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Pakistan & China

Both sides held in deep discussions on Phase-II of CPEC including industrial and agricultural cooperation and socio-economic development.

H.E. Imran Khan

Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan

with

H.E. Wang Qishan

Vice President of the People's Republic of China

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- 10 H.E. President Arif Alvi confers Pakistan's highest civil award Nishan-e-Pakistan to Chinese vice-president H.E Wang Qishan**

Welcoming the Vice President, the President congratulated him on 70 years of establishment of People's Republic of China. He underscored that Pakistan and China are linked by deep historical and cultural ties and highlighted that the 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' enjoys unanimous institutional and strong public support.

- 16 Pakistan & Uzbekistan aim to explore opportunities for enhancement of our bilateral cooperation in the diverse fields**

The Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, Mr. Elyor Ganiev, and his accompanying delegation called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. The Prime Minister highlighted the historic and cultural bonds between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and underscored the importance of closer trade, economic and energy links between the two countries.

- 18 Iran valued Pakistan's stance on Gulf crisis**

Foreign Minister of Iran Dr. Javad Zarif called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. Foreign Minister conveyed the best wishes of Iranian leadership to the Prime Minister, adding that the recent visit of the Prime Minister to Iran had greatly strengthened the bonds of friendship between the two countries.

- 24 The Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi presented seven point agenda to sustain SCO's high momentum in attaining peace, stability and prosperity in the SCO region**

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi participated in the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) Meeting of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), held in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

Relations between Pakistan and Kuwait have been historically cordial

The foreign minister highlighted Kuwait's support to Pakistan in "every critical situation", and assured Al Sabah that Pakistan and its people also respect the people and government of Kuwait. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi asserted that Pakistan gives "much importance" to its bilateral ties with the Gulf nation.



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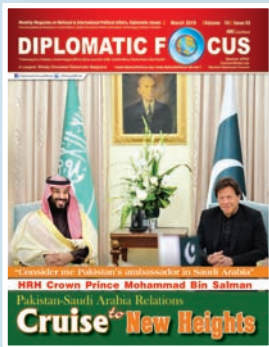
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Mian Fazal Elahi

Shanghai Cooperation Organization foreign ministers meeting held in Kyrgyzstan Participants exchange views on regional, international issues to drive solution for regional peace and stability. Foreign Ministers of Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China, Pakistan, India and Secretary-General of the SCO Vladimir Norov were among the attendees. Shanghai Cooperation Organization has expanded its agenda to include wide-reaching security and economic initiatives, but it remains to be seen if the bloc's members can develop and implement unified policy.

Shah Mehmood Qureshi Foreign Minister of Pakistan also emphasized on collective efforts by SCO member states to meet current day issues and achieve sustainable development. SCO is an important platform for the creation of linkages between countries in the region. Pakistan is always determined to implement the SCO charter. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor would help promote further linkages in the region. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj held an informal dialogue on the sideline of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Pakistan made it clear that we want all the matters resolved through dialogue, including Kashmir and that Prime Minister Imran Khan had said in his very first speech that if India takes one step forward, we would take two steps forward. Shanghai Cooperation Organization and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) always face disappointment to build consensus between nuclear powers Pakistan and India on the issue of Kashmir. Pakistan and Russia share a common position on the prevention of arms race in outer space and work collectively in various international fora towards that goal meeting held on the sideline of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Bishkek. These kinds of activities should be encouraged and other responsible space-faring nations to follow this example that Pakistan and Russia have reiterated their commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force in outer space activities.

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



Mian Assad Ullah

Important Announcement

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

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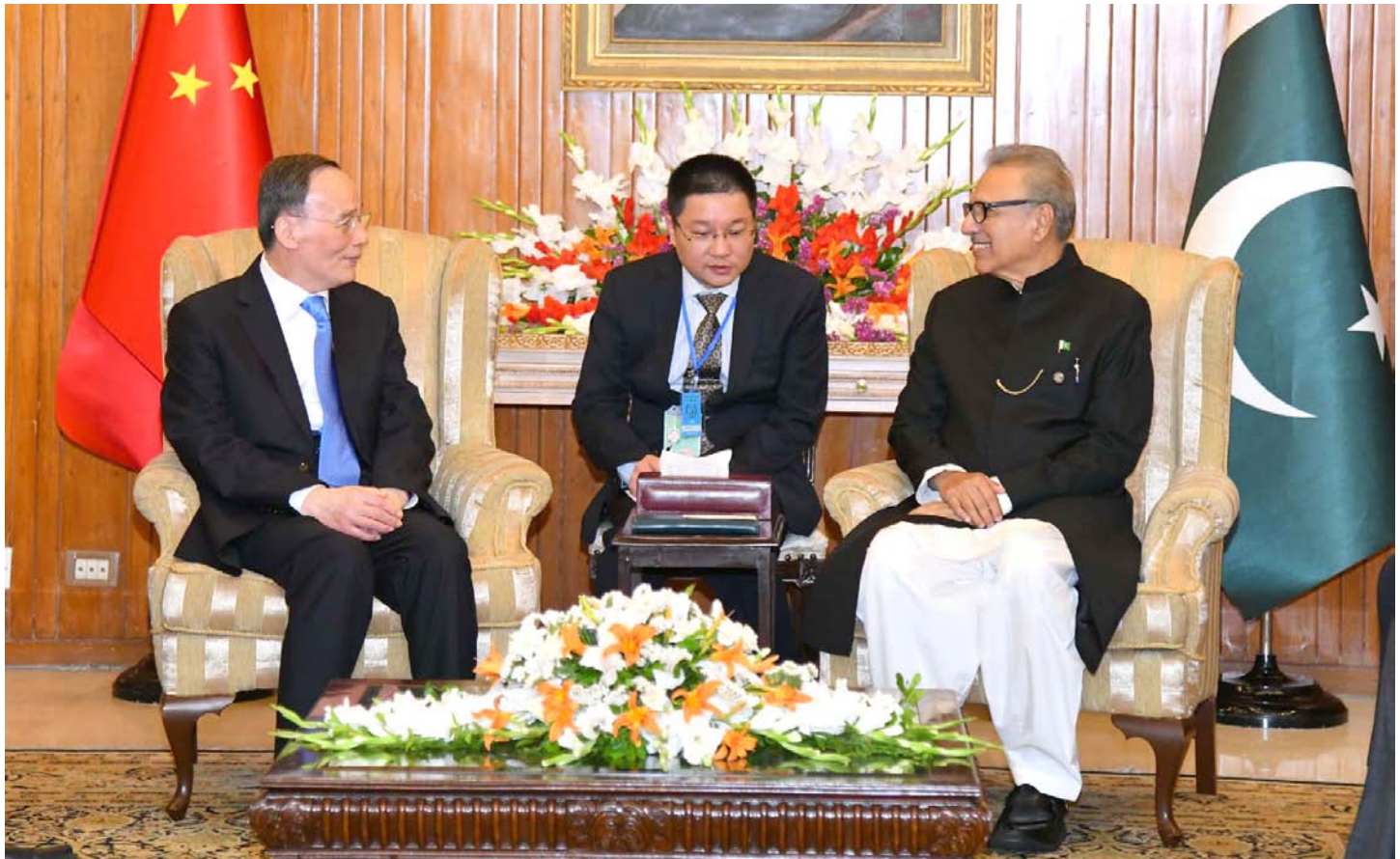
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H.E. President Arif Alvi confers Pakistan's highest civil award Nishan-e-Pakistan to Chinese vice-president H.E Wang Qishan

Mian Fazal Elahi

Welcoming the Vice President, the President congratulated him on 70 years of establishment of People's Republic of China. He underscored that Pakistan and China are linked by deep historical and cultural ties and highlighted that the 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' enjoys unanimous institutional and strong public support. He added that both countries support each other on issues of their core interest. Recalling Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to China in April 2019, the President said that it constituted an important milestone in the history of bilateral relations. The President lauded President Xi Jinping's visionary Belt and Road (BRI) Initiative. He underscored the importance of CPEC for Pakistan's national development and reiterated the resolve for its expeditious completion. The President also underscored the determination to further deepen economic and trade relations for mutual benefit. Expressing satisfaction at growing cultural ties between the two countries, the President stressed that people-to-people relations are bedrock of friendship between Pakistan and China as they augment bilateral engagements in other spheres of bilateral ties. The President also lauded China's constructive



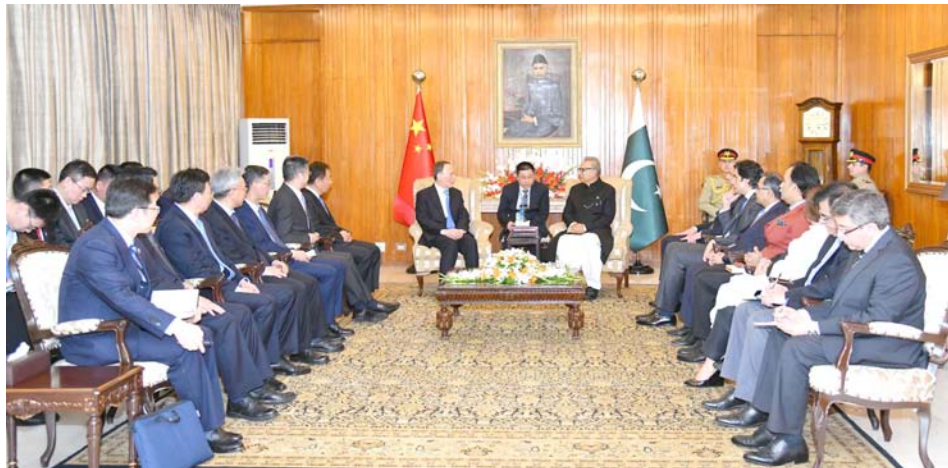
Pakistan and China are linked by deep historical and cultural ties and highlighted that the 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' enjoys unanimous institutional and strong public support:

President Arif Alvi

role in promotion of peace and stability in the region. Views were also exchanged on recent developments in South Asia. Reciprocating the warm sentiments, Vice President Wang conveyed greetings of Chinese leadership and noted that the China-Pakistan relationship continued to grow from strength to strength. He emphasized that bilateral ties are rooted in mutual trust, mutual understanding and shared principles. He reaffirmed China's steadfast support for Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts.

Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan emphasized that bilateral ties are rooted in mutual trust, mutual understanding and shared principles

The Vice President also expressed satisfaction at the growing bilateral economic and cultural ties and assured China's support in advancing Pakistan's national development goals. He also appreciated the smooth progress of CPEC projects. The meeting was followed by a special investiture ceremony. In recognition of Vice-President Wang Qishan's meritorious services to strengthening Pakistan-China friendship, the President conferred upon him Nishan-e-Pakistan, Pakistan's highest civil award. Prime Minister Imran Khan held delegation-level talks with Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan the Vice President is visiting Pakistan on the invitation of the Prime Minister. Reaffirming 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership' between Pakistan and China, the two leaders exchanged views on the entire gamut of bilateral relations and expressed the resolve to further strengthen bilateral relations in all spheres including political, economic and trade, and people-to-people exchanges. Recalling his visit to China last month to attend the 2nd Belt and Road Forum (BRF), the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the results of the visit and highlighted the significance of high level exchanges in cementing the abiding



President Dr. Arif Alvi in a meeting with Vice President of China H.E. Wang Qishan at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad on May 26, 2019.



Prime Minister Imran Khan receives Vice President of China Mr. Wang Qishan at Islamabad on 26th May, 2019.





Prime Minister Imran Khan and Vice President of China Mr. Wang Qishan leading delegation level talks at Islamabad on 26th May, 2019.



Prime Minister Imran Khan and Vice President of China Mr. Wang Qishan unveiling plaque of Pakistan-China Cooperation projects at Islamabad on 26th May, 2019.



Prime Minister Imran Khan and Vice President of China Mr. Wang Qishan Witnessing Signing of agreements / Mous at Islamabad on 26th May, 2019.



friendship between the two countries. The Prime Minister appreciated President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative and underscored its significance for greater regional connectivity and sustainable growth. Reiterating Pakistan's unwavering commitment to China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Prime Minister highlighted the extension of CPEC into new areas of agriculture, industrial development, and socio-economic uplift. He also stressed the importance of further deepening bilateral economic and commercial interaction, industrial collaboration, and China's investment in Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Reciprocating the sentiments of the Prime Minister, the Vice President thanked him for the warm welcome and hospitality. He reiterated China's strong support for the agenda of socio-economic uplift and people-centered development. He also expressed satisfaction at the increasing momentum of bilateral engagement between the two countries. Among other things, the Vice President underlined the importance of frequent leadership-level exchanges, the salience of CPEC projects in diverse sectors, expansion of bilateral trade in

The Prime Minister Imran Khan appreciated President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative and underscored its significance for greater regional connectivity and sustainable growth

a balanced manner, promotion of investments, and increase in cultural and people-to-people exchanges with a special focus on youth and the media.

