concrete effort to enhance the parliamentary relations between Pakistan and Belarus, the Senate of Pakistan and Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus have formally signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for further boosting mutual trust and understanding.

The MoU was signed at a high level interaction between the delegation of the Senate of Pakistan headed by Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani and the Chairman of the Council of the Republic of National Assembly of Belarus Mikhail Myasnikov in Minsk, Belarus. The Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani is in Belarus with a first ever parliamentary delegation to further explore the possibilities of increased cooperation between the people of two sides. The delegation comprises of the Senators and senior officers of the Senate Secretariat including Secretary Senate Amjed Pervez Malik. Both the Houses have agreed to increase cooperation in the areas of exchange of parliamentary delegations and secretarial staff, Create Friendship Groups within both the Parliaments and promote close interaction between the Members of the Friendship Groups.

Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani termed the MoU a new chapter in parliamentary relationship between the two countries.

Both sides have agreed to develop a mechanism for yearly exchange of visits of Chairman Senate and the Belarusian counterparts and regulars interaction of parliamentary delegations of the two countries at international parliamentary fora for shaping a consensus based approach on various regional and international issues. Promotion of capacity building of parliamentarians and human resource development through exchange of experiences, knowledge and expertise, implementation of study visits are some of the other important aspects of the bilateral MoU which have been agreed jointly to maximize and diversify the interaction between two parliaments.

Earlier, the Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani had a meeting with the President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko and discussed the issues of mutual interest between the two countries. Both the sides have agreed to enhance the cooperation through improving the parliamentary linkages for better social and economic ties.



Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, Mian Raza Rabbani postured after he laid a wreath at the Victory Memorial in Minsk during his visit to Belarus.

Pakistan, Cuba agree to maintain upward trajectory in bilateral ties

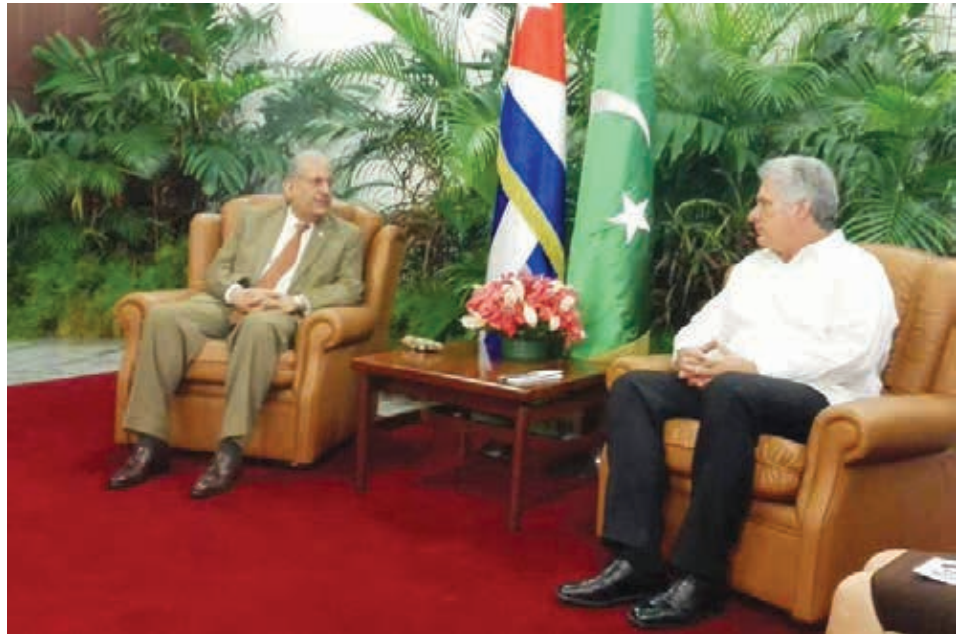
Cuba and Pakistan are true friends who stood by each other in every difficult time: Raza Rabbani

By M.Saeed Yousafzai, Monitoring Desk

Pakistan and Cuba agreed to maintain their upward trajectory in bilateral relations witnessed in the recent past. This was stated during a meeting of Senate Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani with Cuban Vice President Miguel Diaz-Canel in Havana as a part of the Senate's parliamentary delegation visit to Cuba.

"We need to further augment the existing warmth and goodwill to forge a mutually beneficial and future-oriented relationship between our two countries", said Rabbani, adding that the two parliaments maintain close cooperation through exchange of visits and coordination at the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) on issues of common interest.

The Senate chairman said that people of Pakistan fondly remember and greatly appreciate the medical assistance provided by Cuba to Pakistan in the aftermath of the massive earthquake in 2005 and that kind gesture brought the two countries and people ever closer. Pakistan has also reciprocated by sending aid during the devastating hurricane in Cuba in 2008 and has also offered 100 scholarships in various fields for Cuban students. The government of Pakistan also donated 15,000 metric tonnes of rice to the people of Cuba in commemoration of the



60th anniversary of Pakistan-Cuba diplomatic relations.

Raza Rabbani said that the gesture of goodwill has brought our two countries and people closer and opened up new avenues of cooperation. He asserted that Pakistan wishes to further strengthen bilateral cooperation with Cuba in all fields and there is a lot of potential for expansion in our relations, which once properly harnessed could benefit both sides considerably.

The Senate chairman said that in this age of globalisation where physical distances are losing relevance, the potential of Pakistan-Cuba relationship holds immense promise and prospects. He believed we should explore the areas to expand trade and investment avenues as economic cooperation provides the essential vehicle for adding content and substance to the bilateral relations. He said that the volume of bilateral trade is far below the actual potential and called for concerted efforts to enhance economic cooperation in new areas.

Raza Rabbani also informed the Cuban vice president that Pakistan's strategic geographical location puts us in a unique position to act as a trade corridor connecting Iran, Central Asia, and China. He also expressed his hope for the enhancement of people-to-people contact, cooperation in education, science and technology, as well as supporting each other on multilateral issues.

The Senate chairman affirmed that Pakistan is committed to peaceful coexistence with its neighbours, especially Afghanistan and India, on the basis of mutual respect and equality. Pakistan has suffered the most at the hands of terrorists and no nation has done more to eliminate terrorism more than Pakistan. He reiterated that Pakistan is committed to a

Pakistan wishes to further strengthen bilateral cooperation with Cuba in all fields and there is a lot of potential for expansion in our relations, which once properly harnessed could benefit both sides considerably



Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Mian Raza Rabbani being welcomed by President of National Assembly of the People's Power of Cuba, Deputy Esteban Lazo Hernandez before their meeting regarding inter-parliamentary cooperation at Havan, Cuba.

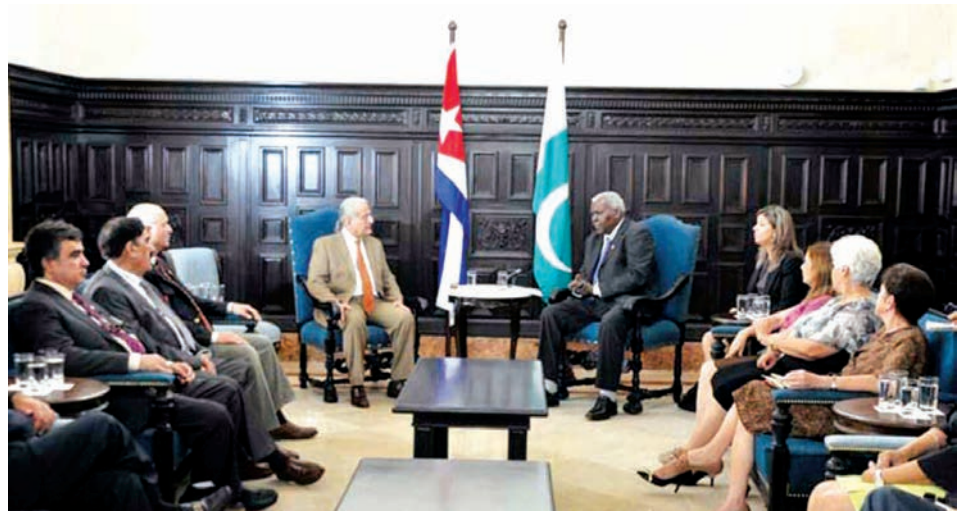
meaningful dialogue with India, while on the contrary, the Indian side not only continues to escalate tensions and hype the media frenzy, it also armed twisted smaller SAARC members to undermine the Islamabad summit. He said that it is important to recognise that the Indian narrative of equating the movement of Kashmiri

youth for the right to self-determination cannot be accepted and the human rights violations by the Indian occupation forces in Indian-held Kashmir cannot be negated. The international community should come forward to curb these human rights violations, he asserted.

on the other side, Senate Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani called for the promotion of parliamentary cooperation, exchange of delegations and information between the Senate of Pakistan and the Cuban National Assembly. He also urged the need for enhancing economic, social and political relations between the two countries.

The Senate chairman also invited the president of the Cuban National Assembly to visit Pakistan as a guest of the Senate of Pakistan.

He expressed these views during a meeting with the President of National Assembly of the People's Power of Cuba, Deputy Esteban Lazo



Parliamentary delegation of Senate of Pakistan led by Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani in a meeting with President of National Assembly of the People's Power of Cuba, Deputy Esteban Lazo Hernandez at Havana, Cuba.

Raza Rabbani says potential of Pakistan-Cuba relationship holds immense promise and prospects in this age of globalisation

Hernandez in Havana. He thanked the Cuban government for offering 1,200 scholarships to Pakistani doctors and acknowledged Cuban medical help to Pakistan during disasters.

"Cuba and Pakistan are true friends who stood by each other in every difficult time. Cuban medical squad always played a leading role in voluntary services," the Senate chairman said. Rabbani emphasised the need for chalking out a global peace plan.

The Senate chairman is on an official visit to Cuba heading a parliamentary delegation comprising parliamentarians including senators Mushahid Hussain Syed, Dr Jehanzeb Jamaldini, Shahi Syed, Lt Gen (retd) Salahuddin Tirimzi, Gianchand, Mohsin Aziz, Nisar Muhammad Khan and Senate Secretary Amjed Pervez Malik.

The chairman said it was a great pleasure to be in Cuba, especially in the beautiful city of Havana.

He said he was looking forward to this visit which could not take place last year. He was eager and hopeful to meet Commander-in-Chief Dr Fidel Castro Ruz.

He eulogised the services of great revolutionary leader late Fidel Castro for upholding national interests and welfare of the people.

Rabbani said three leading lessons of Fidel Castro principles — including resilience against super powers, safeguarding national interest and welfare of masses — would be the model



Secretary Senate of Pakistan, Mr. Amjed Pervez Malik and his counterpart in National Assembly of the People's Power of Cuba, Ms. Miriam Brito Sarroca signing MoU between two Houses for enhancing inter parliamentary cooperation at Havana, Cuba. Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani and President of Cuban National Assembly are present on the occasion.



