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**Pakistan's support to a peaceful, stable, united, democratic, sovereign and prosperous Afghanistan: PM Imran Khan**



**Pakistan attaches its relations with Iran as a fraternal country and important neighbor: Foreign Minister Qureshi**



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## 20 Iranian FM visits Pakistan to discuss bilateral cooperation

Dr. Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of Iran called on the Prime Minister. They discussed efforts for strengthening of bilateral relations and issues related to peace and security in the region. Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to enhance mutually beneficial economic cooperation with Iran including bilateral trade, investments and commercial interaction. The two sides should work together in all earnest. The Prime Minister emphasized the need to deepen connectivity to harness benefits from regional economic integration.

## 22 Prime Minister's participation in the 20th Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Heads of State

Prime Minister Imran Khan participated in the 20th Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Heads of State (SCO-CHS) in video conference format. The meeting was chaired by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Other participating leaders included Chinese President Xi Jinping. The SCO-CHS is the highest forum of SCO. It adopts documents and decisions that provide policy guidelines for determining priorities and major areas of activities of the Organization.

## 38 G20 member states Contributed \$21 billion to fight against COVID-19

As the Group of Twenty (G20) forum's 15th meeting got under Saudi Arabia's King Salman, in his opening remarks, expressed confidence in the outcome of the summit, being held virtually for the first time since its founding owing to the coronavirus pandemic. "I am confident that the Riyadh summit will deliver significant and decisive results, and will lead to the adoption of economic and social policies that will restore hope and reassurance to the people of the world,"



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Mian Fazal Elahi

**K**han's first visit to Kabul as prime minister comes as violence escalates in the warfare state which is threatening peace negotiations deal between the Afghan government and the Taliban that began in Doha in September.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has visited neighboring Afghanistan, where he vowed to "do everything" to help control violence and push for a ceasefire between the Taliban and Afghan forces.

Khan said in a press conference with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani "We notice with concern that the level of violence despite the talks in Qatar, is rising".

He had chosen this moment to visit Kabul to assure the Afghan government that "Pakistan will do everything, whatever is possible, we will do to help reduce this violence and in fact move towards a ceasefire".

Closer engagement between the leaders will help foster a stronger and multi-faceted relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. During the Prime Minister's visit, Pakistan and Afghanistan also issued a document titled "Shared Vision between Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Islamic Republic of Pakistan to support peace and stability in both countries and the wider Region."

The Shared Vision is aimed at advancing a forward-looking cooperative partnership between the two countries for political, economic and people-to-people exchanges.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's support to a peaceful, stable, united, democratic, sovereign and prosperous Afghanistan.

He reiterated his long-standing view that there was no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and that a negotiated political settlement was the only way forward for enduring peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan.

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

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## Heartfelt condolences on the passing of Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ



May Allah the Almighty rest his soul in eternal  
peace and grant courage to the beraved family  
to bear the loss. Ameen!

Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/ Publisher of "Diplomatic Focus" Magazine and on behalf of Diplomatic Focus team wish to extend our heartfelt condolences to the Royal Family and people of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the passing of our Honorable and beloved His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain. We mourn with the Government and people of the Kingdom of Bahrain during this time of bereavement. May the merciful and Almighty Allah bestow an eternal and peaceful rest to His Royal Highness's soul.





## Pakistan and Qatar enjoyed excellent relations in all areas of mutual interest

By Bilal Zafar

President Dr Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan and Qatar enjoyed excellent relations in all areas of mutual interest and Pakistan wants to further strengthen and broaden bilateral cooperation with the brotherly country. He made these remarks while talking to the visiting Commander of Qatar Air Force, Major-General (Pilot), Salem Hamad Eqail Al-Nabet, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The meeting was also attended by Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan and Qatar's Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Saoud Abdulrehman Al-Thani.

The President said that Pakistan and Qatar had great scope for cooperation in the areas of defense and military training and Qatar needed to benefit from defense expertise and training facilities of Pakistan. He also highlighted anti-terrorism efforts made by Pakistan that resulted in defeating militancy and terrorism.

