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Prime Minister Imran Khan & President Xi Jinping willing to

coordinate on the implementation of Phase-II of CPEC that includes industrial cooperation and socio-economic development



Pakistan and Iran are agreed for joint efforts against terrorism and other matters of mutual interest

H.E. Imran Khan

Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan

H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

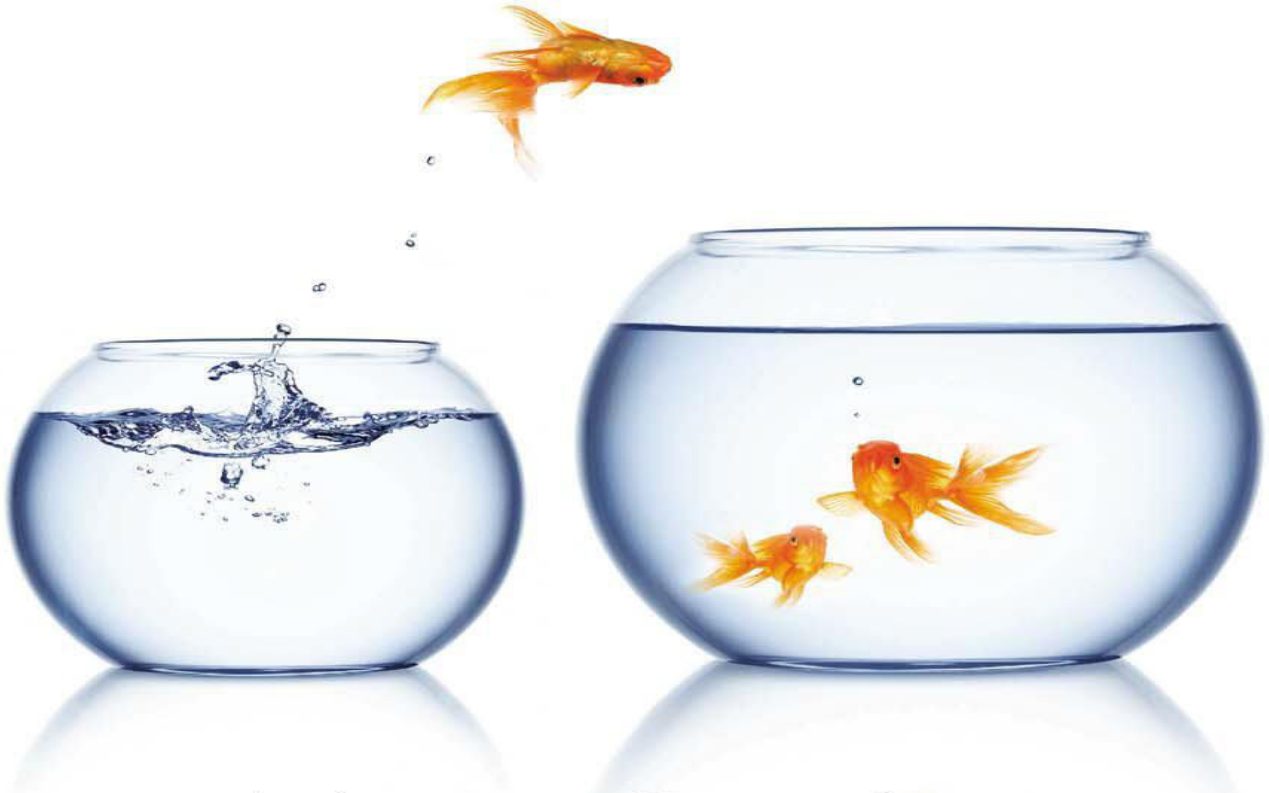


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celebrates

93rd

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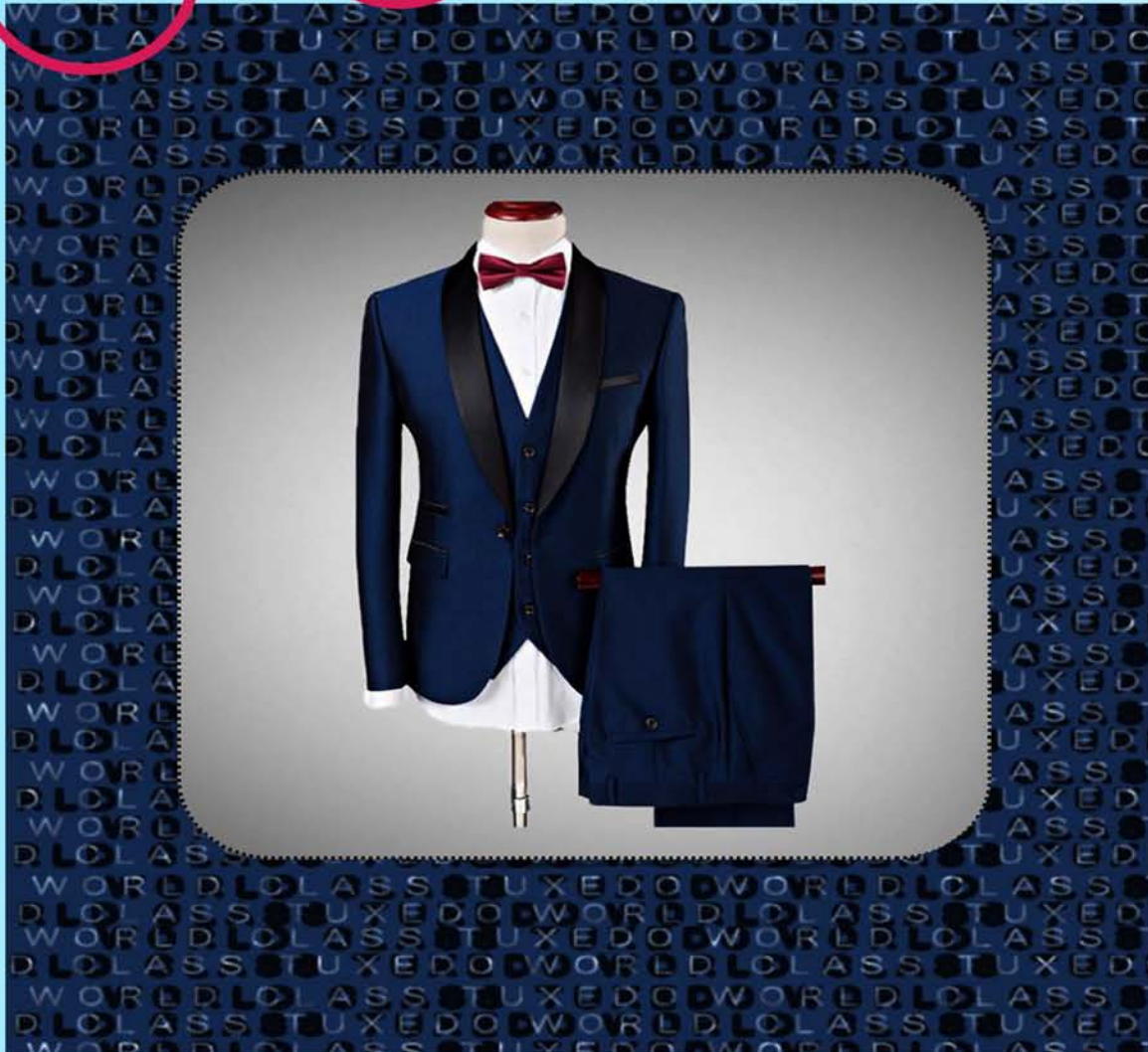
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Prime Minister Imran Khan held a meeting with President Xi Jinping in Beijing. The two leaders were accompanied by Ministers and senior-level delegations. Reaffirming 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' between Pakistan and China, the two leaders exchanged views on the entire gamut of bilateral relations in a warm and cordial atmosphere.

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50 Is economic Crises turn into democratic transformation?

There is need to respect the efforts of Sudanese People who took steps for their freedom, justice, peace and economic stability. People of Sudan deserve appreciation who expressed their solidarity, support and struggling for democratic transformation.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II celebrates 93rd Birthday

Queen Elizabeth II, the world's oldest and longest reigning living monarch, celebrated her 93rd birthday by attending the traditional Easter service at Windsor Castle. Elizabeth was accompanied by members of her family, including grandsons Prince William and Prince Harry, and William's wife, Catherine, at the Easter Mattins service in St. George's Chapel.



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Mian Fazal Elahi

The “Belt and Road Initiative” is well-designed and expanding, making the second forum on the ambitious infrastructure and development project about refinement and enhancement. President Xi Jinping, address on opening ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation to dozens of world leaders, focused on cooperation and how the benefits are for all involved. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, one of the BRI’s major components and one of its earliest manifestations has made substantial progress. Pakistan’s energy supplies have increased massively, critical infrastructure gaps are being plugged, Gwadar once a small fishing village is transforming rapidly into a commercial hub. It is essential to stop all the negative propaganda against CPEC if we want prosperous and progressive Pakistan.

On the other hand the military-led coup that ended Omar Hassan al-Bashir’s 30-year presidency on 11, April 2019 marks the beginning of a new chapter in the book on Sudan’s modern history. There is need to respect the efforts of Sudanese People who took steps for their freedom, justice, peace and economic stability. People of Sudan deserve appreciation who expressed their solidarity, support and struggling for democratic transformation. Sudan is looking forward for effective economic cooperation from the international community that will allow Sudan to utilize its natural and economic resources and to be a pillar of food security regionally and internationally, and to contribute to the economic and social development in the African continent, and this also requires the implementation of the international commitment towards Sudan.

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-official diplomatic engagements, events, national days, social evenings/gatherings, press conferences/interviews and can be contacted for all kinds of stuff including articles, supplements and advertisements etc). It is requested to all Diplomatic missions and government high officials of UK, please contact with Mr. Mian Assad Ullah on His mailing address, 4 Ipswich Road, SW17 9RH, London. Cell number:+44-7961005954/ 2087694850, Email: uk.diplomaticfocus@gmail.com, assadmian1@gmail.com

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Prime Minister Imran Khan and President Xi Jinping address at the Opening Ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum

Prime Minister Imran Khan, in his keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the second Belt and Road Forum in Beijing on Friday, called for greater attention to tackling climate change and poverty as Pakistan and China enter the next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The Prime Minister appreciated the significance of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), saying it "marks a new and distinct phase in the onward march of nations in the world along the path of globalization".

"The presence of so many world leaders today is proof that we choose hope over despair and cooperation over confrontation. 122 states and 49 international organizations have signed onto the BRI's vision and this is a historic and monumental development," he pointed out.

"The BRI offers a model of partnership, collaboration, connectivity and shared prosperity," the prime minister told the audience. "Pakistan is proud to have partnered with China in this transformative endeavor. We have been among BRI's earliest and most enthusiastic proponents," he said.

"The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, one of the BRI's major components - and one of its earliest manifestations - has made substantial progress. Pakistan's energy supplies have increased massively, critical infrastructure gaps are being plugged, Gwadar - once a small fishing village - is transforming rapidly into a commercial hub. The Gwadar airport will be the largest in our country," he told his audience. He informed the audience that special economic zones being set up along the CPEC offer investment opportunities for Pakistani, Chinese and foreign entrepreneurs, and invited interested parties to "avail Pakistan's liberal foreign investment regime and participate in our economy; in particular infrastructure, railways, dams, IT and manufacturing."

"Together, Pakistan and China are entering the next phase of CPEC, with greater emphasis on socioeconomic uplift," he said, adding that the next phase would be "supplemented" by the signing of an expanded Pakistan-China Free Trade Agreement.