Governor Punjab Mohammad Sarwar has said that relation between Pakistan and China will not weak in face of any challenge. Foundations of Pak China friendship have been laid on desire for Peace, mutual values, mutual experiences, and cultural ties. CPEC has helped in heightening the mutual ties, bringing them to new level and create new mutual opportunities. Big portion of population of Punjab composed of young population and we have to create new opportunities in Textile, Agriculture and Technology. Governor Punjab Mohammad Sarwar was addressing the dinner hosted in honor of Vice President of China Wang Qishan at Governor House Lahore. Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar, Chinese Ambassador Yao Jung, Chinese Consular General Lung Dung, members of Chinese delegation, and ministers attended the event. Governor Punjab Mohammad Sarwar also said that it is matter of honor for me that I got opportunity to host great



Chinese delegation in Lahore which is cultural capital of South Asia. Ramadan Ul Mubarak is also month of forgiveness, cooperation and brotherly relations. Visit of Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan is manifestation of great relations and great historical traditions. Bilateral relations between China and Pakistan are two dimensional and China has always helped Pakistan at every critical juncture of history. Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan Shan has lived a challenging life. He is also known as crisis manager in China. Everyone who is cognizant of my political journey knows that I've always faced one crisis after other from UK political life to political journey in Pakistan. I am looking forward to share notes with respectable Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan. I congratulate China who is achieving fastest economic growth in world and Chief

architect of belt Road Initiative which is marking start of new era of globalization wherein 122 nations are being interconnected by road, rail, air and sea. Pakistan is also proud to become part of CPEC-flagship project of Belt Road Initiative. CPEC is opening new opportunities for Pakistan. CPEC is opening Asian markets for our exports and creating jobs in Pakistan. Relation between Pakistan and China will never weak. Our government, as per vision of PM Imran Khan, is cooperating China to mitigate environment change, education crisis and lacklustre economic growth. I have tasked by Prime Minister Imran Khan to work for religious tourism and clean drinking water and i will work together with Chinese leadership to learn from their valuable experiences in these areas. I have firm belief that great Pak China relations will lay foundation of prosperous Pakistan.

Prime Minister Imran Khan also highlighted the importance of further deepening bilateral economic and commercial interaction, industrial collaboration, and China's investment in Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs).





Prime Minister Imran Khan Inaugurates Haier Phase II extension and Foton JW Forland car plant

By M. Bilal Zafar

Due to the new and improved policies by the new Government, we are seeing an inflow and keen interest of business stakeholders of Pakistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan Inaugurates Haier Phase II extension and Foton JW Forland car plant at Lahore. On this occasion, CEO JW SEZ Group, Mr. Shah Faisal was present along with CEO Haier, Javed Afridi and CEO Alex Xu. This initiative is another achievement of the Pak-China friendship that is strengthening with the new policies. This project will not only bring in the latest technology but also will open avenues for more opportunities. This will also create jobs on both sides of the border. On this occasion, Mr. Shah Faisal Afridi said that

“JW Forland is bringing in \$350 million worth of investment to the economy. This will be a huge booster for all the stakeholders and the new Government as well. It will also provide confidence to foreign investors who are willing to invest in the Pakistani market”. Javed Afridi said that “JW Forland Glass Project is worth \$350 million alone which our group is leading. It will generate jobs, industrial and economic stability. All major global players in automotive, beverages and various other industries are coming in with massive investment just like us.” In accordance to auto development policy 2016-21 and keeping in mind the development projects initiated by Govt. under CPEC. Many international automotive brands agreed to invest in auto sector of Pakistan. JW-FORLAND

was shaped up as an agreement between Changsha Foton Vehicle Technology Co. Ltd. and JW SEZ Group was signed back in December 2016. JW-FORLAND became the first Pakistani company to have a 50/50 business deal with a leading Chinese company in the auto sector. It is also for the first time in auto sector of Pakistan that due to this agreement the Chinese technology will be transferred to Pakistan that includes specialized parts like transmission, engine etc. The joint venture established an assembly. The plant capacity, in its initial phase, is producing 30,000 units per annum, which is located over 50-acre land in Lahore. The initial product line includes Cargo trucks and dump trucks ranging from 1 ton to 7.5 tons loading capacity. JW-FORLAND Dump truck D310 is first locally manufactured dump truck that is designed as per international safety standards and specifically manufactured for construction sector of Pakistan. In first phase of this new venture \$150 million was invested and providing direct employment it 500+ peoples that not only include highly experienced and skilled labor but also fresh graduates from different colleges and vocational institutes. In phase II Company further planned to invest \$300 million in future to increase its product line, through this expansion company planned to provide 3500+ direct employment opportunities, and also provide what is actually required for boosting Pakistan economy in terms commercial vehicles and fulfil requirement of passenger vehicles also. Having state of the art plant and highly qualified human resource JW-FORLAND aimed to be no-1 consumer choice in next five years.





Kuwait evinced keen interest in further expanding business activities in Pakistan

By M. Bilal Zafar

Chief Executive Officer Kuwait Petroleum Shaikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah, along with his delegation, called on Prime Minister Imran Khan and evinced keen interest in further expanding business activities in Pakistan. Omar Ayub Khan, Punjab Minister for Energy Dr Akhtar Malik, Secretary Petroleum Mian Asad Hayauddin and senior officers were also present during the meeting. Shaikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah briefed the prime minister about Kuwait Petroleum's business

ventures in Pakistan since 1980s in the area of exploration. He evinced keen interest in further expanding business activities in the country. The Prime Minister welcomed Shaikh Nawaf and his delegation to Pakistan and assured the government's continued support to the company in their smooth business operations. The prime minister highlighted various steps that the present government has taken for improving ease of doing business and facilitation of foreign investment. The premier observed that exploration remained a neglected area in past. He added that in

order to capitalize on the existing potential of the sector, the government was working on a new petroleum policy offering incentives to foreign exploration and production (E&P) companies and removing impediments in way to undertaking smooth and profitable business ventures. The prime minister appreciated the company's contribution towards imparting training to the local manpower in E&P sector. Dr Akhtar Malik also briefed the meeting about various initiatives being taken by Punjab government in petroleum sector.





Pakistan & Uzbekistan aim to explore opportunities for enhancement of our bilateral cooperation in the diverse fields

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, Mr. Elyor Ganiev, and his accompanying delegation called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. The Prime Minister highlighted the historic and cultural bonds between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and underscored the importance of closer trade, economic and energy links between the two countries. The Prime Minister also recalled his interaction with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on the sidelines of the Belt and Road Forum (BRF) in Beijing in April 2019 focused on bilateral relations and connectivity. The Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister conveyed warm greetings of the Uzbek President and gave a detailed briefing on the transport railway corridor-Uzbekistan-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar. Appreciating the briefing, the Prime Minister agreed that the Railway link will not only benefit Pakistan, Afghanistan and CARs but also enhance connectivity of the region with China, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Europe. The Prime Minister also stressed the importance of reinforcing political, economic, energy and cultural collaboration between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, as part of Pakistan's vision for deeper engagement in Central Asia.

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform Makhdom Khusro Bakhtyar has underlined that establishing transport and energy corridors will not only enhance regional connectivity but also boost trade and investment. He stated that Uzbek companies can develop production lines in special economic zones under CPEC framework for mutual benefit of both countries. The Minister

said this during a delegation level meeting with Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, Mr. Elyor Majidovich Ganiyev in Islamabad. Ambassador of Uzbekistan Mr. Furqat Sidikov, Secretary Planning Zafar Hasan, members Planning Commission and senior official of the ministry were also present in the meeting. The minister highlighted that by 2050 electricity demand in Pakistan would reach 50,000 MW adding that Pakistan is committed to CASA-1000 energy project being financed by World Bank. Makhdom Khusro apprised that Pakistan is planning to upgrade its railway system from Peshawar to Karachi to further boost economic activities. The visiting dignitary informed that Uzbekistan has constructed a railway line from Tashkent to Mazar-e-Sharif which can be extended to Peshawar thereby enhancing regional connectivity and trade. The Minister stressed the need to strengthen

regional connectivity through various road and railway infrastructure projects to the benefit of all member countries. The Minister noted that bilateral trade between the two countries has increased significantly in the last two years which can be enhanced to \$1 billion by exploiting potential in various areas. Makhdom Khusro appreciated that visiting business delegation will have an opportunity to meet Pakistani business community to explore more possibilities for future cooperation that will set in motion the launching of joint ventures in different fields. The minister called for regular exchange of business delegation between the two countries to further cement bilateral economic partnership.

H.E. Mr. Elyor Ganiev, Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan along with seven members' delegation called on the Hon'ble Federal Minister for NFS&R in Islamabad. Federal



Deputy Prime Minister of Republic of Uzbekistan Elyor Majidovich Ganiev called on Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa at GHQ in Rawalpindi and discussed matters related to mutual interest including regional security and connectivity.



secretary and other senior officials of the ministry were also present in the important meeting. Matters relating to cotton, direct trade & coming session of JIGC (Joint Inter-Governmental Commission) were discussed. In JIGC meeting matters related to communication, defense, trade and agricultural cooperation are discussed. Pakistan has good ties with its brotherly Muslim country since its independence from the former USSR. The Prime Minister of Pakistan paid an official visit to Uzbekistan in 2015. The proposed areas of bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture are: import/export of livestock items. Both countries may provide market access to each other's livestock products. Similarly, areas like exchange of elite germplasm/genetic resources of cotton, rice and wheat to develop high yielding hybrids and varieties resistant to emerging stresses. Both countries could work together for suitable agricultural technologies for adaption to climate change. Federal Minister Mehboob Sultan said that Pakistan firmly believes in direct trade between the two countries for the benefit of both economies. He added that in agricultural machineries, biological pest management both countries could enter into joint ventures. Moreover in the field of cotton MoU between the two countries could also be signed in future. The Federal Minister said the draft MoU is important to institutionalize bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture. The MoU may be signed during the next Session of JIGC. He further said my predecessor Minister for NFS&R along with some other officials visited Uzbekistan aiming to explore opportunities for enhancement of our bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture. Sahibzada Mehboob Sultan said exchange of germplasm of various agricultural commodities, farm machinery and other areas of agriculture will be strengthened under the institutional framework provided under this MoU. The Minister added that after the 6th Session of Pakistan – Uzbekistan Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC), the two sides will continue to pursue common goals of economic development. H.E. Mr. Elyor Ganiev said that Uzbekistan wants to establish long-term bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture and livestock. He added

our visit meant to achieve highest level of relations especially in agriculture and trade. His Excellency Mr. Elyor Ganiev said, last year the trade between the two countries increased three times and the two nations are capable of increasing it ten times. There is a great need for developing transport corridor between the two countries as transportation is expensive

despite the distance of only 700 Kms, railway through Afghanistan would be beneficial for the countries in the region. Mr. Elyor Ganiev said that we could mutually work out strategies both in transfer of cotton germplasm and mechanization.





Iran valued Pakistan's stance on Gulf crisis

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Foreign Minister of Iran Dr. Javad Zarif called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. Foreign Minister conveyed the best wishes of Iranian leadership to the Prime Minister, adding that the recent visit of the Prime Minister to Iran had greatly strengthened the bonds of friendship between the two countries. Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed satisfaction over excellent bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran. He underscored that early implementation of various decisions reached during his visit to Iran would further enhance cooperation in all areas. Views were exchanged on facilitating movement of people and Zaireen through opening of new border points and promoting local trade activities by establishment of new border markets, besides issues related to beefing up security along the Pakistan-Iran border. The Prime Minister expressed hope that the two neighbours would develop a vibrant relationship in political as well as economic domains. As regards the regional situation, the Prime Minister expressed concern over rising tensions in the Gulf. He underscored that war was not a solution to any problem. Further escalation in tensions in the already volatile region was not in anyone's interest. All sides needed to exercise maximum restraint in the current situation. The Prime Minister stressed that every effort should be made to resolve the issues within the framework of international law and through diplomatic engagement. He added that Pakistan was prepared to use its friendly relations in the region to help lower tensions among brotherly countries and promote peace and stability in the region.