The Parliamentary delegation of Senate of Pakistan led by Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani photographed with the President of National Assembly of the People's Power of Cuba, Deputy Esteban Lazo Hernandez, Cuban Parliamentarians and officials of the National Assembly of Cuba after a meeting on Parliamentary cooperation between two Houses at Havana, Cuba.

of change for the world. The chairman said the Pakistani nation felt the pain of Cuban people who not only lost a great leader but also a father, friend and comrade who changed their lives.

He said the Cuban leader was a ray of hope for the poor who gave a direction to suppressed, down-trodden and exploited people to live their life with dignity and fight for their rights rather than giving up before their unjust supremacy.

The Senate chairman said great revolutionary leader Fidel Castro was the last one among the leaders who change the world with his principles and ideology.

enate of Pakistan and National Assembly of the People's Power of Cuba have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for strengthening of cooperation on Parliamentary Affairs.

Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani said that the MoU would further boost the parliamentary cooperation to augment the existing close and friendly relations between the Parliaments, Governments and people of the two countries as the parliaments embody the will and aspirations of the peoples.

The MoU has been signed between Secretariat of Senate of Pakistan and Secretariat General of the National Assembly of People's Power of the Republic of Cuba at Havana. Secretary



Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani along with the President of National Assembly of Cuba and Parliamentary delegation visiting National Assembly of the People's Power of Cuba at Havana.

Senate of Pakistan Amjed Pervez Malik and his counterpart Ms. Miriam Brito Sarroca, Secretary of National Assembly of Cuba signed the MoU in presence of Senate Chairman Mian Raza

Rabbani and President of National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba, parliamentarians from both countries.

PAKISTAN, FRANCE TO DEEPEN BILATERAL RELATIONS BY PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGES

Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani has called for further strengthening of the bilateral relations between France and Pakistan through parliamentary exchanges and by boosting cooperation in diversified fields.

This was stated by the Chairman Senate during his meeting with French Senator Mr. Pascal Allizard, President, Pakistan-France Friendship Group in the Senate of France and Ms. Francoise Cartron, Vice President of Senate, who called on him at the Embassy of Pakistan in Paris, today. Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Senator Mohammad Mohsin Raza, Secretary Senate Mr. Amjad Pervez Malik and Ambassador of Pakistan Moin ul Haque were also present during the meeting.

While emphasizing the importance of regular interaction between the parliamentarians of the two countries for building a better understanding he also underlined the need to further strengthen existing level of bilateral cooperation especially in the areas of trade, investment and security.

Senators Allizard and senator Cartron, who were part of the French Senate delegation

which visited Pakistan in April last year, expressed solidarity with Pakistan in the wake of recent terrorist attacks in Pakistan and offered condolences to the aggrieved families. The two sides also discussed ways and means to enhance mutual cooperation between the

Senates of Pakistan and France.

The meeting was held during a stopover in Paris by the parliamentary delegation led by Chairman Senate on return from their official visit to Cuba.



Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani is holding meeting with French Senator Mr. Pascal Allizard, President, Pakistan-France Friendship Group in the Senate of France and Ms. Francoise Cartron, Vice President of Senate, who called on him at the Embassy of Pakistan in Paris. Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Senator Mohammad Mohsin Raza, Secretary Senate Mr. Amjad Pervez Malik and Ambassador of Pakistan Moin ul Huque were also present during the meeting.



"Without addressing the underlying and root causes of terrorism, we will only be fighting its symptoms." Dr. Maleeha

Pakistan's counter terrorism campaign enters intense phase

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

Pakistan said at the UN that the country has shown the will, capacity and resilience in combatting terrorism and that Pakistan's campaign has now entered its most intense phase. , says a press release received here today from New York.

Speaking in an informal meeting of the General Assembly on the UN's Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, Pakistan Ambassador to the UN, Dr. Maleeha Lodhi said that Pakistan has been the principal victim of terrorism, having lost tens of thousands of lives.

"But this has only strengthened our resolve to continue our campaign until the last terrorist is eliminated from our country", she emphasized. Pakistan's statement came after the new UN Secretary General, António Guterres unveiled his suggestions for a new UN CT architecture. This envisages setting up a new office for Counter Terrorism headed by an Under Secretary General to lead the world body's

efforts to counter terrorism.

The UN chief opened the informal meeting by describing it as a first step toward consulting member states about his proposal.

Ambassador Lodhi told the meeting of the 193-member body that "Without addressing the underlying and root causes of terrorism, we will only be fighting its symptoms."

Calling for addressing the root causes of terrorism, she told the world body that Pakistan has always advocated that protracted unresolved conflicts, un-lawful use of force, aggression, foreign occupation, denial of the right to self-determination and political and economic injustice, as well as political marginalization and alienation contribute to the spread of terrorism. "Therefore, it is important not to delink terrorism from its political context", Ambassador Lodhi stressed. She said that "As we deliberate on reforming the counter terrorism architecture, we also have to take into account initiatives being taken in the wider reform of the peace and

security architecture," while emphatically making the case for maintaining links between any new Office on Counter Terrorism and the UN's Department of Political Affairs.

The Pakistani envoy said that while the UN's Global Counter Terrorism Strategy remains the most comprehensive document to assist Member States in the elimination of terrorism, 'it remains the sole responsibility of Member States to implement it'.

In this regard, she said, Pakistan believes that the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of any Member States remains "fundamental, indeed sacrosanct."

Ambassador Lodhi said her delegation would consider with an "open mind" all viable options for putting in place the new counterterrorism architecture with a view to agreeing on the best solution.

Pakistan, she added, would work with the U.N. and all member states to improve coherence and cooperation of the organizational set up on counterterrorism.

How to Handle the Enabling Conditions for Extremism and Terror

Global, Internal and Regional Enabling Conditions

The situation we find ourselves in, as ugly as it is, is too serious for a game of blaming each other. The fact is that while we can recognize there is a lot of blame to go around, we need to break the habit of always throwing the ball into another side's court. If we're willing to engage in honest soul-searching, it will start with raising simple but serious questions, such as: what is it that creates an extremist out of a youngster born and raised in France, or for that matter, in other European or North American societies? Even as much as a similar youngster born and raised in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Saudi Arabia, or elsewhere in our region? We all must start by looking at extremism as a common predicament and a common problem, not one confined to a certain region, race, religion, or sect.

Lack of Hope

Looking at some of the enabling conditions, hope, or actually the lack of hope – is central to the equation. And this is precisely where the hard facts puncture the monolithic presumptions relegating the problem at hand to a region and society, developed or developing, Western or Eastern, Muslim or otherwise. It is now a widely established fact—and not merely theoretical speculation or even academic analysis—that a common thread that binds all those engaged in extremist violence is that they feel, and regard themselves, as marginalized in their respective societies—even globally. They believe that they have no hope for a better future, they see no actual and feasible possibility for productive self-fulfillment in an enabling and humanely conducive social environment – whether in Western societies which are becoming more and more introverted and xenophobic, or in the region in the grip of underdevelopment and without meaningful possibilities for representative government. The wave of nationalistic sentiments expressed at the ballot box in recent years, from Europe and crossing the Atlantic, might, unfortunately, only be more fodder for the hopelessness described. ...

Marginalization, Disenfranchisement, Disrespect

While in Western countries, the ballot box generally functions well, the problem lies in another dangerously exacerbating trend: when significant parts of the institutionally-marginalized population find themselves at the losing end of the economic bargain, and

worse still, see their beliefs, their values, and their sanctities targeted on a regular basis, we shouldn't be too surprised that some of them, no matter how tiny a minority, will turn to something other than peaceful protest. ...

Intervention and Hegemonic Tendencies

Another issue to examine is the endemic and age-old problem of foreign invasion and occupation, and what it has brought in its wake. The almost seventy-year state of occupation in Palestine is the most pressing. This has been further compounded by the systematic political and military interventions by the United States to preserve, perpetuate, and create its desired regional configuration and architecture and a "new world order". When President George H.W. Bush proclaimed the emergence of a "new world order" in his address to the UN General Assembly, it was premised on the illusion that the United States had won the Cold War, whereas in fact the Soviet Union collapsed largely due to its own internal rot. In a nonzero-sum world, the West hadn't won the Cold War; the Soviets had simply lost it.

Failure of the State

The most significant internal component of the complex mosaic before us is the failure of the state system to respond to the fundamental demand of a populace for dignity. The fact remains that some of the worst suicide bombers have come from the most affluent societies in West Asia, and some from quite well-to-do families. ...

Diversion Tactics

The frustration of the youth that is being masterfully manipulated by extremist demagogues and their financiers to vent – albeit temporarily – through senseless and barbaric violence against innocents, is ultimately directed against the very foundations of the states in the region. Therefore, it is dangerously misleading to try to defuse this existential internal threat through diverting the anger towards fabricated external enemies. As alluded to earlier, some governments in the region have instigated, armed and financed extremist groups, such as Daesh and Al-Nusrah, utilizing them in proxy wars in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere

Ideology of Exclusion

Beyond the failed, unresponsive and unaccountable state apparatus, and the attempt to divert its focus, there exists also a pseudoideological component based on



By Mohammad Javad Zarif

In December 2016, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif published a lengthy article titled "How to Handle the Enabling Conditions for Extremism and Terror" in the Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs. The following are excerpts.

division, hatred, and denunciation and rejection of "the other". This ideology has nothing to do with the genuine, original message of Islam – as reflected in the Book and in the Prophet's tradition. But regrettably within the Muslim community there exists an ideology based on the notion of "Takfir", or rejection contrary to the very fundamental Qur'anic teaching. Takfiri groups including Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Daesh, Al-Nusrah and a host of other smaller new variants, have been fully and lavishly financed by easily traceable petrodollars. This has been undertaken and pursued through a worldwide network of mosques and religious schools, both in Muslim societies as well as elsewhere. Such massive propagation of hatred has been sold globally, and particularly to the U.S. and its allies, for nearly four decades as a "moderate" Islam to confront a "radical" Iran. As such, it has not only been tolerated by the United States and its western allies, but even promoted and protected.

But the Takfiri perversion of Islam metastasized in West Asia and beyond as a result of the deepening popular resentment emanating from the protracted U.S. adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq, coupled with widespread frustration with the domestic social, economic and political deadlock

Cognitive Adjustment

Notwithstanding the difficulties involved in each crisis, there are always possibilities for exploring and eventually arriving at an outcome that is acceptable to all concerned. Or, more bluntly, there is always a way of "getting to yes": but to do so, the definition of the problem needs to be re-examined. Once a problem is defined in a non-zero-sum way, the most important step has been taken toward resolving it. The challenge is first and foremost cognitive in nature and essence. Once actors are prepared to set aside their predispositions and think differently, policies and actions will follow.

Pakistan-Iran to jointly fight terrorism in region: Iranian FM

By Monitoring Desk

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Pakistani PM's Adviser Sartaj Aziz discussed issues of mutual interest and implementation of bilateral trade projects signed between the two countries.

