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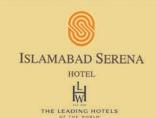


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Benazir Bhutto (1953-2007) was the first democratically elected female leader of a Muslim country during a tumultuous life that ended with her assassination.

President Alvi meets King Salman, 12 **Appreciates Saudi cooperation**

President Dr Arif Alvi met Saudi King and Custodian of the two Holy Mosques Salman bin Abdulaziz in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Both dignitaries discussed matters of mutual interest, including trade, investment and economic relations.

President Xi Jinping: China vows to open up wider to world

President Xi Jinping underlined China's commitment to opening up wider to the world and promoting joint efforts to build a community with a shared future for humanity.

30 Saudi military alliance not set up to counter any country or sect: Raheel **Sharif tells**

He told the Senate chairman that the basic aim of this institution was to counter terrorism and eliminate it. Sanjrani was accompanied by a Senate delegation during the visit to the IMCTC headquarters.

"Diplomatic Focus" welcomed to **New Envoys**

Diplomatic Focus" a prestigious monthly magazine hosted a dinner reception in the honor of the New Envoys to Islamic republic of Pakistan. Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Editor/Publisher of "Diplomatic Focus" welcome and congratulate the new envoys





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with the PM Imran Khan

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Independence of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Gen (rtd) Ashimiyu Adebayo Olaniyi DON, mni

November 2018

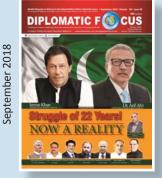
October 2018

Mian Fazal Elahi



Some voices are raised against the CPEC and China clarified the matter. Pakistan has gained in economic terms by addressing its power crisis and developing modern road infrastructure ever since the launch of this mega project. If we go back five years ago, the country was faced with serious energy crisis and nobody was ready to invest in Pakistan due to poor security situation. It was China which while reposing confidence on the potential of the country came forward to help the country wriggle out of the energy crisis and develop state of the art infrastructure in order to bolster trade within the region. Now our new government has further expanded the scope of the CPEC by including subjects such as development of agriculture sector which will help the country learn from Chinese experience and bolster its agri yield. Thus, economically, it is a project that will bring joint development to the two countries; and socially, it is aimed at mobilizing the people to work together for the betterment of our two nations. We are confident that the two countries will further gear up their efforts towards early realisation of all the projects under the CPEC and work hand in hand in order to thwart all the designs and plots of the enemies against this game changer project.

2018 is now behind us, a cursory glance on the developments taking place during the year would show that it was a year of restoration of peace and democratic stabilization. The year witnessed general election leading to peaceful democratic transition and consolidation of the gains that the armed forces achieved in their relentless struggle against the menace of extremism and terrorism. As a result of these two significant achievements, the country is set on the path of progress and development. The nation successfully demonstrated to the world that despite paucity of financial resources and lack of required level of technology, the country can tackle complicated challenges with determination and courage. It is now responsibility of the civil government to stabilize the gains by initiating a combination of measures for the purpose.





The articles, columns, Opinions are published in Magazine in good faith. However, the contents of these writings may not necessarily match the views of the Editor/Publisher/Organization.

Mian Assad ullah

Important Announcement

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

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Afghanistan's New Envoy Presented Credentials to

President Dr Arif A

By Mian Fazal Elahi, M.Saeed Yousafzai

Ambassador-designate Afghanistan H.E. Shukrullah Atif Mashal presented his credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi during credentials ceremony at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. Later, the Ambassador also called on the President. Speaking on the occasion, the President said that Pakistan and Afghanistan have historically enjoyed close and cordial fraternal relations based on a shared faith,



President Dr. Arif Alvi expressed the hope that bilateral relations would be further strengthened during the tenure Of Ambassador Shukrullah Atif Mashal.

culture and heritage. He expressed the hope that bilateral relations would be further strengthened during the tenure of Ambassador Shukrullah Atif Mashal. Ambassador Mashal is the 23rd Afghan Envoy to Pakistan.

We will seek to strengthen bilateral relations between Afghanistan & Pakistan guided by mutual interest and respect:

H.E. Shukrullah Atif Mashal tweeted

Bhutto herself was also arrested many times over the following years, and was detained for three years before being permitted to leave the country in 1984. She settled in London, and along with her two brothers. When her brother Shahnawaz died in 1985, she traveled to Pakistan for his burial, and was again arrested for participating in anti-government rallies.

She flew to London after her release, and martial law was lifted in Pakistan at the end of the year. Anti-Zia demonstrations resumed and Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan in April 1986. The public response to her return was tumultuous, and she publicly called for the resignation of Zia Ul Haq, whose government had executed her father.

She was elected co-chairwoman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), along with her mother, and when elections were finally held in 1988, she herself became Prime Minister. At 35, she was one of the youngest chief executives in the world, and the first woman to serve as prime minister in an Islamic

Only two years into her first term, President Ghulam Ishaq



Khan dismissed Bhutto from office. She initiated an anti-corruption campaign, and in 1993 was re-elected as Prime Minister. While in office, she brought electricity to the countryside and built schools all over the country. She made hunger, housing and healthcare her top priorities, and looked forward to continuing to modernize Pakistan. At the same time, Bhutto faced constant opposition from the Islamic fundamentalist movement.

In 1996, President Leghari of Pakistan dismissed Benazir Bhutto from office, alleging mismanagement, and dissolved the National Assembly. A Bhutto re-election bid failed in 1997, and the next elected government, headed by the more conservative Nawaz Sharif, was overthrown by the military. Bhutto's husband was imprisoned, and once again, she was forced to leave her homeland. For nine years, she and her children lived in exile in London, where she continued to advocate the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. Asif Ali Zardari was released from prison in 2004 and rejoined his family in London. In the autumn of 2007, in the face of death threats from radical Islamists, Benazir Bhutto and her husband returned to their native country.

Although she was greeted by enthusiastic crowds, within hours of her arrival, her motorcade was attacked by a suicide bomber. She survived this first assassination attempt, although more than 100 bystanders died in the attack. With national elections scheduled for January 2008, her Pakistan People's Party was poised for a victory that would make Bhutto Prime Minister once again. Only a few weeks before the election, the extremists struck again. After a campaign rally in Rawalpindi, a gunman fired at her car before detonating a bomb, killing himself and more than 20 bystanders. Bhutto was rushed to the hospital but soon succumbed to injuries suffered in the attack.

In her political testament, Benazir Bhutto identified her son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, as her choice to succeed her as Chairman of the PPP. At the time of her death, Bialawal was only 19, still an undergraduate at Oxford. Although Benazir Bhutto did not live to see the developments, the party she led and the causes she championed still play a major role in the political life of contemporary Pakistan.

Bhutto's autobiography, Daughter of the East, was published in 1988 (also published as Daughter of Destiny, 1989); she also wrote Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, and the West, which was published posthumously in 2008.

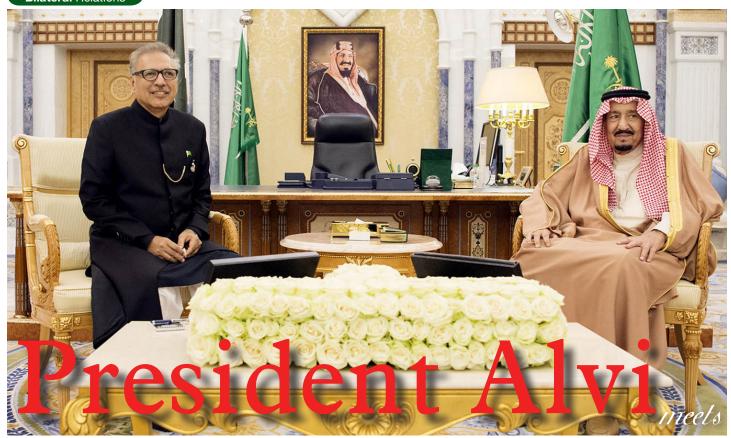
Benazir Bhutto left a deeply polarizing legacy. Her career has been celebrated as a triumph for women in the Muslim world and for the global fight against Islamic extremism. Her efforts and struggle to champion democracy remain a lasting legacy that is deeply respected among her rivals.













King Salman,

Appreciates Saudi cooperation

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Agencies

President Dr Arif Alvi met Saudi King and Custodian of the two Holy Mosques Salman bin Abdulaziz in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Both dignitaries discussed matters of mutual interest, including trade, investment and economic relations.

The meeting was attended by Prince Faisal bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz, the governor of Riyadh, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud al-Saud, Saudi Arabia's minister of interior, director general of Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Rukhsana Afzal, Pakistan acting ambassador to Saudi Arabia Zeeshan Ahmed and Pakistan Consul General in Jeddah Shahryar Akbar Khan were also present during the meeting.

King Salman warmly welcomed the president and congratulated him on his election. He underscored the importance of the timetested Pak-Saudi relationship, and said that the relations between the two brotherly countries were excellent at all levels. The King also commended the positive role played by Pakistani expatriates in the progress and development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



The President reiterated the close bonds of friendship and brotherhood enjoyed by the two countries, based on shared faith, culture and values. He acknowledged the common positions that the two countries had on many regional and international issues. Recalling the recent visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the president hoped that the bilateral relationship would be further strengthened in the days to

The president commended the progress made by the Kingdom under Vision 2030. He stressed that Pakistani expatriates would continue to play their positive role towards the development of both countries.

Doors of Holy Kaaba were opened for President Alvi and performed Umrah and prayed for the prosperity of his country.

During his pilgrimage, the doors of Kaaba were opened for President Alvi where he offered Nawafil.

Besides, the Grand Mosque's administration and diplomats from Pakistan's Embassy also accompanied the president.

Saudi Ara bia has always been supportive to Pakistan and helped Paki stan in difficult times President of Pakistan

President Dr Arif Alvi has said that we are providing an efficient investment structure in Pakistan to attract the foreign investors including the Pakistani expatriates. One window operation will shorten and ease the lengthy processes involved in the investment procedures. President Dr. Arif Alvi added that the procedural delays which frustrate the investors from investing in Pakistan are being streamlined into a one window operation to facilitate the investors. He said this while addressing the Pakistani Community members in Makkah. The community members included representatives of media, construction sector, banking sector, laborer sector, finance and accounting sector, doctors and educationists. The President appreciated the role of Pakistani community abroad in Pakistan's economy and



earning the valuable foreign exchange for their country. But he underlined the need for using the banking channels for sending their hard earned money to Pakistan so that it can become a stimulus in the Pakistan's economy. We are here for change and let us all of us together work for this change, he added.

Replying to question on the Pak- Saudi economic opportunities, President of Pakistan said that Saudi Arabia has always been supportive to Pakistan and helped Pakistan in difficult times. The basis of Pak- Saudi longterm relations is the respect between the two people and love for the most sacred places of Muslims in Makkah and Medina. The president said that both the economies have a similarity that more than 50% of their population comprises of youth which is a huge potential

and the youth need to be given opportunities to play their positive role in respective country's development. There is a change in the Saudi market from demand of unskilled labour to skilled working class and we need to tap that opportunity, he added. Replying to a question on database of overseas Pakistanis, Dr Arif Alvi said that overseas Pakistanis are Ambassadors of goodwill and an asset for their country and we will definitely involve them in the development process and take advantage of their experience. The President took notes of the some of the issues raised by the community members and promised to take up the matter with the relevant quarters in Pakistan.



President Dr Arif Alvi in a Group photo with the representatives of Pakistani Community in Makkah.



Turkish leadership admires vision of PM Imran Kahn for democracy, education and justice

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

President Dr. Arif Alvi has said that there is a lot of potential of improvement of defence and trade relations between Pakistan and Turkey. He was talking to His Excellency General (R) Hulusi AKAR, Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Turkey who called on him along-with a delegation. The President said that Pakistan is an investment ready country now and that the investors from all over the world particularly from Turkey must take advantage of this opportunity. The President said that Turkish Companies have invested immensely in energy and infrastructure projects in Pakistan which not only has strengthened the ties between the two countries but also played

an important role in the development and progress of both the Nations. He further said that Pakistan and Turkey are bound in deep and historical relations, which are not only brotherly but mutually beneficial as well. The President and the Turkish Minister for National Defence hoped that as a result of President's recent visit to Turkey the mutual relations will be further deepened and broadened with the help of further high level contact in near future. The President also stressed the need for early finalization of Free Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Turkey.