The President said that Pakistan's economy was improving despite the Covid-19 pandemic. He said that Pakistan offered enormous investment opportunities and Qatar could benefit from Pakistan's investment-friendly environment in various sectors. Major General (Pilot), Salem Hamad Eqail Al-Nabet appreciated the professionalism of Armed Forces of Pakistan and underlined the need for enhanced defense cooperation between the two countries.

Major General (Pilot) Salem Hamad Eqail Al-Nabet, Commander Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF), who is on official visit to Pakistan, called on General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee at Joint Staff Headquarters, Rawalpindi. Matters of bilateral professional interest, regional security environment, and further strengthening of security & defence cooperation between the two countries were discussed during the meeting.



Major General (Pilot) Salem Hamad Eqail Al-Nabet, Commander Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF), called on General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee at Joint Staff Headquarters, Rawalpindi



Major General (Pilot) Salem Hamad Eqail Al-Nabet, Commander Qatar Emiri Air Force called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS)

Commander QEAF lauded the professionalism of Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their sacrifices in fight against terrorism.

Major General (Pilot) Salem Hamad Eqail Al-Nabet, Commander Qatar Emiri Air Force called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS).

During the meeting matters of mutual & professional interest and regional security situation were discussed. COAS said that

Pakistan values its brotherly relations with Qatar and Pakistan Army also looks forward for enhanced defence and security cooperation with Qatar Armed Forces.

The visiting dignitary appreciated contributions of Pakistan Army for regional peace & security and role in training of Qatar's Armed Forces.

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## Pakistan confers top civil award to Bosnian President

### Pakistan and Bosnia & Herzegovina must continue to work closely in areas of mutual interest

By Mian Fazal Elahi

President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi held a meeting with Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Sefik Dzaferovic, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The President extended a warm welcome to the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and expressed satisfaction over the warm and brotherly relations between the two countries. The President stated that there was a need to translate the goodwill between the two countries into substantive cooperation. He added that the Chairman's visit would further strengthen and deepen the fraternal relations between Pakistan and Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Both leaders underlined the need for further expansion in the bilateral relationship in

diverse areas including political, economic, cultural, defence and people-to-people contacts.

President Alvi apprised the Chairman on the grave and systematic human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) as well as the illegal and unilateral actions of Indian Government of 5 August 2019 which were against UNSC resolutions, international law and 4th Geneva Convention. He added that India's belligerent attitude was a threat to regional peace and security.

The two leaders affirmed that both countries would continue to extend mutual support on issues of each other's core national interest. The two Presidents also agreed that Pakistan and Bosnia & Herzegovina must continue to work closely in areas of mutual interest.

In recognition of the Chairman's services, the President conferred the Award of Nishan-e-Pakistan at a special investiture ceremony. The President later hosted a banquet in honour of President and his entourage.

Prime Minister Imran Khan received Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia & Herzegovina Sefik Dzaferovic. Following the official welcoming ceremony, the two leaders held a one-on-one meeting, followed by delegation-level talks. Ministers and senior Advisers were part of the delegations on both sides. During the meetings, the Prime Minister stated that Pakistan shared brotherly affinity with the people of Bosnia & Herzegovina and relations between the two countries were marked by mutual support at times of need. The Prime Minister added that Bosnia & Herzegovina's assistance on occasion





of 2005 earthquake and 2010 floods in Pakistan was deeply appreciated. The Prime Minister highlighted Pakistan's effective efforts in fighting Covid-19 through 'smart lockdown' strategy and focus on saving lives, securing livelihoods, and stimulating the economy. Noting the efforts made by Bosnia & Herzegovina to contain the pandemic, the Prime Minister announced Pakistan's intention to provide material assistance to the Bosnian side in combating the pandemic. Chairman of the Presidency Sefik Dzaferovic highlighted the close cordial ties between Pakistan and Bosnia & Herzegovina and expressed gratitude for Pakistan's important role in advancing peace and stability in