Sartaj Aziz, expressing gratitude to the Islamic Republic for sympathizing with Pakistani nation and government on recent terrorist attacks, called for a boost in regional cooperation to counter the irreparable consequences of terrorism.

He expressed satisfaction with his visit to Tehran and meeting senior Iranian officials, including Zarif.

Pointing to the terrorist attacks in his country, Aziz said Pakistani government has taken measures to fight against the spread of terrorism.

Backing the acceleration of collaborative measures and cooperation regarding the joint trade projects, Sartaj Aziz said Islamabad seeks to speed up the plans.

Zarif, for his part, condemned recent terrorist attacks in Pakistan and expressed Iran's willingness to cooperate in eradicating terrorism in the region.

He also said Tehran and Islamabad enjoy "good political relations," adding that the two neighbors are set to implement projects in different economic sectors, including power transmission, energy, banking, customs and cross-border exchanges.

"We expect that with the joint efforts to strengthen the relations and accelerate projects' implementation, the two countries witness a boom in bilateral trade relations which benefit the two and the region as well," he added.

He said that President Hassan Rouhani recently paid a visit to Kuwait and Oman in line with the Islamic Republic's efforts to enhance understanding among regional countries to help solve crises in the region.

Pakistani PM's Adviser Sartaj Aziz, heading a high-ranking delegation composed of secretaries of defense and water and power.

Mr. Sartaj Aziz Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs met Brig. General Hossein Dehghan Minister of Defence and Logistics of Iran, soon after his arrival in Tehran. He was accompanied by Defence Secretary Lt. General Zameerul Hassan Shah. They discussed measures to strengthen security along the Pakistan Iran border and agreed that the Border Security Commission of the two countries



Iran offers counter terrorism cooperation to Pakistan

will meet soon to ensure that terrorists and smugglers are not able to operate from each other's territories. During the meeting progress on opening two additional border crossing points at Gabd-Reemdan and Mand-Pishin was also reviewed.

During his brief stay, Mr. Sartaj Aziz also met Mr. Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of Iran. They reviewed regional and global issues

with special reference to the situation in Afghanistan. Later, Mr. Zarif hosted a dinner in honour of Mr. Sartaj Aziz.



Is 'deep state' out to get Trump?



President Trump complained that “illegal leaks” from the FBI and other intelligence agencies forced him to fire his national security advisor, Michael Flynn. The leaks revealed that Flynn had secretly discussed US sanctions on Russia with the Russian ambassador, then falsely claimed he hadn’t. The talks didn’t bother Trump; the leaks did. “The real scandal here is that classified information is illegally given out by ‘intelligence’ like candy,” he tweeted. “The spotlight has finally been put on the low-life leakers! They will be caught!” Others worried, too. Republican members of Congress condemned the leaks as a misuse of classified information. Critics of the intelligence community, both conservative and liberal, warned that un-elected bureaucrats were exerting too much political power. Was the American deep state, panicked by Trump, revealing itself? “The intelligence agencies are pretty hard to roll,” a former top CIA official told me last week. “These guys are trained to manipulate people and overthrow govts, and they’re rather good at it.”

But no, this wasn’t the deep state seizing power. We’re not there yet. In a country controlled by the deep state, members of the armed forces and intelligence agencies can overthrow presidents they don’t like, that’s what happened in Egypt in 2013. They hold veto power over major decisions. They often run large parts of the economy, or at least enough government contracts to make their families rich. And they’re rarely held accountable for their actions. They act with impunity. US intelligence agencies, on the other hand, are restrained by law. Sometimes they overstep, but eventually they are reined in. The officials who leaked the details of Flynn’s conversations knew that Trump would order the FBI to track them down. They put themselves at risk.



By Doyle McManus

Trump’s problem isn’t the deep state; it’s the broad state. He’s facing pushback not only from intelligence agencies, but from civilian bureaucracies, too. When his White House staff drafted an executive order to reopen CIA “black sites” and reintroduce torture, it leaked – and the decision was promptly put on ice. When they drafted another order to repeal

Trump’s problem isn’t the deep state; it’s the broad state. He’s facing pushback not only from intelligence agencies, but from civilian bureaucracies, too.

protections for LGBT federal employees, that leaked too – and the president’s daughter and son-in-law blocked the idea. When Trump banned travel from seven predominantly

Muslim countries, the attorneys general of several states sued, and federal courts blocked the order’s enforcement.

There have been less-dramatic forms of defiance, too. Bureaucrats in the State Department and Environmental Protection Agency have signed petitions protesting the new administration’s policies. In a different category, Trump’s own Cabinet appears to harbour a modest dose of dissent: Defence Secretary James Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson sound distinctly less enthusiastic than their boss about cooperating with Vladimir Putin. It’s not unusual for a new Republican administration to encounter recalcitrant bureaucrats in domestic agencies like the EPA, or for a Democratic president to clash with hawks in national security agencies. In 2009, for example, President Obama believed the Pentagon tried to force him to send more troops to Afghanistan than he wanted.

But Trump and his chief theoretician, Stephen K. Bannon, have taken aim at both sides: not only Democratic bureaucrats, but also much of the Republican establishment. The bureaucratic resistance they’ve met has been unusually bipartisan. The result, especially in the wake of Flynn’s ouster, has been chaos. The National Security Council is leaderless and understaffed. Domestic agencies are gripped by uncertainty, too, a state that induces self-protective bureaucrats to move even more slowly than usual. Jack Goldsmith, an assistant attorney general under President George W. Bush, argued last week. “The US government cannot work well ... without a minimally staffed, well-organized, energetic, competent executive branch. Right now we don’t have such an executive branch.”

— Courtesy: Los Angeles Times

Democratic bans

By SIKANDER AHMED SHAH

FOR many of us, democracy means 'one person one vote'; this, however, is a naïve assessment of this form of government. Democracy is not just about representation and participatory elections, it is also about running a government that protects civil and political rights, achieves freedom from want, and attains cultural and social autonomy. Realising this type of a political order requires the establishment of accountable and effective governmental institutions that check and balance one another against the abuse of authority.

In other words, a constitutional democracy requires the separation of power between the three branches of government. This trichotomy of power keeps any one dysfunctional office from overreaching its inherent powers. Such is the current political climate in the US, with President Trump passing a series of executive orders — including one that unconstitutionally bars the entry of refugees and citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries.

Several US states sued the federal government for what they argued was the exercise of unconstitutional presidential powers that undermine vested state interests and violate their residents' constitutional rights. The order has since been suspended by the US federal judiciary for potentially violating the establishment, equal protection and due process clauses of the constitution.

The decisive factor that led to Trump winning the presidential elections was the white working-class, which came out in large numbers seeking to change the exploitative monetarist policies that had resulted in widespread income inequality. Since he took office, US civil society has gone into high gear trying to force his administration to abandon its exclusionary policies on immigration, formulated as they are under neo-conservatism and driven by bigotry and fascist forces strengthened by the failure of neo-liberalism.

In the same vein, the CEOs of 127 global tech giants based in the US (including Apple, Facebook and Twitter) all of which heavily value and rely on a diverse workforce, have strongly condemned such policies by signing the legal amicus brief opposing the executive order.

Fortunately, the strength and resilience of the country's democratic structures is now beginning to show. Congressmen, state attorneys general and scores of city mayors across the US have strongly condemned

the discriminatory immigration executive orders. For example, the mayor of Bloomington (in the conservative Republican state of Indiana) recently issued a press release condemning and opposing the executive orders, calling them "unwise, shameful, and unconstitutional". Although it is uncontested that the nation's constitutional framework is being seriously tested, its democratic institutional machinery is robust as is becoming increasingly evident at the local, regional and national levels of government.

Recently, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei cynically thanked the new US leader for revealing America's "true face". But one

The decisive factor that led to Trump winning the presidential elections was the white working-class, which came out in large numbers seeking to change the exploitative monetarist policies that had resulted in widespread income inequality.

needs to put one's own house in order before making generalisations about another nation of people. Indeed, Trump makes the same mistakes, but states like Iran and Pakistan have a long and chequered history of unfairly treating and summarily deporting Afghan refugees, including those born within these states, in violation of international law. Also, in the last four months alone Saudi Arabia has summarily deported 39,000 Pakistanis on the pretext of complicity in terrorism or for

violating residency and work rules.

Under Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion ... birth ... [and] no distinction is allowed on the basis of national or social origin or the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs". Under international refugee law, no state can expel or return a refugee to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Further, under Articles 2 and 26 of the ICCPR, the right to equality and non-discrimination are unequivocally protected.

Thus, global and domestic criticism of the US' Muslim and refugee ban, and the deportation of Mexican immigrants, is indeed in order. All states, including Muslim-majority ones, should strongly criticise the US' violations of its international human rights obligations by promulgating these executive orders and attempting to implement them. But Muslim nations cannot have double standards and must use the same universal lens of human rights to criticise each other and meet their own obligations. Refugees, immigrants and religious minorities have to be treated with human dignity, regardless of their country of origin.

The writer is former legal adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Courtesy to Dawn





SPECIAL DECLARATION 4 ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: Commitment to the consolidation of Latin America & the Caribbean as a “Zone of Peace,”

Reaffirmed

By News Desk

The Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered in the Dominican Republic, on occasion of the Fifth Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), on January 25, 2017;

1. Reaffirm our commitment to the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a “Zone of Peace,” proclaimed during the II CELAC Summit held in Havana, Cuba, on January 29th, 2014, which includes the commitment of the States of the region to continue promoting general, complete and nondiscriminatory nuclear disarmament as a priority objective.
2. We reiterate our deep concern for the threat to humanity that the existence, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as their humanitarian impact, and we strongly emphasize that they must not be used under any circumstances, and that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons constitute a crime against humanity and a violation against International Law, including Humanitarian International Law as well as the United Nations Charter, thus, the only effective guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total prohibition and elimination in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner and within a clearly defined timeframe.
3. We emphasize our condemnation of the

perfecting of existing nuclear weapons and of the development of new types of these weapons, which is inconsistent with the obligation to adopt effective measures in favor of nuclear disarmament.

4. We urge the States who possess nuclear-weapon to fulfill their unequivocal obligations to eliminate their nuclear arsenals, under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the commitments arising from the NPT Review Conferences. We reaffirm that the NPT does not establish any right to the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by any State, since the Treaty establishes a transitional status.
5. We welcome the upcoming celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, to be held at the ministerial level in Mexico City, on February 14, 2017, within the framework of the XXV Session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), this meeting will reaffirm the support and the cooperation between its member States to continue working jointly towards the Nuclear Disarmament at the world level following the mandate of the Heads of State and Government of CELAC.
6. We reaffirm the importance of collaboration and cooperation between CELAC and OPANAL.
7. We call for the adoption, in the least amount of time possible, of a universal and legally binding instrument in matters

of negative security assurances. We urge the

States who possess nuclear weapons to withdraw the interpretative declarations made to Protocols I and II of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and to respect the denuclearized nature of Latin America and the Caribbean.