Later on, Prime Minister Imran Khan also received National Defence Minister of Turkey General (R) Hulusi Akar at Prime Minister's

Office. Minister for Defence Mr. Pervez Khattak was also present during the meeting. Welcoming the visiting dignitary to Pakistan, the Prime Minister said that Pakistan greatly values its ties with Turkey and the people of Pakistan have great respect for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. We admire the socio-economic progress made by Turkey under the visionary leadership of President Erdogan, continued the Prime Minister. Expressing satisfaction over the upward trajectory of Pak-Turkey relations, the Prime Minister said that Pakistan was keen to further strengthen its cooperation with Turkey in all areas of mutual interest including trade and defence cooperation. General (R) Hulusi Akar felicitated the Prime Minister on being



elected as Prime Minister of Pakistan and conveyed greetings from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He said that the Turkish leadership looks forward to the visit of Prime Minister to Turkey which would help further strengthening of the existing ties between the two countries. General (R) Hulusi Akar expressed Turkey's deep appreciation of Pakistan's efforts and sacrifices made in the war against terrorism. Regional situation was also discussed during the meeting.

Earlier, Prime Minister Imran Khan received Interior Minister of Turkey Mr. Süleyman Soylu at Prime Minister's Office. Turkish Interior Minister Mr. Süleyman Soylu felicitated the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Turkish leadership and on his own behalf, on being elected and assuming office of the Prime Minister. He conveyed message of felicitation and best wishes from President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the Prime Minister. He said that the Turkish leadership admires vision of Prime

Pakistan is an investment ready country now and that the investors from all over the world particularly from Turkey must take advantage of this opportunity: President Arif Alvi

Minister for democracy, education and justice. Pak-Turkey bilateral relations and ways and means to further enhance mutual cooperation in diverse areas including security, border management; immigration and anti-terrorism were discussed during the meeting. Discussing the issues of terrorism and regional peace, the Turkish Interior Minister appreciated the efforts and sacrifices made by Pakistan in the fight against terrorism. Prime Minister Imran Khan while welcoming the Turkish Interior Minister to Pakistan stated that Turkey holds special place in the hearts of Pakistanis who



deeply admire Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the recent socio-economic achievements of Turkey under its present visionary leadership. The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction over the upward trajectory of Pak-Turkey bilateral relationship and mutual cooperation existing between the two countries. The Prime Minister offered sharing of Pakistan's expertise and experience in dealing with the issue of terrorism that not only threatened peace of a country but the entire region. The Prime Minister also highlighted various steps being taken by the country to deal with the issue of money laundering and illegal immigration. The Turkish Interior Minister said that Turkey would provide every possible assistance to Pakistan in dealing with the issue of money laundering. The two leaders also agreed upon the need to put in place a robust mechanism to deal with the issue of illegal immigration. The Turkish Interior Minister invited the Prime Minister to visit Turkey. The Prime Minister conveyed his best wishes for the Turkish President and Turkish leadership and extended invitation to President Erdogan and his Cabinet members to visit Pakistan. The Turkish Interior Minister was accompanied by Deputy Interior Minister Mr. Ismail Çatakl, Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul, Deputy

Commander of Turkish General Command of Gendarmarie Lt. Gen. Ali Cardakc, DG Migration Management Mr. Abdullah Ayaz and Head of the EU Affairs and Foreign Relations Department Mr. Sava Ünlü. Minister of State for Interior Mr. Shehryar Khan Afridi, Secretary to Prime

Turkish leadership looks forward to the visit of Prime Minister to Turkey: Turkish Defence Minister

Minister Mr. Azam Khan, Foreign Secretary Ms. Tehmina Janjua, Interior Secretary Maj (R) Azam Suleman and other senior officials were also present during the meeting.





Global Vision of Peace -

By S.M Hali

The exercise has been aptly named "AMAN", which is the Urdu term for "PEACE". It signifies Pakistan's endeavor for peace while remaining fully prepared to ensure peace in the region Pakistan Navy (PN) has organized a multinational naval exercise in the North Arabian Sea in the first quarter of 2019. This is the 6th exercise of the AMAN series, which have been held biennially since 2007. All previous naval exercises of the AMAN series have been highly successful and not only were participated wholeheartedly by navies of friendly countries, ushering goodwill to Pakistan, but have also resulted in all participants including the host PN, gaining tremendous professional experience.

The slogan for the AMAN exercises "Together for Peace" sums up the entire gamut of Pakistan's aspirations. Not only Pakistan is desirous of maintaining peace but is also keen on including its friends, allies and partners in achieving amity.

The world is currently embroiled in trials and tribulations of various types. Besides the war against terrorism, power projection especially in the maritime sphere has increased in the twenty first century. Alfred Thayer Mahan,

The exercise has been aptly named "AMAN", which is the Urdu term for "Peace". It signifies Pakistan's endeavor for peace while remaining fully prepared to ensure peace in the region.

the famed US naval strategist had rightly predicted that "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas in the twenty-first century, the destiny of the world will be decided in these waters."

Pakistan's eastern neighbour India is building a Blue Water Navy to fulfill its power projection ambitions. Every nation aspires to build up its defence capability, but India has hegemonic designs and has a history of trying to subdue its neighbours with its maritime capability. Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bangladesh have suffered at the hands of India's domination

The US remains oblivious to China's declarations that it has no hegemonic designs, is keen to resolve issues with its neighbours peacefully and instead concentrate on development and sharing its projects like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with countries of the region and beyond. Interestingly, BRI also has a maritime component, known as the "Maritime Silk Road". India perceives China as an opponent and is opposed to the BRI as well as its flagship project the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), especially the development of the



strategic deep-water port of Gwadar. Since the port is located from where thirty five percent of the world's oil supply flows from the Gulf of Hormuz to the west, both the US and India, perceive it as a threat from where China has the capability of choking the world's oil supply.

In this milieu, Exercise AMAN-19 comes at an opportune moment. Navies from more than 43 countries are expected to participate in the exercise. The rise in number of participants bear testimony to Pakistan's rising relevance in the international pitch.

The Exercise has focused objectives, which include: projecting a positive image of Pakistan as a country contributing towards regional peace and stability; consolidating PN's position in the regional maritime arena; enhancing interoperability with regional and extra regional navies thereby acting as a bridge between the regions and displaying of united resolve against maritime terrorism and piracy.

The Concept of the exercise has been designed to provide a common forum for: Information sharing, mutual understanding and identifying areas of common interests for group analysis and dialogues through International Maritime Conference; developing and practicing response tactics, techniques and procedures against asymmetric and traditional threats during sea phase of the exercise and Intermingling of multinationals with depiction of their respective cultures during cultural shows/ food galas.

Exercise AMAN-19 envisages hosting numerous events of harbour and sea-phase. The harbour activities include, reception of the participating units, a grand opening ceremony, playing friendly sports matches and a Maritime Counter Terrorism demonstration by the elite PN Marines. An International Maritime Conference under the aegis of National Centre for Maritime Policy Research (NCMPR) at Bahria University has also been organized.

The Sea Activities include an International Fleet Review which includes various operational activities/ exercises.

Additionally, numerous other sea activities have been planned, which include simple maneuvers), surface practice firing with main

armament and search and rescue operations amongst others.

Exercise AMAN-19 shall bring honour to Pakistan and will raise the morale of Pakistan Navy for hosting a major multi-nation operational exercise and strengthen the confidence of the nation in the capabilities of the maritime guardians of Pakistan

Exercise AMAN-19 shall bring honour to Pakistan and will raise the morale of Pakistan Navy for hosting a major multi-nation operational exercise and strengthen the confidence of the nation in the capabilities of the maritime guardians of Pakistan.







Pakistan is desirous of forging close trade, commercial and investment ties with the African continent: **President Dr. Arif Alvi**

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

President Dr. Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan is desirous of forging close trade, commercial and investment ties with the African continent. The President was talking to Mr. Adel Elarbi, Ambassador of the Republic of Tunisia and Prof. Julius Kibet Bitok, High Commissioner of Kenya who separately called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. Islamabad. The President said that Pakistan greatly values its fraternal relations with Tunisia which is rooted in common faith, culture and history. He Also mentioned that Pakistan and Kenya enjoy cordial and cooperative relations based on mutual respect and understanding. The President highlighted the need for developing strong political relations with both the countries and reiterated the need for the exchange of regular official and private sector business delegations to further boost economic relations with the both countries.







Efforts should be intensified for exploring new markets for Pakistani products in Africa & Latin America: **PM Imran Khan**

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

PM Imran Khan stated that efforts should be intensified for exploring new markets for Pakistani products in Africa and Latin America while talking at a two day Envoys Conference on Economic Diplomacy was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad. The Conference was organized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and the Board of Investment.

Prime Minister Imran Khan graced the concluding session of the Conference. He appreciated the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for holding the Envoys Conference with collaboration of key stakeholders responsible for foreign trade and investment. He lauded professionalism of Pakistan's Envoys and directed that they should effectively engage diaspora abroad who are a

great asset for Pakistan. He emphasized that concerted efforts should be undertaken to protect the interests of overseas Pakistanis, in particular, working class Pakistanis. He added that team work among Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Commerce and Board of Investment is a key for our success in the economic diplomacy.

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Minister of Finance, Asad Umar; Advisor to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Abdul Razzak Dawood: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms, Dr. Ishrat Hussain and Chairman Board of Investment, Haroon Sharif participated in the Conference. In addition, representatives of Public and Private Sectors as well as government institutions attended. Participants alia, included representatives from Pakistan Business Council, FPCCI, Farmers Associations

Economic Diplomacy should constitute the core of Pakistan's foreign policy in a changing global environment: Foreign Minister stressed

of Pakistan, Alitheia Capital, JW-SEZ Group, Gul Ahmed Textile, OICCI, Gree and NRSP.

Pakistan's Ambassadors to Japan, Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, UAE, Turkey, UK, Spain, Italy and Germany made presentations in the Conference.

The Conference focused on how to scale up trade and investment - critical to Pakistan's economic revival. At the conclusion of the Conference, the recommendations based on inputs of the participants were presented to the Prime Minister.

In his remarks, Foreign Minister stressed that Economic Diplomacy should constitute the core of Pakistan's foreign policy in a changing global environment. Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with other stakeholders must devise a strategy to promote trade, attract investment, and seek new markets for our exports.







By Mian Fazal Elahi

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FPCCI), the apex body representing Pakistan's Industry and Services, held its 42nd FPCCI Export Awards Ceremony to recognize the services of organizations contributing in the progress of Pakistan.

Prime Minister Imran Khan distributed FPCCI Awards on best performance in different areas of exports to about 50 exporters at Jinnah Convention Center Islamabad.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said the government was working to facilitate the industrialists and exporters and would remove bottlenecks in the way of doing business in Pakistan.

Addressing the 42nd Award Ceremony of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) in Islamabad, PM Imran said the industry and exports were the backbone of trade and commerce in any

Imran urged the nation to change its mindset

regarding the business or setting up industry.

"The attitude of bureaucracy towards the business sectors will be changed and it needs to remove bottlenecks in the way of doing business," he said. "Increased prosperity will come through commerce and industry.

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) conferred Prime Minister of Pakistan Award to the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) for outstanding services in banking and financial sector. NBP President and Chief Executive Officer Tariq Jamali was presented with an award by Prime Minister Imran Khan, for recognition of services of organisations in different sectors contributing towards the progress and prosperity of Pakistan.

PARCO is honored by the esteemed President of Pakistan award for the seventh consecutive time for its outstanding services in refining and transporting of petroleum products. Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan presented the Award to Mr. Tariq Rizavi, Managing Director, PARCO.

42nd FPCCI EXPORT **AWARDS** CEREMONY HELD IN **ISLAMABAD**

CCL Pharmaceuticals' Managing Director & CEO Kashif Sajjad Sheikh was the proud recipient of the Special Merit Exporter Award in the Pharmaceuticals category. CCL Pharmaceuticals is the 2nd largest exporter of world-class pharmaceutical solutions in Pakistan, and its products are available in over 12 countries around the world.

10 different categories of awards marked the occasion including President of Pakistan Award; Prime Minister of Pakistan Award; Businessman of the Year Gold Medal; Best Lady Exporter Trophy; Best Export Performance Awards; Special Merit Exporter Awards; Best Regional Export Awards; Best Provincial Exporter Awards; Merit Export Awards and Young Entrepreneurs Exporter Awards.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. Asad Umar, Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue & Economic Affairs and Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood, Advisor to PM for Commerce, Textile, Industry & Production and Investment, leading parliamentarians, bureaucrats, foreign diplomats, and prominent businessmen.



