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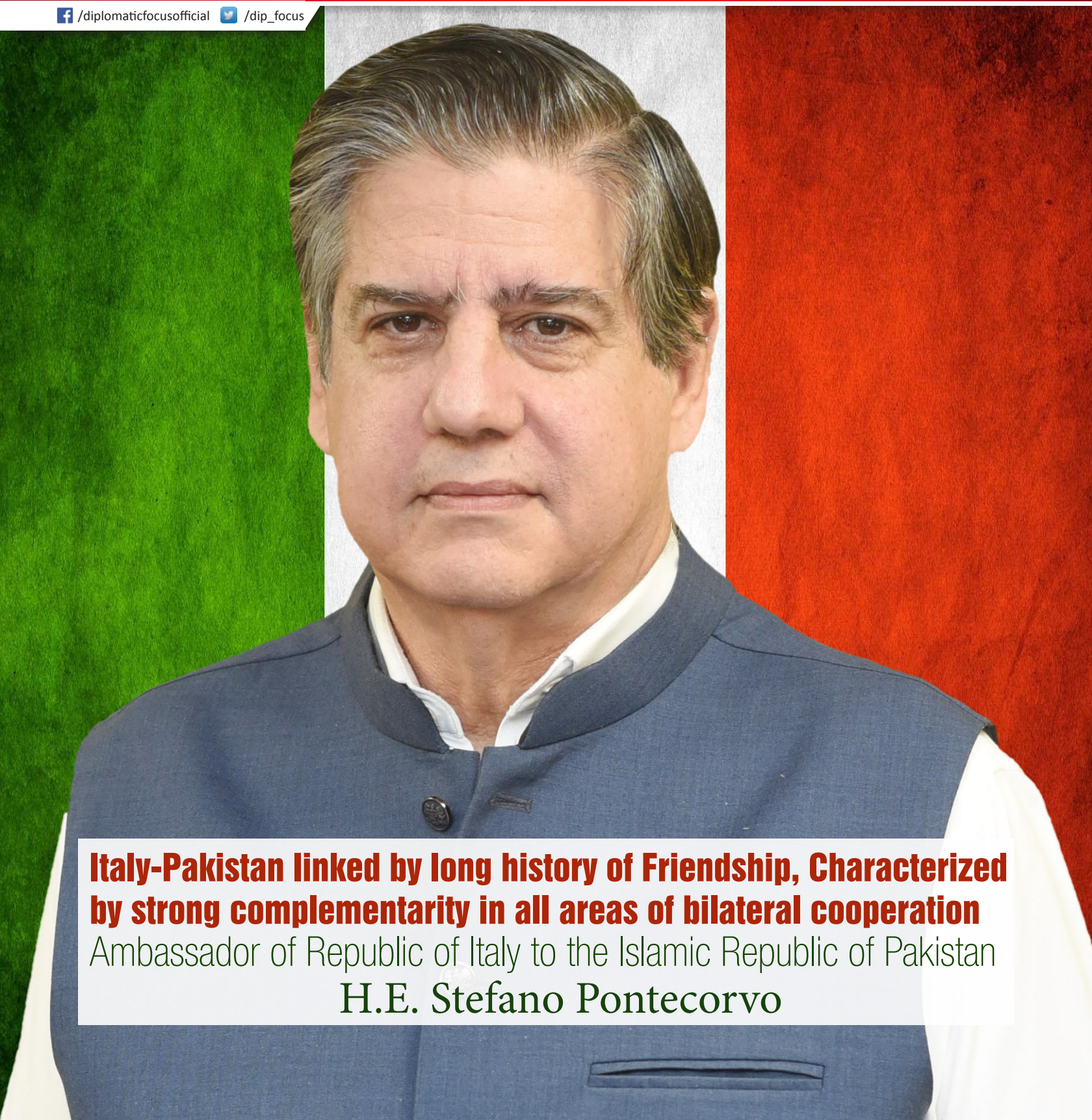
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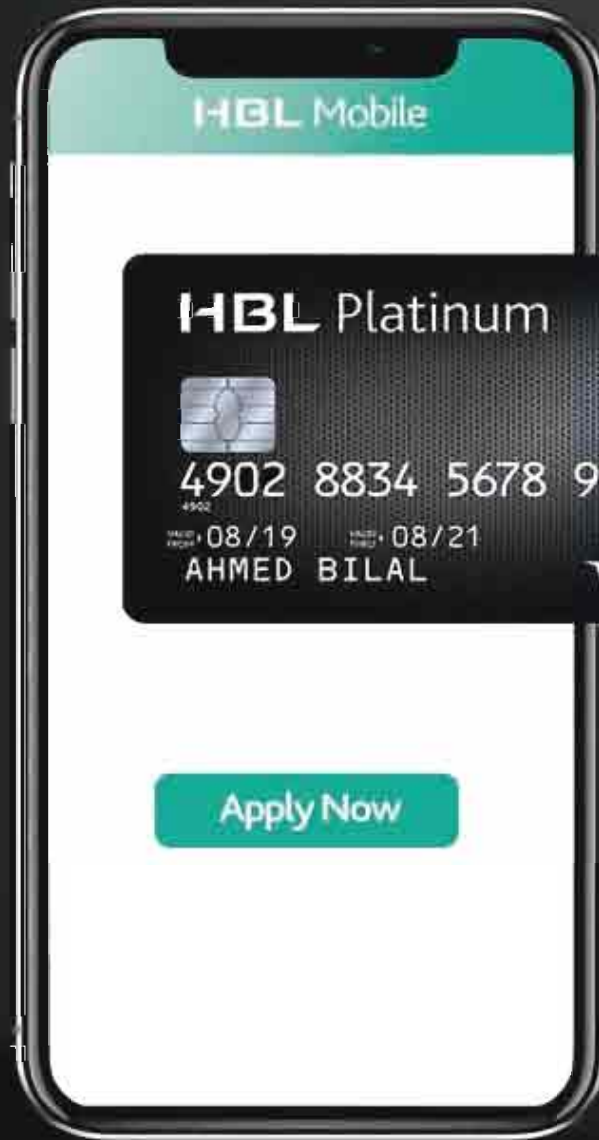
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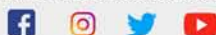
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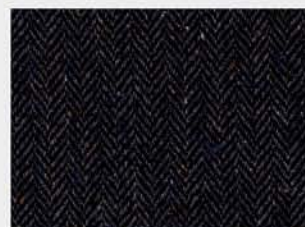
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12 President Dr Arif Alvi inaugurated the Envoys Conference on Africa

The Conference will bring together the Pakistani envoys posted in Africa with important stakeholders including senior leadership from relevant ministries and departments and representatives of the private sector. A Foreign Office statement said Pakistan's relations with African nations have always been characterized by cordiality, mutual trust and understanding.

52 Exclusive Interview Ambassador of Republic of Italy to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Stefano Pontecorvo

Your Excellency! First of all, I, on behalf of 'Diplomatic Focus' appreciate your efforts for enhancing the bilateral relations and praise your role as the ambassador of the Republic of Italy to Pakistan. I am also thankful to you for giving us time out of your busy schedule. DF: Your Excellency! You have been serving in Pakistan for the last several years how would you find people conduct in Pakistan and what kind of perception has developed in your mind about Pakistan

62 PAKISTAN AND CANADA AGREE TO EXPLORE AVENUES FOR DEFENSE AND SECURITY COOPERATION

Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Editor Diplomatic Focus and Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood photograph with the memorabilia signature bat of Prime Minister Imran Khan displayed in Sahibzada Yaqub Khan Hall which is denoted by Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Editor Diplomatic Focus.

64 PFOWA Charity Bazaar organized with collaboration of Diplomatic community

The Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) held its annual charity bazar, providing diplomats a platform to raise funds for underprivileged segments of their community. First Lady Samina Alvi inaugurated the bazar held at the lawns of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), where families of diplomats set up stalls showcasing their respective national and cultural diversity. The MoFA's flagship event was meant to raise funds to support the families of its low-



Special Supplement on the 48th National Day of the United Arab Emirates



Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan
The Founding father of the UAE
(14 May 1933 – 2 November 2004)



His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi

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Mian Fazal Elahi

China and Pakistan have urged the United States “to sift fact from fiction” before questioning their bilateral infrastructure development program, which Beijing is funding under its global Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The reaction came after a senior American diplomat spoke critically of the multibillion-dollar collaboration, known as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and warned it would eventually worsen Islamabad’s economic troubles and benefit only Beijing.

Alice Wells, acting assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian affairs, said the U.S. offered a better model that would improve the fundamentals of Pakistan’s troubled economy. She also raised questions about the transparency and fairness of CPEC projects as well as related Chinese loans Islamabad has received. Her remarks drew a strong response from Chinese and Pakistani officials on November 22. Beijing’s ambassador to Islamabad, Yao Jing, said Wells lacked “accurate” knowledge and relied primarily on Western media “propaganda” to level the accusations.

Critics in the U.S. and elsewhere see China’s BRI program as a “debt trap” for countries like Pakistan, which have struggling economies that would make it difficult for them to make Chinese loan repayments. Islamabad’s repayments are due in the next few years and analysts say that process will bring the country’s depleting foreign exchange reserves under pressure.

Ambassador Yao dismissed those concerns in a press conference, saying unlike Washington and West-governed lenders like the International Monetary Fund, Beijing does not offer or suspend financial loans for “political” reasons. China will never ever ask for these loan repayments as long as you are in need of this money.

CPEC is open to investment from anywhere in the world and China would happily welcome U.S. investment in it. The CPEC which was announced during the state visit of the Chinese President Xi Jinping to Pakistan in April 2015 is, by far, the largest foreign investment project in Pakistan. CPEC is a manifestation of “Look East” policy which is vital for the socio-economic development of the Gilgit Baltistan and Balochistan regions. Furthermore, CPEC will bring billions per annum in terms of transit revenue after the successful channelising of the corridor. Also, it will lessen the load on Karachi and Bin Qasim ports, giving momentum to Pakistan’s seaborne trade. Pakistan will become a country with a chain of universal logistics’ standards, promoting business and trade. CPEC projects will not only develop energy storage facilities but will also introduce hydro-power through constructing medium-sized HPP dams. CPEC is also promising for the exploration and development of mineral resource sector of Pakistan besides developing skilled human resource.

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.

Important Announcement



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

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Ambassadors of European Union and Czech Republic present their Credentials to President Dr. Arif Alvi

By M. Mian Fazal Elahi

Ambassadors-designate of European Union Ms. Androulla Kaminara and Czech Republic Mr. Tomas Smetanka presented their Credentials to President Dr. Arif Alvi in a credentials ceremony at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. The President felicitated the newly appointed Ambassadors to Pakistan and hoped that they would work for further strengthening the existing ties of European Union and Czech Republic with Pakistan. Later, the Ambassadors separately called on the President. Speaking on the occasion, the President said that Pakistan was desirous of cordial relations with all friendly countries. He stressed that it was incumbent upon the international community to work for the alleviation of the misery that the people of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir were suffering at the hands of the Indian fascist regime. He added that the world peace had been endangered by the reckless and provocative approach adopted by this regime.



Ambassador-designate of , Mr. Tomas Smetanka presenting his credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi in Islamabad.



Ambassador-designate of of European Union, Ms. Androulla Kaminara presenting her credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi in Islamabad.



President Dr. Arif Alvi talking to outgoing Ambassador of Iran, Mr. Mehdi Honardoost, who paid farewell call on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad

Envoy of Iran paid a farewell by President of Pakistan

Pakistan is grateful for Supreme Leader of Iran Ayatullah Ali Khamenei's strong support for the just struggle of the people of Kashmir, said President Dr. Arif Alvi, while talking to the outgoing Ambassador of Iran, Mr. Mehdi Honardoost, who paid farewell call on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad today. The unilateral and illegal actions taken by the fascist Indian government, violating the human rights of the people of Kashmir, are a continuation of BJP's hostile and restrictive attitude towards all its minorities, he added. The President further

said that Pakistan would continue its support for humans rights of all communities around the world and in this regard the initiative of English TV channel by Pakistan, Turkey, and Malaysia would go a long way towards countering Islamophobia.

The President said that Pakistan and Iran had close bilateral relations based on religion, culture, people-to-people contacts and commonality of interests. He highlighted that close cooperative relations with all neighbouring countries including Iran was a key

foreign policy priority of Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan greatly valued Iran's consistent support on various regional issues, he added.

The Ambassador emphasized that Pakistan and Iran were brotherly countries and regional peace and stability was their high priority.

The President appreciated the services of the outgoing Iranian Ambassador in furthering the bilateral relations between the two countries during his tenure in Pakistan and wished him well for his future assignments.



President Dr. Arif Alvi talking to outgoing Ambassador of Sudan, H.E. Tageldin Elhadi Eltahir, who paid farewell call on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad

Envoy of Sudan paid a farewell by President of Pakistan

The unilateral and illegal actions taken by the fascist Indian government, violating the human rights of the people of Kashmir, are a continuation of BJP's hostile and restrictive attitude towards all its minorities, as reflected in a 113 day long clamp-down in Kashmir, said President Dr. Arif Alvi, while talking to the outgoing Ambassador of Sudan, Mr. Tageldin Elhadi Eltahir, who paid farewell call on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad today. He urged the international community to

persuade India to abide by its responsibility to uphold the basic human rights of all its citizens.

The President said Pakistan valued its friendship with Sudan and held the country in high esteem. He further said that Pakistan keenly desired to enhance the existing relations with Sudan in all domains particularly collaboration in trade, defence and economic matters. However, the current volume of bilateral trade was not commensurate to the true potential, he added. He emphasized that proactive measures

were needed to enhance the quantum of bilateral and underscored that Pakistan could offer skilled manpower for banking, medical, textile and agriculture sectors as well as the development of infrastructure in Sudan.

The President appreciated the services of the outgoing Ambassador of Sudan in furthering the bilateral relations between the two countries during his tenure in Pakistan and wished him well for his future assignments.



President Dr Arif Alvi inaugurated the Envoys Conference on Africa

By Mian Fazal Elahi / M Bilal Zafar

The Conference will bring together the Pakistani envoys posted in Africa with important stakeholders including senior leadership from relevant ministries and departments and

representatives of the private sector.

A Foreign Office statement said Pakistan's relations with African nations have always been characterized by cordiality, mutual trust and understanding.

"Consistent with the vision of the leadership, and priorities of the Government, the Conference aims at deepening Pakistan's engagement with Africa in diverse fields," the statement mentioned.





The Conference participants shall deliberate on ways and means to further strengthen existing relations with African countries and diversify and deepen political, economic, security and socio cultural ties.

The Conference will also provide leading manufacturers, exporters and IT organizations the opportunity to brief the Pakistani Envoys on potential goods and services which can be exported to African markets.

Africa is the second largest continent of the world with 20% of the world's landmass and 54 sovereign states, with 1.2 billion people and the largest youth population on the globe.

With a collective GDP of over US \$ 2.3 trillion and an import market of around \$500 billion, most countries in Africa are witnessing stable growth. 'Due to its rich natural resources and growing middle-class consumer market, the World bank has predicted that most African countries will reach middle income status by 2025. This presents a tremendous opportunity for Pakistani goods and services.

As part of UN peace-keeping operations, Pakistan has made a significant contribution for peace, security and development on the Continent over the past several decades.

The Conference also envisages interaction with Resident Ambassadors of Africa in Pakistan.