He added that Pakistan wants to promote cooperation with China in agriculture, health

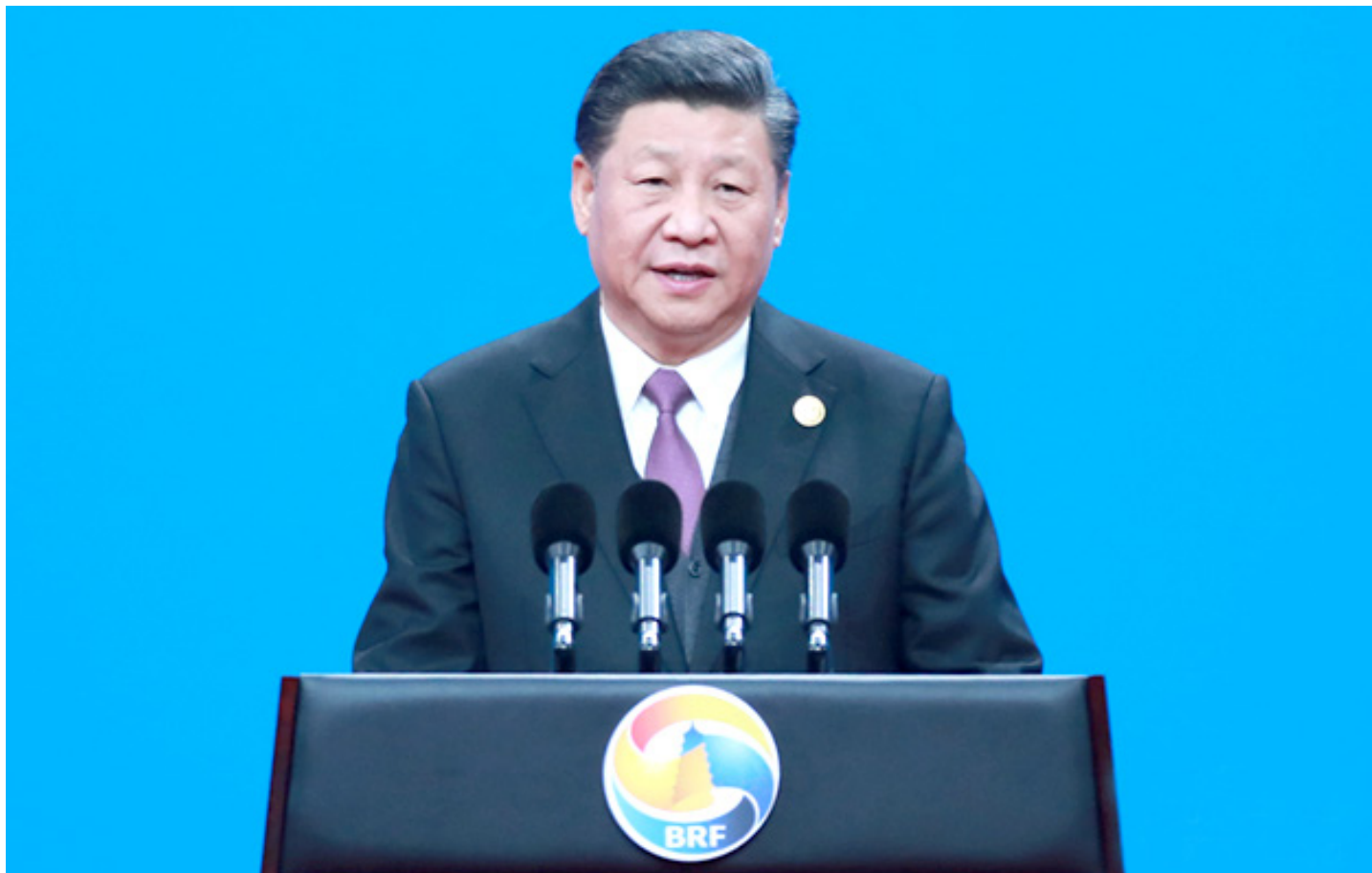
and education, and called for joint efforts towards addressing impediments on the way to sustainable growth.

The prime minister said that Pakistan and China are entering the next phase of CPEC and are focusing on socio-economic uplift, poverty alleviation, agricultural cooperation and industrial development.

"We are changing Pakistan's economic landscape and, God willing, the destiny of our people. I want to thank China and its leadership for their unwavering support for Pakistan," he said.

Prime Minister Imran suggested that, as the BRI takes on a more concrete shape, world leaders direct their efforts and focus onto the people of their countries by addressing impediments in the path towards sustainable growth.

He suggested collaboration on five points: mitigating the adverse effects of climate change by launching an ambitious tree-planting project; establishing a BRI tourism corridor; establishing an office for anti-corruption cooperation; creating a poverty alleviation fund; further trade liberalization and encouraging private



sector investment.

President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing on Friday.

Belt and Road opens up new space for global economic growth

Joint building of the Belt and Road has opened up new space for the world's economic growth. It also created a new platform to boost international trade and investment, expanded new practices to optimize the global economic governance, and made new contributions to improving people's well-being of all countries.

High-quality development of Belt and Road stressed

The principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits should be upheld. The open, green and clean approaches should be adhered to. The goals of high-standard, livelihood-improving and sustainable development should be achieved.

High-quality, sustainable infrastructure under BRI highlighted

Infrastructure is the cornerstone of connectivity and a bottleneck of development confronting many countries. Building infrastructure with such standards can help countries give full play to their advantages in resources and better integrate into the global supply, industry and value chains for interconnected development.

China to sign more high-standard free trade agreements

China will negotiate and sign high-standard free trade agreements with more countries.

China to support 5,000 people for BRI innovation exchanges

China will support 5,000 people from innovation sector in Belt and Road countries in conducting exchanges, training programs and joint researches in the next five years.

Sustainable development under BRI stressed

China will work with other parties to promote a coalition of sustainable cities and an international coalition for green development under the Belt and Road Initiative.

China to invite 10,000 representatives of political parties, think tanks, NGOs from B&R countries

A total of 10,000 representatives of political parties, think tanks and non-governmental organizations from countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative will be invited to China for exchanges in the next five years.

China to allow foreign businesses in more sectors with controlling or full stake

China will allow foreign investors to operate businesses in more sectors with controlling or full stake. China will roll out a new batch of pilot free trade zones.

China prohibits forced technology transfer

China will step up protecting the legitimate rights and interests of foreign owners of intellectual property rights, and prohibit the forced transfer of technology. China will create

a business environment in which the value of knowledge is respected.

China to increase imports on larger scale

China will increase imports of goods and services on a larger scale. China will further lower its tariff rates.

China not to adopt beggar-thy-neighbor currency devaluation

China will continue to improve the exchange rate formation mechanism of its currency, the renminbi, and keep the exchange rate generally stable on a reasonable and balanced level.

China establishes mechanism for fulfilling international agreements

China attaches great importance to the establishment of a constraint mechanism for the fulfillment and implementation of international agreements, and the modification and improvement of laws and regulations in accordance with the need of further opening-up.

Fair treatment to Chinese enterprises, students, scholars abroad called for

All countries should create a sound investment environment, and treat Chinese enterprises, students and scholars abroad as equals. All countries should provide a fair and friendly environment for them to carry out normal international exchanges and cooperation.



Pakistan & China

further strengthen their strategic cooperative partnership in numerous fields

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Prime Minister Imran Khan held a meeting with President Xi Jinping in Beijing. The two leaders were accompanied by Ministers and senior-level delegations. Reaffirming 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' between Pakistan and China, the two leaders exchanged views on the entire gamut of bilateral relations in a warm and cordial atmosphere. They affirmed the resolve to further strengthen their strategic cooperative partnership in all fields including political, security, economic and trade, and people-to-people exchanges in Beijing, China. Prime Minister Imran Khan thanked President Xi for the warm and gracious welcome accorded to him in China and for China's steadfast support to Pakistan on all issues. The Prime Minister also reaffirmed Pakistan's support to China on all issues of its core interest. Prime Minister Imran Khan congratulated President Xi on the successful convening of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum (BRF), which is a practical manifestation of his far-reaching vision, and highlighted its significance as an important international platform for





connectivity and sharing of experience among the BRI participating countries. Reaffirming Pakistan's unflinching commitment to China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Prime Minister highlighted CPEC's next phase and its extension into new areas of agriculture, industrial development, and socio-economic uplift with livelihood projects. President Xi Jinping reiterated China's unwavering support to Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and appreciated the government's agenda for socio-economic development and people-centered progress. He affirmed that China-Pakistan ties would continue to acquire greater strength and deepen practical cooperation in the time to come. The two sides also exchanged views on the regional situation, including in Afghanistan and South Asia. President Xi further expressed China's appreciation for Pakistan's sustained and successful efforts in the fight against terrorism and to create a peaceful neighborhood. Both sides expressed

satisfaction over the close cooperation between the two countries at multilateral fora and resolved to further deepen communication and coordination at all levels. They also agreed to keep the momentum of high-level exchanges between the two countries.

Prime Minister Imran Khan held a bilateral meeting with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang at the conclusion of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum (BRF) in Beijing. The two Prime Ministers were accompanied by Ministers and senior officials in Beijing, China. Both leaders reaffirmed the time-tested and strong friendship between Pakistan and China and exchanged views on the myriad facets of bilateral engagement. The Prime Minister extended felicitations to the Chinese leadership on the successful holding of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum (BRF). Noting the depth and breadth of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Prime Minister said it was of immense significance for the world in terms of connectivity and shared

prosperity. The two sides exchanged views on bilateral collaboration in the context of CPEC and prospects of further deepening economic linkages. The Prime Minister underscored the importance of CPEC for Pakistan's economy and noted with satisfaction its expansion into new areas of development – including industrial development; livelihood projects; social uplift; and agriculture in line with the priorities of government. He hoped that Chinese investment in Specialized Economic Zones (SEZs) would expand Pakistan's industrial base and assist in diversifying its export basket. Underlining the steady growth of bilateral cooperation since the Prime Minister's last visit to China in November 2018, Premier Li Keqiang expressed satisfaction at the positive momentum of CPEC projects. He hoped that the conclusion of the Second Phase of China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (FTA), would give further boost to trade and economic relations between the two countries. The two sides agreed to further deepen the



Prime Minister Imran Khan met Vice President of China Wang Qishan at Beijing.



Prime Minister Imran Khan met Premier Li Keqiang at Beijing.



Prime Minister Imran Khan meets President of Tajikistan Emomali rahmon on the Sidelines of 2nd Belt and Road Forum 2019 at Beijing, China on April 26, 2019.

political, security, economic, education, science & technology, cultural, and people-to-people relations. It was agreed to maintain the existing momentum of high level exchanges between the two countries. The two leaders also exchanged views on regional issues including peace efforts in Afghanistan and peace and stability in South Asia. They also agreed to closely coordinate in their endeavours. The two Prime Ministers also witnessed the signing ceremony at which the Second Phase of the Pakistan-China Free Trade Agreement was signed. The list of MoUs/Agreements signed/exchanged on the occasion is as follows: i. Second Phase of China Pakistan Free Trade Agreement ii. Declaration for Completion of Preliminary Design of Phase-I for Up-gradation of ML-1 and Establishment of Havelian Dry Port under CPEC iii. MoU on Cooperation in the field of Marine Sciences between the China Geological Survey (CGS), Ministry of Natural Resources of China, the Institute of Oceanography, Ministry of Science and Technology. iv. MoU between CIDCA and Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform

on Implementation of the Projects under JWG of CPEC on Socio-Economic Development. v. China-Pakistan Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement vi. Rashakai SEZ Joint Venture and License Agreement between KPEZMDC and CRBC.

The Prime Minister met with H.E. Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan on the sidelines of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, China. The Prime Minister reiterated the importance Pakistan attaches to closer ties and enhanced collaboration with Tajikistan in diverse fields. Among other things, matters relating to connectivity as well as energy cooperation were discussed. Both leaders exchanged views on political relations, high level exchanges, trade and economic interaction and regional situation. They also reviewed the progress of CASA-1000 project and resolved to ensure its timely completion. The two sides also agreed to intensify bilateral exchanges to further boost mutual collaboration in the field of energy and other areas. Prime Minister Imran Khan had a bilateral meeting with Ethiopian Prime Minister



Meeting of Prime Minister Imran Khan with Prime Minister of Ethiopia on sidelines of the Second Belt and Road Forum.

Abiy Ahmed Ali on the sidelines of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum held in Beijing.

Prime Minister Imran Khan had a meeting with Ms. Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of International Monetary fund (IMF) on the sidelines of the belt and Road Forum in Beijing, China. The Prime Minister was assisted by Foreign Minister, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Adviser on Finance, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh and Adviser on Commerce, Mr. Abdul Razzaq Dawood. The meeting reviewed the relationship between Pakistan and the Fund. The Prime Minister identified the areas of reform and initiatives being undertaken by the government to stabilize the economy, control inflation and achieve fiscal balance. The two leaders agreed on the importance of the Fund programme and to work towards an agreement for which an IMF delegation is coming to Islamabad. The two sides agreed on the need for a social safety net for the vulnerable groups of the society.

The Prime Minister met Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, CEO of the World Bank on the



Prime Minister Imran Khan meets President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon on the Sidelines of 2nd Belt and Road Forum 2019 at Beijing, China on April 26, 2019.



Prime Minister Imran Khan meets Chief Executive Officer World Bank Ms. Kristalina Georgieva on the Sidelines of 2nd Belt and Road Forum 2019 in Beijing, China on April 26, 2019.



Prime Minister Imran Khan meets Managing Director of International Monetary Fund (IMF) Ms. Christine Lagarde on the Sidelines on 2nd Belt and Road Forum 2019 at Beijing, China on April 26, 2019.

sidelines of the second Belt and Road Forum (BRF) in Beijing, China. He was accompanied by the Foreign Minister and Advisor on Finance and Advisor on Commerce. The Prime Minister informed CEO, World Bank of the recent steps taken by the government for improving the economic and fiscal situation in the country. He appreciated the role played by the World Bank in regional connectivity, poverty alleviation, financial management, provisional projects, DASU and other infrastructure projects and ease of doing business. The Prime Minister also informed the CEO about the socio-economic uplift measures taken up by the government and creation of “Ehsaas” social welfare programme. The CEO of the World Bank pledged to further strengthen cooperation with Pakistan in the areas of disbursements programme lending and guarantees provision for raising external funds.



CHINESE BUSINESSPERSONS ARE WELCOME TO VISIT PAKISTAN & EXPLORE THE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN VARIOUS SECTORS.

Pm IMRAN KHAN added; his government is providing incentives to the Chinese investors and also improving ease of doing business in the country. Pakistan has become a secure country thanks to the efforts and sacrifices of its security forces and Intelligence agencies.

PM
IMRAN KHAN
PAKISTAN CHINA
TRADE & INVESTMENT
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Pakistan and Iran

are agreed for joint efforts against terrorism and other matters of mutual interest

By Mian Fazal Eahi

H.E. Mr. Imran Khan, the honorable Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan paid a high-level visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the invitation H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, the honorable President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. There has been

regular exchange of leadership level visits between the two sides in recent years. The honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan visited the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in the City of Mashhad. H.E. Mr. Imran Khan, the honorable Prime Minister held delegation-level talks with President Rouhani and also met with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Grand Ayatollah

Seyyed Ali Khamenei during his first visit to Iran as Prime Minister. Prime Minister Imran Khan and his delegation also benefited from spiritual guidance given by the Rahbar. The Rahbar conveyed his deep regard and attachment with the brotherly people of Pakistan and prayed for the success of the Pakistani nation.