8. We welcome the adoption of Resolution No. 71/258 of the United Nations General Assembly [A/C.1/71/L.41], in light of which it is decided, among other aspects, to convene, in 2017, a United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument, that prohibits nuclear weapons, and leads towards their total elimination.
We also encourage the active participation of all CELAC Member States in this multilateral process.
 9. We commit to active participation of the region in the High-Level International Conference of the UN General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament in 2018, convened by Resolution No. A/ RES/68/32.
 10. We celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials-ABACC-, the only global binational system for accounting and control of nuclear material, and we underscore its importance in safeguard matters, as well as in terms of transparency, dialogues and trust building.
- Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, January 25th, 2017

Rape as a weapon of war in

Indian occupied state of Jammu and Kashmir

By Dr Muhammad Khan

Indian security forces have been using rape as a weapon against the Kashmiri women for decades. According to independent and unbiased sources, there have been 500-600 individual rape cases in the Indian occupied state of Jammu and Kashmir per year. Most of these cases are not reported in media and police/court, mainly owing to the social reasons. The raped women and their families cannot afford this social stigma, despite the fact that, these incidents are forced upon and most of the time, rape is committed on gun point by the occupation forces, who have total impunity. In fact, through discriminatory laws, imposed in IOK, Indian security forces have total impunity to do anything against the innocent people of Kashmir.

The Armed Forces Special Power Act and the Public Safety Act, provide total freedom of action against any one in IOK by Indian Army and paramilitary forces. Since Indian Army has power and authority to do anything against poor people of Kashmir, during raids and house searching operations in IOK, they take out men for interrogation and then rape women folk at gunpoint. According to Kashmir Media Service and Kashmir Liberation cell, there are 10828 reported rape cases in IOK at hands of Indian Army and Central Reserve Police from 1990 to 2016.

During the time active Kashmiri resistance in IOK, rape has been a frequent phenomenon by Indian Army in particular. The worst case on the record of Human rights organization was the gang rape of over 100 women in two villages of the Kupwara district; Kunan and Poshpora. These two villages are adjacent and now given a joint name; Kunan Poshpora. The brutal men of Indian Army (Rajputana Regiment) criminally assaulted these villages on the darkness of night on February 23, 1991. Women of all ages; from 9 years to 80 years women were raped by Indian Army men on that night.

According to the detail accounts, later collected by the human rights organizations, "at Kunan Poshpora women of all ages; elderly women, young girls and pregnant women were raped, while men were taken out to interrogation centres." Despite the demands from human rights groups, no action was taken by Indian Army against the Army men, committed in this worst act of violence against humanity in IOK. Since Kashmiri have not forgotten this worst



incident against their women folk, therefore, they have been demanding proper judicial inquiry to apportion the blame on those, who committed heinous human crime.

'In 2013, Samreena Mushtaq, who had

There is need that Rape cases and human rights violations by Indian Army should be taken with International Criminal Court and UN.

documented sexual violence cases for the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS), along with other activists petitioned the Jammu and Kashmir High Court to reopen the case and a magistrate ordered a new investigation.' It created a hope that, there will be some sort of investigation, but, this did not happen. Under the extreme pressure of Indian Army in 2015, Indian Supreme Court, ordered the High Court of IOK to close the

case. Closure of this judicial inquiry is another crime at the hand of Highest Indian court, so, the people of IOK lost all hopes for justice. The brave women of IOK, did not stop and finally recoded the entire account of the incident of February 23, 1991, the gang rape of Kunan Poshpora. Samreena Mushtaq and her four colleagues, women activists have published a booklet entitled as, "Do you remember KunanPoshpore?". This book is indeed an account of the Indian army's Character and crime, which Indian forces are committing against innocent Kashmiris, particularly against the women folk.

There is need that Rape cases and human rights violations by Indian Army should be taken with International Criminal Court and UN. In this regard the Kashmiri women and particularly the affected families should take the lead role. The Government of Pakistan must endeavour to present such cases on all diplomatic forums. The mainstream Pakistani media, the social media and intellectuals must play their active role in this regard.

The writer is International Relations analyst based in Islamabad.

Email: drmk_edu@yahoo.com

Indian Ocean Region: Challenges & strategies

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is undergoing a rapid transformation because of three factors: China's rise as the second largest economy in the world and its launch of the transcontinental mega-venture called the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (OBOR); the United States' (unfinished) pivot or rebalance to Asia ('unfinished' because the US strategy is in transition at the moment); and ascent of several emerging economies of the littoral states, including India, Indonesia, Pakistan and others. In coming decades, their will be exponential economic activity in and through the Indian Ocean and one would see the region's rapid militarisation. The projected time period of this conference – 2030 and beyond – is too long and therefore it is difficult to fully fathom the turbulence and risks that lie ahead.

Within that overall context, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor assumes special significance. India fears that the OBOR, undergirded by CPEC, could consign it to the margins of both land and maritime Asia. These developments also scupper Indian hypothesis that the Indian Ocean should remain its exclusive maritime front yard both economically and militarily. India has believed that it owns and dominates the Indian Ocean and that the United States' naval presence at Diego Garcia is largely symbolic, leaving pretty much to India to patrol the high seas from the Gulf of Aden to the Malacca Strait. It only grudgingly recognizes the role and presence of

other navies, including Pakistan's.

The changes in the IOR propel India to invest even more heavily in its conventional and strategic military capabilities and to establish its presence in South China Sea. In the coming years, Indian Navy would grow rapidly. China has already entered into the IOR. In 2008, it dispatched its flotilla for UN Security Council-mandated anti-piracy operations off the Gulf of Aden. Since then, China has sent 25 escort missions to the region comprising missile frigates, supply ships, ship-borne helicopters, special combat soldiers, seamen and officers and carried out humanitarian and sea lane security operations. In the process, it has escorted 6,000 ships and rescued or assisted 60 Chinese and foreign ships.

Besides the US, China and India, Australia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Africa, France and the United Kingdom will have a role in the Indian Ocean, in varying degrees. The IOR is going to become very crowded but one would expect Australia,

Real competition will be with the United States' world class navy, which China could outcompete in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, in the next two decades.



By Sardar Masood Khan

Japan, Indonesia, and Iran to be more active than others. China would enter into the Indian Ocean slowly and steadily but in a self-effacing manner so that it is not perceived as an extra-regional power. But its real competition will be with the United States' world class navy, which China could outcompete in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, in the next two decades. Until that time, China would meticulously avoid gratuitous projection of its blue water strengths, though it has demonstrated them amply and credibly. Make no mistake: China is set on the path of launching a robust blue water navy.

The U.S.-India defence partnership, supplemented by their Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement, enables India to acquire U.S. made "long-range patrol

aircraft and drones, maritime helicopters, aircraft carrier technology and anti-submarine gear." India argues that it needs all of this in part to counter Chinese built bases from Myanmar to Pakistan to Djibouti. The IOR will deal with existing and new threats. These include piracy, terrorism, proxy wars and spying. All these threats would require new capabilities for war fighting and opposing asymmetric warfare. No less serious is the heating up of the Indian Ocean. Its increasing heat content threatens biodiversity in waters and the seabed. Many small island states fear extinction. Against this backdrop, Pakistan should focus on ten priorities.

First, by opting for the Gwadar Port and CPEC, Pakistan has chosen to become a regional economic hub and a major maritime power. There is no going back. In this regard, it has three fundamental and simultaneous responsibilities: to complete CPEC projects on time and take them to the next higher stage, to build national consensus behind them, and to eliminate terrorism. Pakistan is successfully moving in all these directions. Second, Pakistan will have larger naval presence in IOR; and that demands, for general maritime security, a stronger Pakistan Navy for protection of the sea lanes carrying Pakistan's as well as international merchandise. This task would require more naval assets and related infrastructure. While China would be there to safeguard its own interests in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, Pakistan, which up to now has been largely oriented as a land and air power, would have to build its conventional and strategic naval muscle proportionately.

Third, Pakistan's full spectrum deterrence will not be complete without a triad vis-à-vis India, including a symmetric and credible naval component. The stronger a country's economy, the stronger security cover it would need to protect and sustain it. Pakistan has a narrow window to build its naval capabilities. The opportunity will shrink if we think that this task belongs to the distant future. Fourth, the precipitation of espionage networks around Pakistan's coastline and the mainland would thicken. More vigilance and cooperation with friendly countries will be required to combat this threat.

Fifth, a comprehensive mapping and oceanographic survey of our maritime sector and marine resources should be expedited to develop Pakistan's coastal economy so that it can support the mega-project of CPEC. The National Institute of Oceanography should be activated and this kind of effort should be led by Pakistan Navy, with the full support of

the concerned ministries and parliament. We have to think of Pakistan's coastal economies supplementing and augmenting the land-based economy; and of weaving together the entire coast encompassing Gadani, Ormara, Pasni, and Jiwhani. Pakistan's exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles has expanded to 350 nautical miles after a UN Commission expanded its continental shelf limit by 50,000

the IOR is not all about war and strife. It is a catalyst for peace and prosperity; cooperation, collaboration and connectivity; and stability and security.

square kilometers. Exploitation of the EEZ will deliver huge dividends; but for that technological capacity and managerial skills are required. I understand from the CNS that work in all these areas is under way. Sixth, since 95% of Pakistan's freight trade is seaborne, it is necessary to equip Karachi and Bin Qasim ports, and overtime Gwadar, with modern technology, enhance their dredging capacity, and improve their management to make them competitive regionally. This work is already being done in collaboration with China but it needs more emphasis, and a newer result-oriented approach.

Seventh, in anticipation of its enhanced economic role in the region and taking advantage of CPEC, Pakistan should start working on two supplementary corridors connecting it to West Asia and an Africa.

India fears that the OBOR, undergirded by CPEC, could consign it to the margins of both land and maritime Asia.

The West Asian corridor could go via Iran to Central Asia and Moscow and via Iran to Turkey to Europe; and the second corridor would pass through or around the Gulf region and penetrate into Africa. Africa, in particular, is an upcoming continent and holds immense

promise for Pakistan and should be hospitable to it. Eighth, Pakistan should further strengthen its all-weather friendship and strategic cooperative partnership with China. It should simultaneously develop and maintain good relations with the U.S., Russia and Europe and littoral states in the Indian Ocean. Instead of a unilinear approach, it should pursue a multi-angular foreign policy to reduce competition and confrontation and promote cooperation in Indian Ocean.

Ninth, Pakistan's universities, business schools and general schooling systems should be re-designed to equip them with contemporary and evolving scientific and technological tools and corporate competencies to make the human resource compatible with the changing role of Pakistan and the region. Tenth, interoperability and close coordination are a must to meet the new challenges. Instead of operating in silos, systems should create shared spaces; and Pakistani institutions should move from a culture of adjacency to synergy.