The outcome of Conference will be presented to the Prime Minister in the closing session along with concrete recommendations crafted by the Envoys, proposing a way forward for robust engagement between Pakistan and Africa.



Queen Maxima of the Netherlands visited Pakistan in her capacity as the United Nations Secretary General's Special Advocate (UNSGSA) for inclusive finance for development



By Mian Fazal Elahi

Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, the UN Secretary General's Special Advocate (UNSGSA) for Inclusive Finance for Development, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr. While welcoming the Queen, the President expressed appreciation for UNSGSA's commitment to the promotion of Financial Inclusion for Development. The President stated that Pakistan had achieved a significant progress on financial inclusion since UNSGSA's last visit in 2016 and this visit will also have positive implications on the ongoing initiatives in the country. The President apprised Queen Maxima on the steps Pakistan would take under the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) till 2023 for further promoting financial inclusion in the country

with emphasis on women financial inclusion. The President stressed that Pakistan considers financial inclusion as an effective tool to achieve progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), eradicate poverty, and realizing inclusive economic growth. The UNSGSA briefed the President on her engagements in Islamabad and expressed appreciation for Pakistan's efforts including the prioritization of access to financial services for women and promoting inclusive Fintech the use of technology in financial services.

Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, in her capacity as the UN Secretary General's Special Advocate (UNSGSA) for Inclusive Finance for Development, called on Prime Minister Imran Khan at PM Office. The Prime Minister expressed appreciation for Her Majesty's

commitment to the promotion of Financial Inclusion for Development. He said that her visit to Pakistan would provide added impetus to the ongoing efforts by the Government for promotion of financial inclusion in Pakistan. The Prime Minister also apprised Queen Maxima of various welfare initiatives taken by the government including the flagship 'Ehsaas Programme'. These initiatives, he added, were aimed at promoting financial inclusion especially for women and young people, with the ultimate goal of poverty alleviation, inclusive economic development and women empowerment. UNSGSA appreciated Pakistan's efforts for promoting financial inclusion in the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan and reiterated support for Pakistan's quest for poverty alleviation



and inclusive economic development. While appreciating Prime Minister Imran Khan's efforts of prioritizing access of women to finance and digitizing government payments and procedures, the Queen stressed the need for promotion of Fintech – the use of technology in financial services – while safeguarding privacy and ensuring security and efficiency.

Her Majesty Queen Máxima of the Netherlands met with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss progress of financial inclusion in Pakistan. While appreciating the UNSGSA's dedication to promote financial inclusion, the Foreign Minister said that her visit would provide added impetus to ongoing initiatives in the country. Foreign Minister also highlighted steps taken by Pakistan to promote financial inclusion. The Minister informed the UNSGSA that the government had prioritized the National Financial Inclusion Strategy 'NFIS' as part of its initial 100 day agenda. Its implementation by 2023 is expected to lead to a creation of three million new jobs and additional exports of \$ 5.5 billion through enhanced access to finance for SME's. In line with the purpose of Queen Maxima's visit, the Foreign Minister also invited to the meeting a select group of civil society representatives working on financial inclusion and development of women in Pakistan. Sadaffe Abid, founder of CIRCLE, Khalida Brohi, Founder of Sughar Foundation, Fiza Farhan, former CEO Buksh Foundation, and Shehzad Roy, founder of Zindagi Trust attended the meeting and provided valuable inputs. The UNSGSA appreciated Pakistan's efforts including the prioritization of access to financial service for women and promoting inclusive Fintech– the use of technology in financial services. Her Majesty Queen Maxima arrived in Pakistan this morning on a three-day visit. She is also expected to meet the President and Prime Minister during the visit.

Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, visited the Finance Division for a meeting with Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance & Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez



Shaikh and his economic team. During the meeting, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh gave the Queen a detailed overview of the economic situation in Pakistan with a focus on various policy steps and initiatives undertaken by the government to restore macroeconomic stability and the progress achieved in recent months in different sectors, particularly 40 % decrease in current account deficit, over 15 per cent growth in revenue collection, grant of incentives and loan facility to exporters, tax exemption on exports, investment of over US \$1 billion foreign investment in local bond market, doubling of budget allocations for social safety net, disbursement of direct financial support and stipends to women, youth and students, and nearly 240 per cent growth in foreign direct investment during the last four months as compared to corresponding

period last year. The adviser also spoke on the issue of inflation and enhancing local productivity through various policy means and measures. He further briefed the Queen on the nature of public finance and mechanism for resource distribution between the centre and provinces and allocation of funds and resources for protection of the poor and marginalized sections of the population. The Queen thanked the Adviser for a comprehensive presentation of various aspects of the economy and shared her view on a range of economic issues, including the need for enhanced financial inclusion, better coordination among different tiers of the government, digitalization in government departments, role of innovations and information technology in enhancing transparency and efficiency in government and support to start-ups and new businesses.





President Dr. Arif Alvi has conferred Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon Chief of General Staff of Turkish Armed Forces, General Yasar Guler

By Mian Fazal Elahi

President Dr. Arif Alvi has conferred Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon Chief of General Staff of Turkish Armed Forces, General Yasar Guler, in a special investiture ceremony at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. Later General Yasar Guler along with his delegation, called on the President. On the occasion, the President felicitated him and said that Pakistan and Turkey enjoyed an unparalleled fraternal relationship embedded in a shared cultural and religious heritage, which had now transformed into a strong strategic partnership over the years and is growing stronger. He said that the English TV channel to be collaboratively launched by Pakistan, Turkey, and Malaysia would go a long way to combat Islamophobia on international level.

The President said that Pakistan and Turkey had supported each other in difficult times and appreciated Turkish support on Kashmir issue, particularly in United Nations. He reiterated Pakistan's concern on Indian Army atrocities perpetrated on innocent people of Jammu & Kashmir especially after revoking of Article 370 and 35-A in August 2019 by the Government of India. He also highlighted the ongoing Indian activities and human rights violations in occupied Kashmir and emphasized that the international community should play a positive role to resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with UN Resolution. The President said that the two countries would continue to support each other on all fora.

He highlighted that our defense collaboration, marked by frequent high-level exchanges, had increased manifold. He emphasized that we

should explore ways to further strengthen relations in this critical area. He also appreciated Turkish government's support to Pakistan on Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), FATF and its position on UN Security Council reforms.

The President said that the bilateral trade between the two countries was not commensurate with the true potential. He stressed that there was a vast potential for investment in Pakistan especially in energy, infrastructure and food processing sector. He

underlined that Turkish investments in Pakistan had considerably grown, however, more needed to be done to realize the full bilateral trade potential.

General Yasar Guler said that Turkey fully supported Pakistan on Kashmir issue and expressed hope that India and Pakistan would resolve the issue in accordance with UN resolutions. He further said that Turkey would continue to support Pakistan.





President Dr. Arif Alvi in a meeting with Chairman, European Union Military Committee, General Claudio Graziano, who along with a delegation called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

European Union fully supported the human rights of the Kashmiri people: General Claudio Graziano

By Mian Fazal Elahi

India's illegal and unilateral actions to alter the disputed status of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IoJ&K) and suspension of civil liberties constitute human rights violations of the people of IoJ&K, said President Dr. Arif Alvi, while talking to Chairman, European Union Military Committee, General Claudio Graziano, who called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. He emphasized that the world community must play its role to alleviate the suffering of Kashmiri people at the hands of fascist Indian regime, and moral principles must not be sacrificed at the altar of economic interests, he added.

European Union Military Committee, General Claudio Graziano, said that European Union fully supported the human rights of the Kashmiri people.

President said that the humanitarian situation because of myopic and extremist policies of India in Kashmir would result in forced migration, a problem which was also faced by EU, in terms of refugees from conflict-ridden areas of Middle East. Therefore, all efforts must be made to prevent such forced migration from Kashmir.

The President emphasized that Pakistan valued its relations with the European Union (EU) and EU was a traditional ally and major trading

and investment partner of Pakistan, he added. He pointed out that Pakistan saw GSP Plus Scheme as a constructive engagement for the betterment of its economy.

Appreciating the visit by General Claudio Graziano, the President said that it would help in understanding and enhancing future defense cooperation between Pakistan and EU. He said that Pakistan looked forward to interacting closely with the new EU Parliament as well as

the European Commission. He also highlighted that Pakistan - EU cooperation was based on shared values of democracy, pluralism, mutual understanding and respect and Pakistan was firmly committed to advancing these mutually reinforcing objectives, he added.

The President also highlighted Pakistan's commitment to eradicate extremism and its unprecedented sacrifices in men, material and economy during the ongoing War on Terror.





5th SESSION OF PAKISTAN-QATAR JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMISSION HELD IN DOHA

By M Bilal Zafar

The 5th Session of Pakistan-Qatar Joint Commission was held in Doha on 4-5 November 2019. It was co-chaired by Mr. Omar Ayub Khan, Federal Minister for Energy (Petroleum Division) of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and H.E. Ali bin Ahmed Al Kuwari, Minister of Commerce and Industry of the State of Qatar. The co-chairs also held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Joint Commission. The Joint Commission undertook a comprehensive review of all the facets of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Qatar. A detailed discussion was held to strengthen and expand bilateral cooperation, particularly in the fields of trade, investment and industry, transport, energy, manpower export, education, science & technology, finance, tourism and infrastructure. The two sides decided to aim at a long-term and sustainable partnership on equal footing to explore new areas of cooperation for encouraging trade and investment relations. The joint commission urged private sectors from both countries to establish mechanisms aiming at promotion of bilateral trade. Both sides emphasized on the importance of activating the Qatari- Pakistani Joint Business Council. It was agreed to finalize holding the meeting of Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed in June 2019. The joint commission also encouraged establishing trade fairs and exhibitions in both countries with the aim of introducing manufactured goods and products of both countries. The two sides expressed their interest in developing investment cooperation. The Qatari side welcomed the identification of investment opportunities in various sectors in Pakistan. Besides, discussions were held on enhancing employment opportunities for

highly skilled and professional manpower from Pakistan in Qatar. The two sides also discussed cooperation in aviation, culture and tourism

Federal Minister for Energy Mr. Omar Ayub Khan called on H.E. Ali Shareef Al Emadi, Finance Minister of the state of Qatar. During the meeting H.E. Mr. Omar Ayub Khan underlined the importance of further strengthening the bilateral relations between the two countries. The Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to work together with the State of Qatar to widen and deepen economic ties between

the two countries. H.E. Ali Shareef Al Emadi, Finance Minister of the state of Qatar said that Pakistan and Qatar enjoyed close and fraternal cordial relations which were multifaceted and deep rooted. Qatar would enhance and diversify the bilateral relations with the new political leadership in Pakistan. During meeting between Federal Minister Omar Ayub and H.E Saad Sherida Al Kaabi in his office at Doha. The Qatari Minister reiterated his commitment of working together with Pakistan in areas of mutual interest. On his part, honorable Federal Minister laid stress to build on the existing solid relations between two brotherly countries and commitment to full cooperation in energy sector



Dutch companies discussed joint venture on Agriculture Trade

By M. Bilal Zafar

Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Sahibzada Muhammad Mehboob Sultan was the Chief Guest at the Dutch Agriculture Trade Mission in Islamabad. In the event representatives of private sector agro related Dutch Companies, investors, public sector officials and senior officials of the Ministry of National Food Security & Research participated. The meeting focused on the prospects of Dutch investment in agro sector in Pakistan with special focus on seed potato and dairy processing. Livestock sector is important sub-sector of agriculture in Pakistan; its role is crucial towards rural socio economic development. Since livestock sector of Netherlands is very progressive, Pakistan can utilize their expertise in livestock sector. Federal minister said that Pakistan and Holland can work together in dairy and meat sector of Pakistan, moreover exchange of experts, professionals and scientists in various areas of production and processing could also help towards achieving that end. Sahibzada Mehboob Sultan said that it is very important to enhance bilateral trade of processed dairy, poultry and meat products by providing market access and sharing the sanitary and phytosanitary requirements for import/export of these commodities. It is pertinent to mention that Pakistan imports its total seed potato from Holland; it imported 4735MT in the year 2018-19. There are innumerable challenges towards achieving self-reliance in seed potato as there is a dearth of locally developed high yielding seed potato varieties. Moreover, the seed of imported varieties cannot be produced without integrating



it with our national requirement of registration of varieties. The Federal Minister Mehboob Sultan said that local production system of seed potato could be started with the technical help from the Netherlands. He also said that inviting private seed companies interested in local seed production and starting a joint venture with Dutch Companies on mutually

agreed terms to start local production would be an ideal scenario. Moreover, Seed potato mini-tuber production program with a joint venture of public/ private sector tissue culture laboratories and private sector seed companies in Pakistan could help both the countries.



Federal Minister for National Food security & Research Shahibzada Mehboob Sultan in a group photo at the event of Agriculture Trade Mission from Netherlands in Islamabad.

Guru Nanak and the promise of an inclusive Pakistan



By Haroon Khalid

For a few days every November, the Pakistani city of Nankana Sahib is transformed as thousands of Sikhs and other devotees of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, descend upon it to celebrate Guru Nanak GURPURAB, the anniversary of his birth.

They come from within Pakistan, from the Middle East, Europe, the United States and Canada, but the majority arrive from neighboring India. This year - on his 550th birthday - the numbers are likely to be even greater. On Saturday, as part of the celebration, Pakistan opened a corridor that will allow Indian pilgrims to travel without visas between the Indian town of Dera Baba Nanak and the Sri Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara, Guru Nanak's final resting place, about 6km (4 miles) away in Pakistan.

Men in colourful turbans and dangling kirpan (a knife or sword) and women in saris - once a regular sight in the cities and towns of what came to be known as West Punjab - will become so again. The sound of Sanskritised Punjabi and the drone of kirtan (devotional songs) from the loudspeakers of the city's gurdwaras will mingle with the azan, the Muslim call to prayer.

Nankana Sahib

Located about 75km from Lahore, Nankana Sahib was once known as Rai Bhoi Di Talwandi, but was renamed in honour of Guru Nanak, who was born there in the 15th century.

Gurdwara Janam Asthan, a vast and imposing complex with large manned gates located at one end of the main artery that runs through the city, marks the spot where Guru Nanak was born.

On the city's eastern side is Gurdwara Balila, where he played as a child. While Gurdwara Janam Asthan remains the main focus for pilgrims, over the past few years, several smaller gurdwaras that had been in ruins for decades have been renovated.

These gurdwaras tell a story of a state reimagining its relationship with its Sikh heritage and actively trying to preserve it.

Partition and the Sikhs of Punjab

Carved out of colonial India during independence from Britain in 1947, Pakistan was intended as a home for the Muslims of South Asia, in contrast to Hindu-dominated India. But in this battle between Hindus and Muslims, the Sikhs of Pakistan found themselves in a precarious position.

The partition led to the largest mass migration in human history and the deaths of at least a million people.

The Sikhs of Punjab, the only province other than Bengal that was divided between India and Pakistan, were not left unscathed. Riots broke out between Sikhs and Muslims, with each community committing acts of brutality against the other.

Many Sikhs fled Pakistan for India, and overnight some of the most sacred religious sites associated with Sikhism, including Nankana Sahib, were abandoned. They quickly fell into disrepair or were taken over by refugees fleeing the violence.

But partition, which had been imagined as a solution to the communal issues of India, did not bring an end to the animosity. With Kashmir becoming a particular point of contention, the neighbours remained at odds. They have fought three wars and countless skirmishes since.