While emphasizing historical, cultural,





Prime Minister Imran Khan Meeting with Presiden Hassan Rouhani at Saadabad Palace in Tehran on 22nd April, 2019.

religious and civilizational ties between the two neighboring and Muslim countries, and highlighting the commitment of the senior officials of the two countries to expand relations in all areas of mutual interest, the two sides reiterated the importance of deepening and reinforcing bilateral ties based on principles of national interest, territorial integrity and mutual respect for national sovereignty. They called for swift implementation of bilateral agreements as a step towards realizing this important goal. Both sides highlighted that

common borders should be the borders of peace and friendship, and acknowledged the necessity of forging regular cooperation and exchange of views between political, military and security officials of the two countries to combat threats such as terrorism, smuggling of narcotics, human trafficking, hostage-taking, money-laundering and abduction. It was also agreed that the 10th Round of the Special Security Committee of the two Ministries of Interior will be held in Islamabad in June 2019 to discuss these matters in detail. It was

also agreed that the next meeting of the Joint Consular Commission would be held on 2nd half of 2019 to review the progress made so far and chart the way forward in further facilitating the movement of people from both sides. Pakistan side welcomed the initiation of the process for release of a number of Pakistani prisoners by the Government of Iran, and for making arrangements for their expeditious repatriation to Pakistan. President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan agreed that enhancing



Prime Minister Imran Khan leading Delegation level talks with President Hassan Rouhani at Tehran on 22nd April, 2019.



and cementing cooperation between Iran's Sistan-Balochistan Province and Pakistan's Balochistan Province including opening of new border crossings and border markets would contribute towards improvement of the economic situation of local residents, and further constitutes a step towards resolving border challenges and insecurities. Both sides agreed to hold the 2nd Round of High Border Commission in Islamabad in May 2019 to review the current status of preparations and further measures required for the earliest opening of new crossing points at Gabd-Reemdan and Mand-Pishin, besides opening of new border markets. Both sides highlighted the necessity of extending cooperation in energy sector including export of electricity from Iran to Pakistan. Pakistani side extended its appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for continuing electricity exports to Pakistan's Balochistan Province. Reaffirming the importance of strong and historic socio-cultural and linguistic affinities between the two countries and their peoples. Both sides reaffirmed the need to further strengthen these bonds through promotion of academic, cultural and tourism activities, particularly by encouraging more frequent exchange of visits of intellectuals, folk artists, cultural troupes and by enhancing tourism to the historic religious sites in both countries. Prime Minister Imran Khan reaffirmed the support and solidarity of the government and people of Pakistan with the people of Iran over loss of precious human lives and material damages due to recent severe floods in Iran. Prime Minister of Pakistan expressed the conviction that the people of Iran would handle this natural calamity with their characteristic resilience. Iranian side expressed its gratitude to Pakistan for sending humanitarian assistance to the flood affected people in Iran. Both sides welcomed the signing of a declaration for cooperation in health sector aimed at bilateral technical assistance and experience sharing with tangible outputs. Considering the increase in volume of trade between the two countries in 2018, the President of Iran

and Prime Minister of Pakistan instructed relevant institutions and Ministries to devise all required mechanisms for boosting monetary, financial and commercial activities to their full potential by utilizing all available options. The two sides also decided to hold the 21st round of the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) in the second half of 2019 in Pakistan to deliberate further on these issues. Both sides discussed and exchanged views on major regional and international issues, and asserted that peace, tranquility and sustainable development are prerequisite for enhancing relations, integrity and synergy among the West Asian countries. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the UN Charter and international law, in particular the principles of sovereign equality of states, political independence and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. The two sides reiterated the need for all States to adhere to the rule of law including at the international level. In this context, they expressed serious concerns over unilateral application of measures by any country that are inconsistent with the provisions of international law and the principles of UN Charter. The President of Iran and Prime Minister of Pakistan, referring to the necessity of establishing a safe, stable and independent Afghanistan for the sake of regional peace and stability, acknowledged the necessity of holding Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace dialogue while calling upon regional countries and the international community to work collectively to end conflict and restore complete peace in the country. Both sides also agreed to join efforts for achieving a broader regional consensus in this regard. While condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, both sides acknowledged the great achievements of the two countries in combating terrorism and emphasized that efforts to develop regional and international cooperation in preventing and countering terrorism should be redoubled and the root-causes of all types of terrorism in the region identified and addressed. Considering the importance of developing connectivity and transit corridors in order to accelerate and facilitate bilateral and regional





Prime Minister Imran Khan exchanging view with Governor General Khorasan e Razavi Province Mr. Ali Reza Razm Hussaini who Received him at Shaheed Hashminejad Airport Mashhad, Iran on April 21, 2019.

cooperation and trade, both sides welcomed the implementation of bilateral and multilateral agreements including the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as well as agreements on establishing the North-South and East-West corridors in Iran. The President of Iran and Prime Minister of Pakistan welcomed all dimensions of cooperation of the two countries with other states, particularly the six-party Speakers' Conference in Tehran with the purpose of consolidating cooperation among the regional states. Both sides highlighted the need to resolve the issue of Jammu & Kashmir through dialogue and peaceful means based on the will of the people of that region and in line with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. The President of Iran and Prime Minister of Pakistan emphasized that the right of the people of Palestine to establish an independent and sovereign Palestinian state should be respected as the key demand of the Muslim states. Both sides also agreed to reinforce endeavors through regional and international arrangements and mechanisms to help Palestinians establish an independent state. Both sides stressed on swift and complete implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) by other states considering the full compliance of the Islamic Republic of Iran to its provisions. The Prime Minister of Pakistan expressed his appreciation to the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the warm and generous hospitality extended to the Pakistani delegation, and officially invited H.E. Dr. Hassan Rouhani to visit Pakistan at the earliest convenience. President of Iran accepted the gracious invitation. Dates for the visit will be worked out through diplomatic channels.





Britain's Queen Elizabeth II celebrates **93rd birthday** at Windsor Castle.

By Mian AsadUllah

Queen Elizabeth II, the world's oldest and longest reigning living monarch, celebrated her 93rd birthday Sunday by attending the traditional Easter service at Windsor Castle.





Elizabeth was accompanied by members of her family, including grandsons Prince William and Prince Harry, and William's wife, Catherine, at the Easter Mattins service in St. George's Chapel.

Prince Harry's wife, Meghan Markle, who is due to give birth to the couple's first child imminently, did not attend. The couple, who were married at the chapel in May 2018, posted a birthday greeting to Elizabeth on their official Instagram account.

"Happy Birthday Your Majesty, Ma'am, Granny. Wishing you the most wonderful day! Harry & Meghan," they wrote.

Elizabeth was born on April 21, 1926, in Bruton Street, central London, and became queen in 1952 at the age of 25, meaning she has now reigned for more than 67 years.

She has an official birthday in June which is publicly marked with a large parade of soldiers through central London, known as Trooping the Color.





Pakistan and Korea

is ready to take pro-active measures to increase the quantum of bilateral trade.

By M.Bilal Zafar

President Dr. Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan and Republic of Korea enjoy friendly and cordial relations based on mutual trust and understanding. He added that Pakistan values its excellent diplomatic ties with Republic of Korea. The President said this while talking to a Parliamentary Delegation, consisting of Four MNAs of the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. The President highlighted that bilateral trade between the two countries is not commensurate with its real potential. There is a need to take pro-active measures to increase the quantum of bilateral trade, he added. He emphasized that an early conclusion of Free Trade Agreement between the two countries would be a positive step in this direction. He welcomed the continuous increase in investment by the Korean companies in various sectors of our economy. It indicates the confidence of the Korean businesses in the economy of Pakistan, he stated. He urged Korean companies to take full advantage of Pakistan's liberal investment regime and to invest in Mining, Agro-industry and IT sectors. Highlighting that Government of Pakistan has established Special Economic Zones (SEZs), the President encouraged the Korean companies to establish/ relocate their units in these SEZs. He expressed delight that the number of students





from Pakistan to Korea has steadily increased. Moreover, he appreciated the decision of the Korean Government to increase quota for Pakistani workers to 1000 for the year 2019. The members of Korean Parliamentary delegation said that Korea and Pakistan have a lot to learn from each other. The delegation also indicated that Pakistan has immense treasure of Buddhist artifice, which could be great attraction for foreign tourists.

The delegation of Korean parliamentarians led by Mr. Soo Hyuck LEE, member of Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee also called on the Speaker National Assembly in the Parliament House. Asad Qaiser said that both countries should enhance their mutual and trade relations. He invited the Korean trade and business organizations to invest in Pakistan as the incumbent government is making Pakistan investment friendly nation. "Parliamentarians of both nations should strive for promotion of mutual development", he added. He said the large numbers of Pakistani workers are serving in the Korea and there is a need to facilitate them. He also stressed the need for Korean cooperation in the field of vocational and

technical education for the Pakistani students. The Korean delegation appreciated the role of Pakistani workers in the development and progress of Korea. They also showed their interest for investing in Pakistan in the field of education, trade, health and infrastructure. They said that Korea values high its relations

with Pakistan and wanted to strengthen the existent relation through enhance cooperation in the diverse fields. Ms. Andleeb Abbas, Parliamentary Secretary Foreign Affairs and Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh Convener Pak-Korean Friendship Group were also present in the meeting.



Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Mr. Brandon Lewis, Member of the British Parliament, calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan at PM's Office Islamabad on 15 April, 2019.



Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Mr. Mehdi Honardoost called on Prime Minister Imran Khan at PM Office Islamabad on April 18, 2019.



Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani Exchanging Views with Mr. Kuninori Matsuda, Ambassador of Japan In Pakistan at Parliament House Islamabad on April 08, 2019.



Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani Exchanging views with Pakistan-France Friendship Group of the Senate of French Republic LED by Mr. Pascal Allizard, President of Friendship Group at Parliament House, Islamabad on April 24, 2019.



Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani Exchanging views with Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, MAWAF bin Said Al-Malki at Parliament House, Islamabad on April 18, 2019.



His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Al Madani, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Pakistan called on the Foreign Minister of Pakistan Shah Mehmood Qureshi.



Chaudhary Fawad Hussan, Federal Minister for information and Broadcasting in a meeting with H.E. Kuninori Mastuda, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan in Islamabad on 08-04-2019.



Chaudhary Fawad Hussain, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting in a meeting with Mr. Brandon Lewis, the British Cabinet Minister and Chairman of the Conservative Party, UK in Islamabad on 15-4-2019.

Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Gen Sherali Mirzo, Defence Minister of Tajikistan called on Federal Minister for Defence, Mr. Pervez Khattak, at Islamabad on 09-04-2019.



Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Yao Jing called on finance Minister, Asad Umar at Islamabad on April 16, 2019.



Federal Minister for Religious Affairs & Inter Faith Harmony, Pir Noor-ul-Haq Qadri in a Group Photo with Saudi Delegation Islamabad on April 1, 2019.



Michael K McGovern, Chair International Polio Plus Committee called on Federal Minister for National Health Services, Aamer Mehmood Kiani in Islamabad on April 5, 2019.



Washington, Dc: Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, Dr. Asad Majeed Khan Met with Senator Tom Cotton.



Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Mohammad Nafees Zakaria shaking hand with legendary footballer, Ian Rush MBE, who called on him prior to his trip to Pakistan .



Ali Alizada, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan called on the Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Shafqat Mahmood in Islamabad. on 17 April, 2019.



Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, H.E. Kuninori Mutsada called on Advisor to the PM on Commerce, Textile, Industries & Production and Investments, Abdul Razak Dawood in Islamabad on April 19, 2019.



CPEC will open new vistas of opportunities for the entire region: H.E. Imran Khan Prime Minister of Islamic republic of Pakistan

By M. Bilal Zafar

Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that the Government accords top priority to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Project. He said that the project will not only help in translating all weather Pak-China relations into mutually beneficial economic equation but will also open new vistas of opportunities for the entire region. The Prime Minister was meeting with representatives of 15 leading Chinese companies working on various CPEC and other projects in Pakistan. The Chinese delegation included representatives from Power China, Three Gorges Corporation, CMEC

Neelum Jhelum Power Plant Project, Cr-Norinco Orange Line Project, Huawei, Zong, Port Qasim Power Plant, China Gezhouba Corporation, China State Construction, China Harbour, Matiari-Lahore Transmission Line Project, Haier and other companies. Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Mr Yao Jing accompanies the delegation. Mr. Omar Ayub Khan, Minister for Power, Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar, Minister for Planning, Mr Haroon Sharif, Chairman BOI, Mr. Nadeem Babar, Chairman Energy Task Force and other senior officials were also present. Talking to the Chinese delegation, the Prime Minister said that the Government will provide all possible facilitation to the Chinese

companies in undertaking profitable business ventures and taking advantage of business friendly policies of the present government. Chinese Ambassador while conveying greetings from Chinese President and Premier said that Chinese leadership is looking forward to the visit of Prime Minister to China. He thanked the Prime Minister on behalf of Chinese leadership and business community for his personal interest in facilitating Chinese businessmen and addressing their issues. He assured the Prime Minister that Chinese companies will continue to partner with the government in socio-economic development of Pakistan.



Mayor of London receives Pakistani High Commissioner

Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, called on Mayor of London, Mr. Sadiq Khan at his office in London.