"THE ATTITUDE OF BUREAUCRACY TOWARDS THE BUSINESS SECTORS WILL BE CHANGED AND IT NEEDS TO REMOVE **BOTTLENECKS** IN THE WAY OF DOING BUSINESS," PM IMRAN KHAN









REVIVING THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE WAR-TORN AFGHANISTAN

By Monitoring Desk, Agencies

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi returned home after his marathon tours. Earlier, he held a meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on his trip to Moscow, his last stop on a whirlwind four-nation tour.

The ministers talked about the revival of peace process in Afghanistan. They also discussed the bilateral relations between Russia and Pakistan and developments in the regional situation. Qureshi was received by Russian officials upon his arrival in Moscow.

Both Russia and Pakistan have been actively trying to revive the peace process in the war-torn Afghanistan. In order to kick-start direct negotiations between the Afghan Taliban and the Afghan government, Moscow had last month hosted peace talks that were attended by delegations of the Taliban the Afghan government and global stakeholders. A Pakistani delegation had also attended the peace talks.

Pakistan assisted a meeting between the United States and the Taliban in Abu Dhabi in a bid to pave the way for reviving the peace process that has remained stalled since 2015. The talks were arranged after the US President Donald Trump wrote a letter to Prime Minister Imran Khan, seeking Pakistan's help in mending Afghan peace process.

The overture came after a patch of tense ties between the US and Pakistan since President Trump in 2017 announced his Afghanistan and South Asia strategy in which Islamabad was accused of not acting against terrorist safe havens.

In the first two days of his three-day trip, the









foreign minister visited Kabul, Tehran and Beijing where he met his counterparts and other high-ranking officials. He discussed regional peace and stability and matters of mutual interest with the three neighbours. And in next row FM Shah Mehmood Qureshi visited to Qatar. FM Shah Mahmood Qureshi has held discussions with his Qatri counterpart Shaikh Muhammad bin Abdul Rehman Al-Thani in Doha. Bilaterla and regional issues discussed. Qatri FM appreciated Pakistan's positive efforts for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Mr. Qureshi said the people of Pakistan would get good news soon as the country had defined its right direction. Addressing the members of Pakistani community at the Pakistan Embassy in Qatar, the foreign minister said the government had formally launched the economic diplomacy and his visit was also part of that initiative, according to the PTI's official Twitter handle.

During Foreign Minister's trip to Kabul, his third since he became the foreign minister in August, Qureshi met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani. During his meetings, the foreign minister stressed the importance of peace in Afghanistan for regional stability and renewed Pakistan's commitment to assist in the process.

With his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif on his

trip to Tehran on the same day, the foreign minister discussed bilateral relations and regional situation. Both officials agreed on the importance of improved bilateral relations between the two countries.

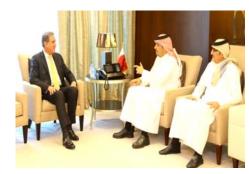
He visited Beijing where he met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The two discussed bilateral and regional issues especially peace in Afghanistan according to Foreign Office Spokesperson Dr Mohammad Faisal.

The US decision to pull nearly half of its troops from restive Afghanistan was high on the agenda at the meeting between the Pakistani and Chinese foreign ministers but US denied the news and said President Trump has not issued an order to the Pentagon directing U.S. troops to be withdrawn from Afghanistan, White House National Security Council spokesperson Garrett Marquis told Bloomberg. China has not announced an official stance on the US troop pullout but Pakistan on Saturday welcomed the decision to slash US troop numbers calling it a step towards peace in war-torn Afghanistan.

Meanwhile in Moscow, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said at a briefing all members of the international community are responsible for the fight against terror groups designated as such by the United Nations Security Council, including the Islamic

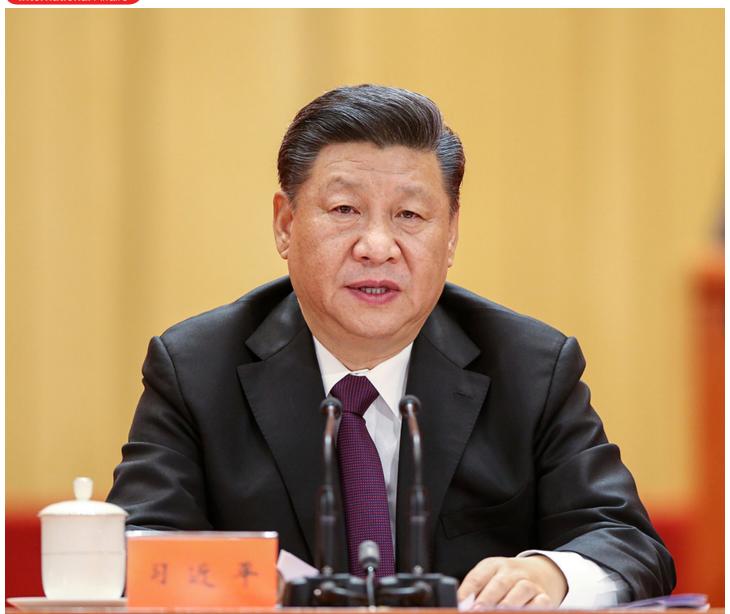
"All members of the international community are responsible as long as the matter concerns the Islamic State, Jabhat al-Nusra and all other groups linked to Al-Qaeda and designated as terrorist organisations by the UN Security Council," she said. "For a long time, Russia has been calling for forming a united front against terrorism and the initiative is still relevant," Zakharova added.

According to her, a broad international front against terrorism "would make it possible to deliver an effective blow to terrorists not only in Syria but in other hotspots as well." "The international community has all mechanisms to legitimize this kind of cooperation, it just needs to show political resolve," the Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman stressed.









President Xi Jinping

China vows to open up wider to the world

By Agency

President Xi Jinping underlined China's commitment to opening up wider to the world and promoting joint efforts to build a community with a shared future for humanity. The practice of reform and opening-up over the past 40 years has shown that openness brings progress, while seclusion leads to backwardness, Xi said at a gathering to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the country's reform and opening-up.

"China cannot develop itself in isolation from the world, and the world needs China for global prosperity," Xi said.

"Bearing in mind China's internal and

international imperatives, we have stayed committed to the fundamental national policy of opening-up, followed a proactive approach to opening up, and entered a new stage of comprehensive, multi-level and wide-ranging opening-up, thus creating a sound international environment and broader development space for China," he said.

China Marks 40 th anniversary of reform and OPENING-UP WITH GREATER RESOLUE

China held a grand gathering to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the country's reform and opening-up, a great revolution that has changed the destiny of the Chinese nation and influenced the world.

Addressing the meeting, President Xi Jinping described the reform and opening-up as "a great reawakening" of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

"Chinese Communists accomplished the most profound and the greatest social transformation in China's history and created the fundamental political conditions and the institutional foundation for all development and progress in China today," said Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission.

Premier Li Keqiang presided over the meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

The celebration started with all participants rising to sing the national anthem.

Wang Huning, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, read a decision to award personnel for their outstanding contributions to the reform and opening-up.

The award recipients were 100 Chinese and 10 foreigners. Chinese leaders presented the medals to those who were present at Tuesday's event.

QUANTUM LEAP

Describing the reform and opening-up as "a great revolution in the history of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation," Xi said a quantum leap has been made in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Xi hailed the birth of the CPC, the founding of the People's Republic of China, and the pursuit of reform and opening-up and socialism with Chinese characteristics as "the three milestones" on the way toward national rejuvenation in modern times.

"What we have achieved in the past 40 years was not a windfall, nor was it given in charity by others. It comes from the hard work, wisdom and courage of all members of the Party and the people of all ethnic groups in China," Xi said. In 40 years, China lifted 740 million people out of poverty. China has built the world's largest social security system, with the basic old-age pension covering more than 900 million people and medical insurance covering over 1.3 billion people.

China's share of global gross domestic product rose from 1.8 percent to 15.2 percent, generating more than 30 percent of global growth for years.

"The great spirit of reform and opening-up ... has significantly enriched our national character and become the most prominent hallmark of the Chinese people in the modern day," Xi said. Dawn Nakagawa, executive vice president of the Los Angeles-based Berggruen Institute, said China's reform and opening-up is an amazing course to celebrate and a miracle.

"The reform and opening-up has made great contributions to turning China into a powerful country," said Yohei Kono, president of the Japanese Association for the Promotion of International Trade.

GREAT PATH

Xi said that the past 40 years eloquently prove the correctness of the path, theory, system and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics, noting the reform and opening-up is a game-changing move not only in making China what it is today, but also for the Chinese people to achieve the country's two centenary goals and its great national rejuvenation.

Tu Xinquan, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, said the most important reason behind China's economic and social marvels is the strong leadership of the CPC.

On the way forward, Xi said the country must see the CPC exercises leadership over all work, as the leadership of the CPC is the most essential attribute of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the greatest strength of this system.

Xi also emphasized the need to adhere to the people-oriented approach to keep delivering on the aspirations of the people for a better life.

Chinese Communists are duty-bound to develop Marxism in the 21st century and adapt it to the Chinese context, he said.

"There is no textbook of golden rules to follow for reform and development in China, a country with over 5,000 years of civilization and more than 1.3 billion people," he said. "No one is in a position to dictate to the Chinese people what should or should not be done."

Xi stressed that the decisive role of the market in resource allocation should be put into full play while the role of the government will be better leveraged, and the vitality of various market entities will be stimulated.

He said China has stayed committed to the fundamental national policy of opening-up, noting China cannot develop itself in isolation from the world, and the world needs China for global prosperity.

"A major country like China cannot afford any disruptive mistake on fundamental issues," Xi said when elaborating on the need to strike a balance between reform, development and stability.

"We must show full tenacity and persistence to see all major reform measures through," Xi said.

By staying committed to advancing reform and opening-up and seeing that Chinese people realize their aspirations for a better life, Xi said that new and even greater wonders of the Chinese nation would be made in the new era.

"We will create new and even greater wonders that will truly impress the world," he said.







Cooperation, Afghan peace process, anti-terrorism

By M. Saeed Yousafzai

The MoU was signed at the conclusion of trilateral dialogue in Kabul. The MoU was signed by Foreign Minister Shah Mehmoud Qureshi and his Chinese and Afghan counterparts.

The signing was witnessed by Afghan President

Ashraf Ghani. Earlier, Foreign Ministers of

Pakistan, China and Afghanistan held trilateral dialogue focused on the political settlement of the Afghan conflict and regional cooperation. Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi of the People's Republic of China, and Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan held the Afghanistan-China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue in Kabul, Afghanistan on 15th December 2018, stated in a press release by Ministry of Foreign Affairs here in Islamabad. China and Pakistan congratulated Afghanistan on the completion of the parliamentary elections and welcomed the efforts of the Afghan government for holding the presidential elections in 2019.

The three sides, once again, reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening their relations, deepening cooperation, and advancing connectivity under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) and other regional economic initiatives. The three sides agreed to promote China-Afghanistan-Pakistan trilateral cooperation under the framework of jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative. The three sides reiterated their strong resolve to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and without any distinction. The three Foreign Ministers agreed to jointly continue their efforts for building political mutual trust and support reconciliation, development cooperation and connectivity, security cooperation and counter-terrorism as the three areas of the trilateral cooperation.

The three sides reiterated their support to

the Afghan-owned, and Afghan led inclusive peace process that is fully supported regionally and internationally, as the most viable way to bring peace in Afghanistan. In this regard, China and Pakistan appreciated the efforts of H.E. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani especially for the comprehensive peace plans that came out of the second Kabul Process and the Geneva Conferences on Afghanistan, and therefore called on the Afghan Taliban to join the peace process at an early date. While efforts are underway to start the peace process, the three sides call upon the parties concerned to end violence and the loss of innocent lives in

The three sides agreed to continue economic development cooperation in areas of mutual interest. The three sides will continue to implement and expand the "soft" projects such as exchange and capacity building programs and explore "hard" projects of livelihood facilities and connectivity. China expressed its readiness to support Afghanistan and Pakistan



in building immigration reception center and drinking water supply schemes at each side of the Ghulam Khan Khel crossing point, and to explore cold storages at Chaman and Spin Boldak. China supports enhanced coordination between Afghanistan and Pakistan on major energy and connectivity projects including the construction of Quetta-Kandahar railway and Kabul-Peshawar Motorway and Railway. The three sides reiterated their firm commitment to implement the activities and projects agreed to under practical cooperation.