In this charged political environment, Sikh heritage fell victim to neglect and, sometimes, hostility. So, too, did some Sikhs and Hindus living in the areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, formerly known as North West Frontier Province, the most westerly province of Pakistan which borders Afghanistan. The riots during partition did not reach there. But during the wars with India in 1965 and 1971, many were forced from their villages. Some headed for Nankana Sahib, about 500km (310 miles) away.

When, as part of my research for my books *A White Trail* and *Walking with Nanak*, I spoke to some of the first Sikh families from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to have moved to Nankana Sahib, they told me how, upon their arrival, they found Gurdwara Janam Asthan in a state of disrepair; its sacred pond empty and its gardens overgrown. Other, smaller, gurdwaras were in a far worse state.





Finding refuge in the abandoned gurdwaras of Nankana Sahib, these Sikh families began some of the earliest renovation work - at their own expense. As, over the years, more Sikh families moved from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Nankana Sahib, a small Sikh community began to emerge.

The numbers increased exponentially after 9/11 as the Taliban sought sanctuary in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and began targeting religious minorities. Some reported being asked to pay jizya (a tax levied on non-Muslims living in a Muslim state) and forced from their homes if they did not. In 2010, a young Sikh man named Jasper Singh was beheaded when his family could not pay. There were other high-profile killings of Sikhs in the region.

From a handful of families, the number swelled to several hundred. For the first time since partition, a sizeable Sikh community had found a home at Nankana Sahib.

Sikh separatism and politics at the gurdwaras

But it was not just the local community that inspired the renovation of these structures. The 1980s witnessed a separatist movement by Sikhs in India. Pakistan, which was still reeling from its defeat to India in the 1971 war, was keen to avenge its "humiliation". It threw its weight behind the Sikh separatist movement, forming connections with expat supporters in Canada, the US and the United Kingdom. Many of these Sikh leaders travelled to Pakistan, where they began addressing Indian Sikh pilgrims, who would, in small numbers, gather for Guru Nanak's Gurburab at Nankana Sahib. Thus, the city's gurdwaras became places where the neighbouring states played out their politics.

In 1985, at the peak of the separatist movement, Indian diplomats were attacked by a mob of Sikh pilgrims seeking to avenge the killing of thousands of Sikhs in the aftermath of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination by her Sikh bodyguards the year before.

It was against this backdrop that Pakistan began paying attention to - and money for - the restoration of historically significant gurdwaras. Funding also arrived from the Sikh diaspora, as well as from Pakistani Sikhs who continued their efforts to restore their sacred sites.

While the Sikh separatist movement in

Punjab subsided, the relationship between the Pakistani state and Sikh heritage survived. Under the military dictatorship of Pervez Musharraf, who was eager to project his rule as "enlightened moderation", protection of religious minorities and their festivals acquired a particular significance. Greater numbers of pilgrims from India were given visas, while the state began improving facilities at the gurdwaras.

All subsequent governments have followed; understanding not just the economic benefits of Sikh religious tourism but what it means for the country's image.

The Kartarpur Sahib corridor

It is this historical background that provides the context for the renovation of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur, which began in the early 2000s through funds collected by Canadian and American Sikhs, and the opening of the Kartarpur Sahib corridor.

Believed to be one of the holiest Sikh sites in Pakistan, Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, once a modest building in the middle of fields with no proper road leading to it but now a well-served and expansive structure, at Kartarpur Sahib - about 180km (112 miles) from Nankana Sahib - holds the grave and the samadhi (memorial - a small marking constructed over the buried ashes of a deceased after cremation) of Guru Nanak.

Challenging dogma across religions, Guru Nanak attracted Muslims and Hindus as his followers. His philosophical movement argued for an inclusive religiosity that allowed people from different sects, castes and religions to come together and worship one God. After his death, upon the request of his followers, both a grave and a samadhi were constructed for his Muslim and Hindu followers.

The first time I visited Kartarpur in 2013 I witnessed a local Muslim family paying homage to Guru Nanak at his grave. I was told that several local Muslims continued to revere him and were the only devotees who regularly visited the gurdwara after partition, even when the property was taken over by drug addicts and smugglers who, because of its proximity to the Indian border, often stopped there.

I noticed something similar at other gurdwaras associated with Guru Nanak. I visited Gurdwara

Sacha Khand - a small single-room, domed building - in Farooqabad, a town about 40km (25 miles) north of Nankana Sahib, a few years ago. The abandoned gurdwara was being used by devotees of a Sufi saint who was buried opposite. While a small shrine had been constructed in its vicinity, the sanctity of the gurdwara had been maintained. The locals were aware of the legends of Guru Nanak and talked about him as they would of any Sufi saint.

At another abandoned gurdwara I visited close to the India-Pakistan border, in a village called Ghavindi, packets of salt and incense sticks, often used in Sufi rituals, had been placed inside, while the floor of the shrine had been recently cleaned.

This tradition was much more obvious when I visited Gurdwara Beri Sahib in Sialkot, a city about 75km (47 miles) northwest of Kartarpur, a few years ago. This year, the gurdwara was reclaimed by the state, renovated and opened for Sikh pilgrims. But before that, it had been looked after by local Muslims, who believed a small grave under a tree in the grounds to be that of a saint. This appropriation of gurdwaras can be understood as a way of maintaining a site's sanctity in a way that is religiously acceptable and meaningful to the local community.

But sometimes this religious syncretism is even more direct. The village of Ram Thamman in Kasur district, in Punjab, derives its name from a gurdwara at the centre of the village named after Guru Nanak's older cousin, a Hindu saint. Starting in the 16th century, it was the site of a festival, Baisakhi, attended by Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. After partition, the numbers declined significantly, but each April, hundreds of Muslims still gather at the gurdwara to pay homage to Ram Thamman. It is one of the few surviving examples of the kind of religious syncretism that was preached by Guru Nanak and once common across South Asia.

Of course, there are many examples of gurdwaras that are still in ruins - according to a study by Iqbal Qaiser, there are about 70 historical gurdwaras across Pakistan that commemorate some aspect of Guru Nanak's life, out of which 13 or 14 have been renovated and opened for pilgrims. Some have been desecrated, others gradually incorporated into Sufi shrines, turned into homes or had all physical trace erased. A few have been maintained by local Muslim communities who have inherited through oral tradition some stories from the life of the founder of Sikhism.

But the extensive renovation of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur and the opening of the visa-free corridor reflect the changing attitudes of Pakistan and the enduring legacy of Guru Nanak and his philosophy. It could address some of the wounds of partition, paving the way for reconciliation between different religious communities, and there is no figure who better personifies that than Guru Nanak, who spent his life trying to bring communities together.

Haroon Khalid is an anthropologist and the author of several books including *Walking with Nanak* and *Imagining Lahore*.



The Vice Chairman of NDRC, Mr. Ning Jizhe, Called On PM

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The Vice Chairman of NDRC, Mr. Ning Jizhe, called on Prime Minister Imran Khan today. Welcoming Vice Chairman Ning Jizhe, the Prime Minister underscored that CPEC was Pakistan's top priority. He added that CPEC was pivotal both for Pakistan's economic transformation as well as for further fortifying the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership between Pakistan and China. The Prime Minister noted that the Vice Chairman's visit was of great significance as it would help consolidate the gains made during the 1st phase of CPEC and accelerate

the implementation of the 2nd phase. While recalling his recent visit to China, the Prime Minister deeply appreciated the support extended by the Chinese leadership to Pakistan on all issues. Among other things, the Prime Minister emphasized the importance of ML-1 for modernizing Pakistan's railway system and also invited the NDRC Vice Chairman to explore opportunities in steel industry, copper and gold mining, and increased agricultural productivity. The new projects will impart a strong impetus to the 2nd phase of CPEC and usher in a new era of cooperation between the two countries for the benefit of the people of Pakistan, he added. The Vice Chairman NDRC

expressed gratitude for the warm welcome accorded to him and conveyed cordial greetings of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang for Prime Minister Imran Khan. He reiterated China's commitment to further deepening the Pakistan-China partnership in all fields. Appreciating the steps taken by Pakistan to enhance coordination and accelerate completion of CPEC projects, he expressed the hope that CPEC will, including through early harvest projects, provide practical benefits to the people of Pakistan. Vice Chairman Ning Jizhe is visiting Pakistan along with his delegation to co-chair the 9th Meeting of the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) of CPEC.



Vice Chairman NDRC Inaugurate 300 MW Coal Power Plant in Gwadar

By M. Bilal Zafar

Gwadar, November 04, 2019: Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform Makhdum Khusro Bakhtyar and Vice Chairman National Development & Reform Commission (NDRC) Ning Jizhe inaugurated the 300 MW Coal Power Plant during their visit to Gwadar today. Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani, senior officials and Chinese delegation members were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Planning said that benefits of CPEC are being reaped as various projects under this monumental framework are being completed or nearing completion. He stated that the incumbent Government has quickened the pace of CPEC

projects which is evident from the inauguration of this coal power plant. He expressed confidence that implementation of CPEC projects will be fast tracked in coming days.

During the meeting between Minister for Planning and Vice Chairman NDRC, discussions were held on special incentives package for investment in Gwadar. VC NDRC expressed pleasure at the proposed package and hoped that it will enhance investment in Gwadar city which will benefit the people of the area.

A donation ceremony was held in Gwadar wherein 4000 solar energy facilities and 700 school uniform were donated by China. Appreciating the donations, Khusro Bakhtyar noted that provision of 4000 solar household

units will ensure provision of electricity to Gwadar.

On the occasion, unveiling ceremonies of China-Pakistan Government Faqeer Colony Middle School Expansion Project and Gwadar Port Authority Commercial Complex project were also held.

During the visit, Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani, Minister for Planning, VC NDRC and Chinese members' delegation visited the sites of different projects being executed under CPEC framework including Gwadar North Free Zone Phase-II, Gwadar International Airport and East Bay Expressway and examined the pace of work.



Chinese commerce minister discuss relocation of Chinese industry to Pakistan

Advisor to Prime Minister on Commerce, Industries, Textile and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood held a meeting with Chinese Commerce Minister Zhong Shan and discussed implementation of Phase-II of the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA) as well as the relocation of the Chinese industry to Pakistan.

In a meeting held during his recent visit to China, he also requested additional quantities of rice and sugar under trade facilitation of \$1 billion extended by China and a grand Country pavilion for Pakistan in CIIE 2020, according to official sources here on Tuesday.

Import of Tobacco from Pakistan by China Tobacco Corporation was also discussed and capacity building support was sought to complete the quarantine procedure to enable export of food related products and commodities from Pakistan.

The Chinese side indicated that after implementation of second phase of CPFTA, imports from Pakistan will increase tremendously and the Chinese investors are keen to invest in Pakistan's infrastructure and manufacturing sectors.

It was informed that the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects are underway at a fast pace and now the focus is on industrialization and socioeconomic

development.

Both sides agreed to further strengthen bilateral high-level trade exchanges.

The advisor thanked the Chinese side for the invitation of second China International Import Expo (CIIE) recently concluded in Shanghai.

Razak congratulated the Chinese side for the successful conduct of CIIE and informal WTO Ministerial meeting.

Pakistan appreciated China's leading role for sustaining and promoting multilateralism.

Meanwhile, as many as 35 exporters from Pakistan displayed their products at the Expo in Shanghai. The total covered area of exhibition halls was more than 300,000 square meters and more than 150 countries participated.

Advisor also met with Suzhou Water Purification Equipment Company that is working with Nestle and Pepsi and one of the renowned water desalination plant manufacturers, Anhui Easy Business Digital Technology Company that provides e-government, e-ports and digitalization services to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and General Administration of China Customs, Northern Heavy Industries Group, the largest equipment supplier to



cement, steel, and mining.

During interview with China Economic Net, the advisor said Pakistani exports to China will increase considerably after the implementation of the second phase of CPFTA, with effect from December 1.

He said the CIIE provided good opportunities to Pakistani exporters to showcase their products in the second largest import market of China.



CPEC a gateway for progress and prosperity for a bright future: Khusro Bakhtyar

The 9th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) Meeting was held today in Islamabad which was co-chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform Makhdum Khusro Bakhtyar and Vice Chairman National Development & Reform Commission (NDRC) Ning Jizhe. Chief Minister Balochistan Jam Kamal Khan, Chief Minister KP Mahmood Khan, Chief Minister GB Hafiz Hafeez-ur-Rehman, Federal Ministers and Secretaries, Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing, provincial secretaries, visiting Chinese members delegations and representatives of leading companies were also present on the occasion.

During the proceedings, a ceremony was held wherein Multan-Sukkur Motorway of the eastern corridor was inaugurated. Gwadar Master Plan was approved and signed. The ceremony also witnessed the signing of two MoUs; one between All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) and Ministry of Planning for further strengthening the worker exchanges and another on Healthcare between Ministry of Health and (Research Development International (RDI)).

In his opening remarks, while welcoming

Vice Chairman NDRC and his delegation, the Minister said that Pakistan appreciates the Chinese leadership for the support it has resolutely extended to the cause of Jammu and Kashmir.

About CPEC, he said that it will be a gateway for progress and prosperity for a bright future. '2019 was a significant year for China Pakistan Economic Corridor as several significant milestones were achieved or will be achieved





by the end of the year. The recent visits of PM Imran Khan and his interaction with Chinese leadership have, in true sense, broadened and enhanced the scope of future cooperation in diverse fields of agriculture, industrial and socio-economic development' stated the Minister.

Khusro Bakhtyar said that Government of Pakistan this year took several important decisions that paved way for finalization of Gwadar Master Plan and preliminary design of ML-1 project, operationalization of Gwadar Port and free zone. 'We made steady progress in resolution of matters regarding finalization of tariffs for the completed energy projects, Gwadar port concession agreement and Kohala hydropower project' said the Minister.

Khusro Bakhtyar said that remaining portion of the Eastern corridor from Sukkur to Hyderabad (M6) will be completed in BOT mode under the umbrella of Public Private Partnership and urged Chinese companies to take active part in the bidding process. He recommended that JCC accords priority to remaining portion Western corridor and the provincial projects proposed in previous JCCs. This year in March, the Zhob–Quetta section of the Western Corridor was inaugurated and now the remaining portion of DI–Khan–Zhob is a priority for the Government of Pakistan.



He highlighted that ML-1 is also a top priority project for Pakistan and the stage is set to take the discussion to next level and formulate a Joint project financing group to discuss the modalities. He added that the Government has established CPEC Authority which will work as a one window for all CPEC related issues so that we can fasten the pace of the projects and remove all bottle necks for efficient implementation of the projects.

Minister expressed optimism that today's huddle will have meaningful consultation to formulate the roadmap for cooperation in the 2nd phase of CPEC and hoped that it will yield tangible progress towards our shared goal of

making CPEC a resounding success.

Appreciating the warm welcome accorded by the Government of Pakistan, VC NDRC Ning Jizhe said that delegation from China for 9th JCC is the biggest as compared to previous delegations which shows commitment of China to take cooperation with Pakistan to new heights. He stated that high consideration will be given to socio-economic and industrial cooperation in the second phase of CPEC. He underscored that bilateral economic cooperation will proceed as planned for the mutual benefit of both brotherly countries.

A documentary showcasing the progress on CPEC was also aired during the 9th JCC.





Projects being carried out under CPEC free of corruption: envoy

By Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador Yao Jing on Friday said that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects were free of corruption.

Speaking at the fifth CPEC media forum, organized jointly by the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad and Pakistan-China Institute, the envoy said that CPEC projects were investigated and it was unanimously concluded that there was no corruption in their affairs. "CPEC is clean," he said.