The High Commissioner briefed the Mayor on business opportunities, promotion of bilateral trade and identified areas for investment in Pakistan. He highlighted that Government's policies were focusing on promoting tourism; hence tourism infrastructure development had great room for investment. Energy, education, agriculture, pharmaceutical and halal food industry were other avenues for the interested investors.

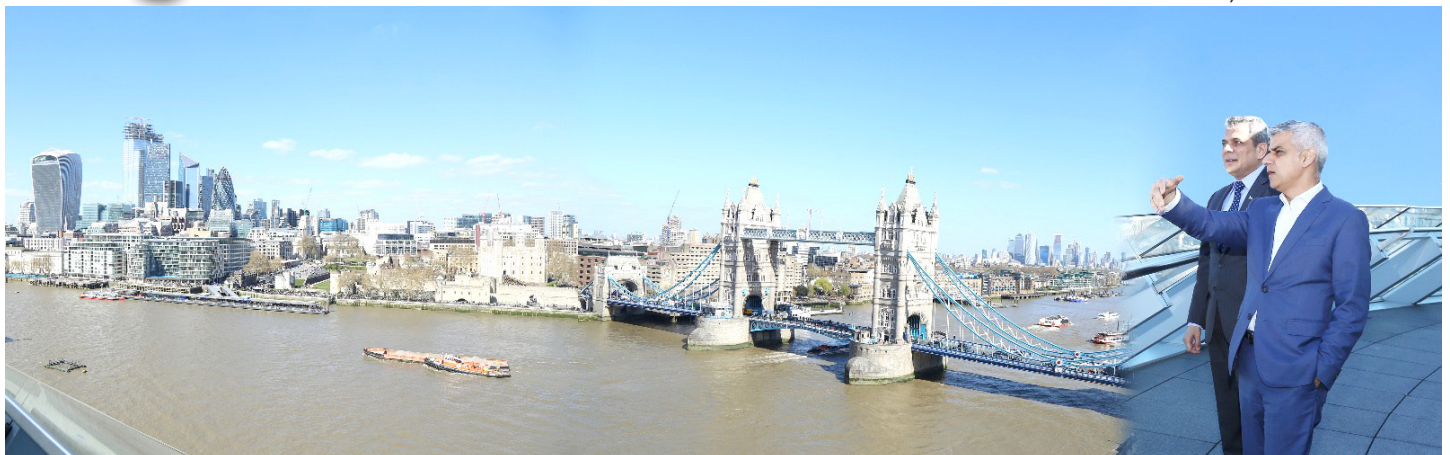
Mr Zakaria said that there are high prospects for the UK to invest in the special economic zones being set up across Pakistan. He briefed the London Mayor on the prospects attached to CPEC for the region.

Both sides appreciated the contribution of Pakistani Diaspora to the British economy and development and noted with pride their achievements.

The Mayor assured his office's assistance and support to the High Commissioner's efforts towards promoting economic, cultural, tourism and educational ties.



High Commissioner of Pakistan to the UK, Mohammad Nafees Zakaria Shaking Hand with Faisal Rashid MP At the Pakistan High Commission, London.





140th Inter Parliamentary Union General Assembly Doha: Parliamentary Diplomacy makes **Pakistan** Shine in **Qatar**

By M. Bilal Zafar

Pakistan's flag remained high as the country's parliamentary delegation made important gains at the 140th Inter Parliamentary Union's General Assembly, which conclude here in Doha on April 10. A seven member joint parliamentary delegation, led by the Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser and comprising Senator Raza Rabbani, Senator Walid Iqbal, Senator Shahzaib Durrani, MNAs Shazia Marri, Rana Tanveer-ul- Hassan, Sher Ali Arbab and Agha Hassan Baloch made an impressive mark on the proceedings.

The hallmark of the visit was Speaker Asad Qaiser's presidency of the 34 Member Asia-Pacific Group of the IPU. This is for the first time in the history of Pakistan that the country has been chosen to lead for a one-year term this important group that also includes China, Iran, India and Japan besides Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Speaker Asad Qaiser was seen actively lobbying for Pakistan in Doha where he held crucial bilateral meetings with his numerous counterparts. He met the Chairman of the Qatar's Majlis-e-Shoura Ahmad bin Abdullah Al Mahmoud, who warmly received the Pakistani Speaker along with his delegation. During the meeting of the two heads of the parliament, it was agreed to expand the scope of the existing relations for the benefit of the two nations by involving the parliaments of both countries. Speaker Asad Qaiser thanked the Qatari counterpart for the one hundred thousand jobs announced by Qatar Government for Pakistanis and hoped that the figure would be further enhanced. He also recalled the historic reception, accorded to Prime Minister Imran Khan during his recent visit to Qatar and hoped



that the Amir of Qatar and the Speaker of the Qatari Parliament would also visit Pakistan.

The Qatari Speaker referred to the historical ties between the two states and praised Pakistan's role in bringing about reconciliation among the Muslim Ummah. He assured his complete support to Pakistan. He said that he looked forward to his visit to Pakistan in order to further cement the cooperation between Pakistan and Qatar.

Speaker Asad Qaiser also held meetings with the Speakers of Nepal and Kazakhstan. The Speaker of the National Assembly of Nepal Mr. Krishna Bahadur Mahara praised Pakistan's role in South Asia as the two sides stressed to reactivate the SAARC forum. Speaker Asad Qaiser offered the newly elected Speaker of the nascent Nepalese Parliament Pakistan's assistance in developing parliamentary institutions through tailor-made training course for Nepalese parliamentarians at the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS). The offer was accepted with thanks.

During his talks with his Kazakh counterpart Mr. Nurlan Nigmatulin, who invited the Pakistani Speaker to participate in the forthcoming Conference of the Speakers of Eurasia, scheduled to be held in the Kazakh capital of Almaty in September this year. Speaker Asad Qaiser accepted the invitation and informed Mr. Nigmatulin that Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with the Central Asian states, especially Kazakhstan. It was in this



spirit that the National Assembly of Pakistan was all set to hold a parliamentary seminar in collaboration with the Kazakhstan Embassy in Islamabad on promoting socio-economic ties with Kazakhstan by invoking the dictums of parliamentary diplomacy. The Kazakhstan Speaker noted it with immense interest and thanked Speaker Asad Qaiser for his personal interest in promoting relations between the two countries.

In another major development, Pakistan's Sher Ali Arbab was elected to the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security,

Shazia Marri was chosen to sit on the High Level Advisory Group of the IPU on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism as well as on the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade, while Senator Shahzaib Durrani was elected to the Bureau of the Young Parliamentarians Forum. The acceptance of the Pakistani candidatures by the international parliamentary community was termed as a sign of global trust in Pakistan's fast developing democracy. The Qatar IPU was the first international visit of Pakistan's Speaker ever since he got elected in August last year.





is growing stronger. He added that Pakistan and Turkey have supported each other in difficult times and appreciated Turkish support during recent tensions with India. He highlighted that our defense collaboration, marked by frequent high-level exchanges, has increased several-folds. He emphasized that we should explore ways to further strengthen relations in this critical area. He also expressed gratitude for the participation of Turkish Air Force "Solo Turk" F-16 team in the Pakistan Day Air Display on 23 March 2019. The President stressed that there is a vast potential for investment in Pakistan especially in energy, infrastructure and food processing sector. He underlined that Turkish investments in Pakistan have considerably grown. However, more needs to be done to realize the full bilateral trade potential, he added. In this regard, he highlighted that Pakistan-Turkey Strategic Economic Framework (SEF), proposed during Prime Minister's visit to Turkey, would pave the way for enhanced economic and trade cooperation.

Pakistan & Turkey

enjoy an
unparalleled
fraternal
relationship
embedded in a
shared cultural and
religious heritage

President Dr. Arif Alvi has conferred Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) to General Hasan Kucukakayuz Commander of Turkish Air Force.

By Mian Fazal Elahi

President Dr. Arif Alvi has conferred Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon Commander Turkish Air Force, General Hasan Kucukakayuz, in a special investiture ceremony at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Later General Hasan Kucukakayuz also called on

the President. On the occasion, the President felicitated him and said that Pakistan and Turkey enjoy an unparalleled fraternal relationship embedded in a shared cultural and religious heritage which has now transformed into a strong strategic partnership over the years and



Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Mr. Timothy Moloney QC and Ms. Maya for of Reprieve Met with Federal Minister for Law and Justice Barrister Dr. Muhammad Farogh Naseem and SAPM on Accountability Mr. Shahzad Akber and Presented a Report on Cases of Death Penalty and Supreme Court in Pakistan, at Ministry of Law in Islamabad on April 19, 2019.



Ambassador of Turkey to Pakistan, H.E. Ihsan Mustafa Yurdkul Called on Chairman, Board of Investment, Haroon Sharif in Islamabad on April 19, 2019.



Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK Mohammad Nafees Zakaria Shaking hand with Dr. Robina Shah, High Sheriff of Greater Manchester in front of latter's Statue Unveiled at the Pakistan High Commission London.



Chinese Ambassador Mr. Yao Jing called on Adviser to Prime Minister of Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh at Islamabad on April 22, 2019.



Ambassador of United States in Pakistan, H.E. Paul Jones called on Adviser to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Malik Ameen Aslam At his office in Islamabad on April 24, 2019.



Federal Minister for Interior, Ijaz Ahmad shan in a meeting with Spanish Ambassador Manual Duran in Islamabad on April 25, 2019.



The Ambassador of Brazil, H.E. Mr. Claudio Lins Along with Mr. Rogerio Rosso, Director International trade UNIAO Quimica (Brazilian Company) called on Federal Minister for NFS&R, Sahibzada Mehboob Sultana in Islamabad on May 2, 2019.



Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Mohammad Nafees Zakaria with Rt. Hon. Nicola Sturgeon MSP, First Minister of Scotland, at her Official residence, Bute House.



Pakistan values its brotherly ties with Bahrain and is committed to augment them in all fields:

H.E. Dr. Arif Alvi President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan

By Mian Fazal Elahi

President Dr. Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan and Bahrain enjoy close and cordial fraternal relations based on the foundations of shared faith, culture and

heritage. He added that Pakistan values its brotherly ties with Bahrain and is committed to augment them in all fields. The President said this while talking to Foreign Minister of Bahrain, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr,

Islamabad. Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa also called on H.E. Imran Khan Prime Minister of Pakistan and Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa. The Minister was on a two-day visit to Pakistan on the invitation

The bilateral trade between the two countries has greater potential than its current magnitude:
H.E Dr. Arif Alvi
President of
Pakistan





of Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. The President stressed that the bilateral trade between the two has greater potential than its current magnitude. He highlighted the need for closer cooperation between the Chambers of Commerce of the two countries. He underlined that Bahrain can import food grains, fresh vegetables/fruits, dairy and meat products, textiles, leather goods, furniture, and surgical instruments from Pakistan. He urged Bahrain to facilitate participation of Pakistan's public and private oil and gas companies in exploration of oil and gas in Bahrain. He also highlighted the opportunity for Bahrain to invest in the development of Pakistan's tourism industry. The President expressed his pleasure at signing of Agreement on Military Cooperation

(June 2018) which covers all areas of defense and reiterated Pakistan's desire to further enhance bilateral collaboration in the field of defense. He also offered that Pakistan can play a mediatory role to bridge the differences between GCC. The President also expressed his gratitude to HM King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa for the gift of King Hamad University of Nursing and Associated Medical Sciences. Foreign Minister of Bahrain, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohamed Al Khalifa, appreciated the constructive role of Pakistani Diaspora in the economic development of Bahrain. In this regard, the President underscored the need of prioritizing the employment of Pakistan's skillful workforce in Bahrain. Foreign Minister of Bahrain also stated that HM King Hamad bin

Isa Al-Khalifa is keen to build strong relations with Pakistan. He further said that investing in Pakistan is investing in the common future of both countries H.E Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al-Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ. During the meeting matters of mutual interest including security situation in the region were discussed. The visiting dignitary acknowledged and appreciated Pakistan's contributions for conflict prevention in the region and also pledged to keep working for better relations between the two brotherly countries.

**Bahrain has
opportunity
to invest in the
development
of Pakistan's
tourism
industry**





Pakistan & Saudi Arabia

endeavors to take steps for further enhancing cooperation in various fields

By Mian Fazal Elahi

President Dr. Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan attaches utmost importance to its relations with Saudi Arabia. Based on the solid foundations of shared faith, culture and heritage, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial and time-tested friendship, he added. The President said this while talking to Chairman, Shura Council of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Sheikh,

The President

Dr. Arif Alvi conveyed his satisfaction at the parliamentary cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and hoped that exchange of delegations would further deepen the collaboration.

who called on him in Islamabad. The President conveyed his satisfaction at the parliamentary cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and hoped that exchange of delegations would further deepen the collaboration. He also expressed pleasure at the steady progress of bilateral relations following the exchange of high-level visits and recalled the highly successful visit of the Crown Prince to Pakistan.