The three sides expressed their strong determination not to allow any country, organization or individual to use their respective territories for terrorist activities against any other countries. The three sides took stock of trilateral cooperation in their fight against terrorism and underlined the need to further strengthen counter-terrorism coordination and cooperation in an effort to combat all terrorist groups and individuals without any discrimination. They also agreed to counter terrorist' logistical capabitlies including financing, recruitment, training, and strengthen trilateral cooperation for counter-terrorism capacity building, deny terrorist use of the internet and to take joint steps for deradicalization, as well as work together to break the nexus between narcotrade and terror financing. To advance their cooperation in the fields of Counter-Terrorism,

the three sides signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Counter-Terrorism. The three sides agree to implement the consensus of the 2nd Foreign Ministers' Dialogue through the trilateral Vice Ministerial Strategic Dialogue, Vice-Ministerial Consultation on Counter-Terrorism and Security, and Director Generals' Practical Cooperation as well as other agreed mechanisms.

China and Pakistan thanked Afghanistan for the successful organization of the 2st China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue and its warm hospitality, and the three sides agreed that the 3nd Afghanistan-China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue would be held in Islamabad in 2019.



Chinese embassy refutes report

'Pakistan to repay \$40b CPEC debt to China'

Pakistan will repay only \$ 6.017 billion and their interests to China

By Monitoring

Embassy of China in Islamabad has termed a report published in a section of media claiming that Pakistan had to repay \$40 billion debt to China under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor quite misleading and wrong.

In a statement issued, the Chinese embassy in Islamabad has stressed that although the Ministry of Planning has issued a statement for clarification, yet the Embassy would like to further clarify on this subject. "The CPEC is a major and important economic cooperation project between China and Pakistan and all CPEC projects are based on consensus of the two countries, and fully comply with relevant laws and regulations," said the statement.

Currently, 22 early harvest projects under the CPEC have been completed or are under construction, with a total investment of \$ 18.9 billion, the statement clarifies adding, these projects aim at resolving two major bottlenecks hindering economic development of Pakistan, namely lack of transportation infrastructure and energy shortage. The embassy has given details of the projects saying the Chinese Government provided concessional loans of \$ 5.874 billion for Pakistan Government's major transportation infrastructure projects, with a composite interest rate of around 2% in repayment period of 20-25 years. The Pakistani government provides sovereign guarantee for the above loans and will start the repayment from 2021. It further says that the Chinese companies and their partners invested \$12.8 billion in energy projects in Pakistan and among them Chinese companies provided \$3 billion from their own equity. The rest \$9.8 billion is raised from commercial banks with interest rate of about 5pc. The repayment period is 12-18 years and all the CPEC energy projects are investment in nature, which is purely independent business behavior of these companies. "The companies are responsible for their own profits and losses and repayment of loans. The Pakistani government does not repay these loans under CPEC. The business cooperation between the two sides is in full



compliance with internationally accepted business practice," it says.

The Chinese Embassy has clarified that the Chinese government provides interest-free loans for Expressway East Bay in Gwadar, grant for some livelihood projects while Pakistan Government provided funding for the feasibility study of ML-1 upgradation.

Therefore, Pakistan will repay only \$ 6.017 billion and their interests to China. China and Pakistan are currently in dialogue how to use Chinese grant to implement new projects such as new Gwadar international airport, Gwadar vocational training center and friendship hospital, etc. Once the financial details are available, they will be shared, says the statement. The embassy further clarifies that during Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to China in November 2018; the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to CPEC and agreed to ensure the normal operation of the completed projects and the smooth completion of the on-going projects.

The two sides also agreed to consult with each other on the future path and direction of CPEC, taking consideration of Pakistan's priority of economic and social development and the demand of Pakistani people.

On December 20, 2018 China and Pakistan successfully held the 8th JCC meeting of CPEC in Beijing and decided to set up a social economic joint working group under CPEC.

The Chinese side will provide more support to the people's livelihood projects such as education, agriculture, poverty alleviation, health care and vocational training. Both sides signed an MOU on industrial cooperation, and agreed to jointly promote the construction of Special Economic Zones. The CPEC has entered a new phase of broadening and expansion in the next 5 years.

The Chinese Embassy appreciates the Pakistani people for their support on CPEC and welcomes the supervision from all works of life. We are willing to join hands with Pakistani friends to nourish CPEC and create a favorable environment for cooperation. "We believe that CPEC, as an important project for China-Pakistan all-weather cooperation, will not only help Pakistan to ease energy load shedding, improve infrastructure connectivity, promote economic growth, but also benefit the people of Pakistan and make an important contribution to the building of China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future," says the Embassy handout.

Courtesy to Pakistan Observer

"The CPEC is a major and important economic cooperation project between China and Pakistan and all CPEC projects are based on consensus of the two countries, and fully comply with relevant laws and regulations,"

Diplomatic Focus Thru Len



President Dr. Arif Alvi talking to Ambassador of Turkey Mr. Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul, who called on him in Islamabad on December 03, 2018.



President Dr. Arif Alvi talking to Ambassador of Morocco, Mohammed Karmoune, who called on him in Islamabad on December 05, 2018.



Speaker National Assembly Mr. Asad Qaiser called on speaker of Islamic Consultative Assembly of Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Ali Larijani on the occasion of second Speaker Conference in Tehran.



Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with H.E. Brigadier General (RETD) Dato Paduka Haji Mahmud Bin Haji Saidin, High commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, at parliament house Islamabad on December 28, 2018.



Chairman Board of Investment, Haroon Sharif in a meeting with Ambassador of China, H.E. Yao Jing in Islamabad on December 04, 2018



Federal Minister for Inter-provincial Coordination Dr. Fehmida Mirza meeting with the Chinese Ambassador Mr. Yao Jing in Islamabad on December 11, 2018.



Ambassador of China to Pakistan Yao Jing calls on Minister of State for communications Murad Saeed in Islamabad on December 07, 2018.



H.E Maj. Gen (RETD) Ashiminyu Adebayo Olaniyi, High Commissioner of Nigeria called on Ms. Zobaida Jalal Federal Minister for Defence Production at Ministry of Defence Production Rawalpindi on December 18, 2018.



Saudi military alliance not set up to counter any Raheel Sharif tells

The 41-nation armed coalition was initially proposed as a platform for security cooperation among Muslim countries and included provisions for training, equipment and troops, and the involvement of religious scholars for devising a counter-terrorism narrative.







By Monitoring

Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) Commander General (R) Raheel Sharif in a meeting with Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani in Riyadh has brushed aside the impression that the coalition has been created to take action against any state, nation or a particular sect.

He told the Senate chairman that the basic aim of this institution was to counter terrorism and eliminate it. Sanjrani was accompanied by a Senate delegation during the visit to the IMCTC headquarters.

The delegation was accorded a warm welcome by General Raheel Sharif and Deputy Commander General Abdur Rehman. The delegation was given a detailed briefing about the role and purpose of IMCTC. Senate Chairman and members of the delegation praised King Suleman Bin Abdul Aziz and Saudi government for eliminating terrorism.

Later, the Senate Chairman visited MISK Foundation along with the members of his delegation. Head of MISK Foundation Badar ud Din Qaheel welcomed the chairman and briefed the delegation about the roles and functions of the foundation. It was told that the foundation was founded by Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman and the rationale was to prepare young Saudi population to deal with the challenges of the future. "The foundation offers training to the youth in the areas of education, culture and media."

The delegation was given a tour of different sections of the foundation and was briefed on their working.

Sanjrani lauded the initiative of vision 2030 under which the youth was being trained on the standards of developed world. He appreciated the work of MISK Foundation and expressed his dream of inclusion of Pakistani youth in the foundation.

The delegation headed by Chairman Senate included senators Ahmed Khan, Mirza Muhammad Afridi, Naseebullah Bazai, Fida Muhammad Khan, Talha Mehmood, Dilawar Khan, Khanzada Khan, Ghous Muhammad Khan Niazi, and Additional Secretary Senate Hsfeezullah Sheikh







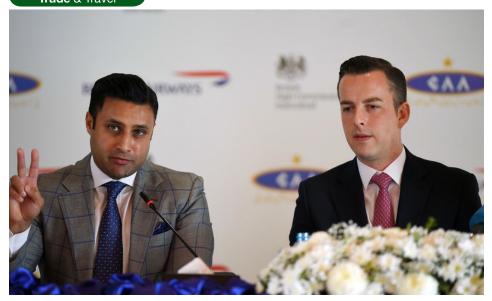
Qatari Amir appreciates Pakistan's 'positive role' for Afghan stability in meeting with COAS: ISPR

By Agency, Monitoring

Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa called upon Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani during a visit to the Gulf country, an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement said. Prominent among the discussions held between the two included matters related to achieving a negotiated end to the 17-year Afghanistan conflict, with the emir appreciating "Pakistan's efforts and the positive role being played by [it] for regional stability including [in] Afghanistan", according to the military's media wing. The army chief thanked Al-Thani for "Qatar's continued support towards a negotiated political settlement for peace in Afghanistan", the statement added. The duo also discussed measures to enhance bilateral security cooperation. According to ISPR, Gen Bajwa also held a meeting with Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani. The Qatari premier expressed the desire to diversify and broaden cooperation between the countries, including in the realm of security. The army chief "assured him of Pakistan's full cooperation in all mutual undertakings", the press release said. During his visit, Gen Bajwa also attended a parade in connection with the National Day of Qatar. The army chief's visit to Qatar comes a day after United States diplomats and Afghan Taliban representatives met in the United Arab Emirates for the first round of talks facilitated by Pakistan on finding a negotiated settlement of the war in Afghanistan. The meeting in Abu Dhabi was also attended by officials from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.



CHAIRMAN SENATE, MUHAMMAD SADIQ SANJRANI ALONG WITH MEMBERS OF HIS DELEGATION IN GROUP PHOTO WITH CHIEF OF THE MILITARY ALLIANCE, LIEUTENANT GENERAL PRINCE FAHAD BIN TURKI BIN ABDUL AZIZ AL SAUD DURING HIS VISIT TO THE HEAD QUARTERS OF THE MILITARY ALLIANCE ESTABLISHED FOR RESTORATION OF LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT IN YEMEN UNDER COMMAND OF SAUDI ARABIA ON DECEMBER 21.2018.



British Airways to resume flights to Pakistan after 10 years

By Monitoring,

British Airways will resume flights to Pakistan from June next year, announced the airline.

"Direct flights from London Heathrow to Islamabad's new airport to start in June," said British High Commissioner Thomas Drew in a video on Twitter. "A further boost to links between the UK and Pakistan, especially on trade and investment."

In September 2008, British Airways had suspended all its flights to Pakistan "for an indefinite period" citing security concerns in the aftermath of the Marriott Hotel bombing that claimed more than 50 lives and injured more than 250 people.

According to a press release on the airline's website, the route will launch as a three-perweek service, operated on a three-class Boeing 787 Dreamliner, with return fares starting from £499.

"All of us at British Airways could not be more pleased to be coming back to Pakistan and we very much look forward to June next year, when our first flight will touch down at your spectacular new airport," said Robert Williams, the British Airways head of sales for Asia Pacific and the Middle East.

He was speaking at a press conference in Islamabad alongside Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Zulfi Bukhari.

"We hope that our new route will allow more people from the United Kingdom to experience what a beautiful country Pakistan is," said Williams.

"British Airways coming back after a decade shows you where we were and how far we've come," Bukhari said, terming the announcement "groundbreaking". "This is a huge achievement for where we [Pakistan] want to be. It's a huge step for this government that it has given foreign investors that security to come back."

He added that this sense of security was "vital" for other various investments to come in.

Bukhari added that the second important point was the "connectivity factor". "British Airways is a prestigious airline," noted Bukhari, who is a dual national of the United Kingdom. "Pakistan is becoming less isolated and becoming more connected to the world — and that's the Pakistan we want to see. We want to see a Pakistan that is heavily connected with the world."

Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce, Textile, and Industries, Abdul Razzak Dawood, also addressed the media and lauded the airline's decision to fly to Pakistan.