Bosnia & Herzegovina as part of the UN Peacekeeping Mission during the Bosnian war and later during the stabilization process. The two leaders exchanged views on the entire gamut of bilateral relations and agreed to further deepen mutual cooperation in all fields, especially in the economic, trade and investment, science & technology, defence industry, educational and cultural arenas. It was also agreed to maintain frequent bilateral exchanges, including at the highest level. The Prime Minister apprised Chairman Dzaferovic of the grave and systematic human rights violations in the IIOJK as well as the adverse consequences of India's unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019 and the threat

posed to peace and security in the region. The Prime Minister thanked the Presidency of Bosnia & Herzegovina for its principled stance on the issue. The Chairman reiterated Bosnia & Herzegovina's position regarding the grave situation in IIOJK, stressing respect for human rights and resolution of the Jammu & Kashmir dispute in line with relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The Prime Minister shared concern on the rise of Islamophobia around the world, particularly in Europe. He stated that publication of blasphemous caricatures and issuance of divisive statements in the name of freedom of expression had hurt the sentiments of Muslims across the world. He underlined

**President of Bosnia & Herzegovina expressed gratitude for Pakistan's important role in advancing peace and stability in Bosnia & Herzegovina as part of the UN Peacekeeping Mission during the Bosnian war and later during the stabilization process**





that there was a need for understanding the special reverence that the Muslims had for the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's condemnation of the recent terrorist attacks in Europe. Underlining the importance of respect for every religion, the Prime Minister underscored the need for assiduous efforts to promote inter-faith harmony. Following the talks, the two sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Scientific and Technological Cooperation as well as the Readmission Agreement. Chairman Sefik Dzaferovic extended a cordial invitation to Prime Minister Imran Khan to visit Bosnia & Herzegovina. The Prime Minister accepted the invitation and said he looked forward to visiting Bosnia & Herzegovina at an early date.

**The Prime Minister said that Bosnia & Herzegovina's assistance on occasion of 2005 earthquake and 2010 floods in Pakistan was deeply appreciated**

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi called on Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia & Herzegovina Sefik Dzaferovic. Extending a warm welcome to the Chairman on his first visit to Pakistan, the Foreign Minister underlined the fraternal nature of relations between Pakistan and Bosnia & Herzegovina marked by warmth and cordiality. He added that there was remarkable goodwill for the people of Bosnia & Herzegovina among the people of Pakistan. Both countries had supported each other in times of need. The Foreign Minister expressed condolences on the loss of precious lives in Bosnia & Herzegovina due to Covid-19. He apprised Chairman Dzaferovic of Pakistan's strategy of 'smart lockdown' and Prime Minister's stress on saving lives, securing livelihoods, and stimulating the economy. Views were exchanged on the entire spectrum of bilateral cooperation. It was agreed that a vast potential existed to





enhance cooperation, especially in fields of trade and investment, energy, science & technology, defence industry, education, and people-to-people exchanges. The Foreign Minister underlined the importance of promoting mutual collaboration through optimal utilization of mechanisms of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC), Joint Economic Commission (JEC) and Joint Trade Committee (JTC). The Foreign Minister also offered training at Foreign Service Academy for the young diplomats from Bosnia & Herzegovina. Foreign Minister Qureshi briefed the Chairman on the grave human rights situation in IIOJK as well as India's illegal measures to change the demographic structure of the occupied territory, which was against UNSC resolutions, international law, and the 4th Geneva Convention. The Foreign Minister thanked the Presidency of Bosnia & Herzegovina for taking a principled position on the issue. The Foreign Minister also highlighted Pakistan's positive contribution to the Afghan peace process and reaffirmed support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned leading to an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement. Both sides appreciated the strong cooperation at the multilateral fora, especially at the UN. It was agreed to continue such mutual support to each other.

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# Ambassador's conference about "The vision of Iqbal" at the Aiwan-e-Sadr



By M. Bilal Zafar

**P**resident Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday said that with the present government's vision of the establishment of Riasat-e-Madina, Pakistan was moving towards the Renaissance of Muslims in line with the philosophy of Allama Muhammad Iqbal.

"There should not be any taunting about the establishment of Riasat-e-Madina, as it the voice of everyone's heart including me and you," he said while addressing an event titled "The Vision of Iqbal: Ambassador' Conference" here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The president said that despite the propaganda of enemies, some brave leaders in the Muslim world including Prime Minister Imran Khan stood firm on Muslims' Renaissance through the ideals of peace, harmony, unity and coexistence as per the vision of great thinker and poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal.