The Jammu and Kashmir dispute will cast its shadow in the strategic and commercial realms of the IOR. If this issue is not resolved peacefully, in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, it would remain a trigger for volatility in the region and a potent driver of conflict. The bilateral talks, despite the sincere and persistent efforts of Pakistan, have proved to be unproductive because of India's intransigence. We urge the United Nations – its Security Council and the Secretary General – to take a proactive stance to help resolve this longstanding issue in pursuance of the Charter obligations to avert a serious threat to peace and security. The foremost priority right now for the international community and UN bodies, especially the Human Rights Council, is to intercede to end massive human rights violations in the Indian Occupied Kashmir. Diplomacy is the need of the hour.

Finally, the IOR is not all about war and strife. It is a catalyst for peace and prosperity; cooperation, collaboration and connectivity; and stability and security. It is the collective responsibility of nations to use the Indian Ocean for nurturing and promoting global commons. Pakistan can play its role in this regard; but to do that that it will have to cast away its old mindset of failure or bravado. Pakistan's economy, CPEC, and state are turning a corner. The people should also adjust Pakistan's self image accordingly.

— The writer is the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and renowned diplomat.

Email: presidentsecretariat@ajk1@gmail.com

Courtesy to Pakistan Observer



Afghan options

By Shahid M Amin

Pakistan has gone through a week of sheer terror in which over a hundred innocent lives have been lost, and many more injured, due to the savagery of suicide-bombings [and still it is going on]. Terrorists massacred ordinary pilgrims who were visiting revered shrines. Police officers performing civic duties have been targeted. Both IS (Daesh) as well as Jamaat-ul-Ahrar affiliated to TTP (Tehreek Taliban Pakistan) have claimed responsibility for these outrages. In November last, another Sufi shrine in Balochistan had been the target in which a hundred lives were lost, for which also IS had claimed responsibility.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and other government leaders have vowed to take severe action against terrorists, till their total

extermination. Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa has warned: "Each drop of the nation's blood shall be avenged, and avenged immediately. No more restraint for anyone." Intensive combing operations are being conducted across Pakistan and many terrorists were killed. An intensive crackdown on banned organisations has been launched in Punjab and Rangers are to be deployed for the first time. Punjab police has already arrested the facilitator of Lahore suicide-bomber, who has divulged that planners of the attack were based in Afghanistan.

Gen. Bajwa and several high-ranking Pakistani civil and military officials have stated categorically that the latest terrorist acts were planned by groups who have sanctuaries in Afghanistan. They have demanded that the Afghan authorities should take firm action

against them. A list of 76 terrorists has been handed over to Afghan officials with the demand that they should be handed over to Pakistan. Gen. Bajwa also called Gen. Nicholson, commander of US military mission in Afghanistan, to protest against continued acts of terrorism in Pakistan, perpetrated from Afghanistan, which were "testing Pakistan's policy of cross-border restraint". Gen Bajwa asked the US commander to play his role in "disconnecting this planning, direction, coordination and financial support".

There are media reports that already Pakistan's armed forces have targeted militant hideouts across the border and a number of terrorists and their training camps were destroyed. If so, this would be the first instance of cross-border attacks by Pakistani military. Among others, former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has suggested that Pakistan should make "surgical strikes" in Afghanistan against such militant groups, based on collection of reliable evidence. Pakistan-Afghan border has been closed for several days and some Afghan refugees have been detained for abetting terrorists. Afghanistan, for its part, has protested against violation of its territory by cross-border firing and closure of border crossings, as well as harsh measures against Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

The latest developments come against the background of anger that has been building up in Pakistan against Afghanistan for quite some time. For the last many years, Afghan rulers have chosen to use diatribe and invective against Pakistan on a sustained basis. Their main grievance is that Pakistan is giving sanctuary or even help to the Taliban forces fighting against the Kabul regime. While making such accusations, they ignore the internal strength of the Taliban, such as ethnic support for them among Afghan Pakhtuns. They refuse to take into account the historical reality that some areas in Pakistan's tribal territories have remained outside authority of the state and Pakistan cannot be held responsible in all such cases. They are unmindful of the fact that the Pakistani Taliban, who are an ally of the Afghan Taliban, have long been at war with the Pakistani state itself. Unfortunately, Kabul has made a habit of putting all blame on Pakistan for the successes of Afghan Taliban. Pakistan has been made a scapegoat for the failures of Afghan military forces. Due to these reasons, an anti-Pakistan phobia has developed in Afghanistan, affecting even the common Afghan citizen.

Pakistan has another legitimate grievance that the Afghan rulers have made a common front with India, Pakistan's antagonist, and developed close ties with India in political, military, economic and other fields, unmindful

of Pakistan's sentiments and security concerns. Pakistan's vital help, and immense sacrifices, during the Afghan Jihad against Soviet occupation is all but forgotten, nor is there any real gratitude in Kabul towards Pakistan for looking after millions of Afghan refugees. During that Jihad, India was an ally of the puppet Communist regime in Afghanistan and was an abettor of the Soviet military occupation. One really doubts if Afghanistan, despite being a proclaimed Islamic Republic, has any sentiments of Islamic brotherhood at all since its rulers cozy up to India which has long maltreated its Muslim minority and suppresses Kashmiri Muslims on daily basis. They have clearly also forgotten Afghan history since the days of Mahmud Ghaznavi and other Muslim rulers based in Afghanistan, who conquered India and established centuries of Muslim rule. Finally, Afghanistan needs to be reminded of what harm Pakistan can do if it chooses to adopt a hostile stance towards Kabul. The closure of border can cripple Afghan economy. The deportation of millions of Afghan refugees can put an unmanageable burden on the Kabul regime. It is also widely accepted that without Pakistan's active cooperation, it would be difficult to find any kind of negotiated settlement of the current war in Afghanistan. The time has clearly come to talk bluntly to Afghan rulers and make them understand hard realities, as outlined above. But "surgical strikes" is probably not best option for Pakistan. It will take away moral high ground from Pakistan and would be seen as violation of International Law.

It would provide India a rationale for similar action against Pakistan. Moreover, surgical strikes could lead to escalation and unpredictable consequences. This is certainly not the time for Pakistan to get involved in any kind of war in Afghanistan or elsewhere. At present, Pakistan is coming up economically and is making a great leap forward with progressive realisation of the objectives of CPEC. In international relations, decisions must be made on hard-headed calculations and emotions must not be allowed to determine national policies. Most importantly, it should be understood by Kabul and Islamabad that terrorists are the common enemy of both countries. They are seeking to secure their nefarious objectives by deliberately provoking the two neighbours, so as to create mutual mistrust and prevent any coordinated action against the terrorists.

The writer served as Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, the ex-Soviet Union, France, Nigeria and Libya.

Email:shahid_m_amin@hotmail.com



Tajikistan to join Pakistan road link bypassing Afghanistan

By Monitoring Desk

While Kabul is reluctant to finalise a transit trade agreement with Islamabad, Tajikistan is poised to join a separate initiative which will connect Pakistan to Central Asia, bypassing Afghanistan entirely, The Express Tribune reported.

Officials told that Tajikistan's request for inclusion into the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA) — a deal between China, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan for facilitating transit traffic and trade — has been approved. The Central Asian state will now become a formal participant once its parliament approves the move, they said, claimed by The Express Tribune.

Inclusion in QTTA — which was signed in Islamabad in 1995 — will grant landlocked Tajikistan access to Pakistan's ports, including Gwadar, without having to depend on Afghanistan. It will provide safe passage to traders from both Pakistan and Tajikistan. Trade between the two countries has risen steadily from \$15 million in 2011 to \$90 million in 2016, and Tajikistan wants to bring the volume up to \$500 million.

Up till now, Pakistani traders have had to rely on the land route through Afghanistan to access Tajikistan and other Central Asian States. Pakistan and Afghanistan had been negotiating a transit trade agreement but Kabul's insistence that India be included in the arrangement led to a deadlock in discussions. Due to tensions with India over unrest in Occupied Kashmir and Delhi's attempts to implicate Islamabad in rebel attacks on military installations, Pakistan

could not accommodate Kabul's demand. But while Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani threatened to cut off Pakistan's access to Central Asia if it did not include India in the transit deal, China revived QTTA to further tap the potential of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, officials said. QTTA provides Pakistan a gateway to Central Asia by using the Karakoram Highway — which links Gilgit-Baltistan to China's Xinjiang region — as a transit corridor. With Pakistan's exports declining by over \$4 billion over the last few years, it has looked to tap the potential of Central Asian and Russian markets. Kyrgyzstan has offered a route to Russia to Pakistani traders. At the same time, Pakistani ports provide landlocked Central Asian states the closest maritime facilities for trade. Currently, they rely on seaports in China, Turkey, Iran, Russia and the Baltic States.

Tajikistan's request for inclusion into the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA) — a deal between China, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan for facilitating transit traffic and trade — has been approved



To serve with honour, integrity, justice and fairplay

Win friends for Pakistan

The government has decided to appoint Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry as Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States of America, Foreign Office announced.

He will join his new assignment in Washington, D.C. next month. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry is a career Foreign Service Officer with over 36 years of bilateral and multilateral experience in the field of diplomacy.

Presently, he is serving as Foreign Secretary of Pakistan since December 2013. Earlier, he has served as the spokesperson of the foreign ministry.

Served as Ambassador of Pakistan to the Netherlands (2009-2012). Represented Pakistan in The Hague based international organizations, including OPCW. Conducted public diplomacy in cooperation with Pakistani community to bring the people of Pakistan and the Netherlands closer. Authored a book "Pakistan mirrored to Dutch eyes" published by Sangemeel publications.

Served as Additional Foreign Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad, dealing with Pakistan's relations with South Asia. Has been actively associated with the peace process with India. Earlier served as Director General for South Asia (2007-2009).

Represented Pakistan in SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). Member of SAARC Programming Committee (2007-2009). Led Pakistan side and chaired several meetings of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference) as Director General in-charge for OIC. Organized OIC Conference of Foreign Ministers hosted by Pakistan in Islamabad in May 2007.

Represented Pakistan in the United Nations for over six years. As Pakistan's Deputy Permanent Representative and earlier as Counsellor, he participated in inter-governmental negotiations in the UN, NAM, G-77, and other forums on several issues of interest to Pakistan. Also chaired UN parleys on a host of important issues, in particular HRM Reform, and UN Budget (2000-2006).

Served as Political Counsellor in Pakistan Embassy in Washington, USA (1999-2000).

Served as Director (chef de cabinet) to the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan in Islamabad. Also participated in India-Pakistan Foreign Secretaries level talks (1997-99).

Facilitated expansion/re-structuring of ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization) when he served as chef de cabinet to the Secretary General of ECO, based in Tehran, Iran, (1991-97)

Worked in various administration and political directorates, Foreign Ministry, Islamabad (1988-91).