By M.Saeed Yousafzai

In a groundbreaking ceremony, Zulfikar Bukhari, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development along with His Excellency Qatari Ambassador to Pakistan Saqar Bin Mubarak inaugurated "Visa Facilitation Center" in Islamabad. Qatar promised 100,000 jobs for Pakistani workforce and the process has started, Zulfikar Bukhari. Talking to the media, Zulfikar Bukhari said that the government is committed to the goal of filling 100,000 job vacancies promised by Qatar for Pakistanis and it is in line with the Prime Minister's vision of creating employment opportunities in and outside Pakistan. It is a big moment because Pakistan is one of the 8 countries to have a Qatari Visa Facilitation Center for swift processing of workers' Visa, he said. Pakistani skilled labor force will also be employed in the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Furthermore, they will also be utilized in other major ventures such as construction projects in Qatar. While mentioning the problems of Pakistanis in Saudi Arabia, he said that Pakistan is also in dialogue with Qatari officials to adjust the skilled labor force coming back from Saudi Arabia in Qatar. While talking to the participants in the inauguration ceremony of the Visa Center, H.E Sagar Bin Mubarak said that in the past, Visa process was handled by Qatarian government. However, now applicants can get their Visas processed and approved through the Visa facilitation centre of Qatar in Islamabad. The applicants have to get their biometric verifications done at these centers. Additionally, medical tests will be conducted to certify their health and fitness. These centers will be opening in other major cities too.

100,000 **JOBS** a reality

Zulfi Bukhari inaugurates Qatar Visa Center in Islamabad





QATAR SEEKS SKILLED AND UNSKILLED LABOR FORCE FROM PAKISTAN, ZULFIKAR BUKHARI



Part-1



The economy has slowed down, the Rupee has been devalued, interest rates have gone up and there has been some increase in the rate of inflation in the country. Why has this happened? And what prospects does the economy hold in 2019? This article answers the above questions in an honest and as simple a manner as is possible.

Pakistan's economy is recovering from what can be best described as a 'consumption led' growth period that was financed by short term debt instruments and a stifling of investment climate. Consumption as percentage of GDP went up from the already worrying figure of 91.8% in FY14 to 94.5% in 2018. Correspondingly, total gross investment (that includes government investment also) in Pakistan was reported at just 16.4% of GDP in FY18 whereas India's figure stands at close to 30% and Bangladesh is at 31% of GDP. Additionally, our spur of consumption spree was associated with policies in the past that instead of channeling the countries resources into savings, investments and industrialization further aggravated the problem of private investment. And here's how:

To begin with, we saw a very visible deterioration in the economy's fundamentals as the country exited the last IMF program in 2016 and all forms of fiscal and monetary discipline were abandoned. What this means is that we were fuelling growth in the economy by spending from resources that we did not have. For example, in the last financial year alone, RS 1300 billion of government spending was financed by printing money and monetization of public debt. The previous government was also happy to ask FBR to withhold genuine refunds to the tune of hundreds of billions of Rupees of businessmen and entrepreneurs that further squeezed their working capital and halted all their expansions. This whole model broadly represented the previous government's fiscal policy and it's no surprise that it fuelled only consumption growth. And

The economy in 2019

By Hammad Azhar The writer is the Minster of State for Revenue, Government of Pakistan

it also led to whopping RS 2300 billion or 6.6 % of fiscal deficit in the system i.e. the excess of government spending over government's income.

Now let's take a look at the monetary side. In the first 4 years of the previous government, the Real Exchange Rate (the buying power of the currency in comparison to other currencies) appreciated by 28% without any improvement in the trade deficit to justify this increase. This means that our exports became that much uncompetitive in the international markets and we began subsidizing our imports. This led to the closure of hundreds of export houses and fuelled a largely consumption led increase in our imports. From a point where we had a Current Account deficit of just USD 2.5 BN in 2013, the figure soared to USD 19 Billion in 2018.

The second aspect of monetary policy is Interest Rates. The interest rates were kept low in the past but that also did not translate into any notable increase in private sector borrowing, the loans that our entrepreneurs use for investments and setting up businesses and industry. The reason that private sector was not advanced these loans by the banks is that the government was doing what the economists call 'crowding out' the private sector. The banks were more than happy to lend to the government in the form of Treasury Bills. So in effect, the lower interest rates actually did not lead to any investment and the whole monetary scheme of things further fuelled the consumption spree.

The result of the above mentioned fiscal and monetary policies was not surprising for any economist. The country came on the verge of bankruptcy at the close of the last financial year (FY2018). Once both the IMF program ended and oil prices began to rise, the superficial nature of the whole economic model unfolded and the State was left with nothing to finance its fiscal expenditures and its huge import bill.

So what has the new government done about this? And what does it plan to do in order to make sure that the repeat of the above does not take place?

The first and foremost plank of the new

government's economic priority in 2018 has been that the country must meet its financing obligations in terms of debt repayment due this financial year (USD 9 billion) and that the current account deficit is reduced to the range from USD 11-13 Billion from the current USD 19 Billion. The fiscal side also has to show improvement as the last reported fiscal deficit of 6.6% is not sustainable. The above priorities are necessary and overarching in order to keep the economy functioning and not defaulting on its both external and internal obligations.

The good news is that as a result of adjustments by SBP in the exchange rate and the imposition of Regulatory Duties by the government on non-essential items, we have seen a sharp reduction in the growth of imports that has gone down from the figure of 26% growth to a negative figure. Some commentators have criticized the steep adjustment in the exchange rate. However, one has to take into account the fact that the exchange rate was allowed to appreciate in real terms and the need for corrections had been piling up for at least 4 of the last 5 years. Therefore the country had deviated significantly from its Actual Exchange Rate value and a one-time steep adjustment had become inevitable.

The foreign remittances, another foreign exchange source, have also shown a very encouraging rise of 12.5% in the first quarter and the export sector is also showing a positive growth. In 2019, the government shall announce a comprehensive incentives package for overseas workers to send their remittances through the formal channels. Improving the speed, security and reducing the red tape that is currently surrounding the formal channel procedures is a central aspect of the upcoming incentives package for foreign remittances.

The new government's successful foreign policy has led to friendly countries offering us sizeable support for our Balance of Payments. Bilateral assistance in the form of funds and deferred oil payment facilities from KSA, UAE and other countries has begun to pour in. As a result of the above, the country has successfully averted the balance of payments crises and all economic trends indicate that our deficits are coming down rapidly to within manageable ranges.



By Zahid Hussain

The spectacle of two old rivals greeting each other on the floor of parliament may not be worth noticing. But the handshake between Asif Zardari and Shahbaz Sharif in the house this week was more than just a matter of courtesy. With the PML-N leader having been 'nabbed' and the noose tightening around the former president from the PPP, the two opposition parties now find themselves pushed into a corner. The handshake could be a prelude to a more effective alliance against a fumbling PTI government. The latest episode in the political soap opera is getting more thrilling with the opposition going for the jugular. What next? Indeed, there is no imminent threat to the Imran

Khan government, but a more strident and united opposition could further jolt a lackluster and inexperienced administration still trying to find a foothold. Although their top leaders are under a cloud facing graft charges, both the PML-N and the PPP seem to have dropped their initially cautious tone and are now challenging the PTI government more forcefully.

Zardari's latest harangue targeting not only the PTI government but also the security driven by his fear of being indicted in moneylaundering and corruption charges. But it politician that he is, Zardari is trying to use a beleaguered PML-N for his own political chess

However, it remains to be seen if the PPP leader can escape the 'accountability trap' by upping the ante. His remarks last week reminded one of his speeches some three years ago when he took on the military establishment following a crackdown on some of his closest associates. He later left the country and stayed away for more than a year.

Zardari then tried to mend fences with the establishment when the axe fell on Nawaz Sharif. It seems now politically expedient for both parties, troubled by a judiciary ostensibly backed by the security establishment, to come closer. The PTI government's own ineptness an opportunity to regain some lost political

A rudderless government

Although the government has inherited the economic mess, its inability to deal with one of the most serious economic crisis facing the country in recent years seems to have given the opposition more confidence that the rulers could crumble under the weight of their own blunders. It may be an exaggerated estimation but it is not completely off the mark either.

Particularly in Punjab, where the ruling party enjoys a wafer-thin majority, its governance vulnerability. Imran Khan has even failed to Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, who never held any public office before, was the best choice to lead the administration in the country's most important and most powerful province. His claim of Buzdar being 'Wasim Akram-plus' has exposed Khan's inability to see the difference between cricket and politics. T20 cricket was not in vogue when Khan was playing, but his approach to politics and governance is no different from that short version of the game. Buzdar's performance in the past four months

tells a different story. Three power centres - chief minister, governor and speaker of complicated the problem. The prime minister's attempt to run the provincial government via remote control has not worked either. The result of recent by-elections neither showed that the PTI has nor been able to improve upon its mass political support in the province. The

Interestingly, the opposition parties are now using Imran Khan's own inanity of threatening to call early elections. Addressing a group of TV presenters last month, the prime minister indicated he could go for fresh elections if his government were to be blocked by the opposition. This is unprecedented talk for a government which has hardly been in power for 100 days. It reinforces the popular perception that Imran Khan has yet to get out of the add to political uncertainty and expose Khan's take the threat of an early election seriously, but uses the remark as a political tool.

It is not just about the opposition joining forces and giving a tough time to the government, it is the disarray within that is also cause for serious concern. Matters may not point to the unravelling of a fragile conglomeration of disparate political groups, but the latest development is ominous. The joining of the (Mengal) in the opposition walkout from the National Assembly this week, in protest against the nonproduction of PML-N leader Saad Rafique in the house, is a sign of the growing frustration of the coalition partners.

The public dissent of some cabinet members on the party's U-turn on the chairmanship of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), ceding to the opposition demand, is another example of disorder. It is like a rudderless ship plying turbulent waters.

Another issue adding to political uncertainty is the failure of the government to strengthen parliament. It is basically the responsibility of the government to defuse tensions and make it possible for parliament to focus on legislation. On the contrary, it is the PTI that has largely been responsible for the stalemate in the house. It has wasted more than four not accepting the leader of the opposition as chairman of the PAC. Finally, it gave in to the opposition's pressure, but the dispute over the composition of parliamentary committees remains a cause of impasse in the house.

Now things have become more difficult with the opposition raising the stakes. Its initial stance of cooperation in running the business of parliament smoothly seems to have changed with its newfound stridency. The opposition parties are taking advantage of the weakness and ineptness of the ruling party.

With no sign of the PTI government taking a more prudent approach or making an effort to get the system to work smoothly, matters are becoming gloomier in the country.

The writer is an author and journalist.

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The eighth round of political consultations between Egypt & Pakistan

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The 8th Round of Political Consultations between Pakistan and Egypt was held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad. Special Secretary (Middle East, OIC and Legal Affairs), Syed Hassan Raza led the Pakistani side whereas Egyptian delegation was led by Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Khaled Sarwat.

The two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and expressed satisfaction at the strong bilateral ties. They discussed ways and means to strengthen and diversify the existing cooperation including in political, investment, economic. trade, defence,

education and cultural fields. They underscored the need for exchange of high level visits between Pakistan and Egypt to inject greater content to bilateral relations.

The two sides agreed to realize the true potential of bilateral trade and agreed on certain measures like visa facilitation for businessmen, exchange of trade related information and business delegations and to promote direct private sector contacts. It was agreed to hold 4th session of Joint Ministerial Commission during the first quarter of next year, in Islamabad.

Both sides also exchanged views on regional and international issues with particular focus on Afghanistan South Asia, Palestine, Syria and UN reforms. There was convergence of views on important issues of regional importance. They noted with satisfaction cooperation between Pakistan and Egypt in multilateral fora and agreed to maintain and further enhance it in future.

A Dinner was hosted by His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Fadel Yacoub, Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan in honour of His Excellency Ambassador Khaled Sarwat, Egyptian Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs and accompanying delegation. The dinner was attended by all members of the Embassy with spouses and some Pakistani officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Pakistan.





ECO DAY 2018: Connectivity For Regional Prosperity

Pakistan FM stresses ECO Countries to increase trade and connectivity

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

The Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi underscored the need for Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Member States to enhance their efforts for increasing trade and connectivity in the region.

In his address at a Ceremony held in connection with the ECO Day at the Ministry of Foreign



Affairs in Islamabad, the minister said stressed for bolstering trade and economic relations amongst the regional Countries.

The minister said the goal could be achieved by improving connectivity through rail, roads, ports and the use of latest technology.

Highlighting the significance of the ECO, Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the organization gave great importance to the objectives of regional peace and development. He said efforts were required to enhance cooperation amongst the ECO Countries at different levels.