Launching of Saudi-Pakistan Supreme Coordination Council will pave the way for a tangible and result-oriented political, economic and strategic engagement

He hoped that the launching of Saudi-Pakistan Supreme Coordination Council will pave the way for a tangible and result-oriented political, economic and strategic engagement. He also conveyed Pakistan's gratitude for the economic support of Saudi Arabia. Due to their durable and comprehensive partnership, the two countries collaborate on multilateral issues and fora, he added. The President appreciated the Saudi Arabia's decision to increase Hajj quota to 200,000 and to drastically reduce visit-visa fee for Pakistani nationals. Underscoring the contribution of Pakistani community in the socio-economic development of the Kingdom, the President also hoped for a greater share for Pakistani manpower in Saudi job market. He also conveyed best wishes and greetings to His Majesty King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman. Chairman, Shura Council of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Abdullah Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Sheikh underlined the need for further enhancing cooperation in various fields and urged both sides to continue their endeavors in this regard. Prime Minister Imran Khan meets Dr. Abdullah Bin Mohammad Al Ash-Sheikh, Chairman of the Saudi Shura Council. Chairman Senate Mr. Sadiq Sanjrani, Speaker National Assembly Mr. Asad Qaiser, Syed Shibli Faraz, Leader of the House in Senate, Foreign Secretary and senior officers were present during the meeting.





Qatar has evinced keen interest for investment in different sectors of Pakistan

By Mian Fazal Elahi

A delegation of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) headed by H.E. Sheikh Faisal Bin Thani Al-Thani, Head of Regional Portfolios, called on Prime Minister Imran Khan at PM Office. Sheikh Faisal Bin Thani Al-Thani is head of Qatar Investment Department and Head of Qatar Regional Investment Fund at Qatar Investment Authority. The Qatari delegation included heads of various organisations in housing, tourism, real estate and energy sectors. Advisor to PM on Commerce Abdul Razzak Dawood, Chairman BOI Haroon Sharif were also present during the meeting. The delegation expressed keen interest in investing in housing, energy, tourism and Airport management sectors of Pakistan. Prime Minister welcomed QIA's interest in making investments in various sectors of economy. PM highlights various business opportunities in Tourism, Housing and other sectors. PM also highlights various steps and policy reforms that have been taken by the present Government to facilitate investors and the business communities.

Finance Minister, Asad Umar briefed the delegation about the steps taken by the present government for ease of doing business and facilitating the foreign investors with various incentives including rationalization of tax regime. He said more such steps were envisaged in the upcoming budget 2019-20. The Qatari delegation has evinced keen interest for investment in different sectors of Pakistan with the focus on investment opportunities in power, infrastructure, tourism and agriculture





Baisakhi a religious and cultural festival in Sikhism

By M. Bilal Zafar

Serena Hotels, under its Cultural Diplomacy Initiative in collaboration with Pakistan Television (PTV) organized a ceremony to celebrate Baisakhi, a religious and cultural festival in Sikhism. President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi was the Chief Guest on the occasion while a huge number of people from Sikh pilgrims coming from across Pakistan, India and other countries, besides diplomats and senior officers from the Evacuee Trust Property Board attended as well.

Addressing the ceremony, President Alvi

said, "Pakistan wanted cordial ties with all the countries and faiths and always desired peace in the region. Having sacrificed a lot during the war against terrorism, Pakistan has learnt the value of peace. Pakistan is now a peaceful and secure country and would continue its efforts for regional peace."

President Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee Sardar Tara Sing said by building Kartarpur Corridor, Pakistan had fulfilled the longstanding desire of the Sikh community. He said both Sikhism and Islam had centuries old bonds and hoped that this relation would

continue in the future.

PTV World Head Mirza Masood said PTV was committed to bring change and intended to do more for all the communities living in Pakistan. He thanked Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels for the great support in hosting the event.

At the event, two documentaries on Baisakhi festival and Kartarpur Corridor were screened followed by live Sufi music performance by Saieen Zahoor.



Pakistan tourism summit 2019

highlighted the undiscovered potential the country possesses

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

President Dr. Arif Alvi said Pakistan was a land of opportunities but there was a need to exploit the vast tourism potential of the country. Speaking at a tourism summit, the President said the present government was following a comprehensive policy for promotion of tourism in the country which would not only exploit the unexplored tourism spots but also unleash economic opportunities in the country. The president said tourism opportunities was a jewel for Pakistan and northern areas of the country were more attractive than the tourism resorts of the entire world. He said after restoration of peace in Pakistan there had been a significant increase in number of tourists to northern areas of Pakistan. Dr. Alvi said there were vast opportunities of religious and traditional tourism in Pakistan and a lot of remittances could be gained from promotion of tourism in the country. He said Pakistan had large opportunities of heritage tourism as well; adding the promotion of tourism would be a guarantee of progress and prosperity of northern parts of the country. The president said Prime Minister Imran Khan himself was very fond of tourism and he was taking personal efforts for promotion of tourism in the country. He said the government had taken a number of initiatives in that regard but stressed that a responsible development for promotion of tourism was must. The president also stressed the need for more facilities for travelers and added that the government would provide facilities but the private sector would have to come forward to make it a success. He said Pakistan had a great tourism potential but there was a dire need to exploit it and promote it at domestic and international levels. He said holding of road shows abroad was of paramount importance to attract foreign tourists in that regard. He said the initiation of open visa policy was a good step of the present government and it would have a very good effect on promoting tourism in Pakistan. Earlier, CEOs and representatives of various groups said a vibrant tourism policy would unleash



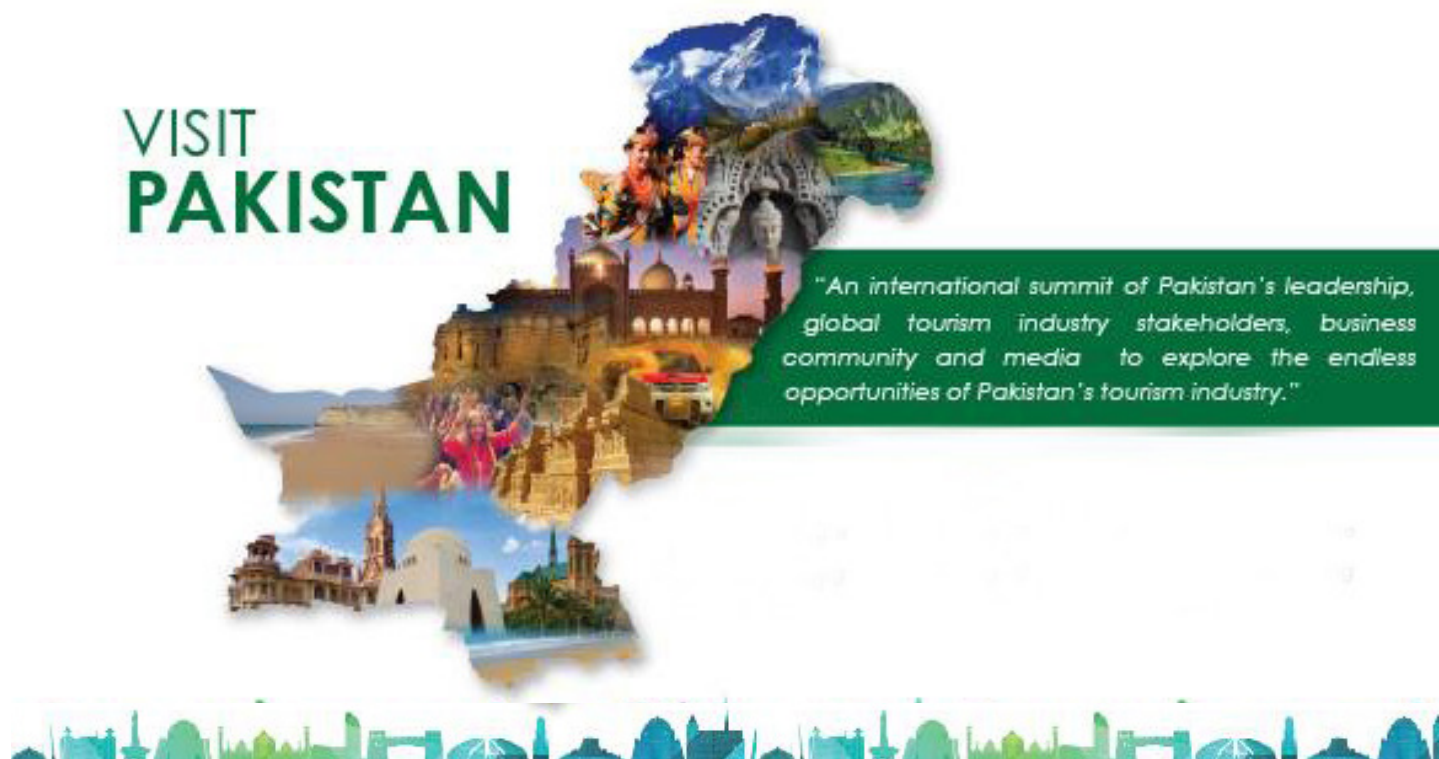
economic opportunities and usher in new era of tourism promotion in Pakistan. The called for creating an enviable environment by offering incentives to the private sector in that regard and added that development of infrastructure, road network, energy, water sanitation etc was basic requirements of tourism promotion. They said though there were challenges but the country was on the roadmap of tourism.

Prime Minister Imran Khan also graced the ongoing Pakistan Tourism Summit aimed at opening new avenues of tourism in the country while highlighting the undiscovered potential the country possesses. In his speech addressing the esteemed convention gathered at the summit that also included famed international travel bloggers, PM Imran said, "Pakistan has so much potential." He added, "The beauty of Pakistan is that we have so many undiscovered areas," stating that if tourism is not regulated and laws are not made, these areas will suffer. "Right now, majority of the areas are untouched." Meanwhile, PM Imran also poked fun at Zulfi Bukhari, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Overseas Pakistanis, and Atif Khan, the current Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Tourism, Culture, Sports, Archaeology and Youth Affairs. Taking a jibe at their ensemble, PM Imran addressing Atif Khan said, "I would like to congratulate you for organising such a massive conference." "However I can't help but notice the way you and Zulfi Bukhari are dressed. It looks



as if you both are promoting the tourism of South France, not Pakistan's," the premier added unleashing a wave of laughter from the audiences. State Minister for Interior Shaharyar Khan Afridi, Ali Muhammad Khan, Members of Parliaments, diplomats and a number of tour

operator from various countries were present on the occasion. Later, Mohammad Atif Khan, Provincial Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Tourism, Culture, Sports, Archaeology and Youth Affairs presented a shield to the president.





National Logistics Cell organized Enabling Employment seminar at Aiwan-e-Sadr

By M. Saeed Yousafzai

The speakers at international seminar on Enabling Employment have stressed the need for improved liaison between the industry and academia, revision of skill education curriculum with special focus on job placement and creation of a platform to assist the government in policy formulation for creation job opportunities for the youth. The Seminar was organized by National Logistics Cell (NLC) in collaboration with Ministry Overseas Pakistanis and Human Development at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Industry leaders & Associations, representatives of chambers of commerce, policy makers, national and international donors and experts on skill education attended the Seminar. The participants focused on issues related to current professional education & vocational training, market & employers' demand and policy reforms for capacity building.

President Dr Arif Alvi was the chief guest on the occasion. Addressing the participants he said that universities should focus on conducting practical research in order to create job opportunities while they must also streamline their degree programs and courses in line with the requirements of the job market.

"There is a critical need for research in universities. NAVTTC and TEVTA are performing their roles to meet the industrial needs of the country," he said. Noting that he was the chancellor of some 25 universities across the country, he said that he will call a meeting of universities and ask their administrations to ensure that graduates with their degrees are employable so that they can easily become a part of the job market. "The information technology industry has seen great

development over the past two decades. We need to take our students towards innovation and teach them courses which will help them in employment," he said, adding that the world is now moving towards artificial intelligence.

PM's Special Assistant for Overseas Pakistanis Sayed Zulfiqar Bukhari said that Pakistan is a country with a critical problem of employment.



"It is rare that a country continues to see unemployment with the passage of time but Pakistan has suffered this phase," he said; as he went on to term unemployment a social problem which causes depression amongst the youth. Previous governments focused on infrastructure but unemployment could not be reduced, he noted, adding that the PTI was

not against infrastructure development but believes that human development is a far better a choice than infrastructure development.

"In the coming times, the government plans to bring unemployment to under 4.5%," he said and warned that they will have to suffer more unemployment in the future if this issue is not addressed. Heads over several countries

Human development is a far better a choice than infrastructure development: Sayed Zulfiqar Abbas Bukhari

have visited our country and Pakistan is soon expected to get a large amount of investment in the technology sector, Bukhari said as he lamented a dearth of technical universities in Pakistan when compared to other countries. Pakistan is rich with resources for tourism and great employment opportunities can be



generated from this sector, he suggested. "There are countries which make over 10% of their gross domestic product (GDP) from tourism alone. We also need to promote the tourism sector of the country," he said. Mr. Bukhari said "no one from outside Pakistan will develop Pakistan. Pakistan will have to be developed by Pakistani themselves".

Earlier, in his opening remarks, Director General NLC Maj Gen Muhammad Asim Iqbal highlighted the role of NLC in promoting skill and vocational education. He said that NLC was running five technical institutes in the country and has so far trained 56000 youth from across the country. He pointed out that due to disconnect between academia and industry, even skilled workers were finding it hard to get employment. On the other hand, industry is faced with severe shortfall of suitable tradesmen. "The lopsided issue of demand and supply at the industry level is primarily due to non-compatible curricula, limited training infrastructure, inadequate skills of teaching staff, lack of interface between industry and academia", he said. DG NLC said that the challenge was both qualitative and quantitative adding that, technical and vocational education

does not meet international standards. In order to make skill development responsive to the need of market, the entire system of technical and vocational education requires urgent overhauling. "We can emulate or even customize successful models and international best practices being followed by developed countries and successful economies," he added. The experts opined that new technologies are fast emerging and so are the modes of knowledge delivery. Low skill workers face threat of irrelevance due to emergence of new technologies and ideas which invariably changes the production techniques. At the same time new technologies create new jobs in other industries which require skills of different kind. They said that the shelf life of a particular skill in present day age is less than five years. The existing education system is not responsive to the high-productivity demand due to introduction of new technologies. They lamented that trainers in technical institutes teach what they know and not which the students require to learn. The inertia and complacency in teaching system is responsible for skills mismatch and widening gulf between the world of learning and world of work which

needs to be bridged.