Served as Third/Second Secretary Pakistan Embassy in Doha (1984-87). Also served as

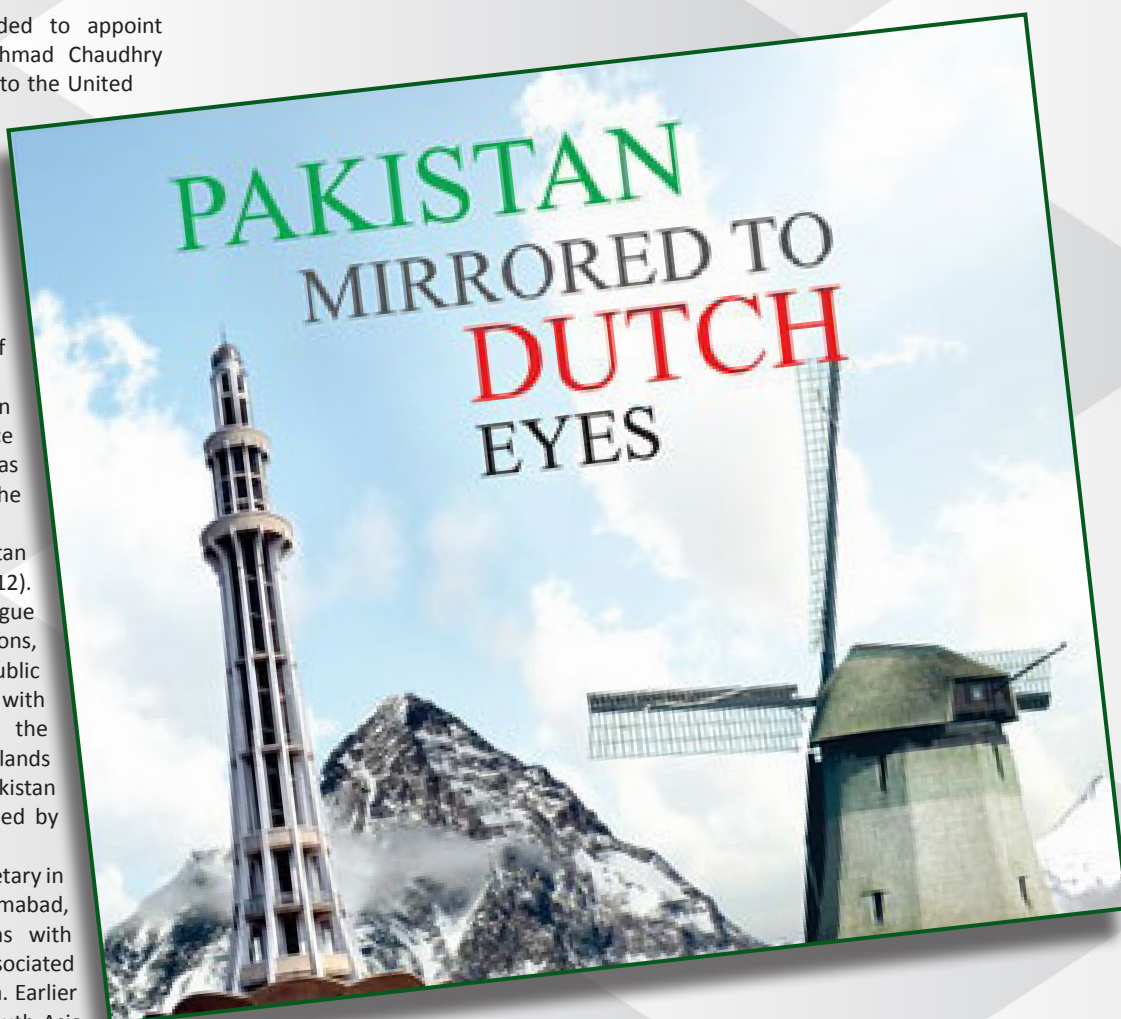
language trainee at the Embassy of Pakistan, Cairo, Egypt (1983). Specialized Training in Foreign Service Training Institute Islamabad (1981-82). Common Training in Civil Service Academy Lahore (1981).

Holds Master's degree in International Relations from Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Medford, Massachusetts. Also holds Masters degree in Political Science and Bachelor of Science from Punjab University, Lahore. Has received several trainings in public sector management.

He is married and has three children.

courtesy to

[www.http://aizazahmadchaudhry.com/](http://aizazahmadchaudhry.com/)



“Diplomatic Focus” honord Mr. & Mrs. Aizaz Ahmad Ch. & New Envoys of Arab Countries



SERENA HOTELS



Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi Editor, CEO, Publisher of “Diplomatic Focus” hosted a Bid farewell in the honor of Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Ch. Foreign Secretary at Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan and now nominated Ambassador to United States of America. And Welcome dinner for New Envoys of Arab Countries

H.E. Mr. Tageldine Elhadi (Ambassador of The Republic of Sudan), H.E. Mr. Mohammed Motahar Alashabi (Ambassador of The Republic of Yemen), H.E. Mrs. Khadija Mohamed Al-Makhzoumi (Ambassador of Somalia), H.E. Mr. Nassar Abdulrahman J. Almutairi (Ambassador of The State of Kuwait), H.E. Mr. Mohamed Karmoune (Ambassador of The Kingdom of Morocco), H.E. Mr. Mohammed Omar Ahmed Al-Marhoon (Ambassador of Oman to Pakistan) at Serena Hotel Islamabad. A large number of guests, including diplomats, political leaders and socialites attended the reception.











Birth Day Celebration

The 55th birthday of Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi Editor, CEO, Publisher of "Diplomatic Focus" and his Granddaughter Alisha's 11th birthday has been celebrated at the Marriott Hotel

which was attended by Pakistanis from many walks of life and of course members of the diplomatic community. The guest of honour was Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman is a Pakistani politician who serves


as the Junior Minister of Federal Education and of Interior and Narcotics Control and Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan.



Brazilian Carnival 2017

Brazilian ambassador Claudio Raja Gabaglia Lins with his better half hosted “Brazilian Carnival 2017” in Islamabad.





Why

Europe conquered the world

By Jonathan Power

Europe was a backwater 1,100 years ago. There were no grand cities apart from Cordoba in Spain, which was Muslim. The Middle East was much further ahead, still absorbing the intellectual delights and challenges of Greek science, medicine and architecture, of which Europeans were largely ignorant. In southern China, agriculture advanced and trade in tea, porcelain and silk flourished.

By 1914 it was a totally different world. The Europeans ruled 84 percent of the globe and had colonies everywhere. How was it that Europe and its offspring, the US, became the dominant dynamic force in the world, and still are today in most things?

If I walk round my university town and stop the first 10 students I meet and ask them why this was so, they would probably say because of the Industrial Revolution. But in 1800, when the revolution was only just beginning, Europeans already ruled 35 percent of the world and had armed ships on every ocean and colonies on every continent. If they did not say that, they might say it was the way the Europeans spread their fatal diseases, smallpox and measles, to which they had gained a good deal of immunity, and this enabled them to lay low native peoples. But all the major Middle Eastern and Asian civilizations had this same advantage. In Africa, it was local diseases that attacked Europeans more than vice versa.

Maybe one of the 10 students would say it was because the Europeans were ahead in the development of gunpowder technology. After all, the military revolution preceded the industrial one. But even though on the right track, I doubt this one student could explain

why. Gunpowder was invented in China, and by the 16th century the Ottomans were making high-quality artillery. But they could not keep up with the pace of European technological development. Europe had military competition and thus innovation baked into it. Europe, unlike the Ottoman Empire or China, was a very un-unified place. Since the fall of Charlemagne, there was no one strong enough to hold Europe together. Moreover, the popes preferred divide and rule, and did not want one strong European leader to diminish their power.

In Europe, dozens of small states and principalities, often each vying to be top dog, were stimulated to nurse their competitive instincts. This pushed research and gunpowder technology forward at a much faster pace than anywhere else in the world. In contrast, China was a massive hegemon; Japan and the Ottoman Empire were sizable ones. A hegemon inevitably comes to believe that since it is politically dominant far and wide, it does not have to work so hard at maintaining superior arms. But when it came to gunpowder technology and its adaption to warships, the smaller European powers, each seeking to outscore each other, could often call the shots against Asia's hegemons.

Philip Hoffman, professor at the California Institute of Technology, argues in his new book "Why Did Europe Conquer The World?" that Europe's pace of innovation was driven by a peculiar form of military competition that he calls a "tournament" — the sort of competition that under the right conditions can drive contestants to exert enormous effort in the hope of earning a prize.

This is what happened in Europe, but not elsewhere. European rulers raised taxes and lavished resources on armies, navies and

gunpowder technology, and pushed forward research. Moreover, unlike in Asia, private entrepreneurs faced few legal, financial or political obstacles to launching expeditions of conquest and exploration. This is why the British East India Co. could conquer much of India.

The wars that led to Europe's and particularly Britain's domination of the world made possible the Industrial Revolution (although there were other important factors too), not vice versa. Victory in battle had given Britain a large share of Europe's intercontinental trade. That created jobs in British cities. That raised wages and agricultural demand.

High wages stimulated the invention of labor-saving machines such as spinning machines and steam energy. Then there were the huge deposits of coal. Hence the Industrial Revolution. Some historians add into the mix the immense profits from the Caribbean and North American slave trade, which provided much of the capital needed to build machines and factories. Others would add the long European tradition of the separation of church and state. Hoffman himself stresses the importance of Britain's uniform legal and fiscal system, and Parliament's control of the purse. Well, as they say, that is history. Now we have a new struggle for dominance. If only it could be done without another round of gunpowder technology, and within the legal framework of the UN Charter.

Courtesy: Arab News

[Jonathan Power is a British journalist, filmmaker and writer.]

Pakistan Wins GSMA Government Leadership Award 2017

By M.Saeed Yousafzai, Monitoring Desk

Pakistan has been declared the winner of the 'GSMA Government Leadership Award 2017' at the biggest annual telecom industry gathering at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona Spain. The award was received by Minister of State for IT &T and Telecom Anusha Rahman during the Global Mobile awards and goes on to confirm the worldwide acclaim and global recognition of the Government's Telecommunication Policy 2015.

Accepting the award Anusha thanked the global telecom community and the GSM Association for reiterating its confidence and trust in the telecom sector policies of the government of Pakistan, Attributing the success to the hard work of professionals at MoIT&T, PTA and FAB she said, "This award is recognition of the Pakistan's policy soundness and the vision of the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for the telecommunication sector in Pakistan by the international community."

She congratulated the prime minister and Pakistani people on winning the second global GSMA award in a short span of two years. Pakistan was awarded the Leadership Award for Transparent and Market Building Spectrum Auction in 2015.

Grant of two major global mobile awards for within a short span of three years of the current government is historical and the 2017 award is significant as it carries the highest significance globally for government's policy initiatives and development of digital markets.

The minister highlighted that 'Telecommunication Policy 2015' had been recognized by the international community for its sound provisions catering for the availability of universal, affordable and quality telecommunication services provided through open, competitive and well managed markets which could be used by people to the benefit of the economy and society.