The foreign minister said Pakistan desired to have cordial relations with all regional Countries. He assured that Pakistan would continue to play its role to promote cooperation amongst the regional Countries in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Diplomatic Affairs

Photo by Ramzan Mughal



The Foreign Service Academy,
Islamabad, held its Passing-out
Ceremony of the 26th Junior Diplomatic
Course. A group of 27 diplomats from 21
friendly countries attended the course.



National Conference on Human Hights Violations in lok Organized At Islamic University IIUI PRESIDENT PROPOSES KASHMIR CHAIR AT VARSITY

President Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Sardar Muhammad Masood Khan said that bloodshed campaign launched by loF was a violation of Geneva convention and humanitarian laws while he was addressing to national conference on Human Rights violations in loK organized by Department of Politics and International Relations of IIVI and Policy and Research Forum AJK jointly at International Islamic University. Speakers paid rich tributes to the brave people of Indian Occupied Kashmir (loK) who have resisted occupation for over 70 years and fighting against the subjugation fearlessly and endorsed International Islamic University Islamabad (IIVII) President's proposal for establishing a Kashmir Chair at university.



CGSS organizes International Conference on

"Water: Future War and Peace in Subcontinent"

With an aim to highlight the increasing threat for future conflict with decreasing availability and increasing demand for water

The Conference commenced with the opening remarks of the Chairman CGSS Lieutenant General (retd) Muhammad Zahir Ul Islam. The Chief Guest of the Conference was the Federal Minister for Law and Justice Mohammad Farogh Naseem. The Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan Jononov Sherali, Lieutenant General (retd) Muzammil Hussain, Dr. Hassan Abbas, Imtiaz Ali Qazilbash, Dr. Azhar Ahmed, Admiral (retd) Dr. Jayanath Colombage, Vice Admiral (retd) Ahmed Tasnim and Dr Audil Rashid shared their views. More than 300 participants including water experts attended the Conference.





Ambassador of UAE

inaugurates an Integrated Dialysis Unit

in Institute of Kidney Disease in Peshawar funded by "Ataya Alkhayer Initiative"





H.E. Hamad Obaid Al-Zaabi the Ambassador of UAE to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, inaugurated the Kidney Dialysis Unit at Institute of Kidney Disease in Peshawar city of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, funded and supported by the "Ataya Alkhayer Initiative" by donating \$ 200 Million US Dollars, as part of the partnership program between the UAE Embassy and the Initiative to provide sustained and continues humanitarian assistance in various areas of Pakistan during the Year of Zayed.

H.E. Hamad Al Zaabi, after the official inauguration and meeting with the Director of the Institute and the medical and administrative staff, said, that UAE is fulfilling its humanitarian responsibilities in view of current challenges which imposed to adopt new means of work and movement to meet the requirements of humanitarian and charitable work by studying the needs in different areas and regions of Pakistan in order to ensure the sustainability of development, humanitarian and charitable projects established by UAE for many years. The Ambassador Al-Zaabi pointed out that the assistance and support to the health sector is one of the priorities of the UAE's Foreign Aid strategy which is always given importance by the leadership in the UAE.

The Ambassador expressed his gratitude to His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Representative of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi in Al Dhafra Region and Chairman of the UAE Red Crescent Authority for the great support and cautious follow-up of all needs and welfare projects in Pakistan.

The Ambassador Al Zaabi also thanked the spouse of H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, H.H. Sheikha Shamsa Bint Hamdan Al Nahyan, Assistant to the ERC Chairman for Women's Affairs and Chairperson of the Higher Committee of the Ataya Initiative, for her direct and uninterrupted support, and appraised the qualitative and innovative Initiative, fostering the humanitarian and development assistance, which is a step forward in reinforcing the global humanitarian mission of UAE and its wise leadership, subsequently resulted in UAE becoming one of the most important donor countries for humanitarian and development assistance and an important platform to launch creative initiatives addressing the humanitarian issues faced by many human communities.

The UAE Ambassador affirmed that Her Highness Sheikha Shamsa bint Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Nahyan, through the "Attaya Initiative" embodied the principle of continuity in the humanitarian contribution and sustainability in development work for the welfare and happiness of mankind. This initiative is consistent and strengthens the UAE's global humanitarian mission under the guidance of the wise leadership of the United Arab Emirates.



By Asadullah Mian, Monitoring

Pakistan and Britain on Thursday signed Prisoner Transfer Agreement at British High Commission in Islamabad.

The agreement was inked by Pakistan's Interior Secretary Major (retd) Azam Suleman Khan

and British High Commissioner in Islamabad Thomas Drew.

State Minister for Interior Shehryar Afridi and Prime Minister's Special Assistant ShazadAkbar witnessed the signing ceremony.

Shortly after the agreement was signed, British HC tweeted, "I today signed the UK-Pakistan

PAKISTAN. Brithin sign Prisoner TRANSFER **HGREEMENT**

Prisoner Transfer Agreement - alongside Interior Minister Shehryar Afridi and SAPM Shazad Akbar."

He went on to say, "It is an important step for both countries, which will allow prisoners of each to serve their sentences in their home country."



CM PUNJAB MEETS THE

AMBASSADOR OF CUBA



By Ali Sajjad, Ramzan Mughal

The new Chief Minister of the Punjab province in Pakistan, Sardar Usman Buzdar, received in the city of Lahore, provincial capital, the ambassador of Cuba, Gabriel Tiel Capote. The meeting was an opportune occasion to review bilateral relations, in particular a cooperation project related to primary health care in Cuba. The Chief Minister of Punjab, the largest province of Pakistan, praised Cuba's health system and expressed its willingness to strengthen exchanges in other sectors such as education, culture and sports.

iplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Ambassador of South Africa H.E Mr. Mpendulo Jele called on Federal Minister of Defence Production Zobaida Jalal in Islamabad on December 14, 2018.



Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting in a meeting with High Commissioner of Canada, Ms. Wendy Christine Gilmour, in Islamabad on December 18, 2018.



Ambassador of Japan H.E. Takashi Kurai calling on Finance Minister Asad Umar in Islamabad on December 26, 2018.



 ${\it Governor}\ {\it Khyber}\ {\it Pakhtunkhwa}\ {\it Shah}\ {\it Farman}\ talking\ to\ {\it Ambassador}\ of\ {\it United}\ {\it Arab}$ Emirates (UAE) to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Alzaabi at Governor's House, Peshawar on December 21, 2018



Malaysian Ambassador Ikram Bin Mohammad Ibrahim Presenting Dr. Mahathir Mohammad's book "A Doctor in the House" to Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain in Islamabad on December 19, 2018.



H.E. Ingrid Johansson, Ambassador of Sweden and Mr. Magnus Sparrholm, CEO, TALKPOOL called on Mr. Haroon Sharif, Chairman Board of Investment at BOI Islamabad on December 14, 2018.



Argentine's Ambassador Ivan Ivanissevich called on Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, In Islamabad on December 12, 2018.



H.E. Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul, Ambassador of Turkey to Pakistan call on Mr. Haroon Sharif, Chairman Board of Investment at BOI Islamabad on December 14, 2018.

Diplomatic Focus Thru Len



UK Delegation of National Crime Agency (NCA) Headed by Mr. Donald Toon, The UK Home Secretary's Envoy to Pakistan on accountability and assets recovery in a meeting with the members of assets recovery unit under the chairmanship of Mirza Shahzad Akbar, special assistant to the Prime Minister on accountability.



Federal Minister of Human Rights DR. Shireen Mazari talking to the High Commissioner of Canada, Ms. Wendy Gilmour who called on her in Islamabad on December 17, 2018



Acting British High Commissioner Richard Crowder called on the Advisor to the Prime Minister Abdul Razak Dawood to discuss the issues of bilateral cooperation in trade and investment in Islamabad on December 17, 2018.



H.E. Mr. Martin Kobler, Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan call on Federal Minister for Water and Resources, Muhammad Faisal Vawda in Islamabad on December 19, 2018.



Ambassador of Japan in Islamabad H.E. Takashi Kurai called on Haroon Sharif, Chairman Board of Investment at BOI in Islamabad on December 03, 2018.



Abdul Razak Dawood, Advisor to PM for Commerce, Textile, Industry & Production and Investment, in a meeting with H.E. Mr. Takashi Kurai, Ambassador of Japan In Islamabad on December 04, 2018.

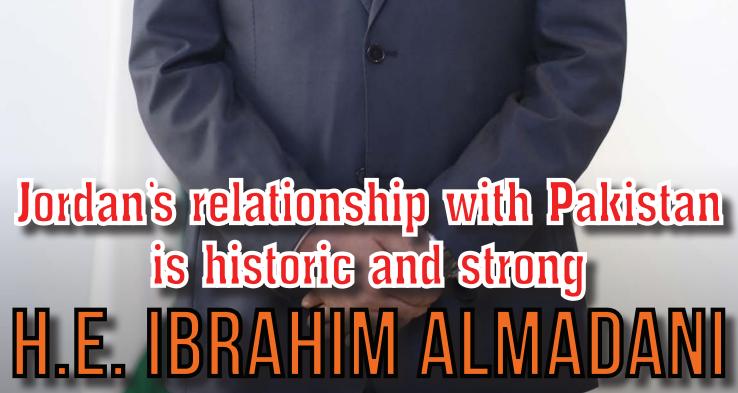


Advisor to PM for Commerce, Textile, Industry & Production and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood in a meeting with H.E. Mr. Mehdi Honardoost, Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan in Islamabad on December 05, 2018.



Federal Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources, Ghulam Sarwar Khan met with CEO, TAPI pipeline Company, Muhammet Myrat Amanov, at Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), Islamabad on December 07, 2018.

Exclusive Interview



Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Pakistan

Your Excellency! First of all, I, on behalf of 'Diplomatic Focus' welcome you as an Ambassador of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in Pakistan and also appreciate your efforts for enhancing the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Jordan. I am also thankful to you for giving us time out of your busy schedule.

DF: Excellency! You are recently appointed as an Ambassador in Pakistan. How do you find

I intended to carry up the economic and trade bilateral exchange to a higher level to match the highly strong political relationship

people conduct in Pakistan and what was your opinion about Pakistan before moving here? In addition to this question can you please tell me what would be your main focal point to improve further relationship between Pakistan and Jordan?

Good morning Mr. Ilahi and thank you and "Diplomatic Focus" for giving me this opportunity to highlight few important points concerning the bilateral relationship between Jordan and Pakistan.

It is both a pleasure and an honor to serve my country in a very dear brotherly and friendly country. Jordan's relationship with Pakistan is historic and strong. I come from a military background where I served in the Jordanian Air Force as a Pilot and I have retired as Major General. As this is my first Ambassadorial mission abroad, I feel privileged to be here. From day one, I was welcomed and extended all the courtesies and high attention by the Government of Pakistan to make my mission a successful one. On a personal level, the warmth and hospitality of the Pakistani people is guite amazing and beyond description.

In God's well, I intended to carry up the economic and trade bilateral exchange to a higher level to match the highly strong political relationship.

DF: Excellency! As we know that culture is a very important factor when it comes to bilateral ties enhancement, what kind of Cultural ties Jordan has offered?

We will work on two levels. The first one is higher visibility of Jordan in Pakistan by taking part in conferences and public cultural events, and by linking cultural bodies in both countries. Secondly, by building a cultural human bridge throughout higher education exchange and encouraging Jordanian students to study in Pakistani universities. I am a strong believer of People-to-People relationship which further strengthens the official and business bilateral

DF: Excellency! Business and trade has become vital for countries these days. What do you think how much is the opportunity for business here in Pakistan and what is opportunities for Pakistan there in Jordan?

On the trade and investment front, I find that we need to do more to bring together our business community and chambers of Commerce & Industry. Both economies provide for genuine business opportunities. For example Jordan is a leading exporter country in the world in for Phosphate, fertilizers and Potash. We can add to this the unique Dead Sea products in cosmetics. Jordan also is a leading Middle East manufacturer and exporter of pharmaceuticals. I encourage Pakistani business community to visit Jordan and experience the suitable business climate especially that Jordan has Free Trade Agreements with leading economies in the World to enable Jordanian exports to penetrate smoothly into these huge markets. Tourism also is a main attraction to Visit Jordan and explore the ancient history of the country and visiting Petra, the Dead Sea, and Magamat Essahabah (Prophets and Companions of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

For Pakistan, there is an enormous potential

in agriculture and food industries, cattle and livestock, leather and leather manufactured products, military hardware.