Mr. Yao was responding to senior US official Ambassador Alice Wells' comments at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre in which she alleged that CPEC projects were piling debt burden on Pakistan and lacked transparency. "We hope Pakistanis will ask Beijing tough questions on debt, accountability, fairness and transparency... Ask the Chinese government why it is pursuing a development model in Pakistan, that significantly deviates from what brought China its own economic success," Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Alice Wells said. Ambassador Yao said he was "shocked and surprised" at Ms. Wells' speech which "fully exposes her ignorance of Pakistan-China relations".

He said the US should not cast aspersions over

something about which it doesn't have accurate information. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said Pakistan-China relations and the success of CPEC "rankles many" in the region and beyond, hence while they cannot stop or slow the project, now they are trying to undermine it through negative propaganda. About the so-called debt trap, he said 91 per cent of the Pakistani debt is owed to the West, including multilateral institutions, and only 9pc to China.

Mr. Yao called upon the media to play its role in nullifying the effects of propaganda against the CPEC. "Media is a major vehicle of information and platform of interaction," he said while addressing the CPEC media forum. "Media from both Pakistan and China have already been playing role in promoting state-to-state relations." He said that Pak-China relations were based on win-win cooperation and were mutually beneficial. China always came forward to assist Pakistan in need without any political or government differences. The envoy said that if Pakistan was in need, China would never ask Pakistan to repay its loans in time. However, he pointed out, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was strict in its repayment system. He wondered why the US had suspended its aid promised to Pakistan and said Washington obviously did so because of political priorities. "When in 2013, the Chinese companies were establishing power plants in Pakistan, where

was the US? Why it did not invest in Pakistan's power sector despite knowing that Pakistan was in dire need of electricity?" he asked.

With respect to the US allegation of corruption in CPEC projects, Mr Yao said it was easy to hurl allegations at anyone without having evidences. With regard to the Main Line (ML-1) railway project which is to be executed under the CPEC, he clarified that the project's cost is around \$9 billion; however, it is only an estimate. "The real cost of the project will be finalised in the second stage of determining financial package of the project," he added.

The Chinese ambassador also reacted to the US accusation of providing few jobs to Pakistani workers in CPEC projects, saying that so far over 75,000 Pakistani workers had been given job opportunities and that around 2.3 million jobs are expected to be created in CPEC projects by 2030.

"I would be more happy to see more investment coming from the United States to Pakistan," Mr Yao said, adding that China was determined to build capacities of Pakistani businessmen and industrialists to boost productivity in the country which would ultimately help increase Pakistan's exports.

(Courtesy to Dawn)



H.E. Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa sworn in as the 7th Executive President of Sri Lanka

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The winner of the 2019 Presidential Election, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) candidate Gotabaya Rajapaksa was sworn in as the seventh Executive President of Sri Lanka this morning (November 18) during a ceremony held at the foot of the Ruwanweli Seya in Anuradhapura amid Maha Sangha and a large crowd. He took oaths before Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya after Secretary to the President Udaya R Seneviratne read out the proclamation declaring Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa as President.

Addressing the nation after the formal swearing-in ceremony at Maha Maluwa of Ruwanweli Maha Seya, President Rajapaksa thanked everyone who voted for his victory and welcomed the minor communities in the country to join hands with him to work towards the prosperity of the nation. He said he will lead the country based on the Buddhist philosophy which upholds principles of equality and justice. While providing the state sponsorship to safeguard the traditional heritage of the nation he said he will take measures to protect the rights of the civilians to live in peace and reconciliation.

Furthermore he said that the time has come to work as a one force to build the nation and a people-centric government is a prerequisite to achieve this objective. The national security

would be the top most priority and the state security mechanism will be strengthened to protect our Motherland. Elaboration on his foreign policy, President Rajapaksa said that "We want to remain neutral in our foreign relations and stay out of any conflicts among the world powers." "We will have our fullest commitment to achieve the sustainable development goals of the UN," he said.

"The Government should always set an example to the society. Professionalism and efficiency should be the cornerstone of government of administrations. Meritocracy and technocracy should be promoted all times, corruption will be never tolerated under my administration." He called on other nations to respect the

sovereignty of Sri Lanka. The recently concluded elections saw the beginning of a new political culture in this country and the examples set would be continued in future activities of the government. The new President highlighted the importance of using the modern technology in every aspect of the governance. President Rajapaksa further said he would form a new government soon to carry out his policies.

He said it is his responsibility to serve every community in this country. No challenge is insurmountable if we work together. "I love my country. I am proud of my country. I have a vision for my country. Hence, I called on everyone to join me in this journey," he said.





Swiss firms will explore further investment opportunities in Pakistan: Mr. Jean Rene Fournier

By M.Bilal Zafar

India's illegal actions to alter the disputed status of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IoJ&K) and the imposition of communication blockade not only contravene numerous UNSC resolutions and international law, but also blatantly violate the basic human rights of the people of IoJ&K, said President Dr. Arif Alvi, while talking to President of the Council of States of Swiss Confederation, Mr. Jean Rene Fournier, who called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. He stressed that Jammu and Kashmir was not an internal affair of India, rather an internationally recognized dispute, pending on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council for 70 years. He highlighted



that the bilateral Simla Agreement that India had been presenting to the world as the sole modus operandi for resolution of bilateral disputes between India and Pakistan had failed to produce any result since 1972. President of the Council of States of Swiss Confederation, Mr. Jean Rene Fournier, said that Switzerland was a staunch supporter of human rights and would offer its good offices for resolution of Kashmir dispute, if both parties agreed, he added. President Dr. Arif Alvi highlighted that Pakistan attached great importance to our cordial and friendly relations with Switzerland and this year marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations. He said that shared belief in fundamental principles





Pakistan. He said that growth in all industries had placed great demands on all facets of Pakistan's air, sea, rail and road and physical infrastructure. There was also a huge tourism infrastructure potential in Pakistan and Swiss firms could explore these investment opportunities, he added.

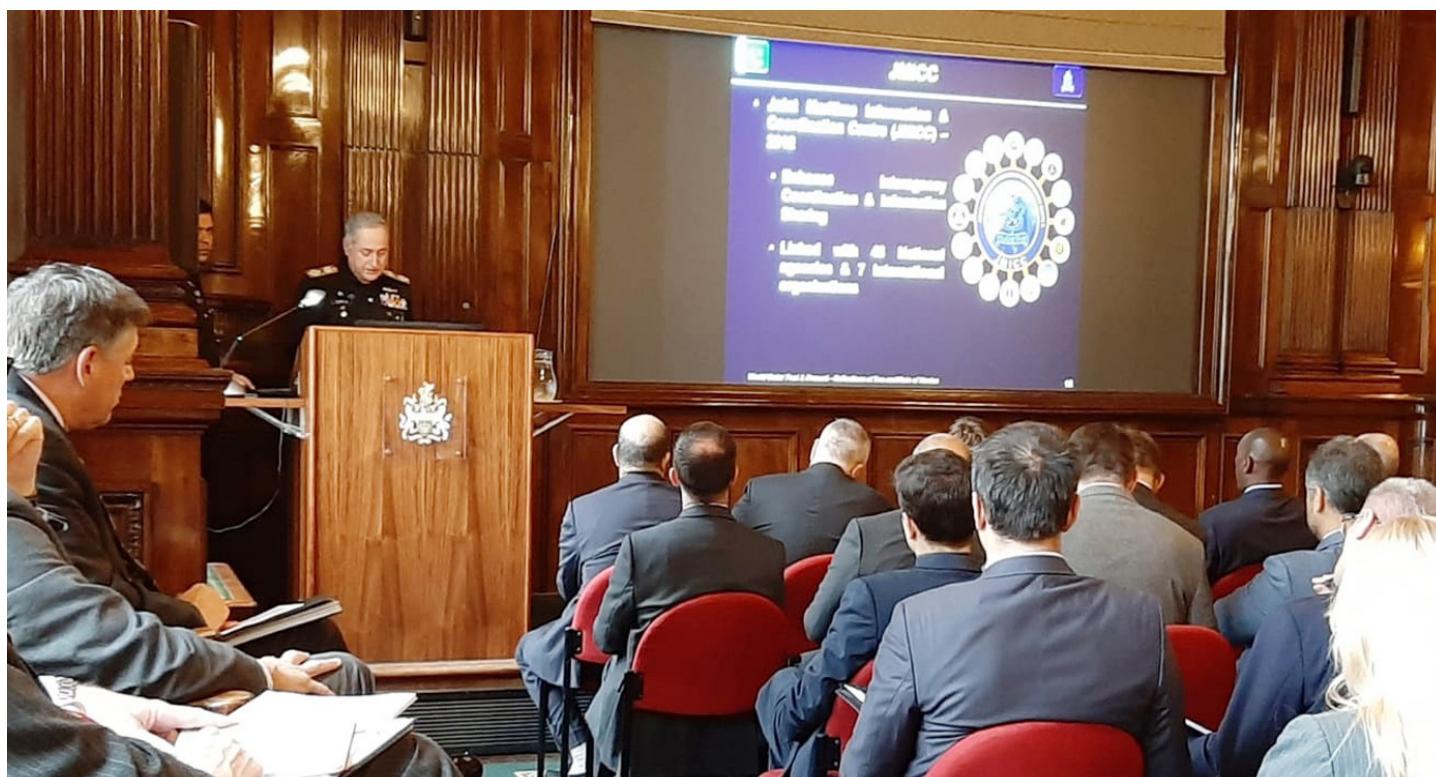


of democracy, human rights, justice and rule of law had been the defining elements of the excellent bilateral relations. The President emphasized that Pakistan valued its long-term partnership with Switzerland in economic, trade and commercial fields. He further said that the trade between the two countries had been increasing steadily, though was not yet commensurate with the true potential. Appreciating Swiss investment in Pakistan, he underscored that the business friendly policies of the Government were bearing fruit as Pakistan had gained 28 places in the "Ease of Doing Business" index this year. The President emphasized that the energy demand in Pakistan had created highly profitable opportunities for the Swiss companies to invest in the renewable, hydel and clean technology power generation projects. He highlighted that there was also investment opportunities in research

and innovation to increase productivity and profitability in crops, dairy, forestry, irrigation and water management, land management, seed production and biotechnology sectors of



The Naval Chief Admiral Zafar Mahmood underlined Pakistan Navy's efforts for ensuring maritime security in the region



By News Agency / Special Report

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi is on an official visit to United Kingdom (UK). During the visit, Naval Chief called on UK's Vice Chief of Defence Staff, Commander Operations Royal Navy, Commandant Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) and addressed the students & faculty of RCDS. The Admiral visited British Think Tank, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) where he also delivered a Talk.

Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi during separate meetings, called on Vice Chief of Defence Staff Admiral Timothy Fraser, Commander Operations Royal Navy Rear Admiral Simon Asquith at Ministry of Defence and Commandant Royal College of Defence Studies Rear Admiral John Kingwell in his office at Belgravia, London. During meetings, matters related to maritime security and mutual interest including bilateral naval collaboration were discussed. The Naval Chief highlighted Pakistan Navy's efforts for ensuring maritime security in the region. The dignitaries appreciated Pakistan Navy's peace initiatives in support of maritime security in the region and agreed on further enhancing the interaction





High Commissioner Mohammad Nafees Zakaria and Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi exchanging souvenirs at the Pakistan High Commission London on 20-11-2019. Their spouses are also present on the occasion. The High Commissioner hosted a reception for the Chief of Naval Staff who is on an official visit to the UK.

in diverse fields of naval collaboration. During his visit to RCDS, the Naval Chief addressed students and faculty on the topic 'World Order; Past and Present – Reflection at Sea and Role of Navies' in which the Admiral pondered over the insight from the naval past and shared his thoughts on the future roles of navies in tackling issues in the maritime domains. The Admiral also visited RUSI & called on Director General RUSI Dr Karin von Hippel, delivered a Talk at RUSI on 'Security Dynamics in South Asia and Pakistan Navy's Role in Regional Maritime Security' and had an informal interaction with intelligentsia, academia and media personnel at the Think Tank.

It is expected that the recent visit of the Naval Chief will further augment and expand defence ties between the two countries in general and navies in particular.



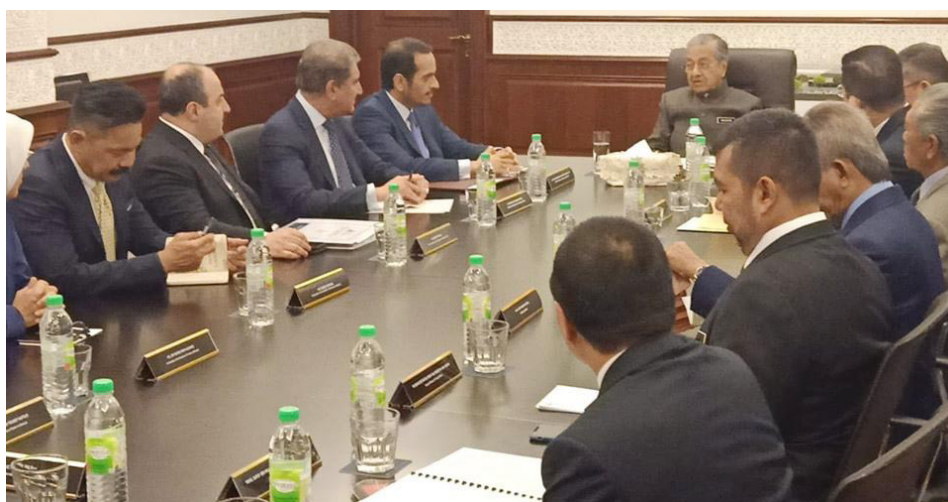
First Sea Lord and UK Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Tony Radakin met with Pakistan's Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abassi NI(M) during Admiral Abassi's official visit to the UK. The day in London and Portsmouth culminated in a dinner in the Grand Cabin of HMS Victory, a ship originally floated in 1765. She was famously vice Admiral Nelson's flagship in 1805 at the Battle of Trafalgar.

The Foreign Minister Qureshi thanked Malaysian Government for its principled stance on Kashmir issue



By M Bilal Zafar

Foreign Minister, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi visited Malaysia from 4-5 November, 2019, on the invitation of Malaysian Foreign Minister Mr Saifuddin Abdullah. The Foreign Minister attended a preparatory meeting on Kuala Lumpur Summit chaired by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. Other participants included Foreign Minister of Qatar and Minister of Industry and Technology of Turkey. The Foreign Minister held separate meetings with the Malaysian Foreign Minister and Minister of Economic Affairs to discuss, inter alia, bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, halal food, science and technology, human resource and international issues of common interest. The Foreign Minister thanked





Malaysian Government for its principled stance on Kashmir issue. In addition to his official meetings, the Foreign Minister held networking meeting with leading businessmen at lunch hosted by Queen Kalsom of Pahang at her residence. The Foreign Minister apprised the businessmen of the steady improvements in Pakistan's economy notably the impressive jump in Pakistan's rating on Ease of Doing Business Index brought about by Government's business friendly and reform-oriented policies. He invited the businessmen to invest in Pakistan. The Foreign Minister also held a meeting with the top management of the flagship Malaysian Oil and Gas Corp Petronas to discuss cooperation in Oil and Gas and LNG sectors. Petronas evinced keen interest to increase collaboration with Pakistan. Petronas has presence across the globe and is known for its expertise in energy sector. The Foreign Minister later inaugurated Community Service Centre at the High Commission of Pakistan. The Centre has been set up by Malaysia Pakistan Business Council. The Centre would provide facilitation to over 82,000 Pakistani nationals in Malaysia. Appreciating the initiative, the Foreign Minister said that the step was in line with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan who accorded immense importance to community welfare. The Foreign Minister also addressed a gathering of prominent Pakistani community members and businessmen at the High Commission.