She added that the award had also recognized the measures laid down in the policy that were expected to make telecom market more



efficient in terms of quality of service and choice of services available to the consumers; and the policy was expected to boost the Telecommunications as well as ancillary ICT sector markets, spur socio economic development and would act as a catalyst towards achieving knowledge based society with digital inclusion of all segments of our society.

On the sidelines of the Barcelona event, the Minister of State for Information Technology & Telecommunication also held a meeting with the Chairman of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Goran Morby as well as host of other global telecom industry leaders including top leadership of the Etisalat, Telenor and Vimplecom groups and invited them to partner with the government to take the benefits of the digital revolution to all segments of Pakistani society.

The global technology leaders congratulated the minister on receiving the Leadership Award and expressed full industry commitment to her initiatives for achieving an inclusive digital economy in Pakistan for the benefit of both the masses and the industry.

This award is recognition of the Pakistan's policy soundness and the vision of the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for the telecommunication sector in Pakistan by the international community: Anusha Rahman



The Canada of today is a peaceful, pluralistic society with strong democratic values: H.C of Canada

The High Commission of Canada celebrates the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation

By Muhammad Bilal Zafar

To commemorate the 150th celebration of Canadian Confederation, the High Commission of Canada organized a press conference in Islamabad.

Reflecting on the country's history, High Commissioner Perry Calderwood explained that in 1867, four colonies united to form a Confederation called Canada. Over the years, additional territories chose to join the country which grew to occupy the northern half of the North American continent. "From our British, French and Indigenous roots, we have opened our doors to cultures from around the world. The Canada of today is a peaceful, pluralistic

society with strong democratic values," he said. The High Commissioner highlighted the multicultural aspect of the country and emphasized that Canada's commitment to inclusiveness is reflected in the political leadership. For the first time, Canada's federal cabinet, led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, is characterized by gender parity with women occupying a number of the most important portfolios. The cabinet includes several ministers who were born outside of Canada, including the Minister of Immigration, who came to Canada as a refugee from Somalia. "We are proud that all Canadians are equal, and can aspire to occupy the highest offices in the land, whether they became citizens last

week, or their ancestors arrived in Canada millennia ago," he said.

The High Commissioner observed that the Canada-Pakistan bilateral relationship dates back to the earliest days of Pakistan's independence. Canada has a significant development cooperation program in Pakistan of about Cdn \$67 million per year, Canadian-Pakistani bilateral trade reached approximately Cdn \$1.5 billion in 2016, and ties between the Canadian and Pakistani peoples continue to grow.

The High Commission of Canada thanks all our friends and partners in Pakistan for joining us in celebrating this milestone anniversary.

The Challenges to Women's Rights in Pakistan

By Muhammad Bilal Zafar

The Government of Canada is an ardent supporter of women's rights both at home and around the world. Canada has successfully implemented gender equality programs in Pakistan over the last 30 years. The Women's Economic Empowerment Forum has been hosted by the High Commission of Canada since 2011.

This year, the scope of the Forum was expanded to address women's empowerment and women's rights in all aspects - political, economic, social, and humanitarian. The Forum looked at the underlying social and cultural factors that constrain women's ability to be equal and active participants in Pakistan's social, economic and political arena. The Forum complements the celebrations of Canada's 150th anniversary of Confederation, which underscores Canada's promotion of diversity, pluralism and gender equality.

The Women's Empowerment Forum brought together a diverse range of women and men. Panelists addressed the major challenges to women's social, political, and economic participation and empowerment, such as the impact of harmful cultural practices, biased social attitudes, non-gender responsive police and judiciary, and religious extremism and intolerance. The participants - development professionals, rural women, the private sector, and government representatives - discussed themes such as the enforcement of progressive legislation, their experience and views on measures needed to support women's social and economic mobility, and promoting women's engagement in decision-making.

"When women are politically empowered, they can help create an enabling environment for their increased economic participation,"

said High Commissioner Perry Calderwood. "When women are empowered economically, their family and community benefits. Similarly by promoting women's rights, all marginalized groups stand to benefit. A society that upholds women's rights will also respect the rights of religious minorities; the rights of children - especially those victims of exploitation and trafficking and the rights of LGBT people. I invite you today to reflect on how we collectively can promote these rights as we advance those of women."

This Forum informs the direction of Canada's future gender programming in Pakistan.

Background

Studies of the situation of women in Pakistan illustrate limited mobility, gender stereotyping, rigid gender roles and the prevalence of gender-based violence. These social inequalities are further exacerbated for women in times of disasters and displacements. Women's challenges are reflected in Pakistan's rank on the Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum, on which

Pakistan stands in 143rd position among 144 countries as of 2016. Women and girls are affected disproportionately by Pakistan's multidimensional poverty, and overall 14 out of 10 Pakistanis live in poverty. While there has been progress in terms of introducing legislation protecting women's rights - reflected in 24 new pro-women laws passed in Pakistan in the past three years - robust enforcement is key to both short- and long-term impact. Room exists for further growth in state policies that encourage women's political and economic participation. As reported in the 2015 Annual Report by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, the prosecution rate for crimes against women remains very low, as the burden of prosecution remains on the shoulders of the victim. This can exacerbate a culture of impunity in which perpetrators have the opportunity to repeat their actions and women become increasingly reluctant to report human rights violations, whether a crime or an instance of discrimination.





International skiers stunned by Malam Jabba's sublime beauty

Foreign visitors call Malam Jabba a skier's paradise

By Muhammad Bilal Zafar

Foreign skiers at a skiing championship held on Malam Jabba's slopes were left stunned by the hill station's ethereal beauty, with some calling it "a skier's paradise" and others honouring it as "one of the most beautiful slopes in the world".

The 'Malam Jabba International Alpine Ski Cup', held between January 26 to February 3, 2017, marked the first international ski championship held at Malam Jabba in the hill station's history. Sixty skiers — 50 men and 10 women — from nine countries, including Pakistan, Morocco, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Greece, Afghanistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Tajikistan, participated in

the championship.

"This is no doubt a very beautiful ski slope surrounded by beautiful forest, and I really like it. It is FIS [International Ski Federation] standard and a world-class ski slope," Anthonios, an official from the International Ski Federation who was present during the championship, told.

He pointed out, however, that the government must reconstruct the road leading to Malam Jabba as it was in really bad shape.

Fatima, a skier from Afghanistan, said she was inspired by the scenic beauty of Malam Jabba. "Its slope is splendid, and the environment is serene," she said.

"It is a really dazzling sight with the green forest

surrounding [it] and the people are really well-mannered and hospitable," she told.

Bahrudin, a skier from Tajikistan, also praised the beauty of Malam Jabba and the facilities provided for skiers.

"Swat valley is really a paradise. I have never seen such a paradise-like ski slope in other parts of the world. Everything in Malam Jabba is heartwarming and I wish to come here again and again," he told.

Skiers from Afghanistan not only praised the scenic beauty of Malam Jabba, but were also impressed by the hospitality of the people.

"I found real hospitality and love in the people here. It seems we have entered a splendidly perfect place on earth," said Mohammad Dawood Kargar, a skier from Afghanistan.

The organisers of the championship said that the successful event proved that Pakistan and Swat valley were not only highly beautiful, but also peaceful.

"We have shown the world that Pakistan is one of the most beautiful and safe countries now. Tourists from across the world can come and can enjoy the scenic beauty and hospitality of the people here," said Air Commodore Shahid Nadeem, one of the organisers of the event.

"This year, Naltar [another popular destination for skiers] saw very little snow, and it is also very far, so we shifted the ski events to Malam Jabba. It is good to know that we now have two international standard ski slopes and we can hold events at both sites," he added.



“We have shown the world that Pakistan is one of the most beautiful and safe countries now. Tourists from across the world can come and can enjoy the scenic beauty and hospitality of the people here,”
Air Commodore Shahid Nadeem

“I found real hospitality and love in the people here. It seems we have entered a splendidly perfect place on earth,”
said Mohammad Dawood Kargar, a skier from Afghanistan.





By Muhammad Bilal Zafar

Pakistan hailed the successful staging of the Pakistan Super League final as a step towards restoring international cricket in the country after a deadly attack on the Sri Lankan team in 2009.

With nerves jangling after a recent resurgence of militant violence, tight security blanketed Lahore's sold-out Gaddafi Stadium but the game went off peacefully with Peshawar Zalmi beating Quetta Gladiators by 58 runs.

Fans held up banners proclaiming "Pakistan wins today", reflecting a mood of defiance. The rest of the Twenty20 tournament was played in the United Arab Emirates for safety reasons. Thousands of police and troops patrolled the area around the Gaddafi Stadium and military helicopters whirled overhead in heavy security more commonly associated with visiting heads of state.

It was outside the same ground almost exactly eight years ago that Pakistan cricket suffered its worst blow when militants opened fire on a bus carrying Sri Lankan cricketers, killing

eight people and wounding nine, including six visiting players.

The attack effectively snuffed out Pakistan's home international sporting fixtures, with no major teams visiting the country since.

Holding the final in Pakistan had drawn criticism from some quarters, after a series

of militant attacks in February left 130 people dead and broke a long lull in violence that had encouraged authorities. Fears of a fresh incident threatened to overshadow Sunday's final, as top players such as Quetta's Kevin Pietersen and Luke Wright pulled out ahead of the clash over security concerns.



But the West Indies' Darren Sammy bucked the trend to captain Peshawar Zalmi to victory, after replacing Pakistan's Shahid Afridi who was forced out with a hand injury.

"My good friend Lala (Afridi) said: 'If we get to the final you should come to Lahore'," Sammy told the crowd.

"I am glad I came to experience the atmosphere here. Even though Peshawar came out on top, cricket was the real winner in Lahore," he added.

Legendary paceman Wasim Akram called it a "momentous occasion for Pakistan", while fans at the ground said they had sent the militants a message.

"I felt no fear and I just came to give a message to terrorists that Pakistanis are not afraid of their cowardly acts," said Mohammad Nauman, who paid \$40 for his ticket.

Peshawar Zalmi rode on a 32-ball 40 by the in-form Kamran Akmal, who clobbered six fours and a six to reach 148 for six off their 20 overs. Skipper Sammy hit two sixes in his 28 not out, while fellow West Indian paceman Rayad Emrit took 3-31 for Quetta.

In reply, Quetta were shot out for 90 after being rocked by left-arm spinner Mohammad Asghar, who finished with three for 16 in his four overs. Eight security experts attended the game,



including officials from the International Cricket Council.

Delegates from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, who are rumoured as possible candidates to tour Pakistan, were also at the ground.

"We will give good news to fans soon that an international team will come to Pakistan," said tournament chairman Najam Sethi, although similar statements in the past have gone

unfulfilled. The final of the Super League's second edition brings a successful conclusion to a tournament which began inauspiciously with two players suspended and more questioned over alleged spot-fixing.

Afridi tweeted: "truly appreciate the arrangements & security. It was a success4Pakistan!"