There is a critical need for research in universities. NAVTTC and TEVTA are performing their roles to meet the industrial needs of the country: President Dr. Arif Alvi





Government and people of Pakistan stand by Sri Lanka in this hour of grief.

By Shahzada Khurram

Pakistan has condemned terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka at Churches and hotels that killed over 150 people and considered it brutal massacred act of terrorism.

Prime Minister Imran took to twitter and wrote, "Strongly condemn the horrific terrorist attack in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday resulting in precious lives lost & hundreds injured. My profound condolences go to our Sri Lankan brethren. Pakistan stands in complete solidarity with Sri Lanka in their hour of grief". PM Imran Khan also telephoned His Sri Lankan counterpart Ranil Wickremesinghe for condolence.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Dr. Mohammad Faisal in a tweet said people and government of Pakistan stand by their Sri Lankan counterparts at this moment of tragedy and against terror. The FO spokesperson further said we are watching the situation carefully.

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has strongly condemned the blasts at churches and hotels in Sri Lanka on the occasion of Easter. In a statement, he expressed profound grief and sorrow over the loss of lives as a result of blasts. Shah Mehmood Qureshi said the government and people of Pakistan stand by Sri Lanka in this hour of grief.



explosion area at the Shangri-La Hotel in Colombo after deadly blasts April 21.



Pakistani Christian children light candles to pay tribute to Sri Lankan blasts victims in Karachi on 21 April, 2019.

Imran Khan @ImranKhanPTI
Strongly condemn the horrific terrorist attack in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday resulting in precious lives lost & hundreds injured. My profound condolences go to our Sri Lankan brethren. Pakistan stands in complete solidarity with Sri Lanka in their hour of grief.
49.7K 12:56 PM - Apr 21, 2019

12.8K people are talking about this

Shehbaz Sharif @CMShehbaz
Tragic Easter carnage in Sri Lank. We mourn the loss of innocent lives. Stand by Sri Lanka and the Christian community around the globe in this hour of grief.
2,903 2:28 PM - Apr 21, 2019

604 people are talking about this

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari @BBhuttoZardari
Devastating news coming out of Sri Lanka. As always, the purveyors of terror have chosen to target innocents on a holy day. Thoughts & prayers with all the families for whom this #Easter has become one of mourning. #Pakistan stands in grief with its brothers in #SriLanka
4,000 2:09 PM - Apr 21, 2019 - Sindh, Pakistan

1,386 people are talking about this

Dr Mohammad Faisal @DrMFaisal
Pakistan condemns explosions and terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka at Churches & Hotels, that have led to numerous casualties and immense loss. People and Government of Pakistan stand by people and Government of Sri Lanka at this moment of tragedy and against terror @MFA_SriLanka
1,711 10:26 AM - Apr 21, 2019

570 people are talking about this



Remembering and respecting the victims of the cruel incident took place in Sri Lanka on 21st April, 2019.

Ambassadors, Ministers, representatives of diplomatic missions and friends in Islamabad, visited the Sri Lanka High Commission in Islamabad to sign the book of condolence, opened on 23rd of April 2019, to remember and respect the victims of the cruel incident took place in Sri Lanka in on 21st April, 2019.

They expressed their solidarity with Sri Lankans in this difficult time and once again declared their thoughts are with the victims, those who suffered injuries, with the families affected, and also support to Sri Lanka in fight against terrorism.

In response, The High Commissioner, H.E. Mr. Noordeen Mohammed Shahied and the Home Based Staff of The High Commission, thanked all the people who expressed their sympathy on behalf of the country and the Sri Lankan people, following the terrible events happened in several places in Sri Lanka.

Mian Fazal Elahi expressed his profound condolences on the sad incident and prayed to God may their souls rest in peace and give courage and patience to the bereaved family to bear the loss.





Senator Rehman Malik

Following our independence, Pakistan and Russia first established bilateral and diplomatic ties on 1st May 1948. Pakistan also celebrated the 70th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations with Russia on 1st May 2018. Things changed in 1959, however, when Ayub Khan gave permission to USA to use its Peshawar Air Base, for which he got deceived by the USA when it sent its spy plane from the Peshawar Base to USSR without informing PAF authorities. The plane was shot down there by Russia and unfortunately Pakistan was blamed for sending the plane since it was Pakistan's soil from where it had come. This made Russia turn against Pakistan and eventually the Soviets paid back their revenge on Pakistan in the 1971 Indo-Pak war.

India took full advantage of the clash and signed the August 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship for Peace and Cooperation which made Russia support India. Subsequent Soviet support to India, in terms of arms and financial aid, further deteriorated relations between Pakistan and Russia. Russia was right to turn against Pakistan and India took full advantage of the situation and we saw Pakistan disintegrated. USSR not only supported the creation of Bangladesh but also kept vetoing every resolution brought from Pakistan to the United Nations against the separation of East Pakistan.

USA, the so called best friend of Pakistan, played a diplomatic trick. While it apparently seemed to be supporting Pakistan against USSR and India, it made to spend its seventh fleet to the Bay of Bengal in order to threaten India and show off its support towards Pakistan. Yet it never sent the 8th fleet, which could have made Pakistan prevent East Pakistan from separating. As per the forever ill intentions of the USA, it wanted to create another never-ending conflict between India and Pakistan in the name of East Pakistan's separation. This

Russia, a fast-emerging friend of Pakistan

can be seen as the first betrayal of the USA as we paid heavenly by allowing the USA to use the airbase against Russia.

Later in 1979, when the USSR was intending to occupy Afghanistan, Pakistan made another mistake by helping USA against USSR efforts to invade Afghanistan. The USSR got disintegrated after defeat in the Afghan - USSR War, but still the Russian leadership was very much in a position to handle the situation and Russia of today has emerged even stronger. Russia has demonstrated to the world that it is still a great nation and a superpower.

The history of diplomatic relations of Pakistan & Russia has seen various ups and downs but most of the times, their perception about each other has been negative; Pakistan's through the prism of western intentions and Russia's through the Indian eyes. The last few years, however, have opened a new corridor for both countries to forget past deeds. In the recent decade, Russia has also started to take an interest in good bilateral relations with Pakistan. Both countries know that the potential threats emanating from South Asia will directly challenge the security of both countries. The cross-border issues of terrorism and the ongoing Afghan conflict guarantee a long-term engagement between Russia and Pakistan.

The signs of an improved relationship between Pakistan and Russia was seen in September 2016, when 70 Russian and 130 Pakistani Special Forces held their first joint military exercises in Cherat, Northern Pakistan. India opposed the meeting and tried its best to convince Russia to call off the exercise following the 18 September militant attack on an Indian army base which New Delhi blamed as usual on Pakistan, but the Russians declined.

We Pakistanis are happy to see that our diplomatic and the military relationships with Russia have improved. I hope Russia will take advantage of the offer now given by Pakistan for the use of Gwadar port. It is also great development that Russia has lifted the decade long arms embargo against Pakistan by agreeing to sell its helicopters to Pakistan despite the opposition of India.

It is only because of the exceptional leadership of Mr. Vladimir Putin that Moscow is now

moving away from its years of hostility against Pakistan for which the Pakistan People's Party Government had played a great role. I remember the first meeting of President Asif Ali Zardari with Mr. Putin where I was also present. In fact, this meeting and discussions cleared many miscommunications. This was the turning point and gave a window of opportunity to reconnect both diplomatically and to share intelligence on security matters.

I had the honour of meeting Mr Putin twice and I found him very positive about Pakistan. I would like to say that he has proven to be a great leader and a reformer who has outsmarted the western leadership. He has led Russians into a great nation with all the indicators of a successful nation.

It is unfortunate to note that no Russian President has ever visited Pakistan, but as long as the Taliban threat is there in the region, it is unlikely that a Russian leader will do so in future as well. The key to further enhancement of relations between both countries is an end to the continuing civil war in Afghanistan. China and Russia both feel threatened by this war, as well as by the increasing number of young men from their Muslim populations who are joining militant groups. Both Pakistan and Russia have a common threat in the form of ISIS now, which is recruiting youngsters from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Russia make it a long way for the two nations to go before the relations actually gets warmed up. Russia has emerged as an important player and he is playing a vital role in the international community.

Russia and Pakistan have passed through various ups and down and now they have decided to march towards better relationships and more cooperation in the interest of both countries. Russia and Pakistan are two very important countries of this region and I foresee a great role of Pakistan, China and Russia as a nuclear block to work for international peace and common growth of the economy.

My discussion at a recent meeting with H.E Alexey Y. Dedov Russian Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan based in Islamabad was very encouraging as the Russian changed policy towards Pakistan will benefit both the countries.

Photos by Ramzan Mughal

Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Editor/Publisher of “Diplomatic Focus” & Head of Diplomatic Council

hosts a dinner reception in the honor H.E. Atadjan N.Movlamov Dean of Diplomatic Corps/ Ambassador of Turkmenistan, H. E. Andrei G. Ermolovich Dean of Euro Asian Group/ Ambassador of Belarus & All Group Ambassadors to Islamic Republic of Pakistan at Marriott Hotel Islamabad. Former Interior Minister Senator Rehman Malik attended the dinner reception as a chief guest.





harbinger of regional connectivity

Malik Muhammad Ashraf

Regional connectivity and development of the required infrastructure through cooperative efforts of the participating countries for shared economic prosperity is a visionary concept and recipe for addressing issues related to poverty alleviation and development, as well as ensuring peace through economic interdependence. The leadership of new China deserves credit for pioneering this movement through its 'One Belt One Road' initiative, which is likely to benefit 26 countries. The CPEC being the pivot of the initiative has generated a lot of interest and acceptability among the countries of South Asia and Central Asia, and even some of the European countries have shown their willingness to join it. Pakistan due to its geo-strategic location is a key participant in making the venture successful. Pakistan surely will also be its greatest beneficiary by becoming a hub of economic activity for both regions. CPEC, therefore, is a harbinger of regional connectivity.

Iran and Turkey are also willing aspirants to join this mega-economic bonanza. Gwadar port will be the centrepiece of CPEC, through which countries of both regions will be importing and exporting their goods, including China and Russia. The Russian government had made a formal request to Pakistan for allowing her to use Gwadar for its exports, which reportedly Pakistan government has consented to. Even Iran,

which has developed Chahbahar port, has expressed its desire to use Gwadar port for its trade. The facts conveniently establish CPEC as being beyond reproach and rightly perceived by most of the world as a game changer.

The PML-N government, by deciding to be part of the Chinese vision of regional connectivity and development, has undoubtedly shown a high degree of pragmatism and foresight given the permeating economic situation in the country, stemming from resource constraint and the fast changing geo-political realities. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was right on the money when addressing the two-day conference on Global Sustainable Transport Conference in Turkmenistan. He said that regional connectivity and economic integration were fundamental pillars of Pakistan's policy, and also announced joining Ashgabat Agreement and Lapis Lazuli Corridor. He also rightly observed that a peaceful neighbourhood had remained the norm of Pakistan's foreign policy and no development policies could yield fruit without peace and security; an apparent reference to efforts by Pakistan to improve relations with India, and the need for peace and security as a fundamental requirement for any fruitful development effort.

Ashgabat Agreement envisages international transport and transit

corridor among Oman, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. The Lapis Lazuli Corridor seeks to foster trade cooperation among Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, by reducing barriers facing transit trade. It intends to develop customs integration procedure in the region.

Unfortunately, some external powers including India are trying to sabotage CPEC through overt and covert operations instead of becoming a part of it and contributing to the regional potential for shared economic development and prosperity. As far as efforts by external forces to sabotage CPEC are concerned, both China and Pakistan are capable of thwarting those efforts and have vowed to implement CPEC as envisaged.

Even more regrettable is the fact that some political elements and vested interests within the country are also trying to create misgivings about CPEC to achieve their political motives. Some political parties first triggered the route change controversy with regard to the western route, refuting the notion that CPEC would benefit all four provinces and also pressed for an equal share in CPEC. They have even gone the High Court in this regard, notwithstanding the fact that the government, since the signing of the CPEC agreement and subsequently ensuring national ownership by taking the political leadership into confidence, has

repeatedly been trying to remove these misgivings. But there seems to be no let up in the campaign against CPEC. The government has throughout maintained that there has been no change in the western route and that the CPEC projects are spread across the four provinces. CPEC is a mix of network of roads, rail, optic fibre and energy projects. The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad has compiled a book containing write-ups and research articles on CPEC which also includes maps in regards to the route of these networks and the location of energy producing units, which corroborate the government stance on the issue, adequately dispelling impressions to the contrary.