DF: Excellency! Jordan has been repeatedly referred to as an "oasis of stability" in a turbulent region. It has been mostly unharmed by the violence that swept the region. Which factors you think keepsthe Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan away from these kinds of

I am a strong believer of People-to-People relationship which further strengthens the official and business bilateral ties

To name a few we can mention:

Moderation of the Hashemite Leadership (Al Albayt), where HM King Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein is the 41d decedent of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). The leadership exemplifies moderate Islam in its best ways and stands steadfast against





fanaticism and radicalization. HM King Abdullah is the Custodian of the holy sites in Jerusalem (both Muslim and Christian)

- Jordan has always called for a just, permanent and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian Problem that leads to self-determination for the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent, viable and contiguous Palestinian State with east Jerusalem as its capital. Jordan has played a pivotal role in the Middle East Peace Process to achieve the goal of statehood to the Palestinians. Jordan is the first host of the Palestinian refugee community outside Palestine.
- Tolerance, harmony and peaceful co-existence between the different ethnic and religious components of

the Jordanian society has significantly supported the unity of the people.

DF: Excellency! Both Pakistan and Jordan have great business ties. Instead of the existing ones, what do you think what further steps should be taken to bring more enhancement so that the trade should get boosted; any future plans? And do you see the potential?

We have already come across this point earlier, but to emphasize more, I estimate that the exchange of business delegations will tremendously help to explore the opportunities and form closer ties between the businesses.

DF: Excellency! The kingdom is also refuge to thousands of Iraqi fleeing persecution by ISIL. While Jordan continues to accept refugees; the recent large influx from Syria placed substantial strain on national resources and infrastructure. What do you think that how further Jordan would take care of these

saturation.

Jordan is a leading exporter country in the world in for Phosphate, fertilizers and Potash

refugees on the other hand European Union refused to accept refugees?

Jordan hosts over one and a half million refugees from neighbors Syria who fled the war in their country and as a result there was a great deal of pressure on the country's financial resources and infrastructure. For the time being, the country had to stop accepting new refugees because it reached the level of

The international community provided partial support for these refugees needs listed in the

Jordan has always called for a just, permanent and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian Problem... Jordan is committed to support a negotiated peace settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict



National Resilience Plan drafted to confront the growing pressure on local hot communities.

The Jordanian Treasury and tax payers' money covers for the hosting of our Syrian refugee community. However, this situation is unsustainable and due to the paramount pressure on the general budget, public has increased tremendously.

While we take care of our neighbor refugee community, we continue to call for a political solution in Syria and the repatriation of refugees to their homeland.

DF: Excellency! Jordan is bordered by Iraq to the north-east and Syria to the north. The Jordan's Armed Forces mission is defending and maintaining the sovereignty, security, and stability of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. How do you think that the borders of Jordan are secured from ISIL?

Only a just and lasting peace based on international legitimacy would bring stability and prosperity to all peoples of the region

The Jordanian Armed Forces JAF did a great Job during the past seven years and has defended the boarder and stopped the infiltration attempts by ISIL and other drugs and smugglers. Not only on the security front, but also on the humanitarian part, JAF has worked hard to ensure the safety and wellbeing of refugees and to differentiate real refugees from infiltrating

JAF is a modern institution run on principles of faith, sacrifice, duty and discipline.

DF: What is the role of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to maintain peace in the region because if stability occurred in the region then Jordan would be the one of the directly beneficiary country in the region?

As discussed earlier, Jordan is playing an important role to stabilize the region and to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people



and other innocent victims of conflicts.

On the political level, the steadfastness of the Jordanian leadership towards peace is unequivocal. This commitment stems from the conviction that only a just and lasting peace based on international legitimacy would bring stability and prosperity to all peoples of the region, and Jordan is committed to support a negotiated peace settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

DF: I would also like to know, what are the health and education facilities you are providing to the people of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and what is the literacy rate of your country?

The level of adult literacy in Jordan is among the highest in the region with a ratio exceeding 96% of Jordanians, where in youth is over 99% (male and female). Life expectancy is around 74 years from 7.5 million Jordanians, with a GDP per capita of \$5000 of GDP of \$40 billion.

Medical facilities in Jordan and vastly advanced and the country welcomes medical tourism from all over the Arab region. Almost all major

operations are done in private and public

The steadfastness of the Jordanian leadership towards peace is unequivocal

At the end I am thankful to you and give my finest regards and wishes to the people of Jordan. May Allah bless Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan with progress and prosperity! (Amin)



2nd All Pakistan Women Chambers Presidents' Summit ends

By M.Saeed Yousafzai Photos by Ramzan Mughal

Second All Pakistan Women Chambers Presidents' Summit ends in Islamabad. Chief Guest of the event Finance Minister Asad Umar appreciated the role of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) for promotion of women entrepreneurship. The minister said that women of Pakistan had huge entrepreneurial energies and they were successfully running businesses like fashion, food, education and in several other fields. A number of Pakistani women had developed their own brands. The Presidents of APWCCI on the conclusion of Summit presented declaration/proposals containing 10 demands for acceptance by the government. APWCCI presidents called upon the government for introducing the financing facilities both short term/long term loans at relaxed terms in the upcoming annual budget of

2019-20 for women and equal financial grants to women of rural and urban areas. Similarly, the women chambers are facilitated in all national and international exhibitions, stall acquisitions and trade delegations through TDAP. Last but not the least the presidents demanded relaxation in policies for establishing new















Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Ambassador of Azerbaijan H.E. Ali Alizada called on Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination Dr. Fehmida Mirza in Islamabad on December 11, 2018.



Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Furqat Sidiqov called on Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Sahibzada Muhammad Mehboob Sultan in Islamabad on December 12, 2018.



Mr. Caser Guedes, Representative UNODC of Pakistan called on Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Sardar Ali Muhammad Khan Mahar in Islamabad on December 13, 2018.



Federal Minister for Aviation Commission Mohammad Mian Somroo shaking hand with H.E. Ambassador of UAE Mr. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Alzaabi in Islamabad on December 27, 2018.



H.E. Ms. Wendy Gilmour, Ambassador of Canada paid a courtesy call on Advisor to the Prime Minister on climate change, Malik Amin Aslam at Ministry of Climate Change in Islamabad on December 28, 2018.



paid a courtesy call on the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr. Justice Main Sagib Nisar at Supreme Court of Pakistan, Islamabad on December 07, 2018.



Ambassador of Morocco, Mohammed Karmoune called on federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform, Makhdum Khusro Bakhtyar in Islamabad on December 03, 2018.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, Muhammad Usman Dar in a meeting with H.E. Mr. Yao Jing Ambassador of People's Republic of China to Pakistan in Islamabad on December 19, 2018.

Qatar National Day marked

The Embassy of the State of Qatar to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan held a reception on the occasion of the National Day of the State of Qatar. The ceremony was attended by high profile official and public representatives, His Excellency Mr. Khusro Bakhtiar, Federal Minister of Planning, Development and Reform was the Chief Guest. Among attendees there was H. E. Mr. Shehryar Afridi, Minister of State for Interior, H. E. Mr. Zulfigar Abbas Bukhari, and special Assistant to Prime Minister and Minister of State on Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development, Senator Mr. Talha Mahmood, Senator Ms. Sitara Ayaz and Senator Naseem Ullah Khan, representing His Excellency Mr. Sadiq Sanjrani, Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan. In addition to Ambassadors of friendly Arab and Foreign countries with their military attachés and members of the diplomatic corps. Number of Generals of the Pakistan armed forces and senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Government and Non-Governmental organizations such as Universities, Human Rights, Charity organizations ... etc. The reception was also attended by heads of think tanks and research institutes and also large number of senior politicians, media personal, journalists, and representatives of the religious parties. During the ceremony, a number of cultural programs were held, and a special pavilion was held for publications that provided an overview of the continuous and wise growth and development of the State of Qatar since its establishment. This is in addition to distributing gifts to guests participating in the ceremony.



















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By M.Saeed Yousafzai

Human rights abuses in the Indian state of Jammu And Kashmir State are an ongoing issue since 1947. The abuses range from mass killings, enforced disappearances, torture, rape and sexual abuse to political repression and suppression of freedom of speech. The Indian Army, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Personnel (BSF) have been accused for committing severe human rights abuses against Kashmiri civilians. India has committed genocide of Kashmiri Muslims to subdue their revolt. Civilians including women and children have been killed in "reprisal" attacks by Indian security forces. International NGO's as well as the US State Department have documented human rights abuses including disappearances, torture and arbitrary executions carried out during India's operations. United Nations has expressed serious concerns over large number of killings by Indian security forces. Human Rights groups have also accused the Indian security forces.

The killings were brutal, unacceptable and violated international law. India continues to use vicious tactics to intimidate, disrespect and silence the Kashmiris and their struggle to achieve their just right to self-determination.

India has continued to ignore legitimate demands for international probe into gross and systematic human rights violations, including use of pellet guns, excessive use of force, arbitrary arrest and detentions, as well as continued sexual violence, as a part of overall impunity enjoyed by the Indian security forces. Despite hollow Indian claims, Jammu and Kashmir remains an internationally recognized dispute, pending on the agenda of the UN Security Council. The dissociation of India from reality is alarming, more so for India itself. To

try to deflect international attention from lok, India continues to launch a volley of attacks along the Line of Control, killing and maiming innocent civilians, living along the border. 1.5 billion people of this region have been deprived of peace and prosperity for the last 70 years by India, as it backed off from implementing the promises it made with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and with the international community. The Government and the people of Pakistan reaffirm their continued and resolute moral, dislogation, and political expensity to the



oppressed people of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir in their valiant struggle for realization of the fundamental right to self-determination.

Pakistan calls upon the international community to call upon India to put an immediate halt to the bloodshed in IoK and to be cognizant of its responsibilities in the matter. India has to allow investigations by an independent fact finding Commission of OCHCR, OIC and IPHRC into the ongoing gross human rights violations in IoK and to fulfill its obligations under UN Security

Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

The tragedy of youths killed in December 2018, maimed, injured, disappeared, tortured and arbitrarily detained in IHK is known to anyone willing to observe India's murderous and repressive policies in IHK.

But is it not time for the international community to take a genuine interest in what is being done in India-occupied Kashmir in the name of security, and to hold the security forces and government of India to account?

Until now, the world community has largely been willing to ignore the plight of the people in IHK.

Kashmir is a disputed region and recognised as such by the UN; Pakistan has a legitimate interest in what happens in the whole of the Kashmir region. The international community must take note not just of the recent violence in IHK, but the overall pattern of illegal control that the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has attempted to extend in the disputed region.

True, India is a rising economic power with enormous amounts of defence and infrastructure expenditure. International powers both big and small are drawn to new markets for their products, and India is a market that they cannot afford to ignore, But at what cost?

The international order championed by Western powers and most developed countries is ostensibly rooted in human and political rights that India's appalling actions in IHK are actively negating.

The world's attention must turn towards the violence India is perpetrating in IHK. The international community has leverage with India; it must use it as a moral imperative at this time.

Kenya's 55th Independence Day Marked

Kenyan High Commissioner Prof Julius K. Bitok hosted a reception to celebrate Kenya's 55th Independence Day in Islamabad. The chief guest was Mr. Mohammad Mian Soomro, federal minister for privatization. A large number of diplomats from various countries as well members of civil society attended the reception.



National Day **Photo by Ramzan Mughal**

Kazakhstan Independence Day marked

To celebrate the 27th anniversary of the independence of Republic of Kazakhstan, Ambassador Barlybay Sadykov hosted an impressive reception at a Serena hotel in Islamabad. The chief guest on the occasion was Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi while Chairman Board of Investment Haroon Sharif was the guest of honour. All the central Asian countries ambassadors including Turkmenistan's ambassador Atadjan Movlamov, Uzbek ambassador Furkat A Sidikov, Azerbaijan ambassador Ali Alizade, Tajikistan's Ambassador Janonov SherAli, Kyrgyz ambassador Erik Beishembiev and various other ambassadors, diplomats, businessmen and civilians also attended the event.





Japanese king's birthday marked

Japanese ambassador H.E. Takashi Kurai hosted a reception to celebrate 85th birthday of Japanese emperor at Serena Hotel, Islamabad. Federal Minister for Privatisation Muhammad Mian Soomro was the chief guest on the occasion. The reception was attended by ministers, parliamentarians, senior government officials, members of the diplomatic community and other dignitaries from the public and private sector had among the guests former federal minister Ahsan Iqbal, former Speaker National Assembly/Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, former Speaker National Assembly Syed Fakhar Imam and his former federal minster wife Syeda Abida Hussain, Deputy Chairman Senate Saleem Mandviwala, Ms. Kashmala Tariq, Senator Dr. Waseem Shehzad, Senator Sitara Ayaz, and Senator Usman Khan Kakar.