Courtesy to NEWS INTERNATIONAL

|  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 MISBAH-UL-HAQ | 1 CHRIS GAYLE | 1 B MCCULLUM | 1 SHAHID AFRIDI | 1 KEVIN PIETERSEN |
| 2 SHANE WATSON | 2 KIERON POLLARD | 2 SUNIL NARINE | 2 EOIN MORGAN | 2 SARFRAZ AHMED |
| 3 ANDRE RUSSEL | 3 SHOAIB MALIK | 3 UMAR AKMAL | 3 WAHAB RIAZ | 3 AHMED SHAHZAD |
| 4 SHARJEEL KHAN | 4 MOHAMMAD AMIR | 4 SOHAIL TANVIR | 4 SHAKIB AL HASAN | 4 C BRAITHWAITE |
| 5 MOHAMMAD IRFAN | 5 RAVI BOPARA | 5 DJ BRAVO | 5 DARREN SAMMY | 5 LUKE WRIGHT |
| 6 SAMUEL BADREE | 6 K SANGAKARA | 6 YASIR SHAH | 6 M HAFEEZ | 6 ANWAR ALI |
| 7 MOHAMMAD SAMI | 7 IMAD WASIM | 7 ANTON DEVCICH | 7 CHRIS JORDAN | 7 TYMAL MILLS |
| 8 KHALID LATIF | 8 BABAR AZAM | 8 M RIZWAN | 8 TAMIM IQBAL | 8 UMAR GUL |
| 9 BRAD HADDIN | 9 RYAN MCLAREN | 9 CAMERON DELPORT | 9 KAMRAN AKMAL | 9 ZULFIQAR BABAR |
| 10 SAM BILLINGS | 10 SOHAIL KHAN | 10 AZHAR ALI | 10 SOHAIB MAQSOOD | 10 M NAWAZ |
| 11 ASIF ALI | 11 SHAHZAIB HASAN | 11 ZAFAR GOHAR | 11 JUNAID KHAN | 11 MOHAMMAD NABI |
| 12 RUMAN RAEES | 12 KHURAM MANZOOR | 12 AAMIR YAMIN | 12 IMRAN KHAN JR | 12 ASAD SHAFIQ |
| 13 SAEED AJMAL | 13 SAIFULLAH BANGASH | 13 FAKHAR ZAMAN | 13 IFTIKHAR AHMED | 13 UMAR AMIN |
| 14 IMRAN KHALID | 14 KASHIF BHATTI | 14 BILAWAL BHATTI | 14 HARIS SOHAIL | 14 SAAD NASIM |
| 15 DWAYNE SMITH | 15 M JAYAWARDENE | 15 GRANT ELLIOT | 15 ALEX HALES | 15 DAVID WILLEY |
| 16 BENN DUCKETT | 16 USAMA MIR | 16 SHAUN TAIT | 16 SHAHZAD M | 16 ROVMAN POWELL |
| 17 SHADAB KHAN | 17 RAHAT ALI | 17 SAIF BADAR | 17 IRFAN KHAN | 17 BISMILLAH KHAN |
| 18 ZOHAIB KHAN | 18 AMMAD ALAM | 18 MOHAMMAD IRFAN | 18 KHUSHDIL SHAH | 18 MIR HAMZA |
| 19 AMMAD BUTT | 19 ABRAR AHMED | 19 GHULAM MUDASIR | 19 HASSAN ALI | 19 NOOR WALI |
| 20 HUSSAIN TALAT | 20 ABDUL HAMEED | 20 USMAN QADIR | 20 M ASGHAR | 20 HASSAN KHAN |

PAKISTAN SUPER LEAGUE TEAMS 2017

69th National Day of the independence of Sri Lanka

H.E. Maj. Gen. Loku Katagodage Jayanth Chandrasiri Perera, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka hosted a reception to celebrate 69th National Day of the independence of his country at Marriot Hotel, Islamabad. Mr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, Minister for Commerce of Pakistan was the chief guest of the eve. A large number of guests, including diplomats, diplomatic Community, persons from armed forces attended the reception.





Noreen & Dr. Ikhtiar Baig CG of Yemen & Dean Consular Corps Sindh Karachi hosted dinner reception at BAIGS attended by social elite of the city, Belinda Lewis UK Deputy HC, Mr&Mrs. Waseem Akhtar Mayor Karachi, Bayram Avari, Shahrukh Hasan, Singer Fakhir, Ishtiaq Baig, Surgeon Bilal Faiz, Seema & Tahir Khan, Agha Wasif, Omair & Iman Baig, Zoyaa & Imran Baig & others. The ambiance was par excellence and the guests were served special cuisines by the chef flown from abroad. The live music enthralled the well attended gathering till wee hours.



Haider Wahee, Ishtiaq Baig, Ali Raza, Salim Yousuf, Ikhtiar Baig, Imran Baig, Fawad Malik & Jawed Edhi.



Omair Baig, Nadeem Akbar, Hunaid Lakhani, Noman Sheikh, Haider Waheed, Faisal Pervaiz, Jalil ur Rehman, Danish Iqbal & Babar Siddiqui.



Tahir, Noreen, Romail, Huanid Lakhani, Belinda Lewis, Ikhtiar Baig & Asif Tata.



Khalid, Saeed Mazhar, Shahid Soorty, Dr. Ikhtiar Baig, Kamran & Sana Saeed.



Dr. Ikhtiar Baig, Bayram Avari, Mr&Mrs. Wali Muhammad, Sadaf, Aainee, Ghufuran Memon & Ishtiaq Baig.



Shahrukh Hasan, Asif Tata, Ishtiaq & Ikhtiar Baig & Shahid Soorty.



Pervez Madraswala, Ahmed Jalal, Jawed Edhi, Dr. Baig, Waseem Qadri.



Ghufuran Memon, Agha Wasif, Jawed Jumani, Ikhtiar Baig & Absar Pagganwala.



Omair Baig with wife Iman.



Noreen Baig, Mr&Mrs. Surgeon Bilal Khan, Dr. Ikhtiar Baig, Belinda Lewis UK Dy HC, Bayram Avari, Pervez Madraswala & Akram Wali Mohd.



Omair Baig, Zafar Usman, Ikhtiar Baig, Leelu, Noreen, Nawab Kaifee, Tahir & Seema.



Waseem Qadri, Dr. Baig, Shahbaz Malik, Noreen & Zaki Paha.



Group photographs of the guests, Noreen Shahbaz, Hina, Samra, Noreen Ateeq, Saira, Noreen Baig, Ambreen, Sana, Huma & Farhana.



Asif Sajjan, Ikhtiar Baig, Yaqoob Ahmed & Ishtiaq Baig.



Tahir Khan, Ikhtiar Baig, Mr&Mrs. Yousuf Dewan, Noreen, Leelu, Zafar Usman & Omair Baig.



Erum, Dr. Ikhtiar Baig, Dr. & Mrs. Hashmat Malik & Noreen.



Omair, Noman Shaikh, Nadeem Akbar, Hunaid Lakhani & Saqib Tata.



Hina Farid, Seema, Naheed, Noreen, Amra.



Jawed & Ambreen, Saeed & Sana, Kamran & Anjum, Tariq & Azmat.



Naila Waseem Akhtar, Ikhtiar, Noreen, Zaki Pasha & Imran Baig.



Mr&Mrs. Ikhtiar Baig with singer Mr&Mrs. Fakhir Mahmood.



Dr. Ikhtiar Baig, Ali Raza, Satish Anand & Noreen.



Iman Omair Baig with Mr&Mrs. Munawar Kassim Ali.



Dr. Ikhtiar Baig, Mr&Mrs. Shahrukh Hasan & Noreen Baig.



Mayor Karachi Waseem Akhtar with Ikhtiar & Ishtiaq Baig.



Noreen with Neelu Munaf.



Serena hotels-Chief of Air Staff International Alpine Sky Cup 2017 & Malam Jabba Alpine Cup 2017



Prizes were distributed among the winners of Chief of Air Staff Karakorum Ski Championship and Malam Jabba International Alpine Ski Cup, Serena Hotel, Islamabad. Also present on the occasion were Ski Federation of Pakistan (SFP) president Vice Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Asad Lodhi, CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani, ambassadors and other notables.



Former Minister of Family and Population Arab Republic of Egypt and Egypt's candidare for Director General of UNESCO H.E. Mrs. Moushira Khattab and Omer Zahid Malik, Group Managing Editor pakistan Observer,during a reception ceremony in her honour hosted by Ambassador of Arab Republic of Egypt Sherif Shaheen at his residence.



H.E. Khalifa Ali Hamad Al-Manaseer
Ambassador of Bahrain to Pakistan
hosted a reception in the honor of Arab
countries' envoys in Islamabad at Serena
Hotel, Islamabad.



Nepal celebrated Armed Day in Islamabad

Ambassador of Nepal H.E.Mrs.Sewa Lamsal Adhikari hosted a reception to celebrate Armed Day of Nepal at Serena hotel, Islamabad. Chief guest of the eve was Lieutenant General Muhammad Afzal. Other prominent guests were HI(M), Military Attache Colonel Neeraj Poudyal, Mayor Islamabad and Chairman of CDA Mr. Sheikh Anser Aziz, Ambassador of Afghanistan Dr Omar Zakhilwal, High Commissioner of Bangladesh Tarik Ahsan, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka Major Gen. (R) Lokuketagodage, and Former Senator Akram Zaki.



56th Independence Day & 26th Anniversary of the Liberation Day of Kuwait Celebrated



Ambassador H.E. Nassar Abdulrahman J. Almutairi of Kuwait hosted a warm and cordial reception to mark the 56th anniversary of the Independence Day & 26th Anniversary of the Liberation Day of his country at Marriott Hotel, Islamabad. Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Mr. Riaz Hussain Pirzada was the chief guest. A large number of guests graced the function included ambassadors, senior diplomats, officials and prominent people from Pakistan society.





Bulgarian National Day Celebrated in Islamabad

Ambassador of Bulgaria H.E. Roumen Pirontchev, hosted a reception to to celebrate the National Day of Bulgaria. The prominent guests of the eve were Ambassador of France Martine Dorance, Ambassador of Austria Dr Brigitta Blaha, Ambassador of Poland Piotr Opalinski, Ambassador of Netherlands Jeannette Sepper, Ambassador of Switzerland Marc Pierre George, Charged Affairs Portugal Joao Sabido Costa



Canadian HC celebrates the 150th anniversary Confederation

High Commissioner of Canada H.E. Perry Calderwood hosted a reception to celebrate the 150th anniversary Confederation of his country at Canadian High Commission, Islamabad. Mr. Zahid Hamid, Minister of Law, Justice & Human Rights was the chief guest of the eve.



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Member American Association of Endodontist.
Former Head of Dentistry,
Shifa International Hospital

Dr. Shahid Mamood is a graduate from the University of Texas, at San Antonio, USA with specialization in Endodontics and Implantology. He has twenty years of experience to his credit. He has also had the privilege of setting up the Department of Dentistry at Shifa International Hospital and remained the head of the department for six years.

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