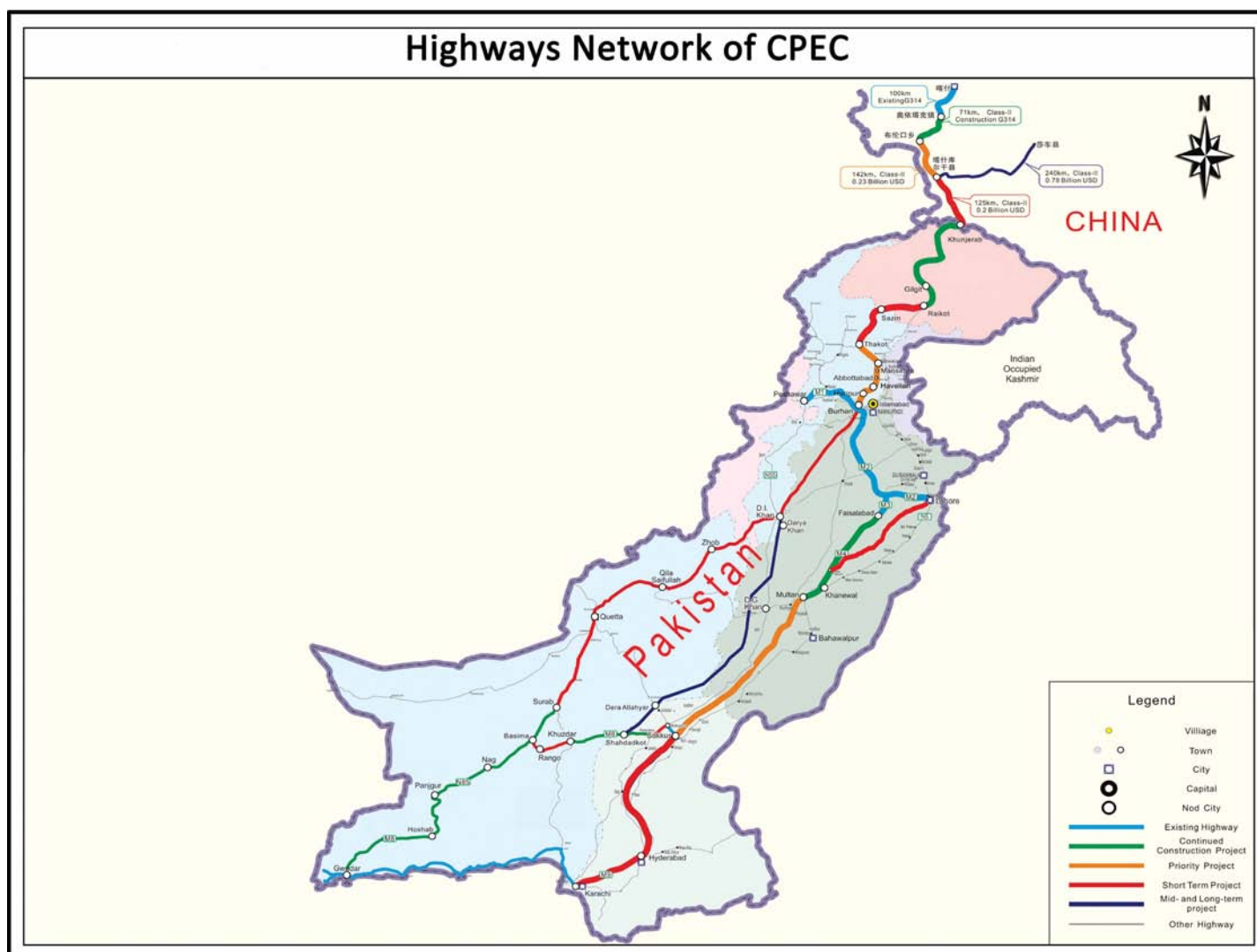
Another notion promoted by the detractors of CPEC is that the money being spent on CPEC projects was a loan from the Chinese government, which would add to the debt burden of the country. That probably is the most blatant falsehood. Out of the total cost of CPEC projects, which now has gone up to \$51 billion after announcement by China to provide \$ 5 billion for up gradation of railway line from

Peshawar to Karachi, only \$11 billion to be spent on infrastructure development is a loan component with 1.6 percent interest, which is the lowest considering the interest rate of 5-8.5 percent on loans advanced by the World Bank. The biggest chunk of \$34 billion pertains to energy projects, which is purely a direct foreign investment.

Another anti-CPEC view around is that the projects under it have been initiated in violation of the PPRA rules, and they lack transparency. This reflects the ignorance of those who are trying to advance that view. The Chinese model of investment is on government-to-government basis, which is the safest and a reliable way of investing money in foreign lands. Such agreements are negotiated between the governments and are exempt from the local procurement rules. They do not require open bidding by prospective investors. This is an internationally accepted and practised norm. The much maligned Orange Line Project in Lahore is yet another venture funded by the Chinese government. An International Governmental Framework Agreement was

signed on May 22, 2014 that stipulated that it would be entirely designed, constructed and supervised by Chinese companies. The PPRA rules also did not apply to this undertaking, being carried out through government-to-government arrangement. But unfortunately, a particular political party has been persistently trying to create doubts about the project and even hurled accusations of kickbacks against the Punjab Chief Minister.

Those elements who are seeking to undermine CPEC need to realise that by pursuing their narrow political interests at the cost of the national interests, they are also undermining relations between Pakistan and its greatest friend China, which has not only contributed to Pakistan's economic development over the years but has also helped it in bolstering its defence capability and nuclear programme. It is a relationship beyond the realm of normal diplomatic relations, which has achieved eternity through CPEC.





Dr. Mehmood UI Hassan Khan

Despite usual western perception and biased media reports about recently held local elections in Turkey, democracy is the ultimate vector.

Turkish people were free to vote and every vote was accordingly, counted and weighed in the final tally. According to Turkish official data, more than 57 million people in the country were registered to vote for mayors and councilors. Turnout was high at just under 86%. Turkish people had the chance to elect some 22,000 local councilors, along with 30 metropolitan and 1,351 district mayors. People of Turkey have now elected mayors for 81 provincial capitals and 957 towns.

It is pertinent to mention that local elections in Turkey are held after every five years. Turkish citizens over 18 years old have the right to vote in elections except those who hold certain military positions or are charged in prisons.

Nevertheless, there still some important tussle/struggle is going on to control the collateral damages of unexpected defeat through legitimate means allowed by the constitution of Turkey. Initially, Turkey's Supreme Election Council will decide fate of mayors of Istanbul and Ankara.

It seems that political maneuvering and euphoria of electioneering is gradually over and ownership of Ankara and Istanbul (political & economic capitals) will be now decided in the courts. Having all said that, it is obvious that recently held local elections in Turkey have once again established that Turkey is the only Muslim country which has true traditions of democracy.

The party of Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has lost control of the capital, Ankara and Istanbul in local elections which is indeed a serious blow to his 16 year rule starting from 2003.

Most recently, local elections were held across Turkey and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) led alliance won more than 53% of the total vote. But melting down of national economy, weakening of lira, rising ratios of unemployment and the last but not the least, price hike (20 % inflation rate) were the main

Turkey Local Elections 2019:

A Critical Analysis

issues of the Turkish local elections which forced its people to act differently in different regions due to which a "clear division" has now been created between major urban and countryside demography's. It is now feared that Turkey is more polarized than before, but still a strong democratic country.

The AKP has alleged invalid votes (300,000) and serious irregularities in most of the 12,158 polling stations in Ankara. Fatih Sahin, general secretary of AKP committed to follow all legal rights to prove its party's claims of serious irregularities i.e. invalid votes in the local elections. Some raids of law enforcement agencies have now been reported in local as well as regional media outlets to arrest the culprits of fake votes.

President of Turkey and head of AKP while delivering the "Victory Speech" assured his die hard supporters to carry out economic reforms without compromising on the rules of the free market economy till the next Presidential election to be held in 2023. It is true that image of invincibility has been shattered and an opposition long seen as "desperately divided" has achieved a new life line in the politics of Turkey. Is it beginning of end or end of a beginning, only time will tell?

The opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) having secular orientation, won in Ankara. With almost all votes counted, his candidate was on nearly 51% and the AKP's Mehmet Ozhasaki had won the support of just over 47%. The CHP has also won the third largest city, Izmir of Turkey. The people have voted in favour of democracy. They have chosen democracy," CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu said.

Previously, the AKP, with its roots in political Islam, has won every election since coming to power in 2002. President Erdogan rigorously participated two months political campaign included 100 rallies, was about the "survival" of the country and his party.

The opposition pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) did not fully take part in various regions because of so-called unfair circumstances. The HDP regained several seats across the mainly Kurdish south-east, where the government has replaced elected mayors with government-appointed trustees in the past after alleging the ousted officials had links to the outlawed militant Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK), but also lost two south-eastern towns to AKP control.

Politically, voting in 30 cities, 51 municipal capitals and 922 districts across the country was treated widely as a referendum on the

president's handling of Turkey's economic crisis as the Turkey the nation of 81 million people faces a recession for the first time since Erdoğan entered office 16 years ago.

It was also a litmus test for his newly expanded presidential powers to secure AKP dominance in the country's two major cities.

Despite the shocking results in Turkey's major urban centres, the ruling AKP and an allied nationalist party still won more than half of the votes across Turkey as a whole. Across the country, the President's AKP party, in alliance with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), held 51.63% of the overall vote, while the opposition alliance took 37.55%.

It is reality that Erdogan transformed Turkey since his ascent to power in 2003, implementing diversified but integrated policies and series of structural reforms that encouraged economic growth and challenging Turkey's secular foundations by bringing Islamic conservatism into to public life but politics has its own sultans and economics is the real kingmaker.

If we compare recent political achievements of the incumbent political party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) with past we conclude that in the previous local elections held in March 2014, the incumbent political party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), won eighteen out of the thirty metropolitan mayors, including five of the seven largest cities i.e. Ankara, Adana, Antalya, Bursa, Gaziantep, Istanbul and Izmir, and 45.6 percent of the overall votes. But now surprisingly, Justice and Development (AKP) have lost in five of Turkey's six biggest cities, including Istanbul, the country's economic engine, and the capital, Ankara.

The AKP has received a significantly larger share of the total vote than in 2014. In Konya, for instance, the increase represents a 6% of the vote. This growth in popular support can probably be explained by an important element: The MHP did not put forward candidates in the above-mentioned provinces after reaching an agreement with the ruling party. Thus, many MHP voters are likely to have moved to the AKP in these areas.

The AKP's now controls just 39 provinces, while it held 48 after the 2014 local elections. At the same time, the CHP has gained from ruling 14 provinces to 21. An important factor leading to this new reality was that the CHP won the eight close contests for a metropolitan municipality in which it was involved.

Despite having heavy weight political battling and increasingly elements of divergence,

the Republic of Turkey still has a unique administrative system which defines three different district types for local elections: villages, cities and metropolitan cities. The difference between cities and metropolitan cities originates from the size of the population. Cities with more than 750,000 residents are categorised as metropolitan cities while the rest are simply called cities. There are 31 metropolitan cities and 50 cities across Turkey, and voters in both will have a total of four votes. A voter living in a particular metropolitan city therefore vote for a metropolitan municipality mayor, district mayor, municipal council members and mukhtar (neighbourhood representatives), while people in cities cast their votes for a mayor, municipal council members, provincial assembly members and a mukhtar. People living in villages on the other hand cast their votes only for provincial assembly members and a mukhtar. In the most recently held local elections, thirteen political parties were in the electoral race. However, it appeared that the biggest races were among five major parties i.e. the AK Party, CHP, MHP, IYI Party and HDP.

Before elections it was expected that AKP would turn out to be a vector. The AKP formed the People's Alliance with the nationalist MHP prior to 2018 general elections, and the two parties were also continuing their alliance in local elections.

The other alliance in local elections was the Nation's Alliance, formed by the CHP and IYI Party. CHP, which follows a social democrat path, is the main opposition party in the country. The co-founder of the alliance IYI Party is a new party formed prior to the 2018 general elections and holds a centre-right nationalist position.

Most political parties took part in said local election announced their manifestos. Although there were hundreds of different promises, a few stood out among the majority of the parties. Better transportation system, modern and smart infrastructure, and the environment were the main promises of all the major political parties in Turkey.

Traffic is a big issue in metropolitan cities, especially Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Parties promised/pledged to build new underground metro lines and strengthen other means of public transportation such as ferries. Moreover, new roads were also promised to solve traffic jams in these cities. Candidates emphasised the importance of smart technology systems to solve transportation issues.

All of the candidates promised to work towards developing large green spaces and parks in city centres.

Traditionally, all major political parties and mayoral candidates emphasized higher priority to contest in Turkey's top three biggest cities i.e. Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Generally,



political parties nominated well-known and strong political figures in order to increase their chances of winning in these cities. Parties also paid great attention to the concerns of people living in these cities in their election campaigns and promises.

The AK Party and its predecessor have been governing both Istanbul and Ankara since 1994, while the main opposition party CHP has governed Izmir since 1999. It was a matter of political survival, strength and sustainability and winning of new hope of revival and viability between the AKP and CHP candidates i.e. Binali Yildirim, former prime minister and speaker of parliament, and CHP's candidate Ekrem Imamoglu, Mayor of Istanbul's Beylikduzu district in Istanbul.

Same was the case of Ankara where, the AK Party's candidate Mehmet Ozhaseki, former minister of environment and urban planning contested against CHP's candidate Mansur Yavas, former mayor of Ankara's Beypazari district in a close race. In Izmir, Nihat Zeybekci, former minister of economy, was contested for the AK Party, and Tunc Soyer, Izmir's Seferhisar district mayor, is running for CHP.

Turkish electoral system has some salient features which show/uphold its real strength and resilience. For the election of the provincial assembly and municipal council, a proportional representation system with a 10 percent election threshold was adopted in the recently held local elections 2019. For the mayoral election, first-past-the-post system was pursued.