Foreign Minister of Iran Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, who is paying an official visit to Pakistan,

called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser in Parliament House. The meeting was held in cordial atmosphere where ways and means to further intensify Pak-Iran bilateral relations besides forging unity amongst the Muslim Ummah were discussed. The Speaker welcomed the Iranian Foreign Minister and underlined the importance, the people and government of Pakistan attached to the long standing brotherly relations between the two countries. The Speaker expressed his deep concern over the recent tension in the gulf region which posed a threat to the regional peace and stability. He said that all sides needed to exercise restraint and a solution may be found for amicable resolution within the framework of international law. He reiterated the support of Government of Pakistan for Joint Comprehensive Plan, which represents an excellent example of negotiated settlement of complex issues through diplomacy and

dialogue. Referring to his interaction with his counterpart Dr. Ali Larajani, the Speaker said that there was a broader consensus for strengthening Pakistan-Iran relations through enhancing parliamentary interaction and cooperation. The Speaker also spoke about the ongoing cooperation between Iran and Pakistan in diverse sectors. He said that immense economic potential exist on both sides which needed to be utilized for mutual benefit. He also expressed his satisfaction on the cooperation between law enforcement of both the countries which had substantially resulted in decrease in insurgency along both sides of the borders. He said that the military operation would continue till terrorism was exterminated from the Pakistani soil. The Iranian Foreign Minister thanked the Speaker for his sentiments and said that Iran had special affection for their Pakistani brethren and strongly believed in the need for further strengthening of these relations. He



said that continuous interaction between the political and parliamentary leadership from both countries would help further cement Pak-Iran relations. He also briefed the Speaker about the role foreign countries were playing in implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan. He said that Iran would exercise restraint, however, would not allow anyone to wage economic war on Iran. Foreign Minister Zarif was confident that concerted efforts by all concerned would lead to a peaceful resolution of the ongoing crisis. The Iranian Foreign Minister agreed that Muslim leaders should play their role for bringing Ummah on same page to counter common threats and challenges. He thanked for diplomatic support of Pakistan extended to Iran, regionally and internationally.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi today his Iranian counterpart Dr. Javad Zarif in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is Foreign Minister Zarif's third visit to Pakistan since the new Government assumed office. Foreign Minister Qureshi exchanged views with Dr. Zarif on recent tensions, undermining peace and stability in the region. Important issues related to bilateral relations were also discussed. Both sides appreciated the progress on important decisions made during Prime Minister Imran Khan's recent visit to Iran and the need to continue regular engagement for expanding cooperation in all areas. Views were exchanged on promotion of bilateral trade, facilitation of the people to people contacts and movements, opening of the new border crossing points, establishment of new border markets and enhancing security along Pakistan-Iran border. Views were also exchanged on important regional issues including recent developments concerning peace process in Afghanistan. Foreign Minister Qureshi expressed concern over rising tensions, threatening the stability of an already volatile region. He underscored that any miscalculation or accident could escalate the tensions to a dangerous level. He also emphasized that Pakistan did not favour a conflict and believed that all sides should exercise maximum restraint and work in a spirit of easing the tensions. The Foreign Minister stressed that disputes should be resolved within the framework of international law and through dialogue and diplomatic means. Underscoring the utility of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Foreign Minister Qureshi stated that the Agreement was a good example of negotiated settlement of complex issues through diplomatic means. He added that Pakistan supported JCPOA and noted the efforts of the other parties to the Agreement to salvage the deal. Faithful implementation of obligations by all parties was vitally important. Foreign Minister Qureshi conveyed that Pakistan stood ready to work with all sides to help lower tensions and preserve peace and stability in the region. H.E Dr Mohammad



Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of Iran called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ. During the meeting matters of mutual interest and evolving situation in the region were discussed. COAS said that war is

not in anyone's interest and all sides need to make efforts to keep conflict away from the region. Foreign Minister appreciated Pakistan's positive role for regional peace and stability.

Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



President Dr. Arif Alvi talking to President Huawei Technologies Middle East Region Mr. Charles Yang, who called on him in Islamabad on May 20, 2019.



Federal Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen M Mazari talking to the Country Representative of UNFPA, Ms Lina M. Mousa who called on her here in Islamabad on May 06, 2019.



Special Assistant to Prime Minister, Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan in a Meeting with H.E Mr. Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi, Ambassador of UAE in Islamabad on 06-05-2019.



Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting, Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan in a meeting with H.E Mr. Kuninori Matsude, Ambassador of Japan in Islamabad on 8-5-2019.



Special Assistant to Prime Minister, Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan in a Meeting with H.E Mr. Nawaf Saeed Ahmad Al-Maliki, Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Islamabad on 09-05-2019.



Special Assistant to Prime Minister on information and Broadcasting, Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan in a meeting with H.E Ms Margaret Adamson, Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan in Islamabad on 13-5-2019.



H.E Mr Kuniiori Matsuda, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ.



Federal Minister for Interior, Ijaz Shah in a Meeting with Chinese Ambassador Mr. Yao Jing in Islamabad on May 8, 2019.

Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh receiving the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi at Ministry of Finance, Islamabad on May 14, 2019.



Muhammad Usman Dar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs in a meeting with UNDP delegation, headed by its Regional Director Asia Pacific, Mr. Haoliang Xu Prime Minister's Office, Islamabad on 14.05.2019.



Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, receiving the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Thomas Drew at Ministry of Finance, Islamabad on May 15, 2019.



ADB Country Director for Pakistan, Ms. Xiaohong Yang called on the Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, at Islamabad on May 15, 2019.



Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination, Dr. Fehmida Mirza in a Meeting with Spanish Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Manuel Duran Gimenez-Rice in Islamabad on May 16, 2019.



H.E. Mr. Stefano Pontecorvo, Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan called on Ms. Zobaida Jalal, Federal Minister for Defence Production at Her Office in Rawalpindi on May 16, 2019



H.E. Mr. Essa Abdullah Al Basha Al noaimi, ambassador of UAE Called on Ms. Zobaida Jalal, Federal Minister For Defence Production At Her Office in Rawalpindi on May 16, 2019.



H.E Mr Yao Jing, Ambassador of China to Pakistan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ.

Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Rolf Michael Hay Pereira Holmobe Called on Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Petroleum, Nadeem Babar at Petroleum Division, Islamabad on May 17, 2019.



Deputy Minister of Economy of the Republic of Bulgaria, Ms. Liliya Ivanove Along with Bulgarian Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Roumen Pironchev Called on Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Sahibzada Muhammad Mehboob Sultan.



Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, H.E. Margaret Adamson Called on Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Shafqat Mahmood in Islamabad on May 20, 2019.



Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, H.E. Kuninori Mutsada Called on Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination, Dr. Fehmdia Mirza in Islamabad on May 20, 2019.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Textile, Industries & Production and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood in a Meeting with Ambassador of Korea to Pakistan, KWAK Sung-kyu in Islamabad on May 23, 2019.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Sheikh Receiving French Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Marc Barety, At Finance Ministry, Islamabad on May 23, 2019.



H.E. Mr. Yao Jing, Ambassador of China, called on General Zubair Mahmood Hayat, Chairman JCS Committee at JSHQ.



British High Commissioner Thomas Drew called on the Foreign Secretary today. The two discussed bilateral relations and regional issues of interest on May 2, 2019.



The Prime Minister of Pakistan H.E. Imran Khan appreciated Japan's role as Pakistan's key development partner over the years

By M. Bilal Zafar

Mr. Kuninori Matsuda, Ambassador of Japan called on Prime Minister Imran Khan at the Prime Minister's Office. The Japanese Ambassador discussed areas of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Japan. The Prime Minister appreciated Japan's role as Pakistan's key development partner over the years and highlighted the areas of investment, human resource

development, information technology, tourism and agriculture to further deepen mutually beneficial cooperation. The Prime Minister underscored that his government is determined to overcome the current economic challenges through peace oriented, investment friendly, development focused and people centered strategies. Pakistan is ready to welcome Japanese businesses in all the sectors of economy. The two sides expressed satisfaction over the upward trajectory in bilateral relations



between Pakistan and Japan. The Japanese Ambassador assured his government's full support to enhance bilateral relations with Pakistan

By M. Bilal Zafar



Pakistan has been re-elected to the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). Pakistan secured the highest number of votes – 48 out of 54 – from the Asia-Pacific Group. The Commission membership will be for a four-year term starting, 1 January 2020. Elections were held in New York at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Pakistan has served on the Commission for four decades since its establishment. The overwhelming support in this election is yet another vote of confidence by the international community in Pakistan's leadership and its important role in the global policy discourse on the world drug problem. Pakistan would continue to advocate dialogue and cooperation to address challenges related to narcotic drugs through a balanced, comprehensive and evidence-based approach.

Pakistan re-elected to the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)



The Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi presented seven point agenda to sustain SCO's high momentum in attaining peace, stability and prosperity in the SCO region

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi participated in the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) Meeting of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), held in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

Addressing the Plenary, Foreign Minister stated that Pakistan's membership of SCO is an acknowledgement of the significance that Pakistan attaches to regional peace, stability, common development and prosperity. He shared Pakistan's vision of peaceful and prosperous neighborhood underpinned by win-win partnerships. In this context, he highlighted the pivotal role of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, especially for landlocked, energy-rich Central Asian states.

The Foreign Minister highlighted Pakistan's sacrifices and achievements in counter-terrorism. He expressed Pakistan's willingness to share its experiences and expertise in this field. He also emphasized the need to address the root causes of terrorism. The Foreign Minister stressed that enduring peace and prosperity in South Asia hinged on good-faith diplomacy and result-oriented dialogue. The Foreign Minister also underscored the importance of achieving

lasting and long-lasting peace in Afghanistan and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to facilitate the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan.

The Foreign Minister presented seven-point agenda to sustain SCO's high momentum in its march towards attaining peace, stability and prosperity in the SCO region. He, inter-alia, noted the importance of dispute resolution mechanism and confidence building measures among member states, arresting missile defence

systems and keeping outer space free of weapons, measures to combat drug trafficking and corruption, synergizing various connectivity initiatives under SCO, and vitalizing SCO financial and trade mechanisms.

During the Meeting, the Foreign Ministers of SCO Member States finalized the programme and agenda for the meeting of the SCO Council of the Heads of State to be held on 13-14 June in Bishkek. Later, a signing ceremony was held in which various decisions and documents



Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Bishkek. The meeting is attended by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of member countries including Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and India.



Meeting with the President of Kyrgyzstan, H.E. Sooronbay Jeenbekov on the sidelines of SCO Council of Foreign Ministers in Bishkek.

were adopted. In his speech SCO Council of Foreign Ministers Address by Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

Your Excellency, Chingiz Azamato-vich Aidarbekov, Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, distinguished colleagues from SCO Member & Observer States, Your Excellency, Vladimir Norov, Secretary General SCO, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is again a great privilege to join colleagues from SCO Member and Observer States in this beautiful city of Bishkek. I am grateful to our hosts for their warm reception and gracious hospitality. I congratulate the Kyrgyz Republic for the able stewardship of SCO as Chair since the Qingdao Summit last year. We welcome incoming Secretary General His Excellency Vladimir Norov, and Director Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, Mr. Jumakhon Giyosov. I wish them success in their important new positions. Excellencies, Our leaderships will be meeting next month to take stock of a global dynamic where forces of populism and protectionism are ascendant, and challenges to sustainable growth, the environment, and our collective security are assuming global proportions. The response, we believe, lies in collective endeavours and coordinated approaches. The SCO, we believe, provides an excellent platform for effective action. Representing 42% of humanity, 23% of world's land mass, and

some 22% of global nominal GDP, and imbued with the "Shanghai Spirit," SCO indeed shows the way forward. Excellencies, For millennia, the SCO heartlands have been epicenters of civilization. Pakistan itself is the product of centuries of amalgamation of foreign and local influences. We envision Pakistan's future firmly embedded in an integrated Pan-Asian sphere of shared prosperity represented here. A vision that is fast reaching fruition in the shape of the transformational China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of President Xi Jinping's far-sighted Belt and Road Initiative. Our geography affords the vital air, land and sea nodes and corridors connecting South with Central Asia, the Middle East with China, Europe with the Far East, and Eurasia with the Sea. Excellencies, Terrorism is the bane of our times. We condemn it in all forms and manifestations including State terrorism against people under illegal occupation. We appreciate the practical cooperation taking place on this matter under the SCO Regional Anti Terrorist Structure. As one of the few countries to have successfully fought and reversed the tide of terrorism and extremism, Pakistan stands ready to share its experience and expertise with friends in SCO through the Structure. Remembering the old adage, that if you want to have peace, work for justice, it is equally important to address the root causes of terrorism. Excellencies, Afghanistan

remains central to our efforts to forge lasting regional stability. We have consistently called for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process of dialogue and reconciliation, as the only viable way forward. It is a matter of satisfaction that a dialogue process to promote peace and reconciliation has taken hold.

Going forward, we hope, it would expand to involve the broader array of Afghan interests and actors.

Pakistan will continue to facilitate the process, and hope others too, would support it, as part of a shared responsibility. Excellencies, South Asia, now a part and parcel of SCO, lags behind other regions in terms of regional cooperation, economic integration and connectivity. It continues to be held back by formidable challenges relating to the human condition, namely poverty, illiteracy and disease. Political differences and unresolved disputes further compound the predicament.