Riyadh Agreement to ‘open the door’ for broader peace talks on Yemen, says King Salman

By News Agency

Saudi Arabia seeks a political settlement in Yemen and hoped that a recent agreement signed in Riyadh would open the door to broader peace. The king was speaking at an annual address to the Shoura Council on November 20, 2019.

King Salman said “we deserve to feel proud of our nation’s success in eliminating extremist manifestations, and besieging its ideology by all means, to return to moderation, which is a characteristic of the Saudi society.” Saudi Arabia and its allies intervened in the conflict in 2015, shortly after the Houthi militia took over the capital Sanaa. He said the Kingdom’s oil policy aims to promote stability in global oil markets and looks to serve consumers and producers alike. King Salman also said the initial public offering of Saudi Aramco will allow investors inside and outside the Kingdom to take part

and will create thousands of jobs. The revenues from the sale, he said, will be allocated to the country’s Public Investment Fund. He said Aramco’s ability to quickly restore oil production capacity after attacks in September proved the Kingdom could meet global demand during any shortage.

“Though the kingdom has been subjected to attacks by 286 ballistic missiles and 289 drones, in a way that has not been seen in any other country, that has not affected the kingdom’s development process or the lives of its citizens and residents,” the king told assembled council members, royals and foreign diplomats.

Meanwhile, King Salman hailed the Kingdom’s “huge achievements” in the past decades, adding that the country is determined to record further achievements through its Vision 2030.

He also mentioned that Saudi Arabia has been ranked in 2019 by the World Bank as the “most

advanced and first reformed country among 190 countries in the world.

King Salman also commended his government’s decision to grant tourist visas, describing the move as a way to attract investments, create jobs and showcase Saudi heritage and culture.

Earlier during the meeting, Dr. Abdullah Al-Asheikh reviewed the Shoura Council’s accomplishments during the third year of the seventh session.

Al-Asheikh said: “Thanks to the support of the wise leadership and the council’s cooperation with the Cabinet, ministries and governmental bodies, the council was able to achieve significant accomplishments, where it held 65 sessions and issued 262 decisions that were referred to King Salman, to serve our dear country and guarantee welfare and prosperity for our people.”



Satrang Gallery Art Festival

Satrang Gallery is proud to exhibit *Confluence*, a solo presentation of works by the internationally acclaimed artist Nida Bangash. *Confluence* is held in collaboration with and in celebration of the inaugural Islamabad Art Festival.

Nida's miniature art practice explores issues of cultural identity, dislocation, displacement and territoriality by

examining the domestic as a charged political space. Nida's patterned, often geometric, visuals and architectural motifs have been informed by her traditional training in the discipline of miniature art from Pakistan's reputed National College of Arts.

The works in *Confluence* belong to three separate series of inquiry, *War Rugs with Love*, *I Am A Tree* and

This Bridge Called My Back, where over a period of seven years, the artist examined larger concerns of childhood, ideas of home, and aspects of weaving.

Born in Iran, and raised in Pakistan, Nida now lives and works in the US. She is exhibiting in

Pakistan after a period of six years.



Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



President Dr. Arif Alvi talking to outgoing Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Zubair Mahmood Hayat, Ni (M), who paid a farewell call at Aiwan-e-Sadr



President Dr. Arif Alvi talking to CEO Islamic Relief Worldwide, Naser Haghamed who called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.



President Dr. Arif Alvi talking to Ambassador designate to Pakistan's permanent Mission to UN Geneva Mr. Khalil ur Rehman Hashmi at Aiwan-e-Sadr Islamabad.



Ambassador of Korea Mr. Kwak Sung-Kyu call on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser at Islamabad.



Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic Mr. Erik Beishembiev called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser in Islamabad.



Ambassador of Iran Mr. Mehdi Honardoost called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser at Parliament House Islamabad.



Governor KP Shah Farman talking to Australian High Comisioner in Pakistan Dr. Jefferey Shaw at Governoer's House Peshawar.



Federal Minisetr Asad Umar Talking to Ambassador of Geremany to Pakistan, Mr. Bernhard Schlagheck who called on him in Islamabad.

Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Federal Minister for Interior Brig (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah met with Italian Under Secretary Mr. Manilo Di Stefano in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform Asad Umar talking to Ambassador of China to Pakistan, Yao Ying, who called on him in Islamabad.



Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Pakistan, Mr. Saqr Bin Mubarak Al Mansouri is being received by the Advisor of the PM on Finance & Revenue Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh at Finance Ministry Islamabad.



Federal Minister Khusro Bakhtyar talking to Ambassador of China, Mr. Yao Jing who called on him in Islamabad.



H.E Bernhard Schlagheck, Ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany called on Zubair Gillani MOS/Chairman Board of Investment At BOI, Islamabad.



Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, H.E. Atadjan Movlamov called on Federal Minister Economic Affairs Division, Muhammad Hammad Azhar in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for Law & Justice Dr Farogh Naseem talking to the European Union Ambassador Androulla Kaminara who called on him in Islamabad.



Iranian Ambassador H.E. Mehdi Honardoost called on Advisor to the PM on commerce Abdul Razak Dawood in Islamabad.

Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Kuninori Matsuda called on SAPM for petroleum, Nadeem Babar in Islamabad.



Vice President of World Bank H.E. Ms. Ceyla Pazarbasioglu called on Sardar Ahmad Nawaz Sukhera, Secretary Commerce in Islamabad.



Governor KP Shah Farman talking to Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan H.E. Ms. Wendy Gilmour who called on him at Governor House, Peshawar.



Sardar Ahmad Nawaz Sukhera, Secretary Commerce, in a meeting with H.E. Mr. Tomas Smetanka, Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Islamabad.



Ambassador of Romania Mr. Nicolae Goia called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser in Parliament House, Islamabad.



Special Assistant to the PM on Information and Broadcasting, Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan in a meeting with H.E. Mr. Androulla Kaminara, the Ambassador of European Union in Islamabad.



Federal Minister for National History, Shafqat Mahmood Talking to the Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan. H.E. Paulo Neves Pocinho in Islamabad.



Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan H.E. Geoffrey Shaw calls on Dr. Sania Nishtar Special Assistant to the PM on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation to discuss area for Ehsas.

Pakistan role is appreciated towards regional peace and successes of Pakistan Army against terrorism.



H.E Dr Geoffrey Shaw, Australian High Commissioner called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ, Matters of mutual interest including bilateral cooperation and regional security were discussed during the meeting.



Lieutenant General You Haitao, Deputy Commander of Chinese People's Liberation Army called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ.



COAS met Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Admiral Ali Shamkhani



COAS arrived Tehran, Iran on official visit. COAS met Major General Mohammad Hossein, Chief of Staff Iranian Armed Forces.



COAS met Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Army Chief Major General Abdul Rahim Mousavi.



COAS called on President of Iran, Hassan Rouhani. Regional security environment and matters of mutual interest discussed. The President appreciated role of Pakistan towards regional peace and successes of Pakistan Army against terrorism.



Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan
The Founding father of the UAE
(6 May 1918 – 2 November 2004)



**His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan
President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of ABu Dhabi**



His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum
Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates



Message of the Ambassador H.E. Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi, on the Occasion of 48th National Day of the United Arab Emirates

We celebrate the 48th anniversary of the announcement of our Union and the establishment of our country; today marks the anniversary of the unification of the seven Emirates in 1971. On this day, our country embarked on a bold and optimistic journey of progress and development in order to achieve its vision across different fields by 2021; a vision which aims to make the UAE among the most competitive countries in the world by the Golden Jubilee of the Union.

Today the UAE, with its wise leadership, continues this journey with energy and determination, and looks to its children to continue the achievements of the nation and its citizens.

The progress, development and prosperity that we enjoy nowadays in the UAE goes hand in hand with a balanced foreign policy based on moderation, tolerance, humanitarian assistance and political openness that allows our country to gain greater respect in its diplomatic presence and further boost its friendly relations around the world.

On the occasion of 48th National Day of the United Arab Emirates, I would feel the honor to affirm that historical relations between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is developing further in various fields and broader horizons.

The brotherly relationship between two countries in 2019 has witnessed constructive developments, the high level exchange of visits are best proof of ever looping affinity and bounds between the two friendly governments and peoples, the Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan twice visit to UAE, and H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan visit to Islamic Republic of Pakistan followed by the visits of H.H. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan,

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and other official visits are evident to the eagerness of the both leaderships to broaden the horizons of cooperation.

The UAE remain committed to its resolution to assist the economic stability in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, beside its humanitarian and developmental projects the UAE is keen to enhance its investments and economical ties with Pakistan

On December 2nd of each year, we reflect on our nation's achievements, and what we need to accomplish in the coming year. Ours is a comprehensive development agenda, which aims to look after the present as well as to plan for the future, and to compete with confidence on the world stage relying on proper planning, technological know-how, and our extensive human capital – the most important resource of the country.

Our leadership declared 2019 as the Year of Tolerance, to reinforce the fact that we are a country where more than 200 different nationalities live in an atmosphere of openness, mutual respect and coexistence based on the principle of tolerance.

There can be no better illustration of this tolerance than the visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to the UAE; the first visit by a pontiff to the Arabian peninsula, and his signing with the Sheikh of Al-Azhar the document of "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together". This document enshrines the country's determination to instill a spirit of tolerance in society, establishing a culture of openness and dialogue, and rejecting all kinds of discrimination based on religion, gender, race, color or language.

Our Year of Tolerance also encapsulates the

vision of the UAE's Founding Father Sheikh Zayed, who believed that a successful, tolerant and progressive society can only be achieved by empowering women and ensuring their full participation in the construction of this country. A third of the UAE's Cabinet are women; women represent a majority of the workforce of our civil service and our university graduates; and the representation of women in the Federal National Council is now at 50 percent.

Another highlight of this year was the remarkable progress made by UAE diplomacy in terms of the strength of the UAE passport, which now ranks the most powerful in the world, according to the global Passport Index. Hence, more visa exemptions were granted with 177 countries where UAE nationals are allowed to enter without a visa.

2019 also saw the launch of the "Mohammed Bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence", the first graduate level, research-based artificial intelligence university in the world. This university aims to empower students, businesses, and governments to advance artificial intelligence and use its extraordinary potential as a global force for positive progress.

Moreover, the UAE has spared no effort in empowering young people, as evidenced by the Emirati leadership's support for Hazaa al-Mansouri, the first Arab astronaut to visit the International Space Agency, who has become an inspiration and a role model to many young Emiratis.

The UAE has an international reputation for both security and stability, and this has enabled us to become a magnet for many creators and talented individuals, who seek an environment that supports their skills and talents, and appreciates and rewards their intellectual prowess.

It is well-known that the UAE has always been at the forefront in carrying messages of peace and cooperation to the world, and this no doubt assisted us in winning the right to host Expo 2020 Dubai, the largest event to be staged in the Middle East. Expo 2020 Dubai will showcase human achievements in many fields, with the participation of more than 200 countries, companies, organizations and educational institutions. This global event confirms our nation's ability to connect and inspire millions of people around the world to celebrate human progress, solve global challenges, and create a better future.

On this occasion, we remain grateful to our leadership, which spares no effort to raise the nation and achieve the well-being and happiness of its citizens and residents.

Finally, I wish a blessed year for the UAE filled with constant progress and prosperity.



A reflection of the federation's journey of UAE over 48 outstanding years

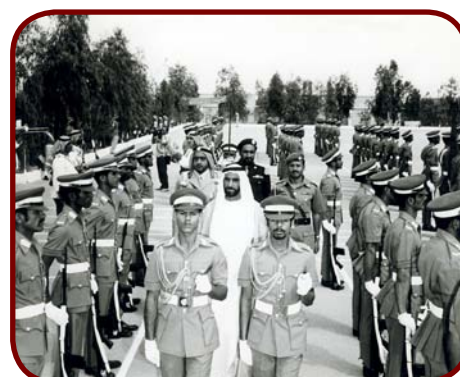
On 2 December 2019, the UAE celebrated the 48th anniversary of the union of the seven emirates. This occasion marks a sincere reflection of the federation's journey over 48 outstanding years of monumental events and achievements, building on the foundation that was first laid down by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and his brothers, the fellow founding fathers. Since then, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, has followed in their footsteps, leading our nation on a journey of continuous progress and prosperity at all levels.

This national occasion is an opportunity to celebrate the UAE's achievements over the past years. Following the directives of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, and under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and the supervision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and

Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, the UAE government has keenly invested in developing its people and national capacities, ensuring great progress towards making the UAE one of the best countries in the world by the time of the union's golden jubilee, as planned in the UAE Vision 2021.

The UAE has planned strategically. Through

foresight to anticipate and analyze future opportunities and challenges in vital fields, and execute long-term pre-emptive plans to achieve national goals, using modern technologies, and harnessing them to serve the country's people and ensure their happiness. It has focused on development in all sectors, transforming plans into tangible realities through record achievements on both regional



and international levels, setting the UAE among the world's most advanced countries. These achievements are in line with the aspirations of the wise leadership for the future of the UAE, to reach the objectives of the UAE Centennial 2071 launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, a comprehensive, long-term vision spanning over five decades, to enhance the UAE's reputation and soft power.

UAE is largest international aid donor

For the sixth consecutive year, the UAE maintained its position as one of the largest international donors in the field of official development aid (ODA) in relation to its gross national income (GNI), after ranking first in 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2017. UAE foreign assistance during the last 10 years (2009-2018) amounted to approximately AED 170 billion (USD 46 billion).

The UAE has continued to exert tremendous humanitarian efforts to achieve peace and prosperity in the world through its foreign aid, development and humanitarian programs. The UAE has maintained its position among the largest international donors in terms of official development aid, which, relative to the UAE's gross national income, amounts to 1.31%, almost twice the target of 0.7% set by the United Nations as a global measure of donor efforts.

The UAE seeks to make a tangible positive impact to the ultimate goal of humanity: that of eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development by 2030. The country is at the forefront of efforts to combat poverty and provide foreign aid to those in need, especially those most vulnerable. The UAE's projects in developing countries have diversified to include the sectors of infrastructure, education, health, energy, food aid, agriculture and the environment.

The UAE has thus emerged as one of the world's leading advocates of alternative and renewable energy solutions worldwide. Seeking to help address the consequences of climate change, the UAE contributes to the development of the renewable energy sector in island countries such as the Caribbean and Pacific Islands, and has established two funds to provide solutions and support renewable energy programs in island states. Over the past 10 years, the UAE's total assistance to



the renewable energy sector reached about USD 1.25 billion. The UAE's assistance to the renewable energy sector remains one of the driving forces for the economy, promoting job growth and empowering women, contributing to the achievement of sustainable development goals and environmental benefits.

These significant achievements reflect the UAE's civilization and culture and the respect and appreciation it has drawn both regionally and globally, under the guidance of wise policymakers and leaders who have worked tirelessly to ensure the UAE enjoys a prestigious regional and international stature. The UAE

has proven a model of wisdom, moderation, coexistence and peace, and renowned for its achievements and excellence.

Through his vision, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan - may his soul rest in peace - guided the UAE towards the adoption of a successful and active foreign policy based on balance, moderation, and non-interference in internal affairs of other countries, in acknowledgement of the role and responsibility the UAE holds at regional and international levels.