Tourism & Arts

4th International Mountain Film Festival held

Serena Hotels hosted the inaugural ceremony of the 4th edition of the Pakistan International Mountain Film Festival (PIMFF). The chief guest on the occasion was renowned mountaineer Colonel (r) M Sher Khan who holds the distinction of being the first Pakistani to have climbed Rakaposhi and Nanga Parbat, along with numerous other peaks. PIMFF Founder Wajahat Malik welcomed the guests to the ceremony and screening of 'The Frozen Road'. 'The Frozen Road', one of the most extraordinary films in the programme, depicts an incredible month-long expedition through Canada's remote and frozen Yukon Territory to the Arctic Sea. Ben Page began the three-year bike trip in 2014 and chronicles a single month in the riveting film. PIMFF screens short films, documentaries, features and animations related to mountain adventure sports, nature, environment, climate change, mountain tourism, mountain cultures and communities.



"Diplomatic Focus" welcomed to New

"Diplomatic Focus" a prestigious monthly magazine hosted a dinner reception in the honor of the New Envoys to Islamic republic of Pakistan. Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Editor/Publisher of "Diplomatic Focus" welcome and congratulate the new envoys in his speech which includes H.E. Wendy Gilmour High Commissioner of Canada, H.E. Mr. kjell Gunnar Eriksen Ambassador of Royal Norwegian, H.E. Mr. Pornpop Uampidhaya, Ambassador of Royal Thailand, H.E Mr. Ibrahim Almadani, Ambassador of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, H.E Mr. Noordeen Mohamed Shaheid, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, H.E Mr. Nicolaus Keller ambassador of Austria. Mr. Elahi also wished and hoped that as ambassador/High Commissionaire's efforts will strengthen the relations of Pakistan with their respective countries.

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand H.E. Mr. Pornpop Uampidhaya said at the event that he is very optimistic and determined that the cooperation between the two countries would be extended to all possible areas during his tenure. H.E. Ibrahim Al Madani Jordanians Ambassador put light on the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Jordan. High Commissioner of Sri Lanka H.E. Noordeen Mohamed Shaheid conveyed warm greetings to the people of Pakistan.







Wendy Gilmour joined the Canadian Foreign Service in 1990, with postings to Zimbabwe accreditation to Mozambique. Botswana and Angola), the United Kingdom and Nigeria. She served in international peace operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Office of the High Representative) and Kosovo (Political Advisor to the Commander NATO Kosovo Force) in the1990s, and with the Canadian Armed Forces as a Political Advisor to the Canadian Commander Joint Task Force South-west Asia post 9-11. In headquarters, Ms. Gilmour served as Deputy Director in the Eastern Europe and Regional Security and Peacekeeping Divisions, and as Director Peace Operations, including responsibility for the establishment of Canada's Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and Director of the Sudan Task Force. She was posted to Colorado Springs as the Political Advisor to Commander North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) in 2008-2010, and on return to Ottawa, joined the Department of Public Safety as Senior Departmental Assistant to the Minister. Ms. Gilmour moved to National Defence in 2011 to become the Director General International and Industry Programs in the Materiel Group, after which she rejoined the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development in 2015 to become Director General Trade and Export Controls.

Ms. Gilmour holds a BA (Honours) in Political Studies and History from Queen's University at Kingston and served in the Canadian Forces Primary Reserve as a Logistics Officer.

H.E. Wendy Gilmour

High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan



The newly appointed High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Noordeen Mohamed Shaheid, Attorney at Law assumed duties on 22 October at the High Commission of Sri Lanka in Islamabad.

At a simple ceremony following the assumption of duties, High Commissionerdesignate Mohamed Shaheid said that though the formal Diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka started in 1948, the genesis of the relations dates back to the Gandhara era. He further stated that both Pakistan and Sri Lanka are strategic partners in South Asia and that the relationship between the two brotherly countries is based on mutual trust, confidence and cordiality.

He was very optimistic that the cooperation between the two countries would be extended to all possible areas during his tenure and committed to extend his fullest support to strengthen the existing relationship and build stronger people to people contacts. The High Commissionerdesignate also recalled with gratitude the support and assistance provided by the Government of Pakistan to Sri Lanka in the hour of need.

High Commissioner-designate Mohamed Shaheid had held several high level positions in the State Sector previously. He had served as the Chairman of the National Institute of Co-operative Development, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Agency, Director of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, Advisor to the Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services, Chairman of the Intellectual Property Advisory Commission, and Chairman and Director General of the National Enterprise Development Authority. Immediately prior to taking up the diplomatic assignment in Pakistan he served as the Chairman of the Consumer Affairs Council.

H.E. Noordeen Mohamed Shaheid

High Commissioner of Sri Lanka



Major general (Retired) Ibrahim Yala Al madani retired from the Royal Jordanian Air Force On 5th July, 2016 with the last position as a Director of intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance. Born in Al-tafeelah on 15th Jan, 1962, entered service as a pilot cadet on 2nd December, 1980 and graduated as a helicopter pilot on 5th July, 1983 and as a Second lieutenant. Held various command and leadership positions throughout his career in the RJAF helicopter pilot flying from Md500,S76,Uh-1 Huey, super puma (AS332) and importantly serving at the Royal squadron flying VVIP UH60 Blackhawk for sixteen years. Also commanding two helicopter operational squadrons (No7&8) at the Air lift wing (ALW) and later becoming the wing commander, with the primary operational responsibility of providing the air Lift capability to the RJAF; a unit consisting of four operational squadrons operating six type of aircraft/ helicopter with a multitude of operational tasks varying from air lift to search and rescue to regional in country transport missions .

Education

July 1983 Helicopter Pilot, King Hussein Air College / Jordan. October 1990Academic Instructor course, Maxwell AFB, Al/ USA April 1996 Squadron officer course, King Hussein air College.

July 2005 Command and staff college / Ministry of Defense united kingdom(Note: This is equivalent to a bachelor degree in military science from the University Of Mutah / Jordan)

2007 High national diploma in defense studies, national defense college / mutah university.

2008 MSC in management and strategic studies, national defense college / Mutah university.

2009 High national diploma in defense studies / Australia defense college.

Command Assignments

September 2002 – May 2004; No (8) squadron commander. August 2005 – November 2006; No (7) squadron commander. 21 March 2010 -7 January 2016; Air lift wing commander 7 January-5July 2016; Director of Air Intelligence and reconnaissance and surveillance (ISR/RJAF)

Awards and Decorations

Emblem Of Merit & Competency in Managerial & Technical Skills.

Medal of Military Merit; 4th grade.

Medal of Independence; 2nd grade.

Emblem Of leadership Competency.

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant, 2nd December, 1980

First Lieutenant, 10th June 1989.

Captain, 10th June 1989

Major, 10th June 1993

Lt Col,10th June,1998

Colonel, 10th June, 2004

Brigadier General, 10th June, 2010

Major General 5th July 2016

After Retirement;

Joined The Royal Jordanian National Defense College on 11th April, 2018 as a Directing Staff.



Water wars /// THE OFFINE

By Khalid Saleem

Inequitable apportionment of water resources is fast becoming the cause of tension in several regions of the world. Our region is no exception. In fact, it may well be the area most severely affected. The countries of SAARC region are particularly vulnerable and unless this regional organization wakes up to its responsibilities in this regard, things may take a turn for the worse. In this piece, one will confine oneself to the serious problems being faced by this country, as a lower riparian.

Past experience has shown that India has shown less than logical regard for its international obligations towards its neighbours, and in particular with regard to equitable apportionment of water resources. This is evident in its blatant disregard of Pakistan's concerns, despite mutually agreed international commitments. The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 was a solemn agreement entered into by India and Pakistan. It was intended to ensure that while affording India its full rights - Pakistan's legitimate share of water as the lower riparian would not be adversely affected. The World Bank had provided its auspices for concluding this crucial Treaty, even though it stopped short of assuming the formal role of guarantor for its implementation in letter and spirit. Taking advantage of this, India has over the years adopted the policy of nibbling at the terms of the Treaty bit by bit.

Past experience shows that slow reaction or procrastination by Pakistan has emboldened India to go ahead with projects that violate the provisions of the Treaty both in letter and in spirit. The dispute over Baglihar Project — in which Pakistan had invoked the relevant clause of the Indus Waters Treaty to little or no consequence — is a case in point. Pakistan, it would appear, has been fighting a losing battle in its quest to protect its water rights. Whatever efforts were made in the past can be classed as too little and too late. This is just not on, considering that this happens to be an area that is fast becoming water deficient. When the Quaid-i-Azam had termed Kashmir as

the 'jugular vein' of Pakistan, it was not a mere rhetoric statement. A hardcore realistic that he was, he was pointedly referring to the flow of precious waters from the State into Pakistan. The dip some years ago in the flow of water in river Chenab as a result of the operationalising of the Baglihar Project — and that not once but twice in a crucial period for our agriculture — had once again brought the issue into sharp focus.

Now to the basics! How and why did the water-squabbles start in the first place? With the benefit of hindsight, one can safely surmise that some time down the line India's Establishment took the conscious decision to begin to nibble bit by bit at the Indus Waters Treaty. Water projects of a certain magnitude



are permitted under the Treaty that lays down strict parameters for the design of such projects. The current Indian Government has gone a step further by openly expressing its resolve to up the ante. In many ways, authorities in Pakistan were amiss in the aforementioned instances. By the time Pakistan had formulated its response many projects were already in a fairly advanced stage. Pakistan's pleas of freezing the construction work pending a mutually acceptable settlement were brushed aside by the Indian side. The Indian intentions were evident. As with several other issues - e.g. Siachin – they wished to present the world with a fait accompli and at the same time to test the resolve of the Pakistan Government.

The statement of the then government that Pakistan expected India to abide by international agreements on water sharing of the Indus system was most came rather late in the day. The assertion that the Indian move would only damage the bilateral ties that the two countries had built over the years and that "India should not trade off important regional objectives for short term domestic goals" was pertinent. But since then little follow-up action appears to have been taken, which attitude took the sheen off the desired 'protest'. What remains to be seen is how things will shape up in the times to come. The matter of the Indus Basin waters is very serious indeed. In fact it can even be described as a matter of life and death. This is certainly not an issue that could have been conveniently consigned to the dustbin of the 'composite' dialogue, now defunct. A matter of life and death for the people of this blessed land should neither be subjected to longish procrastination nor, indeed, swept under the proverbial rug. The authorities concerned should be well aware of the consequences of failure.

Ever since the so-called composite dialogue started, less than optimum attention was afforded to the question of water apportionment. In fact, one of the first CBMs should have been related to the strict observance of the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960. The fact that no one gave a thought to this issue of extreme importance can only be regretted. As things are moving at present, it may perhaps already be too late to make amends. It may be well in order to reiterate here that the question of apportionment of waters is not confined to our region alone. In fact, it has raised its ominous head in many regions of the world, particularly in the Third World. It would be in the fitness of things if the international community were to wake up to the need to tackle this issue betimes, before it becomes the cause of future wars, as appears highly likely.

— The writer is a former ambassador and former assistant secretary general of OIC.

Culture & Customs

Former Ambassador of Argentina to Pakistan H.E. Rodolfo José
Martin-Saravia and his wife Mrs. Susana arranged a beautiful party on the
occasion of Wedding of their beloved son Mr. Nicolas. Among the guests
were Mr. Anwar Saifullah and his Wife Samina from Pakistan.



Arts & Diplomacy

Korean embassy wraps up 2018 cultural events with film show at PNCA

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Islamabad, in collaboration with the Korea Foundation and the Pakistan National Council of Arts, hosted a film show at PNCA. The film selection for screening was "the Fatal Encounter" is a 2014 Korean movie based on a historical story of politically motivated real-life assassination attempt on King Jeongjo, the 22nd ruler of the Korea's Joseon dynasty.











Spanish guitarist hits soul & emotions of Audience

The Spanish guitarist Raul Viela, travelled all the way from Spain to perform in a music concert arranged by the Spanish embassy in Pakistan. The concert marked the 40 years of the Spanish Constitution.











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