It is our firm belief that enduring peace and prosperity in South Asia will remain elusive without good-faith diplomacy and result-oriented dialogue. We have commenced work on the Kartarpur Corridor that will facilitate pilgrimage of Sikh yatraes to one of holiest shrines of Sikhism in Pakistan. The "Shanghai Spirit" is being reinforced through the "Kartarpur Spirit." Excellencies, I wish to submit a seven-point agenda to help sustain





Minister of Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi held meeting with his Kyrgyzstan counterpart Chingiz Aidarbekov on sidelines of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

SCO's high momentum: FIRST: Expand the scope of SCO institutional framework to include alternate dispute resolution and confidence building mechanisms among Member States. It was in Bishkek Your Excellencies would recall, that the Treaty on Good-Neighborly Relations, Friendship and Cooperation was concluded in 2007. SECOND: Develop a regional consensus on arresting build up of missile defence systems by individual States or groups of States, and on keeping outer space free of weapons. THIRD: Work on establishment of SCO Development Fund and SCO Development Bank. And finalize proposals for trade in local currencies. FOURTH: Take the lead in evolving a more comprehensive international framework of cooperation to combat corruption and white collar crime. FIFTH: Launch a more concerted effort to combat production, supply, trafficking and demand for illicit drugs. SIXTH: Leverage SCO's institutional capacity to synergize the various connectivity initiatives and ensure maximum impact. I am referring to the Belt and Road Initiative, the Economic Cooperation

Organization, and the Eurasian Economic Union. SEVENTH: Strengthen the SCO Youth Council by focusing on promoting cultural understanding, academic excellence and skills acquisition among our youth. Pakistan looks forward to joining the Council soon.

Excellencies, As SCO's global influence and profile rises, so do the hopes and expectations of the billions under its sway. We have laid the groundwork. It is time to build higher the edifice of cooperation.

Prior to the Meeting, the Foreign Minister along with the Foreign Ministers of other SCO member states paid a joint call on the President of Kyrgyz Republic, His Excellency Sooronbay Jeenbekov.

On the sidelines of CFM, the Foreign Minister held bilateral meetings with the Foreign Ministers of China, Russia, Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan. The Secretary General of SCO also called on the Foreign Minister.

The Secretary General of SCO Vladimir Norov called on Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bishkek.



The Secretary General welcomed Pakistan's membership as an important step that had enhanced the prestige of the Organization. He expressed gratitude for Pakistan's active participation in various platforms under SCO umbrella. Secretary General Norov shared his vision for promoting cooperation among the SCO members in a wide array of sectors ranging from intra-SCO trade to tourism, innovation and youth empowerment.

The Foreign Minister congratulated the SCO Secretary General on assumption of office. He also expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's important role in facilitating Pakistan in the process of integration in the Organization. The Foreign Minister assured Pakistan's complete support to the Secretariat in achieving the goals and objectives set under various SCO initiatives. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bishkek.

The Foreign Ministers took stock of the current state of the bilateral relationship and agreed



Minister of Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi meets the foreign minister of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr. Beibut Atamkulov on the sidelines of SCO Council of Foreign Ministers in Bishkek.





Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi meets H.E. Mr. Wang Yi (Foreign Minister of China) on the sidelines of SCO Council of Foreign Ministers in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

that Prime Minister Imran Khan's participation in the 2nd Belt and Road Forum in Beijing had provided further impetus to All-Weather Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two countries. They also agreed that the upcoming visit of Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan to Pakistan will mark another milestone in the bilateral relationship.

The Foreign Minister thanked China for its support in Pakistan's smooth integration in the SCO. Both Foreign Ministers agreed to continue working together in SCO to achieve its multifaceted goals and objectives.

The Foreign Ministers also discussed important issues impacting regional and global security and expressed satisfaction that both China and Pakistan had identical views. They agreed that meaningful forward movement on reconciliation process in Afghanistan was of paramount importance for overall peace and stability in the region and beyond. The two Foreign Ministers agreed to continue close coordination to handle challenges emerging from the evolving security situation in the region and around the globe.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Bishkek.

The two Foreign Ministers reviewed and

expressed satisfaction over the steady development of bilateral relations, marked by growing warmth and increasing level of engagement in all spheres. They agreed that the upcoming Deputy Foreign Ministers level talks will provide further impetus to the already healthy momentum in bilateral ties.

Foreign Minister Qureshi appreciated Russia's support to Pakistan's smooth integration into SCO. Foreign Minister Lavrov termed Pakistan's SCO membership as a very positive step.

The Foreign Ministers also discussed important issues impacting regional and global security. They agreed that a successful reconciliation process in Afghanistan was of great importance to the overall global and regional peace, security and stability.

Foreign Minister Qureshi and Foreign Minister Lavrov signed a Joint Statement on No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Bishkek today.

The Foreign Ministers agreed that both countries shared historic traditions and values as well as religious and cultural ties. Both countries also had similar perspectives on regional and international issues.

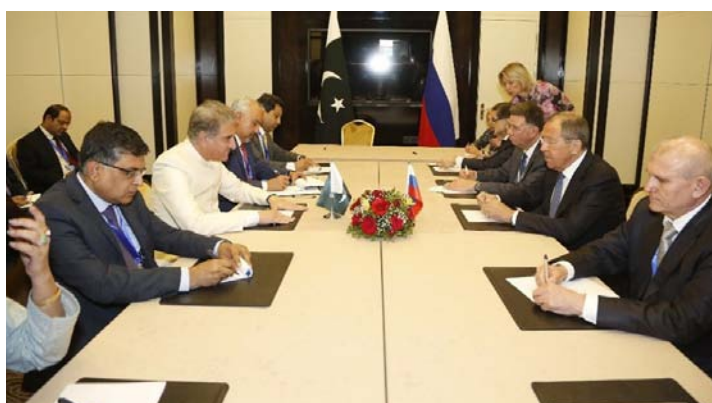


The Foreign Ministers noted that there was immense potential for further strengthening of comprehensive bilateral relationship with a special focus on trade, aviation, agriculture, and defense production. In this context, Foreign Minister Qureshi underscored that Pakistan provided the shortest trade route to Central Asian States through Gwadar port. Both sides agreed to work on further strengthening of regional connectivity.

The Foreign Minister congratulated the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan on assumption of Office. He also thanked Kazakhstan for support in Pakistan's smooth integration in SCO.



Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had brief discussion with Indian Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj and Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Chingiz Aidarbekov.



Minister of Foreign Affairs Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi meets the Foreign Minister of Russia, H.E. Mr. Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of SCO Council of Foreign Ministers in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.



Relations between Pakistan and Kuwait have been historically cordial:

Foreign Minister of Pakistan Shah Mahmood Qureshi

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi met his counterpart Sabah Al Khalid Al Sabah at an Iftar dinner held in his honor in Kuwait.

The foreign minister highlighted Kuwait's support to Pakistan in "every critical situation", and assured Al Sabah that Pakistan and its people also respect the people and government of Kuwait. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi asserted that Pakistan gives "much importance" to its bilateral ties with the Gulf nation.

The foreign minister apprised the businessmen of the government's agenda for the development of business infrastructure, adding that the government wants Kuwaiti companies to invest in Pakistan and assist them in the accomplishment of this agenda. He noted that several companies from the Gulf country had already been successful in conducting business in Pakistan, and assured the delegation that Pakistan is providing all possible facilities to foreign investors. He said that there are "vast investment opportunities" in Pakistan in the energy, agriculture, health, education and construction fields for foreign investors and added that the investment of Kuwaiti companies would be welcomed.

"The Kuwaiti delegation indicated their intent to bring massive investment in Pakistan in the near future," During his stay, the Foreign Minister will hold talks with his Kuwaiti counterpart on the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, including matters pertaining to visa. Speaking to the media, Qureshi said he is carrying a special letter of Prime Minister Imran Khan for the Emir of Kuwait. He expressed hope his visit will help



Minister of Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi calls on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.





further strengthen relations between Pakistan and Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi did Press Conference in Kuwait. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Pakistan supports the security and stability of the region. During a press conference held on the sidelines of his two-day visit to Kuwait, Qureshi praised the role played by Kuwait in supporting and promoting peace in the region, adding that it is a key player in its stability. He pointed to the excellence and wisdom of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, noting that he is the driving force of stability in the region because of his skill and experience. He added that he has already met with Kuwaiti ministers of interior and foreign affairs and discussed the problem of visas for Pakistani citizens, pointing out that they agreed to overcome the difficulties in this subject. The minister stressed that his country supports security and stability in the region through the special relations it has with all countries. "We do not wish for war, this region has seen a lot of wars and tragedies," he added. Pakistan is ready to facilitate de-escalation of tension in the region and support peace and stability, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said. He made the remarks during an interview with the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). "We are concerned about rising tension between the United States and Iran," he said and added, "Pakistan would always be supportive of peace and stability, we would be more than happy to facilitate in de-escalation." On the relations between Kuwait and Pakistan, the minister said relations between the two countries have been historically cordial. "Politically, we have had excellent relations; we have been supporting each other at the regional level. On many global issues, our policies are common, and our approach on many regional issues, including on the issue of Palestine, they are close to each other," he said. The visit was aimed at building comprehensive economic relations, he added. "I feel that we can facilitate more, by sending skilled and semi-skilled manpower to Kuwait, we can achieve further economic development." As for the role of Kuwait in the United Nations Security Council, Qureshi said, "Kuwait plays a very balancing and mature role, especially during the recent standoff between India and Pakistan." "They helped de-escalate and defuse tensions," he added.





Prime Minister Imran Khan congratulated

By M. Bilal Zafar

I congratulate Prime Minister Modi on the electoral victory of BJP and allies. Look forward to working with him for peace, progress and prosperity in South Asia," the prime minister said on Twitter.

Hours later, Modi responded to PM Imran's tweet, thanking him for his congratulatory message and saying that "I have always given primacy to peace and development in our region."

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has won a second term in office following the country's marathon seven-phase general elections, the world's largest democratic exercise ever. Modi is the first non-Congress prime minister in India to return to power after a full five-year term. Official data from the Election Commission showed Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) winning 303 of the 542 seats, up from 282 it had won in 2014. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has won 351 seats. The opposition Indian National Congress (INC) won 52 seats. In 2014, the Congress was reduced to 44 - its worst performance ever. The party or coalition with a simple majority (272 seats) in India's lower house of

parliament, called the Lok Sabha, is invited to form the government. About 67 percent of more than 900 million eligible voters cast their ballots in the staggered elections that the ruling party fought on issues of national security and a hardline Hindu agenda. Reports said the 48-year-old leader had offered to quit at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee in New Delhi. The committee includes his mother and former Congress president Sonia Gandhi as well as former Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. The main opposition Congress party has denied reports that its president Rahul Gandhi had offered to resign following their stunning defeat in the general elections, Indian media reports said.

Results show 78 of the 542 Lok Sabha seats have been won by women - a record high in the world's largest democracy, but still well below the global average of nearly one in four seats. India was one of the first countries to have a female leader, but more than five decades after Indira Gandhi became prime minister, women's participation in politics remains stubbornly low. Indian media reports say Narendra Modi is likely to be sworn in for his second term as prime minister on May 30. A second straight landslide election



Narendra Modi on his electoral victory

defeat for the opposition Congress leader Rahul Gandhi raises serious questions about his leadership and cast a damaging shadow over one of the world's most prominent political dynasties. Gandhi, who even lost the family constituency seat of Amethi to the Hindu nationalist BJP. The election results made grim reading for Congress barons who have relied for generations on the talismanic Nehru-Gandhi name to provide electoral success. Congress failed to get a single seat in 13 of the country's 29 states.

Imran Khan @ImranKhanPTI

I congratulate Prime Minister Modi on the electoral victory of BJP and allies. Look forward to working with him for peace, progress and prosperity in South Asia

84.5K 4:45 PM - May 23, 2019

22.1K people are talking about this

Narendra Modi @narendramodi

Thank you PM @ImranKhanPTI.

I warmly express my gratitude for your good wishes. I have always given primacy to peace and development in our region.

Imran Khan @ImranKhanPTI

I congratulate Prime Minister Modi on the electoral victory of BJP and allies. Look forward to working with him for peace, progress and prosperity in South Asia

89.5K 9:57 PM - May 23, 2019

15.8K people are talking about this



16th Asia (ACD) Ministerial Meeting

Cooperation Dialogue



Agency

The 16th Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Ministerial Meeting was held in Doha, Qatar. The events included a Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), the Ministerial segment, and a Business Forum. Participating in the 16th ACD Ministerial, Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to making Asia a connected, prosperous and peaceful region. The Head of Pakistani Delegation, Special Secretary (Asia Pacific) Imtiaz Ahmad, in his remarks stated that ACD is a leading platform to realize the dream of pan-Asian cooperation and Pakistan fully subscribes to its aims and objectives. Pakistan announced the establishment of a Joint Working

Group (JWG) on Connectivity with Co-Prime Movers i.e. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Bangladesh and India. Pakistan also announced that the inaugural meeting of the Executive Committee of the Joint Working Group on Connectivity would be convened soon.

Pakistan is the Prime Mover for the Pillar of Connectivity and the Co-Prime Mover for the Pillar of Cultural and Tourism in the ACD. Tourism is a high priority area for the Government of Pakistan and the country is opening up for tourists from across the world. In this regard, Pakistan's recently-announced Visa Policy with its reduction in visa fee, introduction of e-visa and visa-on-arrival facilities, will help enhanced connectivity and people-to-people

exchanges. Special Secretary Imtiaz Ahmad highlighted that Pakistan had hosted the 4th Ministerial Meeting in Islamabad in 2005, which adopted the Islamabad Declaration on Finance, Energy Security, Flow of Capital and Investment. Pakistan emphasized its vital role in overland connectivity to the Middle East, China, Central Asian and South Asia. Gwadar is also the confluence of BRI's land and maritime routes. ACD is a continent-wide forum, which provides a platform to Asian countries to regularly exchange views on areas of mutual interest and foster an Asian community. Pakistan is one of the founding members of ACD and assigns high priority to this forum.