Recalling the historic 1930 address of Allama Muhammad Iqbal in Allahabad, he said the

current situation of minorities' exploitation in India were reflective of what Allama Iqbal had viewed about the two-nation theory and the creation of a separate homeland for Muslims of the subcontinent.

The president said that as the vision and poetry of Allama Iqbal was universal with focus on Muslims' Renaissance, he was the poet of Ummah.

Recalling the formation of Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) over two decades back, President Alvi said, since Prime Minister Imran Khan was inspired by the thoughts of Allama Iqbal, they then had decided that their government should be on the model of the State of Madina.

He recounted various political, intellectual and philosophical achievements of Allama Iqbal including his efforts for the creation of Pakistan.

The president said that Allama Muhammad Iqbal, like the founder of nation Quaid-e-Azam, was initially supportive of a united India but later after realizing the psychology of Hindus,

who wanted their dominance, gave the idea of a separate Muslim state and started political efforts to achieve the objective.

Minister for National Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mehmood while speaking on the occasion said that Allama Muhammad Iqbal besides other things also addressed the youth and highlighted the importance of education.

He said the present government was working hard for the promotion of education and for the first time introduced a national curriculum in the country.

Senator Waleed Iqbal, grandson of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Chairman Academy of Letters Dr. Yusuf Khushak, Dr. Ayub Nasir (Poet), Prof. Dr. Shahid Iqbal Kamran, and Ambassadors and High Commissioners of different countries including Germany, Italy, Spain, Bangladesh and Kyrgyzstan also addressed the conference and highlighted various aspects of Allama Iqbal's poetry.

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## President Dr. Arif Alvi distributed awards at 47th Pakistan Open Golf Championship

By M. Bilal Zafar

President Dr. Arif Alvi said it was essential to encourage the golfers for promotion of the game as well as better representation of the country abroad.

Addressing as chief guest at a prize distribution ceremony of 47th Pakistan Open Golf Championship, the president said that he himself, being fond of the golf, found it a “very fascinating” game. He congratulated winners of the championship and said it required dedication and craze to achieve excellence in any game. He said due to the immense passion, Pakistan produced world class hockey and squash players in past despite lack of facilities and resources.

The president said the better green leveling of golf courses could also attract tourists as people traveled to Thailand and Dubai to enjoy the game.

The president told the audience that he played 18-holes in Margalla Golf Club and preferred to walk instead of availing the cart.

He said it was impressive to know that Pakistan had around 15,000 golfers and 48 golf courses. However, the game could be well promoted through better facilities at the courses like

sprinkle irrigation using treated waste water and better leveling.

The president also lauded the idea of introducing golf facilities for the children and women and recalled that he had also bought a golf set for his kids to inculcate the game’s passion in them.

The president started his address advising people to continue adhering to the anti-COVID

19 precautions. He said statistics and graphs revealed that the second COVID wave was surging more consistently and looked more dangerous too.

Therefore, the people must not give up precautions of wearing mask and maintaining social distancing.







## Pakistan PM Imran Khan pledges support for Afghan peace process in historic visit

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Prime Minister Imran Khan paid a day-long visit to Kabul at the invitation of President Ashraf Ghani. This was the Prime Minister's first visit to Afghanistan since assuming office in August 2018. The Prime Minister had wide-ranging talks with President Ashraf Ghani to review efforts during the past two years to promote shared objectives of strengthening Pakistan-Afghanistan bilateral relations and achieving lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's support to a peaceful, stable, united, democratic, sovereign and prosperous Afghanistan. He reiterated his long-standing view that there was no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and that a negotiated political settlement was the only way forward for enduring peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan.