The UAE emerged as an inspiring model of



tolerance, coexistence and human fraternity, working over the years to lead international efforts towards closer relations between cultures, religions and civilizations, building bridges that contribute to the progress of nations and enhance security and stability.

These values of tolerance and fraternity were highlighted this year in the UAE capital of Abu Dhabi, which witnessed the birth of the Document on Human Fraternity, signed jointly by Pope Francis of the Catholic Church and Sheikh Ahmed El-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. This historic statement is a unique model among calls for reconciliation and peace, dialogue and closer ties between nations, cultures and civilizations. The document aims to establish new experiences between nations and cultures, characterized by friendship and fraternity and aiming to strengthen human relations, build bridges of communication, ensure harmony and goodwill, and fight extremism, violence and terrorism.

The announcement of the Abu Dhabi document coincided with the declaration of 2019 as the Year of Tolerance by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE. This stressed the importance of tolerance in terms of sustainable institutional work through a set of legislations and policies aimed at deepening the values of tolerance, dialogue, acceptance and openness to different cultures, especially among new generations, which positive repercussions reflect on society in general.

Combined with several initiatives and large-scale projects within the same framework, the Declaration aimed to position the UAE as a global capital of tolerance. They feature research contributions and social and cultural research in the field of tolerance and dialogue of cultures and civilizations, and the introduction of legislation and policies aimed at institutionalizing the values of cultural, religious and social tolerance, and finally to promote dialogue, tolerance and acceptance of the other. Initiatives launched to promote dialogue between peoples and religions include the "National Programme for Tolerance", the "Mohammed Bin Rashid Award for Tolerance" and the "International Institute for Tolerance" in addition to the establishment of several centers to fight extremism.





Ration of Women Empowerment enhanced in UAE

In terms of women's empowerment, the UAE has continued its efforts to raise the status of Emirati women in line with the Resolution No. (1) of 2019 issued by the President, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, to increase the representation of women in the Federal National Council (FNC) to 50%. The decision was issued in the run-up to the FNC elections scheduled to take place in October.

The UAE now leads in several regional and global indicators on gender equality and women's achievements, education and literacy, and female employment, and also ranks first in the world for "treating women with respect" according to the Social Progress Index, among many other indicators. In addition, women contribute to the ownership of nearly half of the SMEs in the UAE, and the government's socio-political

policies stress the need for a more equitable approach to the development of the family.

The UAE supports the participation of Emirati

women in decision-making as a core component of their economic empowerment. Federal laws now require the appointment of women to the boards of all government institutions. Women represent 50% of the FNC and 27% of the new cabinet composition, with 8 female ministers.

Moreover, the UAE has made remarkable progress in reducing the gender gap in girls' education in schools and higher education, with women comprising more than 70% of UAE university graduates. Economically, women make up 46.6% of the total workforce, holding 66% of public sector jobs, 30% of which are decision-making positions. Furthermore, there are 23,000 businesswomen managing projects worth about US\$15 billion in the UAE.

Foreign investment and Talent attraction in UAE

In the field of foreign investment and talent attraction, the UAE Cabinet approved a resolution granting foreign investors ownership of up to 100% in 13 different economic sectors. A new system of visas introduced provides investors and their families with long-term

visas of up to 10 years. In addition, residence visas of up to 10 years have also been granted for specialized competencies in the fields of medicine, science, research and technology, as well as for scientists and innovators.

Expo 2020 Dubai

The UAE is proud to host Expo 2020 Dubai, the world's first event to highlight the creativity and achievements of humankind. It will welcome more than 200 participants from countries, companies, organizations and educational institutions, highlighting the country's ability to gather the world under one roof.

Expo 2020 Dubai will contribute to the growth of the UAE economy, injecting AED 122.6 billion (USD 33.4 billion) between 2013 and 2031. During the 2020-2021 event, Expo 2020 Dubai will contribute 1.5% of the country's GDP.

UAE diplomacy will continue its journey and set the UAE at the forefront, to serve as an example of success and excellence, as a source of success and distinction over the coming years.



Expo 2020 Dubai

Expo 2020:

Expo 2020 Dubai is a mega international event in terms of size, scale, and duration and visitor numbers.

It's a platform to showcase the World's Greatest Show where people from all over the world come together and connect with each other, share ideas, learn and innovate. It's also a place you can come and have fun.

Why Dubai?

Expo 2020 Dubai is the first World Expo to be held in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) region, and the first to be hosted by an Arab nation with the participation of more than 192 countries.

Inside Expo 2020 Dubai:

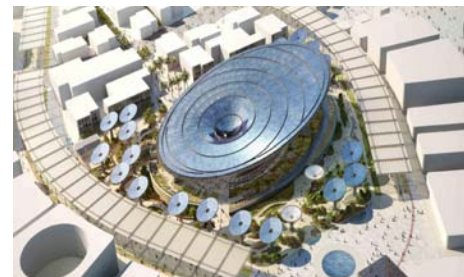
Expo 2020 Dubai under the theme of



"Connecting minds and creating future" will be a celebration of human brilliance and achievement. It will be an opportunity for people to connect from different corners of the world, to experience the best of art, culture, geography, science, technology, innovation and invention and to set into motion millions of new thoughts and ideas that will make a lasting impact in our lives.

Throughout its history, the UAE has shown the world what is possible through its remarkable development. With Expo 2020 Dubai, Dubai will go a step further in inspiring the next generation to spark innovations that will underline the next 50 years of human progress.

Expo 2020 Dubai will be a celebration of the UAE Vision 2021 by supporting the growth of tourism, stimulating the development of innovative businesses in the UAE, and enhancing





Thailand Pavilion



Finland Pavilion



Singapore Pavilion



New Zealand Pavilion



Poland Pavilion



Oman Pavilion



Netherlands Pavilion



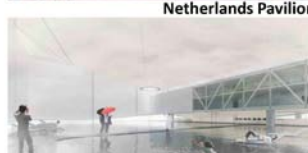
Germany Pavilion



Republic of Korea Pavilion



USA Pavilion



Brazil Pavilion



Sweden Pavilion

the country's international reputation as a location to do business.

It will focus on the power of youth and unlock the potential of one of the world's youngest and fastest growing populations.

Salient feature of Expo 2020 ?

With a site spans 4.38 square kilometers and located in the Dubai South district, close to Al Maktoum International Airport and within easy reach of Dubai International Airport, the Expo 2020 site also have its own metro station, capable of transporting 36,000 passengers per hour.

Each participating country will have its own pavilion, while there will also be a pavilion for each of the main themes - sustainability, mobility and opportunity along with Al Wasl:

Opportunity Pavilion:

Triggers visitors to realize the important role that they can play in human development through their actions.

Mobility Pavilion

Moving on up: human progress through physical and digital realms

The Sustainability Pavilion

Embark on a journey for our planet and choose your path for our shared future

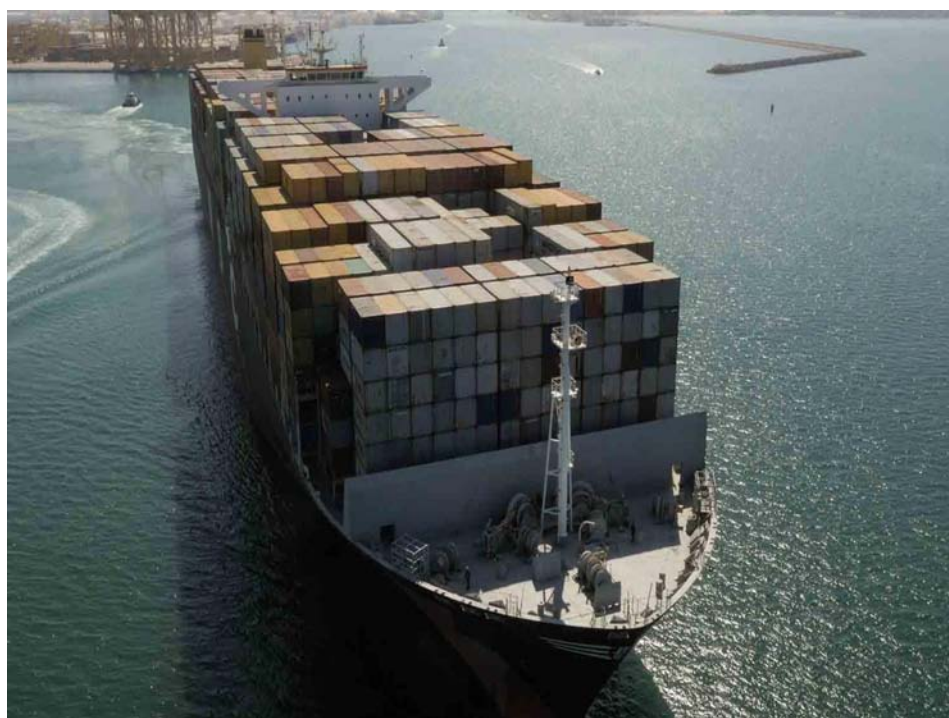
Al Wasl

The first ever Emirati opera and a cultural milestone for the UAE, Expo 2020 Dubai.

Dates and times of Expo 2020

Expo 2020 Dubai also coincides with the UAE's 50th anniversary in 2021, marking an important milestone for the UAE.

- Opening day: October 20, 2020
- Closing day: April 10, 2021





49th National Day of Oman marked

MUSCAT – 18TH November 2019 – The Sultanate of Oman will today mark its 49th National Day, the most cherished milestone that is celebrated this year and every year in a renewed spirit of dignity, determination and aspiration.

As the Omani people mark the National Day (the 18th of November Anniversary) in full fanfare and jubilation, they strongly voice their love, gratitude and allegiance to the architect of modern Oman, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

“The achievements made all over the land of Oman has been the fruit of cooperation and partnership of the loyal Omani people in all fields of action,” said Sultan Qaboos.

The men, the women and the young people of Oman, whose hearts embrace Sultan Qaboos, value the Sultan’s wisdom, farsightedness and love of Oman. They deeply appreciate that he dedicated his life to secure the present and future of the Sultanate. Not only did the Sultan steer the country to the shores of safety, he also achieved stability, security and prosperity over the past 49 years of statute leadership, despite the challenges posed to the region.

Though 49 years are considered a short span in the life of nations, the Sultanate, under the leadership of Sultan Qaboos made record progress in all sectors. The Sultan, who vowed to build a modern state, planned well for everything. The country has been established on solid grounds of equality, rule of law, cooperation and institutional integration that saw a successful prime, with citizens sharing

the responsibility of nation building.

The accomplishments made and savored by citizens are incredible. Being a model country, the Sultanate has earned the respect of the international community and it is well known as a peace-loving country. Internationally, Oman’s initiatives are focused on active participation in every positive effort aimed at realizing peace, security and stability of nations around the world.

Oman’s world class status has been highlighted in many events, the most of recent of which is the First World Congress on Maritime Heritage

reaffirming the country’s status in the world maritime map, a status marvelously asserted by Shabab Oman 2 sail ship, which continued to bag top international cups for tall ships, the last of which was the vessels voyage of “Glory and Peace” to the European Continent this year.

The Sultanate’s international prestige has also been reaffirmed through the convening of GCC, Arab, regional and international meetings in Oman. This was in recognition of Oman’s active diplomatic efforts aimed at ensuring the security, stability and prosperity of the region’s countries and the world at large. Oman’s advocates a policy of non-interference in the



held in Singapore last march (2019). At the conference, His Majesty the Sultan was awarded the Excellent Leadership Award. This reflects a global recognition for the Sultan’s attention to Oman’s marine heritage and keenness on

internal affairs of other countries, respect for neighbors and cooperation to resolve disputes through dialogue and peaceful means.

Oman, which heads the current GCC summit

sessions, has played a positive role in rapprochement among member states during meetings of committees and councils in preparation for meetings of the GCC Supreme Council of leaders.

Oman welcomes all sincere efforts to end wars, on top of which is the war waging in Yemen. The Sultanate's seeks all means to ease tension in the GCC region and secure the safe passage of vessels via the Strait of Hormuz as part of the country's responsibility to secure its regional waters. This was stated clearly in the Sultanate's speech during the 74th session of UN general assembly, saying, "Acting from its position of sovereignty on its national waters and, as part of its international responsibilities to oversee its part of the Strait of Hormuz, Oman calls upon all countries to cooperate and respect the right for navigation in accordance with UN Agreement on Maritime Law. It urges all parties not to avoid escalation and to resolve disputes through diplomatic means to prevent serious negative reactions that harm the freedom of navigation and the world economy."

The Sultanate also reiterates its support for the Palestinian people's national right of establishing their own independent country, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as part of the two-state solution. Last June, Oman opened a new embassy in Ramallah, Palestine.

Oman's foreign policy is clear, transparent and objective at all political, economic and cultural levels.

To enhance security and stability in the region, the Sultanate signed a joint defence agreement with the United Kingdom on the 21st of February 2019. This was followed on the 22nd of May 2019 by another agreement for cooperation and development of joint ties with the United Kingdom. Earlier, in May 2018, the Sultanate signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with China.

Locally, and as part of celebrations marking the 49th National Day, Oman has fostered immense developmental march forward to put the Omani economy on track for a new phase of growth: The Oman 2040 Vision, which begins to be implemented in 2021, following the success of Oman 2020 Vision.

In a recent speech, the Sultan hailed these efforts and underscored the need to continue making progress by enhancing the rates of growth, improve services to citizens, diversify the economy and increase partnership between the government and the private sector. He issued a number of Royal decrees on economic diversification, attracting foreign investments, the establishment of a Public Authority for Privatization and the establishment of a National Recruitment Centre.

To realize more ambitions for the people as

required by the current stage of development, the Sultan issued a Royal decree (No. 63/2019) to establish a new Ministry of Technology and Communications and a new Ministry for Arts Affairs (Royal Decree No. 65/2019, both issued on October 14, 2019. During the same set of decrees, the Sultan established a Tax Institution (Royal Decree No. 66/2019).

One of the salient features of development celebrated as part of the 49th National Day Anniversary has been the holding of the MajlisA'Shura Elections (9th Term), held on October 27, 2019. As many as 86 members were selected to represent citizens on the board of this parliamentary body whose term lasts 4 years, until 2023. The elections this year attracted a turnout of 49% of the total number of voters (713,335). The elections deadline had to be extended by two more hours. Two women were elected to the council's board this time.

This was followed on November 7 by the appointment of (85) members to the board of the State Council, the second arm of the bicameral body of Oman Council, which enjoys legislative and audit powers as per Royal Decree No. 101/96 issued on November 6, 1996.

Sultan Qaboos has indeed established and empowered Oman to develop rapidly towards achieving its developmental goals, depending on the efforts its men, women and young people, while the Sultan's Armed Forces, the Royal Guard of Oman, the Royal Oman Police and the Firq Forces stand guard to protect the country's march of progress.

Now content and capable, the Omani people take every opportunity, particularly national celebrations, to express gratitude and allegiance to the leader of modern Oman, a deserved gesture from a thankful people to their affectionate leader Father of the Nation.



I myself and my colleagues who are serving in Pakistan believe in this country. It has a rosy future although a somewhat complicated present

Exclusive Interview

Pakistan and Italy have excellent relations and cooperation in the fields of both trade and service sectors. Italy has also supported Pakistan bid for a free trade agreement between Pakistan and EU

Ambassador of Republic of Italy to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
H.E. Stefano Pontecorvo

Profile of H.E. Stefano Pontecorvo Ambassador of Republic of Italy to Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Stefano Pontecorvo born in Bangkok, Thailand on the 17th of February 1957

1983: Degree in Economics cum laude – Università di Roma. 1985: Enters Diplomatic Service at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Personnel (1986) and Directorate General for Political Affairs, NATO Desk (1987).