In Turkey the Supreme Election Board (YSK) is the top authority responsible for the conduct of all electoral processes in a transparent, equal, fair, and reliable manner. The electoral process

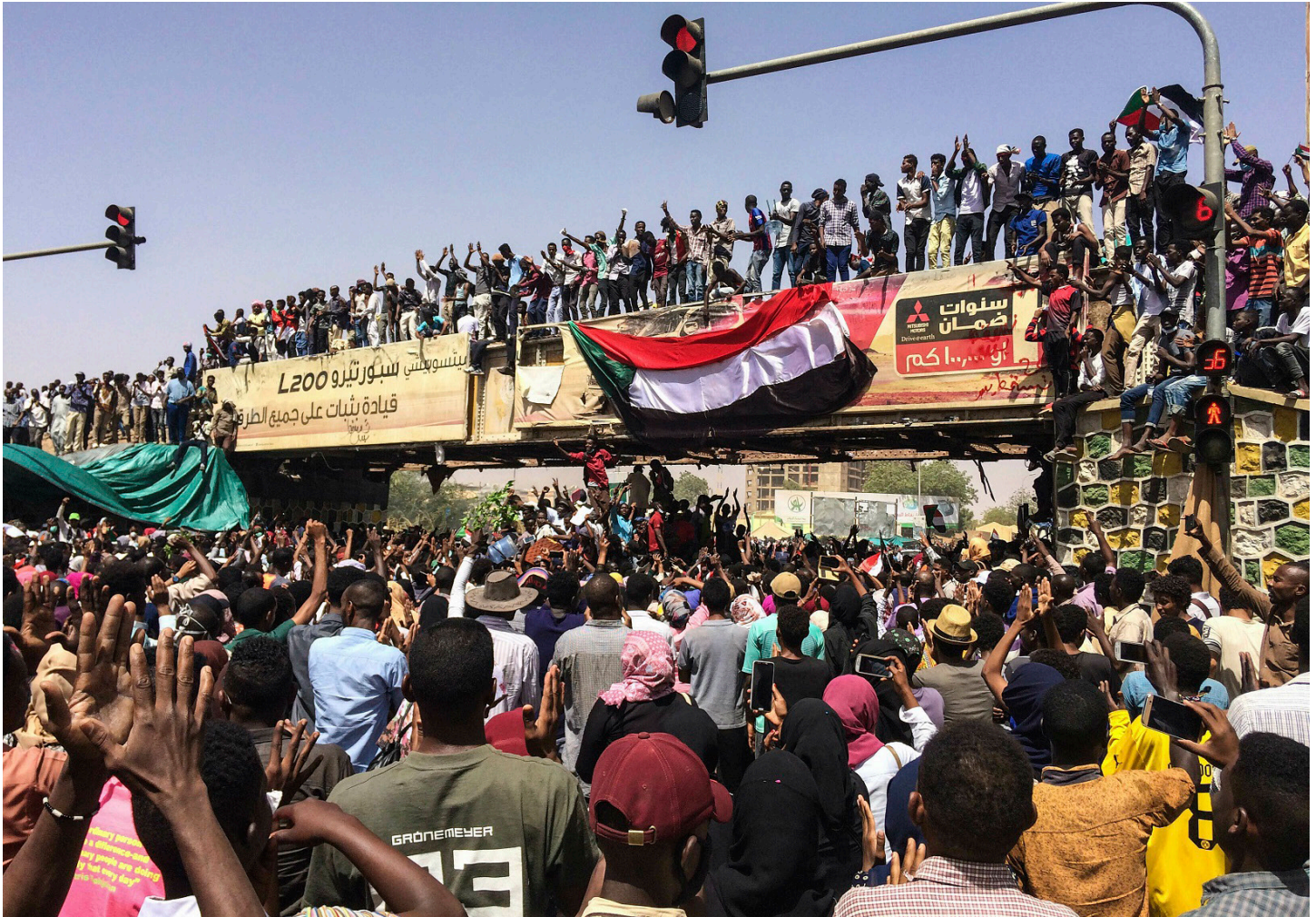
prior to, during and following the election period, was carried out through an integrated election management system, called SECSIS. It enabled voters and political parties to monitor the whole process throughout Turkey. It also ensured that political parties simultaneously obtain results of the ballot boxes once they were entered into the system after counting. It secured the conduct of elections in a transparent manner.

The center-left nationalist CHP, the main opposition party, has obtained two significant victories after unending defeats and won both the main cities i.e. Ankara and Istanbul which combine around a quarter of the country's population.

Good news is that the outcome of most recently local elections 2019 in the Republic of Turkey has outburst and disapproved rhetoric of western media outlets about functionality of Turkish democracy. Turkey has an elected democratic government where human rights are granted by its constitution. The mayorship in Istanbul is still contested and the Supreme Electoral Council, an independent legal body, is handling challenges as per Turkish law in a transparent fashion.

A defeat in some major cities by a whisker is a wake-up call for the ruling government. The government will have to take all possible measures to provide some kind of comfort in the age of economic uncertainty, financial crisis, banking crisis, foreign reserving and declining ratios of FDIs in the country.

It is hoped that by next elections 2023 Turkey will be succeeded to strengthen its economy through export-driven growth, investment in technology and job creation.



Is economic Crises turn into democratic transformation?

By M. Bilal Zafar

It all began with economic crisis in December 2018, the government tried to handle the economic situation but it collapse when US put sanction by the year and loss of oil revenue by imposing emergency austerity measures and sharp currency devaluation.

The subsidies on oil prices and other incentives by the Government for the common people cuts off which rise the frustration level of the people. In the beginning the protests arises from east over living standards, but the anger soon spread to the capital, Khartoum. The lifting of most sanctions in 2017 failed to help the country, which had lost most of its oil fields when South Sudan became independent in 2011.

The protesters demanded to withdraw all the orders on growing prices of things which are essential for living but in no time the demand is converted into the removal of President Bashir

who is in charge for nearly around 30 years.

The protests reached at its peak on the symbolic date of 6 April the anniversary of a



Sudan's military ousted long-time ruler Omar al-Bashir in a coup.

1985 non-violent uprising that removed then dictator Jaafar Nimeiri. Protesters adopted slogans of regime change which remind the

There is need to respect the efforts of Sudanese People who took steps for their freedom, justice, peace and economic stability.

Arab Spring of 2011. Protestors gathered outside the headquarters of the military in the capital and refused to move. The economic problems brought Sudanese from all walks of life on to the streets but the organization of demonstrations was taken on by the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), a collaboration of doctors, health workers and lawyers.

The proportion of women among the protesters has been put as high as 70% and they come from all ages and backgrounds. They say they are also demonstrating against Bashir's government attitude in a conservative Muslim society where Sharia law is practiced.

The protesters are mostly young, reflecting

People of Sudan deserve appreciation who expressed their solidarity, support and struggling for democratic transformation.

the country's demographics, but people of all ages joined for the change. At one point some individual soldiers were seen protecting those in the demonstrations but there was no mass transfer of allegiance.

But protestors are not in the favor of military government.

In the immediate aftermath of the announcement that President Bashir had been replaced by a military council the SPA (Sudanese Professionals Association) called on people to



maintain the sit-in outside the military HQ. This was in disobedience of a curfew. The SPA said the coup was led by a handful of military officials who were close to the former president and implicated in the problems that people were demonstrating about. When it was announced the "uprooting of the regime" Lt Gen Awad Ibn Auf said there would be a three-month state of emergency and a two-year transition period to prepare for civilian rule.

He appeared to side with the protesters saying: "For a long time, examining what's going on in the state and the corruption... the poor are poorer and the rich are still rich, and there are no equal chances for the same people." In the face of continued protests, Mr Ibn Auf himself stood down, as did the feared security chief, Gen Salah Gosh. Lt Gen Abdel Fattah Abdelrahman Burhan was then named as head of the transitional military council, to become Sudan's third leader in as many days. According to the foreign ministry, Gen Burhan is "committed to having a complete civilian government".

The military council has said that Mr Bashir is

in custody. He has not been seen in public since the coup and his whereabouts are unknown. He is wanted for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court in connection with the conflict in Sudan's Darfur province. But he may be put on trial inside Sudan, according to the military rulers.

There is need to respect the efforts of Sudanese People who took steps for their freedom, justice, peace and economic stability. People of Sudan deserve appreciation who expressed their solidarity, support and struggling for democratic transformation. Sudan is looking forward for effective economic cooperation from the international community that will allow Sudan to utilize its natural and economic resources and to be a pillar of food security regionally and internationally, and to contribute to the economic and social development in the African continent, and this also requires the implementation of the international commitment towards Sudan. (Monitoring Desk)



The British High Commissioner, H.E. Thomas Drew, celebrated the 93rd birthday of Her Majesty the Queen in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. Chief Minister of Punjab H.E. Sardar Usman Ahmad Khan Buzdar was the chief guest on the occasion in Lahore. To celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's 93rd birthday, the British High Commissioner, H.E. Thomas Drew CMG, also held a reception in her honor at the British Deputy High Commission in Karachi. This is the Cadillac in which she rode during her first visit to the city in 1961. This year we followed the cricket theme to build up to one of the most anticipated sports event Cricket World Cup 2019. The Pakistan women's cricket team also attended the event. . Dignitaries, military personnel, high officials, politicians, business community and media persons grace the occasion by their presence.





The final match of the most prestigious Serena Hotels Polo Cup 2019 was held at the Islamabad Club Polo Ground before diplomats, government officials and business people, who gathered to celebrate the Game of Kings. An incredibly fast game, featuring an incredible alliance between human and horse, polo has gained great popularity in recent years as the game has become more accessible for non-players. The Serena Hotels Polo Cup is an annual event organised by the Serena Hotels under the Hotel's very active sports diplomacy initiative, which aims to promote sports and sportsmanship in Pakistan.





The Embassy of Spain and Serena Hotels collaborated to host a fundraising gala dinner featuring a performance by renowned Spanish performer Alba Heredia. The performance with her group included cante (singing), toque (guitar playing), baile (dance), jaleo (vocalizations and chorus clapping), palmas (handclapping) and pitos (finger snapping) which left the audience in fascination.


SERENA HOTELS


Dean of Diplomatic Corps honored outgoing Envoy

Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Turkmenistan's Ambassador H.E. Atajan Movlamov hosted a lunch reception to bid farewell of outgoing Ambassador of Russian H.E. Alexey Dedov Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Marriott Hotel Islamabad. The reception was attended by Dignitaries, Foreign diplomats, Businessman and Media persons.



First Lady Mrs. Samina Alvi was the chief guest in General Body Meeting of Floral Art Society of Pakistan (FASP) at Serena Hotel. First Lady Mrs. Samina Alvi also visited stalls and distributed souvenir during General Body Meeting of Floral Art Society of Pakistan (FASP).



SERENA HOTELS



“The Night” at Satrang Gallery



Satrang Gallery at Serena Hotels presented THE NIGHT by Ayesha Jatoi. Jatoi has presented a series of delicate miniature drawings accompanied by other works.

The artist's diverse practice is deeply rooted in her miniature training and is heavily influenced by her own readings, writings and observations. Text and simple lines form the backbone of her works which is supported by the strong conceptual framework behind her art.



On the occasion of the 25th Freedom Day of Republic of South Africa Celebrated at Marriott Hotel Islamabad. The Acting High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa H.E. Christo Janse Van Noordwyk welcomed the guest. Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan was the chief guest on the occasion. Event is also graced by Foreign Diplomats, dignitaries, High officials and media persons.



Serena Hotels celebrated the Press Freedom Day in Islamabad. The bureau chiefs of all prominent print and electronic media were invited to an exclusive get together at Islamabad Serena Hotel, followed by a cake cutting ceremony. World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993.



Chairperson of Poverty Alleviation Coordination Council Dr. Sania Nishtar was invited as chief guest in the Islamabad Foreign Women Association (IFWA) Charity Bazaar 2019 at Serena Hotel. Stalls of different products are organized in the charity Bazar. Diplomats, Actors, Politicians, High dignitaries and people from different walks of life grace the occasion by their presence.



115th M.P. Bhandara Memorial Murree Brewery Polo Cup

By Farasat kazmi

Chief Executive Murree Brewery Company Mr. Isphanyar Bhandara says that sports help in developing the mental and physical abilities of the youth. This builds their character along with improving patience and courage in their personalities. He added that the players are assets of the nation and play an important role in promoting sports for the formation

of a healthy society. He expressed his views while talking to reporters after distributing prizes in the successful team at the 115th M.P. Bhandara Memorial Murree Brewery Polo Cup Final in Rawalpindi. The guests of honor that attended the event were Senator Sitara Ayaz, the Ambassadors of Azerbaijan, Poland, Egypt, Sweden, and Bulgaria. Seven teams are participated. PBG Team scored 7 goals to beat CLS team by 3.5 goals. Senator Sitara Ayaz said he

appreciated the efforts of the Murree Brewery team for the promotion sports event went on to say that the inaugural M.P. Bhandara Memorial Murree Brewery Polo Tournament was held in 1904. At the end of the match young army individuals demonstrated tent pegging and there was horse dancing. All the attendees who observed these performances thoroughly enjoyed this display.



On the occasion of the Armed Forces Day of the Republic of Bulgaria at Serena Hotel Islamabad. H.E Roumen Pirontchev Bulgarian Ambassador hosted a large reception to mark Bulgaria's Armed Force Day. The event was graced by foreign diplomats, dignitaries, high officials, and media persons.



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