Prime Minister's Youth Program to take Green Youth Movement and startup Pakistan program to all universities

By M. Bilal Zafar

Mr. Muhammad Usman Dar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs called on Dr Tariq Banuri, Chairman Higher Education Commission to discuss establishment of Green Youth Movement (GYM) Clubs and introduction of Prime Minister's Startup Pakistan program in all public and private sector universities of Pakistan, to be run under the umbrella of Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Program. Green Youth Movement (GYM) Club project aims at civic engagement of youth, especially the university students, by making them execute Green Youth Movement (GYM) under Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Program. It would create a

platform for social contribution of youth in raising awareness about climate change in the country, besides helping them earn decent livelihood by promoting social entrepreneurship to address challenges of climate change. Startup Pakistan Program would be a flagship initiative of Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Program to create a national eco-system for the development of Innovation-Driven Entrepreneurs (IDEs) in the country. It intends to train youth across universities and top 300 TVET sector institutes in emerging technologies through digital incubation platform. It would not only promote entrepreneurship culture but would also create employment opportunities for youth in the country. It would a great

way forward for the sustainable economic growth in the modern knowledge economy era. It was agreed in the meeting that Higher Education Commission would collaborate with Prime Minister's Youth office for effective implementation of these programmes under the guidance of honorable Prime Minister, Imran Khan for socio-economic uplift of youth. Moreover, proposals on National Internship; National Youth Employment Exchange (NYEX); Education Support for undergrad students; and Laptop for All programs also came under discussion. Mr. Muhammad Usman Dar thanked Dr Tariq Banuri for his commitment to get youth-focused initiatives implemented by all HEC-recognized universities across Pakistan.





Pakistan & Bulgaria

agreed to work together for promotion of bilateral trade and investment

By M. Bilal Zafar

The 2nd Session of Pakistan–Bulgaria Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) was held in Islamabad. Mr. Noor Ahmed, Secretary, Economic Affairs Division and Mrs. Liliya Ivanova, Deputy Minister of Economy of Bulgaria led their respective delegations. The IGC focused discussions on enhancing trade, economic cooperation in ICT, agriculture, livestock, tourism, culture, maritime and railways sectors. Both sides agreed to work together for promotion of bilateral trade and investment. Bulgarian side agreed to facilitate the export of Pakistani citrus fruit, mango, rice, raw cotton, dates, fruits and marble to Bulgaria and other countries of Eastern Europe, while Pakistan would facilitate export of Bulgarian products in Pakistan and third countries. Both sides also agreed to encourage their businessmen for participation in trade fairs & exhibition and to endeavor for establishment of joint ventures in automotive, engineering and food processing. On the conclusion of

The IGC focused discussions on enhancing trade, economic cooperation in ICT, agriculture, livestock, tourism, culture, maritime and railways sectors

the IGC, an Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income was also signed by the Director General, FBR and Deputy Minister of Economy, Republic of Bulgaria. Representatives of various Ministries/ Organizations including Commerce, Information Technology, Railways, Maritime Affairs and National Food Security participated in the Session. During her stay in Pakistan, Mrs. Liliya Ivanova called on the Minister of National Food Security & Research and Advisor to the Prime Minister on Commerce & Textile and Investment. Mr. Noor Ahmed, Secretary, Economic Affairs Division in his concluding remarks, expressed that both the countries will continue to strengthen economic and trade relations in future for mutual benefit of two countries. The Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Economy also reciprocated the spirit of friendship, cooperation and assured that Bulgaria will enhance cooperation with Pakistan in the identified areas.



Rights and benefits of the Saudi 'Green Card'

Agency

The official gazette of the Saudi government has published new information concerning the laws and regulations of the Privileged Iqama, widely known as the Saudi "Green Card." It also carried the conditions under which the Iqama can be canceled. Following the announcement of the Saudi Cabinet's approval of the Privileged Iqama residency permit, as previously reported by Arab News, the new information offers a further look

The Kingdom is continuing its development and reform plans within Vision 2030 to develop its economy and enhance the attractiveness of its investment environment.

at the Privileged Resident Permit (iqama) scheme. The iqama was first proposed in 2016 by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and was approved by the Cabinet last week. It will for the first time allow foreign nationals to work and live in Saudi Arabia without a sponsor. The scheme will enable expatriates to permanently reside, own property and invest in the Kingdom. An authorized draft of the new Privileged Iqama system offers a number of benefits to highly skilled expatriates and owners of capital funds that will not require a Saudi sponsor. A special committee has been given 90 days to determine regulations governing the mechanisms of the scheme, such as fees for applicants, which have not been yet determined by the authorities. Fahad bin Juma, vice chairman of the Shoura Council Financial Committee said that eligibility for the Saudi Green Card will be determined by a number of bodies headed by the Ministry of Commerce and Investment, as reported by Al-Watan newspaper. He also added that in order to be eligible, applicants must possess scientific or professional skills that are not abundantly available in the Kingdom, or they should be company owners who can invest in the country. The holder of the Privileged Iqama will be deemed resident for the purpose of applying other statutory provisions, especially tax provisions, regardless of how much time he spends outside the Kingdom in the course of the

year. The applicant must be over 21 years of age, must have a valid passport, must not have a criminal record, and must provide a health report dated within 6 months of the application presenting proof that the applicant is free of infectious diseases. In the case of applications from within the Kingdom, the applicant must obtain a legal resident permit before applying. The Privilege Iqama rights include possession of private means of transport and any other movable properties that an expat is allowed

Media reports suggest the "Privileged Iqama" could cost as much as SR800, 000 for a long-term version or SR100, 000 for the one-year version

to acquire as per the Saudi law, employment in private sector establishments and transfer between them (this includes the beneficiary's family members) except for occupations and jobs from which non-Saudi nationals are banned. The rights also include freedom to leave the Kingdom and return to it independently, use of the queues designated for Saudi nationals when entering and exiting the Kingdom through its ports, and doing business under the foreign investment system. Under the system, two categories are provided to applicants, an extended iqama and temporary iqama subject to renewal. Upon approval of the application, according to Article 5, the applicant must pay the fees specified by the designated authorities; the holder will be deemed resident for the purpose of applying other statutory requirements, especially the tax provisions, regardless of how much time he spends outside the Kingdom in the course of the year. The Privileged Iqama does not entitle the holder to Saudi citizenship. The holder of the Privileged Iqama, will enjoy several rights, including residence in Saudi Arabia with his family, the right to issue visitor's visas for relatives as defined by the MOI regulations, the recruitment of domestic workers, the possession of property for residential, commercial and industrial purposes with the exclusion of Makkah, Madinah and border

areas as per the regulations. The holder will also be able to utilize property in Makkah and Madinah for a period not exceeding 99 years. The Ministries of Justice and Commerce and Investment shall establish the necessary mechanisms to ensure the

New visa move will allow residents and expatriates to play a more active role in Saudi economy

beneficiary's access to an instrument of utilization issued by the Notary Public. This right will be enforceable by transfer to others according to the rules set by the committee. Saudi Arabia's minister of Economy and Planning, Mohammad Al-Tuwaijri, said that the Privilege Iqama law approved by the Saudi Cabinet confirms that the Kingdom is continuing its development and reform plans in accordance with Vision 2030 to develop its economy and enhance the attractiveness of its investment environment. The Privilege Iqama aims to make residents and expatriates an active

part of the Saudi economy, promote consumption growth by increasing quality purchasing power and economic activity in various sectors, establish more small and medium enterprises, and generate jobs for Saudi citizens. The Privileged Iqama can be canceled if the holder did not comply with the obligations stipulated in Article 7 of the law, waived his residency, and/or passed away or was no longer eligible. Several matters could lead to the cancellation of the Iqama, such as providing false information in the application, a conviction for a crime punishable by imprisonment for a period exceeding 60 days and/or a fine exceeding SR100,000, or a judicial decision to deport the holder from the Kingdom. The cancellation or termination of the Privilege Iqama does not entail the transfer of the rights and benefits, obtained in accordance with Article 2 of the law, to the holder's family. However, if a family member met the conditions of this law and its regulations, he may apply for the Privileged Iqama. In the event of the cancellation or termination of the holder's Iqama or any of his family members, the Privilege Iqama Center will, in coordination with the designated authorities, consider and remedy any consequences that may result therefrom in accordance with the law and its regulations. (Monitoring Desk)





High Commissioner receives warm welcome in Birmingham

By Mian AsadUllah

Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Mohammad Nafees Zakaria during his visit to Birmingham held meetings with British-Pakistani community including MP Khalid Mahmood, Councillors, businessmen, Lord Mayor Cllr Yvonne Mosquito, 'All Parties International Contact Committee on Kashmir', and Pakistan origin Councillors.

In his meeting with MP and the accompanying delegates, the High Commissioner briefed them on the developments in Pakistan, the smooth democratic transition, opportunities for business and investment. Matters pertaining to Pakistani Community were also discussed. Women's role in the promotional activities was also emphasised.

During the interaction with the Lord Mayor, she appreciated the active role being played by Pakistani Community in the development of Birmingham and the UK. Mr. Zakaria underlined that the Community was one of the strongest links between the two countries and could be instrumental in furthering bilateral relations in tangible terms. British-Pakistani Councillors highlighted a number of issues faced by the Diaspora members in their meeting with the High Commissioner, who undertook to address them through measures at the High Commission level and also by suggesting policy initiatives to the Government. The High Commissioner held a two-hour interactive session with members of Pakistani community at the Birmingham City Council which was full to the capacity.



The High Commissioner stated that Pakistan and UK enjoyed strong bilateral relations. He underscored the historic role played by the Pakistani Diaspora in further strengthening the ties between the two countries. Mr. Zakaria briefed the Community about the important developments taking place in Pakistan and conducive environment for business and investment opportunities to benefit from. He identified areas with economic benefits such as tourism related infrastructure development, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), Education Sector, Halal industrial products, Food Processing, Surgical Goods, Pharmaceutical, IT, etc. He underlined that negative media reflection about Pakistan and Pakistani Community abroad should be discarded being malicious. Community's contributions to the British economy and society have been widely acknowledged by the British Government and people alike with deep appreciation. Admiring the UK for an enabling environment that made scores of Pakistani Diaspora members big achievers, Mr. Zakaria underscored that they should pay back for a stronger Great Britain. He urged the community to invest more in the next generation which is their future and a solid bridge for further strengthening the historically strong relations between the two countries. In an interactive session, he responded to a number of queries raised by the community members. At a KPMG arranged interactive meeting, Mr. Zakaria presented a broad picture before a number of British business leaders on the trade and investment opportunities in

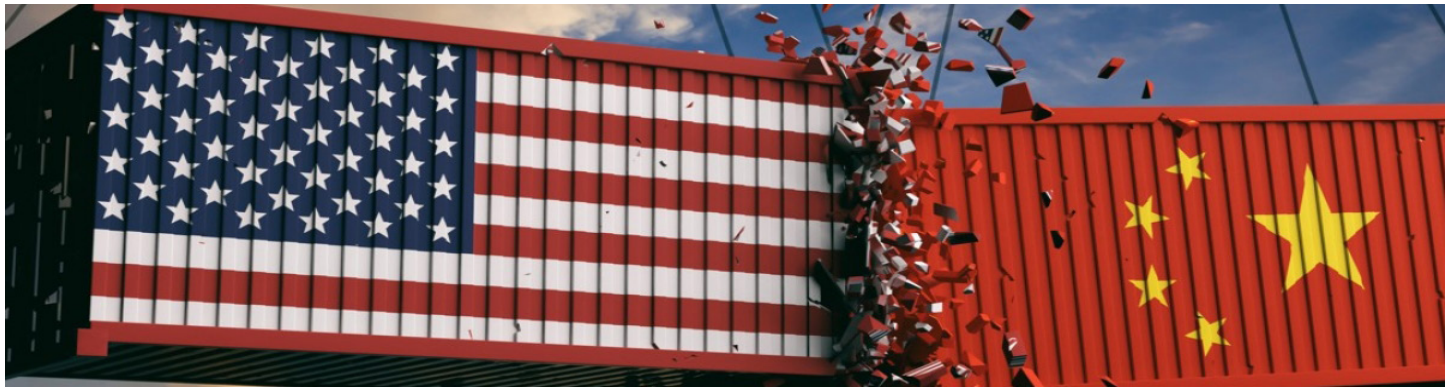


Pakistan. He also highlighted the exploration presently going on in Pakistan in Oil & Gas sector and the incentives for the investors. Mr. Zakaria underlined present government's liberal economic and investment policy. He informed about the SEZs announced by the government, offering opportunities for investors in the development of the SEZs and for setting up of an enterprise/industry. He also touched upon the investment/business opportunities associated with 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor' (CPEC), which is the flagship project of the 'Belt & Road Initiative of China'. The High Commissioner also highlighted prospects for investments in the higher education sector in Pakistan, particularly in setting up Universities for emerging technologies, and technology parks. The meeting at KPMG was attended by Mr. Geoff Layer, Vice Chancellor

Wolverhampton University, Mr. Andy Argyle and Mr. Mothi Sayeeram from KPMG LLP, Mr. Nasir Awan MBE, Awan Marketing, Mr. Adam Parker, Birmingham Airport, Mr. James Wong, Southside BID, Mr. Nik Hardy, Burton Chambers, Mr. Ifraz Ahmed, The Asian Today, Mr. Mahmood Ahmed, British General Council, Mr. Arsalan Sultan, Supertouch Workwear and Mr. Ashiq Ellahi, Sakhawat Commercial Brokers. The High Commissioner thanked Councillor Waseem Zaffar, for coordination and facilitation for the engagements in Birmingham. In their meeting with the High Commissioner, representatives of 'All Parties International Contact Committee on Kashmir' highlighted the human rights violations being perpetrated by Indian occupation forces in IoK and condemned Indian atrocities.



Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Mohammad Nafees Zakaria with KPMG Officials after a roundtable Conference in Birmingham.



Huawei won't bow to US pressure:

Ren Zhengfei founder and CEO of Huawei

Agency

Chinese telecoms giant Huawei is ready to deal with Washington's crackdown and will reduce its reliance on US components, its founder has told Japanese media. President Donald Trump effectively barred Huawei from the US market and added it to a list which would restrict US sales to the firm amid an escalating trade war with Beijing.

"We have already been preparing for this," Huawei founder and CEO Ren Zhengfei told a group of Japanese journalists in his first interview since Trump's move. Ren said Huawei would continue to develop its own components to reduce its dependence on outside suppliers. Huawei is a rapidly expanding leader in 5G technology but remains dependent on foreign suppliers. It buys about \$67 billion worth of components each year, including about \$11 billion from US suppliers, according to The Nikkei business daily. The usually elusive Ren, 74, has come out of the shadows in recent months in the face of increasing pressure on his company. Huawei is the target of an intense campaign by Washington, which has been trying to persuade allies not to allow China a role in building next-generation 5G mobile networks. A former army technician, Ren founded Huawei in 1987 with only \$5,000, according to company lore. The company now claims to have nearly 190,000 employees, operates in 170 countries, and reported revenue of more than \$100 billion last year. Ren said his company would not yield to pressure from Washington. "We will not change our management at the request of the US or accept monitoring, as ZTE has done," he said, referring to fellow Chinese telecoms giant ZTE which was also targeted by Washington. It buys about \$67 billion worth of components each year, including about \$11 billion from US suppliers, according to The Nikkei business daily.

Huawei founder and CEO Ren Zhengfei said that "We have not done anything which

violates the law," adding the US measures would have a limited impact. Ren's army background and Huawei's opaque culture have fueled suspicions in some countries that the firm has links with the Chinese military and intelligence services. US internet giant Google, whose Android mobile operating system powers most of the world's smartphones, said it was beginning to cut ties with China's Huawei, which Washington considers a national security threat. The move could have dramatic implications for Huawei smartphone users, as the telecoms giant will no longer have access to Google's proprietary services which include the Gmail and Google Maps apps a source close to the matter told AFP. Reports also emerged that several US chipmakers providing vital hardware for Huawei's smartphones have stopped supplying the Chinese firm. In the midst of a trade war with Beijing, President Donald Trump has barred US companies from engaging in telecommunications trade with foreign companies said to threaten American national security. The measure targets Huawei, the world's second-biggest smartphone maker, which has been listed by the US Commerce Department among firms that American companies can only trade with if authorities grant permission.

Due to the ban, Google will have to halt business activities with Huawei that involve direct transfer of hardware, software and technical services that are not publicly available. That means Huawei will only be able to use the open source version of Android. It will need to manually access any updates or software patches from Android Open Source Project, and also distribute the updates to users itself, a source told AFP. In a statement, Huawei said it would "continue to provide security updates and after-sales services" to all existing smartphones and tablets globally, including those not yet sold. A person familiar with the matter who requested anonymity told Bloomberg News that Huawei will be

unable to offer Google's proprietary apps and services in the future. China's foreign ministry said it was actively following the situation. "At the same time, the Chinese side supports Chinese enterprises in taking up legal weapons and defending their legitimate rights," said spokesman Lu Kang.

5G leader

Huawei is a rapidly expanding leader in 5G technology, and currently has the most advanced and cheapest 5G capacities in the world. Its smartphones outsold Apple's iPhones in the first quarter of this year, seizing the California company's second-place spot in a tightening smartphone market dominated by Samsung. But the Chinese firm remains dependent on foreign suppliers. It buys about \$67 billion worth of components each year, including about \$11 billion from US suppliers, according to The Nikkei business daily. US chipmakers including Intel, Qualcomm and Broadcom have informed workers that they will stop supplying Huawei until further notice, Bloomberg said Monday, citing people familiar with their actions. Huawei "is heavily dependent on US semiconductor products and would be seriously crippled without supply of key US components," said Ryan Koontz, a Rosenblatt Securities analyst, although the Chinese firm is believed to have stockpiles in place.

The ban "may cause China to delay its 5G network build until the ban is lifted, having an impact on many global component suppliers," he added. The companies themselves did not comment.

Huawei is the target of an intense campaign by Washington, which has been trying to persuade allies not to allow China a role in building next-generation 5G mobile networks. Super-fast networking 5G, the fifth-generation successor to today's decade-old 4G technology which is struggling to keep pace with global broadband demand, promises radically quicker transfers of data. (Monitoring Desk)



By Rafiullah Kakar

THE Easter bombings in Sri Lanka once again turned a spotlight on the challenge of global jihad, terrorism and Islamophobia. Muslim scholars and community leaders from across the world have condemned the attack, dissociated themselves from the perpetrators and defended Islam as a religion of peace.

Many Muslims are constantly feeling like they need to apologise. Still, they continue to face a backlash and stereotyping of their community. The fear of reprisals combined with growing Islamophobia compels Muslims to insist that these acts have nothing to do with their faith. This urge to separate religion from the violence committed in its name is well intentioned and understandable, yet counterproductive. It is true that these terrorists do not represent the overwhelming majority of Muslims, who oppose terrorist groups like the militant Islamic State (IS), the Taliban, and Al Qaeda. However, it does not necessarily mean that they have nothing to do with religion. They may not represent the Islam that moderate Muslims know and follow, but their actions are inspired by their own version or interpretation of it. Here, it is worth emphasising that, as a Muslim, I strongly believe that the Muslim belief is no more 'violent' than those of other religions. Neither is religion the only cause of such violence. Instead, violent extremism is a complex phenomenon with multiple driving factors including injustice, identity crisis, extremist ideologies, and socioeconomic reasons. Their salience varies across time and space. There is no clear profile or single causal pathway that can define the process of radicalisation. Similarly, there is also no denying that colonialism, Western military interventions in Muslim countries and support to authoritarian Muslim rulers have played a role in the rise of Islamic extremists and militants in the Muslim world. To summarise, it is often a combination of politics and extremist interpretations of Islam that produces the vitriolic narrative and rampage that most Muslim countries face today. The problem is that while Muslims

Moderate Muslims' dilemma

almost always talk about the politics that creates terrorism, and rightly so, they are reluctant to discuss the role of radicalised interpretations in inspiring terrorist violence. Interventionist Western foreign policies alone do not explain the origin and sustenance of terrorist groups like Taliban, Al Qaeda and IS. These groups derive their sustenance mainly from obscurantist ideology that views the modern nation-state as a system of kufr and affirms the inherent right of Muslims to rule. The desire and motivation to kill and be killed comes from a sincere belief in the notion of achieving paradise through 'martyrdom'. In Muslim-majority countries, a small segment of Muslims do recognise the challenge posed by radical interpretations of religion and disputes a literalist reading advocated by fundamentalists. Quranic verses, they argue, are often misinterpreted and quoted out of context. There are, however, two points which must be considered in the debate. First, these debates are restricted to the drawing rooms and private gatherings of a tiny liberal, secular

There is no clear profile or single causal pathway that can define the process of radicalization.

and left-leaning class that is often insulated from the rest of society which is generally conservative. Publicly, most Muslims are reluctant to openly engage in a debate regarding religion. Those who do so often pay a huge price.

Second, the lack of an authoritative hierarchy in doctrinal interpretation means that any Muslim can interpret religion the way he or she likes. While making Islam more egalitarian and democratic, this also makes it easier for extremists to promulgate their literal interpretations despite opposition by a large majority of Muslim clerics and scholars. Moderate Muslims cannot be blamed for not engaging in open public debate because most Muslim countries lack the environment required for discussing sensitive issues. The countries where there is space for critical debates are the relatively advanced democracies of the developed world. However, in almost all such countries, Muslims are also a minority and often the victims of hatred and prejudice inspired by Islamophobia. Consequently, conscious of

their minority status, moderate and liberal Muslims in these countries hold back their views on religion for fear of being seen as abettors of Islamophobia. The rise of right-wing nationalism in Europe and America has only reinforced their concerns. Diaspora Muslims fear that even pointing out that militancy might have something to do with a certain interpretation will feed into Islamophobia. The nuance about particular interpretations, the argument goes on, would gradually disappear in the public debate and Islam as a religion and Muslims as a group would be criticised. These are legitimate concerns and it is, therefore, not surprising that diaspora Muslims scholars and intellectuals are at the forefront of the 'IS-has-nothing-to-do-with-religion' school of thought. The real challenge for Muslims is to be able to have these difficult conversations in a way that does not lead to more Islamophobia or buttress the West's Orientalist and stereotypical view of Islam and the Muslim world. Media, scholars, journalists and governments in the Muslim and Western world have a responsibility to assuage these fears and ensure a safe space where such conversations can be held. Moreover, they should also not mistake this as an acceptance that an extremist version of Islam is the only or main source of terrorist violence. Instead, the discussion about addressing other important drivers of violent extremism should continue. Defeating violent extremism requires a holistic strategy that should simultaneously address its social, economic and political causes. Reclaiming control of theological interpretations should be just one bit of the wider strategy. Moderate Muslims must understand, deconstruct and delegitimise the extremists' version of Islam rather than denying the existence of their interpretation. By denying any link between faith and the violence carried out in its name, Muslims foreclose all public debate on different interpretations and help extremist Muslims get away with their context-less versions. This denial has given right-wing nationalists in Europe and America an opportunity to cash in on the growing public unease about Muslims and their faith. They need to realise that the extremists' interpretation can only be countered and discredited publicly if its existence is first admitted and then actively contested and challenged. This may sound like a daunting task, but it is the only way moderate Muslims can ensure that their vision of a more tolerant and inclusive Islam prevails. (Courtesy to Dawn)

The writer is a public policy and development specialist from Balochistan.



Turkmenistan elected to the three important bodies of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

During the work of Organizational session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Turkmenistan was elected to its three important bodies: Executive Council of the World Food Program for the period of 2020-2022, Commission on Population and Development for the period of 2020-2024 and Commission on Narcotic Drugs for the period of 2020-2023. The election of our country to these structures became one more proof of growing reputation of Turkmenistan in the world, recognition of its major role in the resolution of most contemporary issues of present day global development.

A significant vector of international activity of Turkmenistan is the provision of food safety and nutritional development on the national, regional and world-wide levels.

In this regard, our country proposed an initiative to gather the High-Level Food Forum under the auspices of the UN. The meaning of the proposed initiative is based on the notion that such Forum will give effective impulse to the international partnership in the area of global nutrition and thus will assist attaining concrete future resolutions on the UN level in this direction. As to the contribution of Turkmenistan in the resolution of population related issues, it is worthwhile to note the implementation in the country of various important programs in the area of reproductive health, countrywide and regional projects aimed at provision of most convenient conditions for applying the demographic policy, protection of mother and child. Turkmenistan will continue uncompromised struggle against

the narcotics. Practical actions are realized in our country aimed at combating illegal drug trafficking and in this regard national programs are successfully implemented. The membership of Turkmenistan in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs opens new perspectives for cooperation for efficient response to this global challenge. The election of Turkmenistan to these three important bodies of the United Nations Economic and Social Council serves as a vivid proof of rightness and rationality of the course selected by our country aimed at wide international cooperation in the resolution of actual problems of modern world, suitability of our policy with the security protection, progress and sustainable development.