1988: Italian Embassy, Moscow. Second Secretary for Economic, Financial and Commercial Affairs.

1989: Promoted First Secretary.

1992: Italian Permanent Mission to NATO, Brussels. First Secretary in charge of the Balkans and Deputy Representative to the NATO Political Committee.

1995: Promoted Counsellor.

1996: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome. Chief of Staff of the Secretary General. 1997: EU Council, General Secretariat, Brussels. Head of the Balkans Desk. 1999: Stability Pact for South East Europe, Brussels. Head of Office and Responsible for the Third Table on Security and Stability in the Balkans.

2000: Promoted First Counsellor.

2001: Italian Permanent Mission to the EU, Brussels. First Counsellor for External Relations (Italian Representative on the RELEX Group) and Chairman of the RELEX Group during the Italian Presidency. Deputy Permanent Representative to the EU Political and Security Committee.

2004: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome. Head of the Financial Division of the Directorate General for Cooperation and Development.

2005: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome. Chief of Staff of the Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Europe, Senator Roberto Antonione (under the Berlusconi Government).

2006: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome. Chief of Staff of Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Africa and Cooperation for Development, Hon.le Patrizia Sentinelli.

2007: Italian Embassy, Moscow. Minister Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission.

2008: Promoted Minister Plenipotentiary. 2009: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome. Deputy Director General for Sub-Saharan African Countries.

2010: Italian Embassy, London. Minister and Deputy Head of Mission.

2013: Diplomatic Advisor to the Minister of Defence since 15th of January 2013 (Min. Giampaolo di Paola under the Monti Government; Min. Mario Mauro under the Letta Government; Min. Roberta Pinotti under the Renzi Government). Present position Ambassador of Italy in Pakistan.

Photo by: Ramzan Mughal

Your Excellency! First of all, I, on behalf of 'Diplomatic Focus' appreciate your efforts for enhancing the bilateral relations and praise your role as the ambassador of the Republic of Italy to Pakistan. I am also thankful to you for giving us time out of your busy schedule.

DF: Your Excellency! You have been serving in Pakistan for the last several years how would you find people conduct in Pakistan and what kind of perception has developed in your mind about Pakistan regarding the security situation?

I had already a good picture of Pakistan as I lived here 50 years ago from 1968 to 1970 and I continued to follow the country in which I stayed, not only for personal but also for professional reasons. I followed Pakistan because I have been involved with NATO and EU and for the crisis in Afghanistan, in which

I joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs because I am the son of a diplomat and I like the life a Diplomat leads. So it was a natural choice

Pakistan was one of the major actors. So that's why I had a clear picture of Pakistan before coming here.

DF: Your Excellency! I've had the opportunity to look at your impressive career, but I also





wanted to give you a chance to tell me about your career, student life, when and why you joined the ministry of foreign affairs?

I joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs because I am the son of a diplomat and I like the life a Diplomat leads. So it was a natural choice. I have also had other jobs. I was a University Professor in economics. I have been a part-time journalist and worked as a chartered accountant for a while and at a certain point I was also a military officer. When I was 28 years old I decided to try the diplomatic entry exam and I passed it. The Diplomatic career was always in the back of my mind.

DF: Your Excellency! When was your father posted as a diplomat in Pakistan? Do you remember how Islamabad looked like at that time?

My father served as Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of the Republic of Italy to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan from 1968 to 1970. Islamabad was different at that time; F6 and G7 were the only established sectors and Aabpara

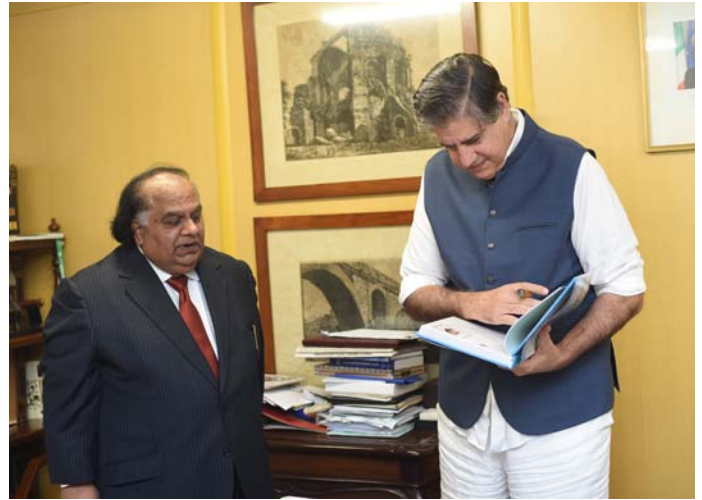
My father served
as Deputy Head
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the Embassy
of the Republic
of Italy to the
Islamic Republic
of Pakistan from
1968 to 1970

market was the only famous market of that time in Islamabad. Islamabad Club was also there at that time luckily. Islamabad was a peaceful place. There was a restaurant at Rawalpindi Railway station where we used to go there.

DF: Your Excellency! Italy is one of the important countries of the European Union in terms of bilateral and trade relations with Pakistan. Would you like to share the information on volume for trade and the products which are import/export between the two countries? And how do you see the export opportunities for Pakistani businesses to Italy?

They are both going very well. We can even say that in four years trade relations have gone up 300 percent due also to our strong ties in the defense field, in which Pakistan has become 2nd partner for Italy after Qatar. Pakistan is the fifth market for our textile machinery industry. We have exports of active principles for medicines and other items such as chemicals but by and large machinery for mechanical, textile and leather industries make up the bulk of our exports. The overall trade between





the two countries is around 3 billion dollars. Pakistani entrepreneurs are starting to take advantage of opportunities on the international and European markets, especially after the EU has extended the GSP+ facility to this Country. I am sure that with this trend in a few years we will be in a better place. The exports from Pakistan to Italy are mostly textile, leather goods, granite, and marble. I think there is a lot to be done, especially if Pakistani exporters start to brand their high quality products. Now what is happening is a lot of Italian companies





are sourcing raw material and semi finished products to Pakistani companies in Pakistan. Pakistan has a good quality level in a large number of fields including the furniture field, often overlooked, which should allow Pakistani entrepreneurs to brand their products rather than produce for the big firms in Europe and the USA.

DF: Your Excellency! I would like to know what kinds of Memorandum of understanding have been signed between the government of Pakistan and the government of Italy?

We have signed about 25 Memorandum of understanding in different sectors. An MoU about university cooperation which will reciprocally recognize respective high education degrees issued between the two countries is under negotiation. I also signed lately intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in LNG which allows Italian companies, in particularly ENI, to bid for LNG and generally gas and petroleum products to Pakistan might probably be the most important MOU that I signed. We have a couple of other agreements with the government of Gilgit Baltistan and then we have specific agreements which give a legal framework for cultural, political and economic cooperation.

DF: Your Excellency! Italy's educational system is considered one of the best education systems. I would like to know how many Pakistani students are enrolled in the universities of Italy. Would you further increase the number of students under

scholarship programs?

This year we have sent 400 students in Italy. We have 21 universities which give courses in English, many of them high ranked. Scholarship programs are offered by the individual Universities. 18 out of 21 universities have MoUs with Pakistan universities and with these agreements we should be able to actually increase the number of scholarships and teacher exchange programs in different faculties. The debate on the Pakistani education system must be deeper so the sense of awareness on education rises not only in the middle-class families but also among the lower income families. If I remember correctly on average Countries spend 12 to 18 percent of its GDP and Pakistan spends only 2 percent of its GDP. So the issue is not to give just middle-class student access to education getting rid of low

Italy has signed an MoU as the only western country to do so. We have signed the MoU on our participation during the BRI initiative summit held in China.

DF: Your Excellency! Italy is a part of the European Union and a very friendly neighborhood, what is the role of the Italian Government in the European Union? In addition to this question, I would like to ask what is the trade of Italy with European Union countries?

The trade of Italy with the European Union is around 60% of our total trade. Italy is a founding member of the European Union and we, like any other country work actively in defining its policies and its road maps defining its directives. So I think Italy plays a very active positive role in the EU. As a strong EU member, we are making efforts together with others



states decide if they participate or not. Italy has been a very active participant in NATO, UN, and EU operations. So we have the 2nd contingent in Afghanistan, for example, we have a big contingent in Somalia. We have a big contingent in Kosovo which is a NATO operation. Somalia is not a NATO operation it is EU operation. We are in 26 different NATO, EU and UN led operations. Italy is a strong troop contribution country but NATO does not impose anything on any country.

DF: Your Excellency! I would like to know about Pakistani overseas who are living and working in Italy did the Italian communities accepted them easily?

First of all, we have a wonderful Pakistani community in Italy. Two hundred twenty thousand Pakistanis are living in Italy which makes it the 2nd biggest community, which

We can even say that in four years trade relations have gone up 300 percent due also to our strong ties in the defense field, in which Pakistan has become 2nd partner for Italy after Qatar

is well integrated. The Pakistani community is adding value to the Italian society and such things are appreciated by the Italians. As you mentioned before we have been a country of immigration in the sense that our youngsters go abroad for jobs everywhere but our historical immigration, a bit like yours, was economic immigration looking for a better life. We have had a strong immigration debate in Italy that is on illegal immigration and created problems; you can be a strong country as you want, and we are a strong country and rich country luckily. But when you have three hundred thousand illegal immigrants landing on your shores you are bound to have problems. Luckily the numbers are going down. We are still quite a tolerant society. We are open to legal immigration because we need it for economic reasons and we welcome anyone who is staying according to the rules.

DF: Your Excellency! Some countries are



offering immigration on investment point of view some of the countries have startup visa program I would like to know the Republic of Italy has this kind of offer for the investors for the startup programs?

No, we don't have any policy that encourages

immigration. We need certain types of immigrants to fill the gaps of our economy. We tend to being an open society and country. 3 quarters of Italy's frontiers are coastline and not land frontier, which by itself gives a different perspective.



good in the past and which has improved a lot now. The efforts of the army and the LEAs has been commendable. So the security situation is better and foreigners move freely for business and pleasure. From the economic point of view, the previous Government and especially the current governments are carrying out the long-needed reforms that are having positive results. You have had a spectacular jump in the ease of doing business. I see that Italian businessmen and EU businessmen have very few complaints about the Pakistani economic and banking system. The entrepreneurs here are serious and open-minded and the banking system works very well. It needs a few adjustments as required by the FATF and the IMF programs and they will also help the reforms aimed at making Pakistan's economy strong once the structural imbalances are properly addressed.

DF: Your Excellency! Italy is rich in cultural and tourist places how many numbers of tourists visit every year in your country and is tourism sport your GDP as well?

Yes, of course, 20 percent of the GDP of Italy has been generated by tourism but now that percentage is decreasing. The number of tourists every year is anywhere between 3 to 5 million. But I can say that a sophisticated tourist policy is not a number game. Numbers are less important than the category of people who are coming because if you take the economic point of view different types of tourists spend in different ways. So you have a tourist who comes to Italy for shopping and they spend a lot of money. Other categories spend equally, for example those who prefer to visit cultural sites. From the cultural side we have 55 UNESCO sites and together with China we are the country which has the biggest number of them. In Italy you find historical and naturally beautiful places wherever you go. So we target certain tourists to able to maximize their economic impact on our society. That is something Pakistan can and should do.

DF: Your Excellency! Italy and Pakistan have cultural agreements to promote the culture between the countries and the Italian embassy brings their cultural groups which are a very



We have incentives for startup and investment in Italy but these don't make a distinction between Italians and foreigners. You can come and buy a house and form a company in Italy and you are welcome; you may be an Italian, you may be a Pakistani you may be a Canadian it's a level playing field.

DF: Your Excellency! Overseas who are leaving in Italy and they got nationality of the Republic of Italy did they have the right to participate in politics on the national level?

They do have the same rights; a few Italians of foreign origin, i.e. immigrants have been members of parliament and Government Ministers. Also at the local level, specifically in

the north, there are Italians of Pakistani origins that are part of local authorities as elected officials. You have the same rights, which is a welcome addition to a political debate that has different perspectives which is always good.

DF: Your Excellency! You are a very senior diplomat for more than four years what do you think about Pakistan? Is it a good country from an investment point of view and do you want to give any message to the Pakistan investors as well as international business community?

I have been here for four years and I have seen great potential in the overall picture of Pakistan. The first thing that comes into my mind, of course, is security which was not

Pakistan has a good quality level in a large number of fields including the furniture field, often overlooked, which should allow Pakistani entrepreneurs to brand their products rather than produce for the big firms in Europe and the USA

good activity to promote cultural diplomacy? I would like to know is Pakistan end have the same thing doing over there in Italy and what is your policy to promote cultural diplomacy between the two countries?

What we are doing in the cultural field what we are doing in other fields. For example, in the medical field my wife has initiated an activity in favor of autistic children and has followed, together with the Embassy staff, a number of very successful artistic initiatives. We have done several things in cooperation with the Pakistani embassy in Italy which is very active. I would like to mention in particular the largest contemporary art exhibition held in the world, which took place in Milan and carried out by the Italian branch of the TCF foundation. All works of art, by the most renowned Pakistani artists such as Rashid Rana, Imran Qureshi and the likes were sold with a big impact on Italian and European art lovers.

Pakistan has this year, for the first time, a Pavilion in the Venice Biennale, which is the biggest art event in the world, which had excellent reviews on renowned media such as Financial Times and CNN.

Lately, we have brought an Italian designer Stella Jean who stayed here a couple of weeks together with photographers and has taken up several ideas which translated into a Pakistani themed designer collection for Milan the Milan Fashion Week which is the most important fashion week in the world. Last week I was in Karachi for the Karachi fashion week. In this initiative we have had great assistance from the Ministry of Commerce and Secretary M. Suquera. These activities have put Pakistan on the cultural map of Europe.

DF: Your Excellency! Italy Government from



your end have any plan to bring any high-level delegation to Pakistan or Pakistan end going any delegation to Italy to promote bilateral trade relation?

Two big delegations have visited Pakistan and Italy. 30 Pakistan businessmen went to Italy and met 300 Italian businessmen; we had the same event here, which a delegation of sixty Italian entrepreneurs came and met with their counterpart in Pakistan in Islamabad and Lahore. Next week here we have a joint economic commission and there should also be a business forum. I believe a lot more business to business contacts need to be put in place. Government to government meetings are important to set the stage and create a framework where business can take place and for this reason we reopened our trade agency office in our Consulate Karachi which assists

and finance the participation of Pakistani businessmen in exhibitions in Italy. Exhibitions are still very important because that is where businessmen who interested in cooperation meet.

DF: Your Excellency! Would you like to give any message for the people of Pakistan and the readers of Diplomatic focus magazine?

The message is always the same. I myself and my colleagues who are serving in Pakistan believe in this country. It has a rosy future although a somewhat complicated present. We all gone through transition period reforms period such as you are going through with the difficulties you are having but certainly, the results you are achieving are very promising. The economy is strong, entrepreneurs are solid and there are all the ingredients that Pakistan will be a success story.



Italian Cuisine Week in the World' aims to promote high-quality food

Italian Ambassador Stefano Pontecorvo hosted 'Italian Cuisine Week' aims to promote Italy's agri-food industry and the tradition of high-quality food.

He said Italy's agri-food industry and the tradition of high-quality food was so central to the Italian identity and culture.

"Over a thousand events will be held, coordinated by the 296 diplomatic and consular headquarters and Italian cultural institutes around the world," he said at the 'Italian Cuisine Week in the World' hosted by himself and his wife Lidia Ravera Pontecorvo. "This event is dedicated to Venice in a moment in which the city needs

solidarity," the envoy said.

The Culture of Taste' is the theme of the fourth edition of the 'Week of Italian Cuisine in the World' — which started from 18 November, and will run until 24 November, 2019. The event aims to promote quality Italian cuisine and farm produce.

The Italian Embassy, as other Italian diplomatic and consular offices and Italian Cultural Institutes all over the world, are undertaking numerous events, from cooking courses to tastings and dinners.

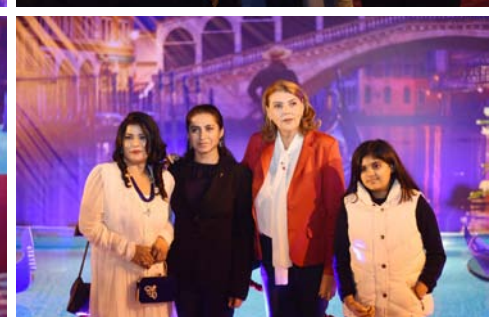
There are over 1000 activities planned by almost 300 diplomatic-consular missions and Italian Cultural

Institutes, so that the project will cover all geographic regions, help protect Italian culinary traditions, and promote a healthy lifestyle with the Mediterranean diet.

Some of the highlights of the programme include the promotion of the Mediterranean diet as a healthy lifestyle, discussions on products with registered and protected designation of origin, and re-discovery of Italian villages and their typical culinary products.

Wednesday's food gala was attended by diplomats, government officials and journalists. The event was perfectly managed and sweetly hosted by the popular Italian envoy.





Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Editor Diplomatic Focus won a memorabilia signature bat of PM Imran Khan in auction and denoted bat to Sahibzada Yaqub Khan Hall at MOFA



Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Editor Diplomatic Focus and Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood photograph with the memorabilia signature bat of Prime Minister Imran Khan displayed in Sahibzada Yaqub Khan Hall which is denoted by Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Editor Diplomatic Focus.

PAKISTAN AND CANADA AGREE TO EXPLORE AVENUES FOR DEFENSE AND SECURITY COOPERATION

By M. Bilal Zafar

High Commissioner Raza Bashir Tarar met with General Jonathan Vance, Chief of Defence Staff, Canadian Armed Forces to discuss defence and security relations at all levels between Pakistan and Canada.

High Commissioner Tarar briefed the Chief of Defence Staff on the regional situation including Pakistan's cooperation in US led peace efforts in Afghanistan. He informed that a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan is in the interest of regional countries, including Pakistan.

The High Commissioner said that Pakistan would like to have enhanced defense and security cooperation including participation of Canadian Armed Forces officers in the short, medium and long-term courses in Pakistan's armed forces institution. The High Commissioner further underlined that collaboration in the field of joint exercises between armed forces of both the countries will be mutually beneficial.

General Vance appreciated important role being played by Pakistan towards regional peace and stability. He also noted Pakistan's vital role in bringing peace in Afghanistan. The Chief of Defence Staff agreed with the

High Commissioner to further explore the avenues for defence and security cooperation and enhance collaboration in areas of mutual interest.



Embassy of Japan to celebrate “A Month of Japanese Culture”

To show the rich cultural diversity and traditions of Japan, the Embassy of Japan is organizing a variety of cultural activities under the banner of “A Month of Japanese Culture” starting here from November 14. To kick start the month-long cultural activities, on November 14, Assistant Prof. Dr. Satoshi Naiki, an eminent Japanese expert on Gandhara civilization from Kyoto University, who is currently leading a Japanese Archaeological Mission in Pakistan, will deliver a lecture on the Legacy of Gandhara at the Center for Culture

and Development.

Followed by the lecture on Gandhara civilization, on November 19th, “Japan Festival 2019” would be organized at the premises of the National University of Modern Languages. The day-long Japan festival would be inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Kuninori Matsuda, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, together with the Rector of NUML.

“Japan festival 2019”, which is being organized with the cooperation of National University of Modern

Languages, will begin with the Japanese Language Speech Contest among the students of Japanese language department and will be followed by other colorful cultural performances such as Kendo demonstration, Taiko performance, Karate and Judo demonstration, Ninja performance, Origami workshop, Bonsai and Ikebana demonstrations. This festival aims to highlight the diverse cultural facets of Japan under one roof and to create harmony and understanding among the people of two friendly nations.





PFOWA Charity Bazaar organized with collaboration of Diplomatic community

The Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) held its annual charity bazaar, providing diplomats a platform to raise funds for underprivileged segments of their community.

First Lady Samina Alvi inaugurated the bazar held at the lawns of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), where families of diplomats set up stalls showcasing their respective national and cultural diversity.

The MoFA's flagship event was meant to raise funds to support the families of its low-income staffers in the field of education, health and social welfare.

The First Lady in her address said caring for others made better human beings and appreciated the joint efforts of diplomatic corps for a noble cause.

She expressed satisfaction that PFOWA, founded by its first patron Shaista Ikramullah on the recommendation of Begum Raana Liaquat Ali Khan in 1947, was effectively continuing with the legacy of philanthropy.

She said besides fund-raising, the plurality at the bazaar presented a colourful kaleidoscope of arts, culture and cuisine that cultivated bonds of harmony among the participating countries. Samina Alvi also apprised the audience of her social work of over two decades mainly focusing provision of education and clean drinking water to underprivileged sections of society. She also highlighted the importance of raising awareness about breast cancer, saying that early diagnosis could save the lives of thousands of women in the country.

Foreign Secretary Sohail Mehmood said it was heartening to see the diplomats along



with their spouses joining hands for an act of benevolence.

He said the endeavours aimed at making difference in the lives of underprivileged was the ethos of foreign service. President PFOWA

Mahwish Sohail in her welcome address said the charity bazar not only proved an opportunity for the international community to display their cultural montage, but also to share a common goal of social welfare.



PFOWA's Patron Mehreen Qureshi said the Association had a 72-year-old remarkable history of volunteer work for uplift of the needy families of diplomatic corps.

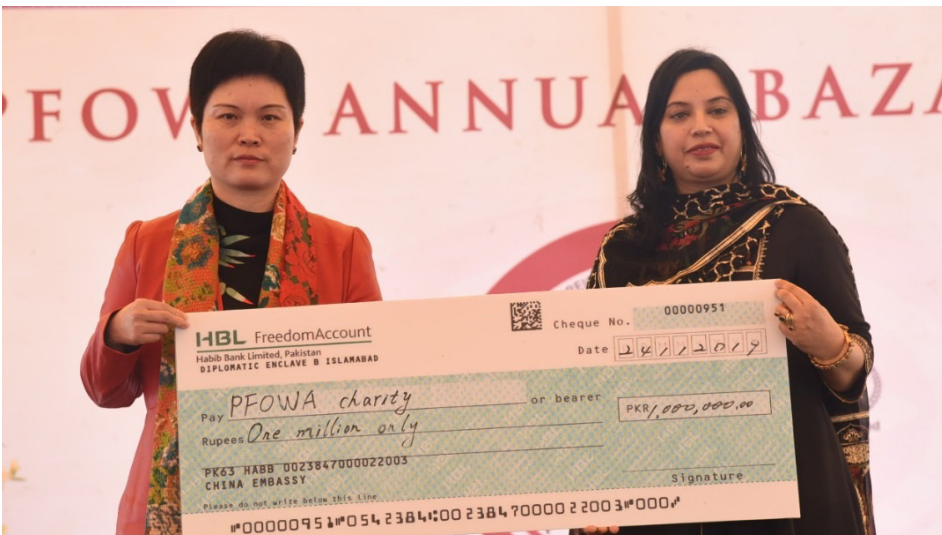
The Charge d'Affaires of China's Embassy presented a cheque of Rs one million to the President PFOWA. Earlier, First Lady Samina Alvi



Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Editor Diplomatic Focus won a memorabilia signature bat of Prime Minister Imran Khan in auction and denoted bat to Sahibzada Yaqub Khan Hall.

visited various stalls set up at the bazaar and evinced keen interest in the unique artefacts from all over the world. An auction of cricket

memorabilia including two bats and two balls signed by Prime Minister Imran Khan was also held, the proceeds of which went to the PFOWA charity fund. The children of diplomatic staffers clad in traditional outfits took the stage in a 'Parade of the Nations' and presented tableaux while waving national flags of their countries. The song and dance performance of the Kashmiri artistes was highlight of the occasion that depicted how the innocent people of the Valley were witnessing dark time of their lives under the over-three month seige by the Indian occupation security forces. The PFOWA bazaar enthralled the visitors with a mix of cultural and culinary experiences from different countries. The participating countries included China, Russia, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Egypt, Bangladesh, Iran, Japan, Central Asian states, Malaysia, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Yemen and several others.



Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad organized a Charity Bazar



The stall of the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Morocco organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Sri Lanka organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Ukraine organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Sudan organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Iran organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad



The stall of the Embassy of Iraq organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad



The stall of the Embassy of Japan organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Bangladesh organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad



The stall of the Embassy of Morocco organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad



The stall of the Embassy of Nepal organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.





The stall of the Embassy of Jordan organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Kuwait organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Maldives organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Kazakhstan organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Malaysia organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Palestine organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Russia organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.





The stall of the Embassy of Tajikistan organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Turkey organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Uzbekistan organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Thailand organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of Turkmenistan organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.





The stall of the Embassy of Azerbaijan organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad.



The stall of the Embassy of China organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad



The stall of the Embassy of Egypt organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad



The stall of the Embassy of Indonesia organized at the charity bazaar of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA) in Islamabad





President of the Kyrgyz Republic participated in High-level International Donor Conference

H.E. Mr. Sooronbai Jeenbekov, President of the Kyrgyz Republic participated in High-level International Donor Conference is being held in Bishkek.

In the welcome speech, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic noted the major projects have been implemented with the help of partners.

"Large infrastructure projects were implemented with the financial support of the Asian Development Bank. On the basis of close cooperation with the World Bank, projects were implemented in the field of

energy, road construction and infrastructure development. The International Monetary Fund and the Eurasian Bank for Reconstruction and Development have provided significant assistance in ensuring financial stability," said the President.

H.E. Mr. Sooronbai Jeenbekov continued the UN Agencies have made invaluable contributions to the sustainable development of the country.

"They are currently working in the regions on education, health, social protection and environmental issues. Projects on clean drinking

water and irrigation are being implemented with the assistance of the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Islamic Development Bank and other donor organizations. Work is being carried out bilaterally with the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, Turkey, European countries, Japan, South Korea, the United States, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and other countries,"



SAMSUNG Pakistan & LUMS Sign MoU to Accelerate Social Start-ups in Pakistan



Samsung Electronics Pakistan and LUMS have joined hands to support and empower social start-ups contributing towards achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through this collaboration, Samsung and LUMS aim to accelerate start-ups delivering on their full entrepreneurial potential and create a positive impact.

The official MoU signing ceremony for the collaboration took place at the National Incubation Centre Lahore (NICL). The MoU was signed by Mr. Roy Chang, Managing Director Samsung Electronics Pakistan, and Dr. Arshad Ahmad, Vice Chancellor LUMS.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Chang said, “Everything we design and create at Samsung, anticipates human behaviour and solves a problem, clearly. At every touch-point, consumers feel that an experience is built around them, not the other way round. Samsung is determined in its quest for innovation that inspires meaningful human progress and that’s the culture we want to promote through this initiative to contribute towards a more innovation driven economy and solving key local challenges identified by the United Nations.”

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Ahmad said, “For a company like Samsung to choose LUMS to collaborate with is a great privilege and we are very grateful for this. Entrepreneurship is a way of thinking and that thinking is fueled by fusion across disciplines. The agenda we have for the next five years is to fuse together other disciplines with science and engineering and we call that a no-borders agenda, and partnership with industry is critical to make this successful. We can’t solve any of Pakistan’s challenges or problems if we don’t work together.”

About corporate citizenship at Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd.

Samsung is committed to carry out its vision “Together for Tomorrow! Enabling People” by empowering future generations to achieve their full potential through education. The company operates a range of educational programmes to nurture young people across society to become pioneers, driving positive social change and build a better world for all. For more information visit (citizenship website).

About Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd.

Samsung inspires the world and shapes the future with transformative ideas and technologies. The company is redefining the worlds of TVs, smartphones, wearable

devices, tablets, digital appliances, network systems, and memory, system LSI, foundry and LED solutions. Samsung empowers future generations to achieve their full potential through education with its citizenship vision “Together for Tomorrow! Enabling People”. For the latest news, please visit the Samsung Newsroom at <http://news.samsung.com>.

About LUMS

LUMS, established in 1985 as a not-for-profit University, offers over 30 degree programmes at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels through its five schools of Business, Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Engineering, Law, and Education. The University aspires to achieve excellence in national and international leadership through unparalleled teaching and research, and civic engagement to serve the critical needs of society.

About National Incubation Centre Lahore (NICL)

NICL is an incubation and acceleration platform, launched under the public-private partnership of the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecom, IGNITE, Fatima Ventures and LUMS. It implements the most comprehensive experiential and developmental learning programmes and equips entrepreneurs to continuously reach new professional heights.

Islamabad Art Festival 2019

H.E. Mr. Manuel Duran Gimenez-Rico, Ambassador of Spain and Mr. Jamal sha president/ Chief Curator Islamabad Art Festival 2019 organized twelve days exhibition function by "The Creative View" and artwork was done by Carlos Garcia Lahoz. Member of Diplomatic community, High dignitaries, Government officials and media person grace the occasion





65th Anniversary of the National Day of Republic of Algeria

On the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the National Day of Republic of Algeria H.E. Mr. Lakhal Benkelai hosted a dinner reception at Serena Hotel Islamabad. Azam Khan Swati member of Senate was the chief guest on the occasion. Dean of Diplomatic Corps, High dignitaries, Government Officials, member of diplomatic community, media persons and business community graced the occasion.





101st Anniversary of National Day of Romania

The Romanian ambassador expressed his views while speaking on the occasion of 101 anniversary of National Day of Romania.

"I warmly welcome the spirit of Romania-Pakistan relations, characterized by friendship and collaboration and the new dynamism witnessed in the recent years with a result-driven political dialogue

reflecting a clear desire of both states for developing a pragmatic relationship in fields of mutual interests".

The Romanian ambassador expressed these views while speaking on the occasion of 101 anniversary of National Day of Romania. Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaisar attended the event as chief guest. It was Asad Qaisar's first

diplomatic event after assuming charge of the Speaker of the National Assembly. Apart from him, Minister Sheharyar Afridi attended the event as guest of honor while a number of other Federal and State Ministers, Senators and ex Ministers also attended the Romanian national day reception.







National Day and Armed Forces day of Bosnia

To celebrate the National Day and Armed Forces day of Bosnia and Herzegovina, ambassador Brigadier General (r) Sakib Foric hosted a reception at the Serena Hotel Islamabad. The event was held in the Sheesh Mahal hall and well attended, with diplomats; members of the diplomatic Defense Corp; senior Pakistani officers of the Armed Forces and civilians of note. The guest of honour was Minister of State for Climate Change Ms. Zartaj Gul and the cake cutting ceremony took place with all the VIPs on stage joining in.



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