Pakistan appointed ambassadors and diplomats to 18 stations

By M. Bilal Zafar

In a bid to push the diplomatic discourse, Pakistan appointed ambassadors and diplomats to 18 stations, including China, India, Japan, Belgium, Malaysia, Portugal, Kenya, Singapore, Czech Republic, Algeria, Tajikistan, Brunei, USA, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, UAE, Russia, special secretary to foreign affairs. The appointments have been finalised after approval by Prime Minister Imran Khan following a detailed meeting with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi at PM's Office. According to the decisions taken, senior diplomat Naghmana Hashmi has been appointed an ambassador in Beijing, replacing Masood Khalid who has completed his stint. Moeenul Haq would be the new ambassador in New Delhi as Ambassador Sohail Mahmood has been elevated as foreign secretary. Additional Secretary Imtiaz Ahmed has been appointed as the ambassador in Tokyo, Japan while Zaheer Janjua has been posted as the ambassador in Brussels under a plan to enhance bilateral relations with the European Union (EU). Additional Secretary Amna Baloch has been posted in Malaysia while Javed Khattak would be the new ambassador in Portugal. Saqlain Syeda would be the new ambassador in Kenya while Rukhsana Afzal has been posted as the ambassador in Singapore. Khalid Jamali would be the new ambassador in the Czech Republic and Ataul Munim Shahid would be the ambassador in Algeria. Sarfraz Ahmed would be the ambassador in Sudan and Imran Haider would be the new ambassador in Tajikistan. Major General (r) Abdul Aziz Tariq would be the ambassador in Brunei while Major General (r) Mohammad Khalid Rao would officiate in Bosnia Herzegovina. Khalid Majeed would be the new ambassador in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia while Ayesha Abbas Khan would be the new counsel general in New York. Moazzam would be special secretary foreign affairs in Abu Dhabi while he would be replaced by the ambassador in Kuwait Ghulam Dastagir would be the new ambassador in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Ambassador Qazi Khalilullah has played a key role as the ambassador to Russia and he is being given an extension for six months in Moscow. (By Monitoring Desk)

	CHINA نغمہ ہاشمی Ms. Naghmana Hashmi		INDIA معین الحق Mr. Moin ul Haque
	JAPAN امتیاز احمد Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad		BELGIUM ظہیر جنجوعہ Mr. Zaheer Janjua
	MALAYSIA آمنہ بلوچ Ms. Amna Baloch		PORTUGAL جاوید خٹک Mr. Javed Khattak
	KENYA ثقلین سیدہ Ms. Saqlain Syeda		SINGAPORE رخسانہ افضل Ms. Rukhsana Afzal
	Czech Republic خالد جمالی Mr. Khalid Jamali		ALGERIA عطاء المنعم شاہد Mr. Ataul Munim Shahid
	TAJKISTAN عمران حیدر Mr. Imran Haider		SUDAN سرفراز احمد Mr. Sarfraz Ahmed
	BRUNEI عبد العزیز طارق Mr. Abdul Aziz Tariq		Bosnia Herzegovina محمد خالد راؤ Mr. Mohammad Khalid Rao
	SAUDI ARABIA خالد مجید Mr. Khalid Majeed		UAE غلام دستگیر Mr. Ghulam Dastagir
	USA عائشہ عباس خان Ms. Ayesha Abbas Khan		RUSSIA قاضی خلیل اللہ Mr. Qazi Khalilullah
			Special Secretary Foreign Affairs معظم احمد خان Mr. Moazzam Ahmad Khan

Pakistan and China celebrated 68th anniversary of diplomatic relations. An Iftar dinner was hosted by H.E. Yao Jing ambassador of China and graced by Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood. Both sides believed that our partnership will grow from strength to strength! On 21 May 1951, China & Pakistan established diplomatic relations. Now we are iron brothers & golden sisters. Long live China-Pakistan friendship! China-Pakistan dosti zindabad! Happy 68th birthday



Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Humanitarian Foundation launches annual Ramadhan Iftar Food Distribution Program

The Embassy of United Arab Emirates in Islamabad with the support of Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Humanitarian Foundation launches annual Ramadhan Iftar Food Distribution Program for the needy people in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, this distribution campaign comes in the frame work of Embassy's initiatives on "Year of Tolerance" upon the directives and follow-up by the H.E. Hamad Obaid Al-Zaabi the Ambassador of UAE in Islamabad.

The main distribution program held in Pavilian Marqui, Islamabad, under the patronage of H.E. Pir Noor-Ul-Haq Qadri, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and with the participation of Officials of government of Pakistan and DHM of UAE Embassy Mr. Abdul Aziz Al Neyadi and other officials Islamabad.

In his speech on the occasion the Honorable Minister H.E. Pir Noor-Ul-Haq Qadri, expressed his thanks and appreciation on behalf of the Government of Pakistan to the people and leadership of UAE. The Minister added, UAE always assisted Pakistan in times of need and established development programs in infrastructure, health and Education sectors, such as building roads and bridges, schools and hospitals and water supply projects in all over Pakistan, and all these assistance programs are based on brotherhood and humanitarian grounds.

H.E. Hamad Obaid Al-Zaabi said that the launch of the distribution is part of the initiatives and plans of the Embassy with charitable and humanitarian foundations in the month of Ramadan, in which we respond to all appeals from various regions of

Pakistan in close coordination with the local Pakistani governments that cooperate with us closely in order to deliver food for every needy family, He also praised the generous support provided by charitable organizations to the Pakistani people, and expressed appreciation to sincere brotherhood between the UAE and Pakistan linked by the historical ties between the two countries.

UAE Embassy launches annual Ramadhan Iftar Food Distribution Program for the needy people in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan with the support of Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Humanitarian Foundation



YEAR OF TOLERANCE



King Salman humanitarian aid and relief centre support to our brethren in Pakistan with 80 Tons of Dates in Pakistan. This Relief programme implemented in partnership with World Food Programme in Pakistan. H.E Nawaf bin Said Al –Maiki Ambassador of Saudi Arabia distributed the packets of dates. Country Director World Food Programme Mr. Finbarr Curran also present on the occasion.



Iftar ceremony is hosted by Royal embassy of Saudi Arabia in Islamabad. His Excellency Mr. Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki ambassador of Saudi Arabia welcomed the guest. Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Mr. Noor-ul-Haq Qadri, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ms Firdous Ashiq Awan, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan Qasim Suri, Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Hussain Chaudhry, Raja Zafar ul Haq leader of the opposition in Senate invited as chief guests. High dignitaries, Diplomats, Businessmen, Government officials and media persons also graced the occasion.





Pakistan attaches immense importance to its relations with Qatar

By M. Bilal Zafar

The Ambassador of Qatar H.E. Saqr Bin Mubarak Al-Mansouri called on the Speaker, National Assembly Asad Qaiser in Parliament House. Speaker Asad Qaiser while talking to the Ambassador said that Pakistan attaches immense importance to its relations with Qatar since both the countries were tied in eternal bonds of religion, brotherhood, history and culture. He said that Pakistan needs to further solidify existing bonds through parliamentary cooperation besides other varied fields. The Speaker underlined the need for participation of Qatari investors in power and infrastructure development projects in Pakistan. He appreciated the unwavering support of Qatari government to Pakistan as and when required. He asked the Ambassador

to convey his good wishes to his Qatari Counterpart.

The Ambassador of Qatar H.E. Saqr Bin Mubarak Al-Mansouri appreciated the sentiments of the Speaker and assured his Government's all-out support to Pakistan in diverse fields. He said that Qatari National Assembly was also keen to enhance its cooperation with National Assembly of Pakistan. He was confident that fraternal relations between both the countries would further strengthen by frequent interaction between the parliamentarians of both the countries and economic cooperation. The Ambassador informed that Qatari investors were keen to take part in the economic activities in Pakistan and various agreements have been signed for investment in agriculture, power and manufacturing sectors. He also assured for his

government's support for socio-economic uplift of marginalized segments of the society, health, education and sanitation.

Qatari National Assembly was also keen to enhance its cooperation with National Assembly of Pakistan: Ambassador of Qatar H.E. Saqr Bin Mubarak Al-Mansouri





Polish Armed Forces valued Pakistan Army's efforts in fight against terrorism and contributions towards regional peace and stability

M. Bilal Zafar

Lieutenant General Jaroslaw Mika, Commander of the Polish Armed Forces acknowledged and appreciated Pakistan Army's professionalism, efforts in fight against terrorism and contributions towards regional

peace and stability. He said this while visiting the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, where he called upon Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa, according to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). "Issues of mutual interest including defence, training and

security cooperation between the two armies were discussed." Earlier, on arrival at GHQ, the commander of the Polish armed forces laid floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada. A contingent of Pakistan Army presented the guard of honor to the visiting dignitary.



Pakistan & Latvia

enhancing bilateral relations

By M. Bilal Zafar

The 5th round of Bilateral Political Consultations between Pakistan and Latvia was held in Riga. Additional Secretary (Europe) Ambassador Zaheer A. Janjua and Ambassador Janis Mazeiks, Under Secretary of State and Political Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, led their respective delegations. The two sides undertook a comprehensive review of the bilateral relations and identified areas for future cooperation in political, economic, trade, investment, education and cultural fields. The Additional Secretary briefed on the political and economic developments in Pakistan, including the strengthening of democracy, emerging economy and future prospects of growth as well as government's people-centric agenda and efforts aimed at establishing rule of law, good governance, justice and accountability. He invited Latvian companies to benefit from

Pakistan's investor-friendly policies. The Additional Secretary briefed the Latvian side on the situation in South Asia, notably the Indian aggression and Pakistan's measured response as well as steps in support of peace and stability. He added that Pakistan had consistently worked for military de-escalation, diffusion of tensions, and resumption of dialogue with India to peacefully resolve all outstanding disputes. In the context of deteriorating situation and gross violations of human rights in the Indian Occupied Kashmir, the Additional Secretary urged the Latvian side to take cognizance of these abuses, documented extensively by international organizations, including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Additional Secretary apprised the Latvian side of Pakistan's efforts to facilitate the ongoing talks for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. Reiterating that there was no military solution to the Afghan conflict, he emphasized that a politically-negotiated

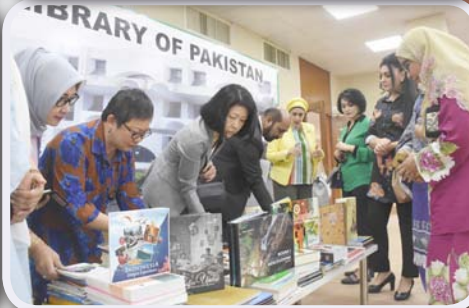
settlement, led and owned by the Afghans, was the only sustainable way forward. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the level of cooperation at the international fora, including the UN and the European Union, and agreed to continue supporting each other. The next round of Pakistan-Latvia Bilateral Political Consultations would be held in Islamabad on mutually-convenient dates.



H.E. Kwak Sung-kyu Ambassador of Korea hosted the Iftar dinner reception which is attended by the Pakistani government officials and local diplomatic corps. A number of Pakistani dignitaries and diplomats (including former President Wasim Sajjad, Sayed Zulfiqar Abbas Bukhari, Tariq Banuri Higher Education Chairman also graced the occasion.



Within the Framework of outreach activities of the Heads of Diplomatic Missions' Spouses Group, a number of spouses of Ambassadors and High Commissioners donated 140 books from their private collections and from the collections of their Embassies to the National Library of Pakistan. Spouses of Heads of Diplomatic Missions president H.E. Mrs. Ghada Ahmed, Spouse of the Ambassador of Egypt attempts, through this donation, to reach out to the Pakistani community by introducing their different cultures through their books.



Ambassador of Ukraine H.E. Vlad Lako hosted Iftar dinner reception in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Guest from Pakistani community and all Pakistani Association of Graduates of Ukrainian Universities also attended the Iftar dinner reception.



Mr. & Mrs Aziz Boolani host a grand Iftar Dinner at Serena Hotel

By Hussain Odhwani

Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels and his wife Wiqar Boolani hosted a grand Iftar Dinner. Parliamentarians, Ambassadors, Government Officials, Members of the Armed Forces, Media Representatives, Heads of the International Agencies and Corporate Executives were present along with the friends and well-wishers of Serena. The Sheesh Mahal banquet hall appeared to be a testament of Arabian

night, with Ramadan decorations, glittered with moonlit light surrounded with white drapes and Bedouin tents in the foyer area of hotel.

There was a wide variety of cuisine for the guests to choose from, with live food corner showcasing food from each restaurant of hotel. A diverse healthy corner was catered for guests who were conscious about their health. The Pakistani sweets corner attracted a large number of guests.

The management of the hotel was busy

tending to the guests and ensuring a smooth flow to the event while the hosts stayed at the entrance of the hall to welcome each guest personally.

The guests enjoyed the iftar dinner in a serene environment with the traditional live music while the evening reflected anecdotes of Serena's legacy of immaculate service and feasts that were not only gastronomical but also visual.





Mian fazal Elahi CEO Diplomatic Focus magazine hosted iftar dinner reception with the collaboration of Startup Pakistan. This reception was organized in the honor of Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Diplomats and Business Community. Government officials, High dignitaries, Diplomats, media persons graced the occasion.





Dean of Diplomatic Corps honored outgoing Envoy

Farewell Reception hosted in honor of Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria H.E. Mr Roumen Pirontchev and High commissioner of Australia H.E. Ms. Margaret Adamson organized by Ambassador of Turkmenistan and Dean of Diplomatic Corps H.E. Atadjan Movlamov at Marriott Hotel Islamabad.. Ambassadors, High Commissioners and defense advisors from diplomatic missions, politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, journalists and officials graced the occasion.





Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Hosted Iftar Dinner Reception

Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan H.E. Barlybay Sadykov hosted Iftar dinner reception at his residence. Mayor of Islamabad Sheikh Anser Aziz, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, journalists and government officials graced the occasion.



Embassy of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Hosted iftar dinner reception

The Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Almadani hosted iftar dinner reception.

H.E. Mr. and Mrs. Ibrahim Almadani welcomed the guest on the occasion. Diplomats, High dignitaries, Government officials, members of business community and media persons join the occasion.





Iftar dinner reception hosted by H.E. Tarik Ahsan, High Commissioner for the People's of Republic of Bangladesh in Pakistan. Ambassadors, High Commissioners and defence advisors from diplomatic missions, politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen, journalists and officials of the Bangladesh High Commission attended the iftar-dinner. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Muhammad Usman Dar, Chairman of Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Convener of National Assembly Friendship Group for Bangladesh MNA Chaudhry Mahmood Bashir Virk, Senator Lt General (retd) Abdul Qayyum, Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood, former federal Interior Minister A Rahman Malik, former State Minister for Foreign Affairs Nawabzada Malik Amad Khan, Mayor of Islamabad Sheikh Ansar Aziz and Member of National Assembly Mehnaz Akber Aziz were present.



Best of luck!

Pakistan finalizes make-up of World Cup squad

By Hassan Zafar

Chair of Pakistan men's selection committee, Inzamam-ul-Haq, said the team combination has been revised after taking into account the fast bowlers' performance against England as well as considering the nature of wickets that are likely to be presented in the World Cup. "Junaid and Faheem had been originally preferred over a few other bowlers based on their recent performances and the investment we had made on them since 2017. They had the opportunity to cement their World Cup spots, but they were well below-par in the series against England even though they were up against the difficult challenge of bowling on placid and batsmen-friendly wickets. "After it became obvious

that the bat is likely to dominate the ball in the World Cup, we revisited our strategy and reverted to the pace of Mohammad Amir and Wahab Riaz. Furthermore, Amir and Wahab give the fast bowling attack more experience to back and support the relatively inexperienced but immensely talented Shaheen Shah Afridi and Mohammad Hasnain." Wahab has taken 102 wickets in 79 ODIs, including 24 wickets in 12 World Cup matches in 2011 and 2015, while Amir has picked up 60 wickets in 51 matches, including five wickets in Pakistan's successful ICC Champions Trophy 2017 campaign. Wahab's last ODI was in the ICC Champions Trophy 2017 against India in Birmingham, while he last represented Pakistan in the Dubai Test against Australia in October 2018. Explaining

the decision to recall Wahab, Inzamam said: "The lack of potency of our frontline bowlers in the recent ODI series against England meant that a change was needed. In addition, we now know that we will encounter batting wickets throughout the World Cup campaign. "The combination of both these elements, meant that we believed that right now, utilising the World Cup experience and knowledge of Wahab was the correct choice. "Wahab has been training and playing club cricket, and the player of his calibre will not face much problem in adapting and adjusting to the gruelling demands of the World Cup. In addition, playing in the World Cup warm up matches, bowling his quota, will have him match-ready "The bowling unit during the England ODIs has not clicked as anticipated or expected; if we have at our disposal two vastly experienced pace duo of Amir and Wahab, then it will be foolish not to include them," says Inzamam. On Abid Ali, Inzamam said: "It has not been an easy decision to leave out Abid, particularly after he got only one opportunity on the tour. But, he was our third choice opener. After both the first choice openers struck early form, we preferred Asif Ali as he brings firepower to the team that can strengthen our chances in the tournament. "Both our openers are in form and average over 50 each. If required, we have a fully fit Mohammad Hafeez who can be promoted in the batting order, while Haris Sohail can be the option."



PAKISTAN SQUAD FOR WORLD CUP 2019



OPENERS



FAKHAR ZAMAN



INAM-UL-HAQ

MIDDLE-ORDER BATSMEN



ASIF ALI



BABAR AZAM



HARIS SOHAIL



MOHAMMAD HAFEEZ



SARFARAZ AHMED



SHOAIB MALIK

SPINNERS



IMAD WASIM



SHADAB KHAN



HASAN ALI



MOHAMMAD AMIR



MOHAMMAD HASNAIN

FAST BOWLERS



SHAHEEN SHAH AFRIDI



WAHAB RIAZ



Sohaib R. Malik

THE Belt and Road Initiative has attracted praise and critique since its inception in 2013. The response is not unnatural for the transnational endeavour that could mobilise an investment of \$1.3 trillion by 2027 and will potentially change the geo-economics of partner countries and regions. It remains to be seen, however, if BRI's architects will follow in the footsteps of Western hegemony or seek mutually beneficial partnerships.

The West, led by the US, is becoming more wary of China's bolstering economic muscle with every passing day. The country has faced more intense scrutiny since 2015 when it announced 'Made in China 2025', a plan to spearhead high-tech industrial development. Beijing presents it as an effort to circumvent the middle-income trap, but Western countries accuse it of mercantilism and subsidising Chinese firms heavily for a competitive edge over their Western rivals.

On the political front, Western strategists equate BRI with debt-trap diplomacy to sow the seeds of distrust. The accusation is ironically levelled by the architects and custodians of the Bretton Woods system. Besides, it emanates from a policy to limit China from playing an assertive role in the developing world, which may undermine the West's contemporary dominance. Pakistan — the host of BRI's crown jewel, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor — has strategic ties with China, which both countries are striving to deepen further. Our analysts argue CPEC is a historic opportunity for Pakistan to leapfrog into the 21st century.

In this backdrop, it's barely noted that the corridor is now a test case for Beijing too to demonstrate its ability of becoming a trusted partner for the Global South. It is nonetheless incumbent on the Pakistani government to remain cognisant of channelling the benefits of CPEC towards our youth and poorer population. No matter how sincerely Beijing pursues CPEC, we cannot discount the fact that its own economic interests, not inherently exploitative though, would hold supreme, and we must

Towards CPEC 3.0

realise that sooner rather than later.

As President Xi presses ahead with his flagship initiative and presents BRI as a common development goal, our decision-makers should aim to nurture a long-term partnership that yields equitable dividends. This necessitates an understanding of the needs of our economy for today and for tomorrow and prioritising the areas that hold all-out benefits. Likewise, Beijing must pursue economic ties with Islamabad based on the principles of transparency and shared prosperity, regardless of our much weaker economic might.

Despite some politicking regarding CPEC's initial priorities, it was carefully crafted because the provision of energy and transport infrastructure is a prerequisite for economic advancement. The second phase prioritises agriculture, digital connectivity, industry, tourism etc. As this economic integration accelerates, future collaboration, CPEC 3.0, should be manoeuvred towards high-tech sectors — namely telecom, electric mobility and renewables, where China is an emerging global leader — to optimise CPEC's benefits.

In the telecom industry, China's Huawei has become a leading equipment supplier and is among the world's most innovative companies with nearly 88,000 patents as of December 2018. Analysts believe it is set to lead the world in the rollout of the future's most promising, and critical, technology: fifth-generation (5G) mobile telecom infrastructure. As of April 2019, Huawei had signed more than 40 5G contracts globally, proving that the firm can commercialise its solutions faster than its Western and Asian rivals.

Many Chinese tech giants are already present in Pakistan. Since digital connectivity and infrastructure are essential for tomorrow's economies, future cooperation in this area should form a major pillar of CPEC. Regardless of the US government's fierce opposition, Chinese tech giants will be at the forefront of advancements in the telecom industry. Therefore, B2B partnerships could help Pakistan's budding ICT sector to develop capacities by engaging with Chinese partners. Meanwhile, Chinese firms can target the vast untapped potential of Pakistani market.

Concerned chiefly about its soaring dependence on imported fuels and worsening urban pollution — challenges we can relate with — the Chinese government implemented several corrective measures. Since taking the reins in 2013, President Xi has stressed

the need for sustainability more than his predecessors. Resultantly, China is a leader in the renewables industry and the largest market for electric vehicles (EVs). According to Wood Mackenzie, a consultancy, by December 2018 China had 181 gigawatt of wind and 175GW of solar PV capacity — a whopping one-third of installations worldwide.

Although Western original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) dominate the global wind turbine value chain, Chinese PV suppliers are rivalled by none, albeit facing anti-dumping duties by many countries. Chinese turbine OEMs have struggled to lure investors outside their domestic market, but thanks to CPEC, they hold a 30pc share in Pakistan's nascent wind energy market. Chinese turbine OEMs are willing to localise production for future installations, which can lay the foundation for tech transfer — yet another incentive that sets renewables apart from thermal power.

China leads the world in emerging trends in e-mobility. It has over 200 million electric two-wheelers and recorded sales of 1m EVs in 2018 — more than the rest of the world combined. According to McKinsey, a consultancy, the success of Chinese OEMs is more pronounced in the e-bus segment — of the 97,000 urban buses sold in China in 2018, 87,000 were electric.

Beijing has a goal that one-fifth of vehicles sold in China by 2025 should be electric, which will catalyse exponential growth in EV sales and help Chinese manufacturers consolidate their strengths. Advancements in these sectors will create further synergies. For instance, 5G connectivity is necessary to commercialise autonomous EVs and robo-taxis, which will rely on artificial intelligence and fuelled (ideally) through renewables.

This is not to suggest that China will help us become an important player in these futuristic technologies. That thought is far-fetched. Nevertheless, by aiding Islamabad in these areas to address the economic and environmental challenges it faces, Beijing will vindicate President Xi's stated vision of BRI and legitimise its leadership in the developing world. Or else we must tone down the enthusiasm that encircles CPEC and reassess the allocation of our scarce institutional resources for better outcomes. (courtesy to Dwan)

The writer is an analyst specialising in energy policy and political economy.

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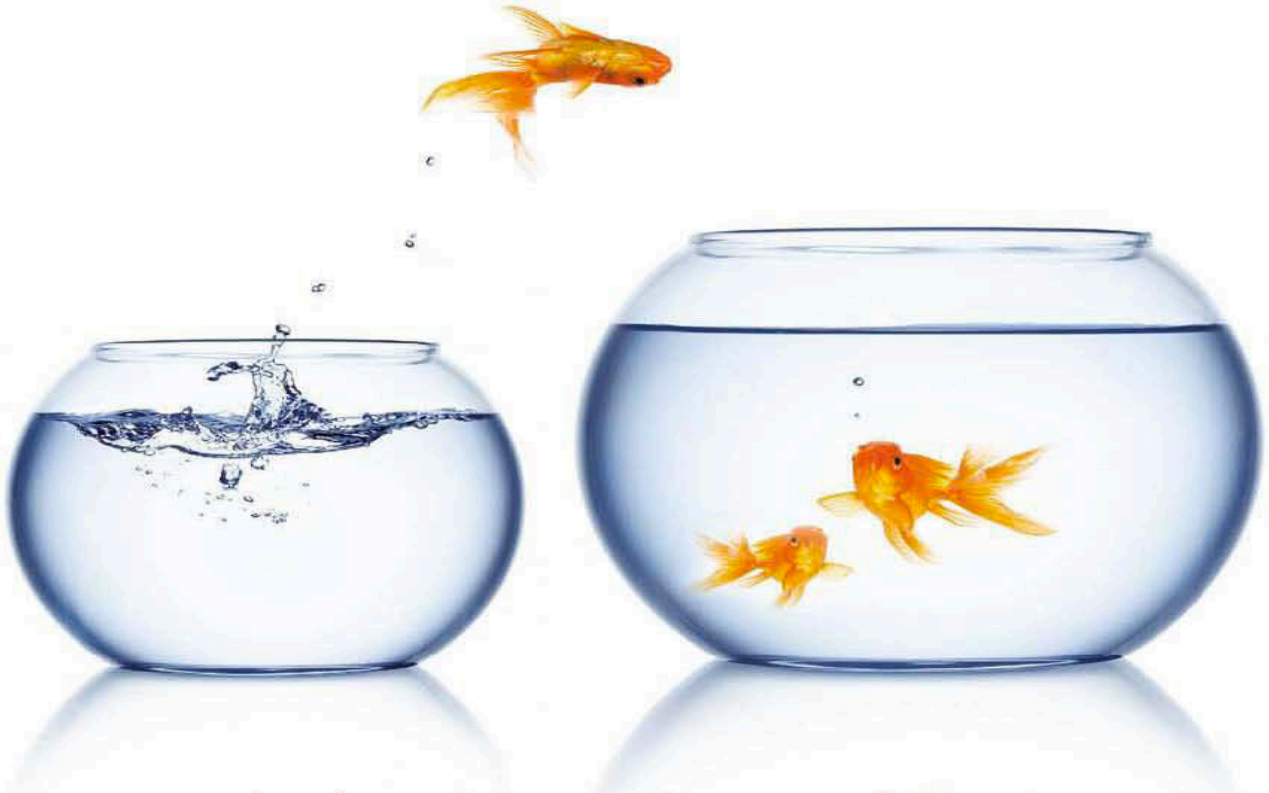
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