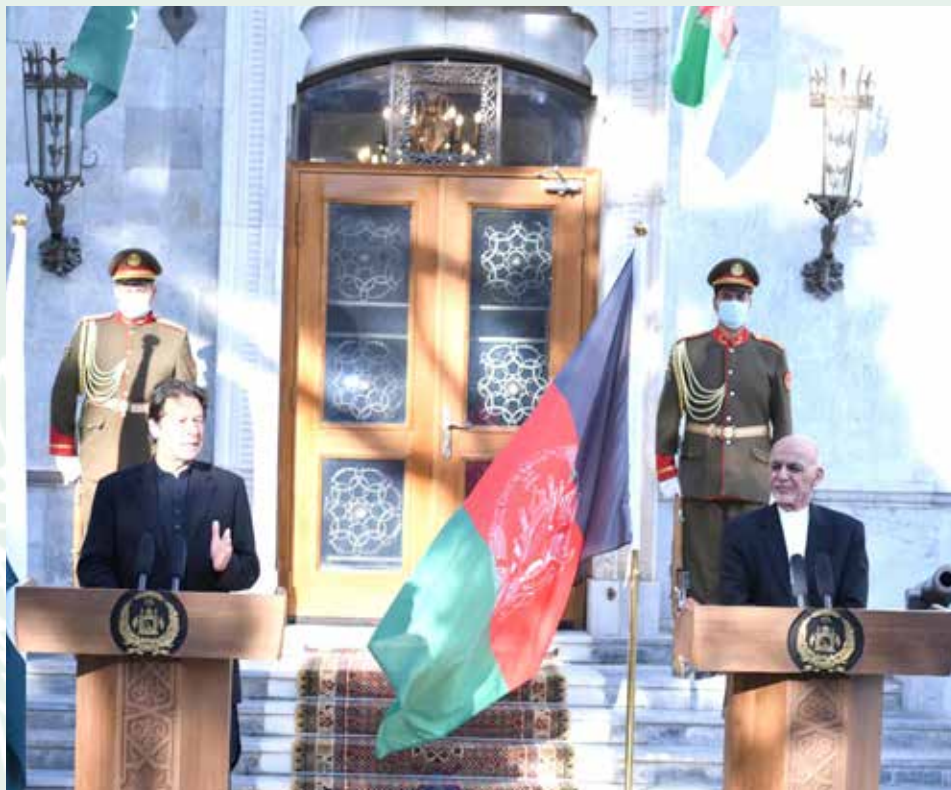


Prime Minister Imran Khan called on all sides for taking necessary measures for reduction in violence leading to ceasefire to protect Afghan lives. Underscoring the importance of an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement, the Prime Minister underlined that Pakistan will respect the decisions made by Afghans in the peace process. He also cautioned against those who could spoil the peace efforts.

During the Prime Minister's visit, Pakistan and Afghanistan also issued a document titled "Shared Vision between Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Support Peace and Stability in Both Countries and the Wider Region." The Shared Vision is aimed at advancing a forward-looking cooperative partnership between the two countries for political, economic and people-to-

**Pakistan's support  
to a peaceful, stable,  
united, democratic,  
sovereign and  
prosperous  
Afghanistan**

people exchanges. The two leaders agreed to constitute Committees to pursue security and peace-related matters. The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at increasing high-level leadership exchanges imparting a steady momentum to bilateral cooperation in diverse fields. In this regard, he appreciated that the recent visit of Advisor on Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood to Kabul from 16-18 November led to important breakthroughs for commencement of negotiations on Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), progress in revision of APTTA, Customs Assistance Agreement, and understanding to have MoU for cooperation between two



Central Banks. The two leaders also agreed to expedite infrastructure and energy connectivity projects. They also discussed development of new rail-road projects between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Prime Minister extended an invitation to President Ashraf Ghani to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience. On the sidelines of Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Kabul, Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi met his Afghan counterpart Mr. Haneef Atmar. The two Foreign Ministers reviewed complete gamut

of bilateral relations, developments in the Afghan peace process, regional connectivity, and people-to-people contacts. The Foreign Minister assured his Afghan counterpart of Pakistan's steadfast support to a peaceful, stable, sovereign and prosperous Afghanistan. The Foreign Minister reiterated Pakistan's consistently-held position that there is no military solution to the Afghan conflict and that Afghans must seize this historic opportunity presented by U.S.-Taliban







Peace Agreement and subsequent start of Intra-Afghan Negotiations for bringing an end to the conflict through inclusive and broad-based political settlement. He underlined that Pakistan will respect the decisions taken by Afghans in the peace process. The two Foreign Ministers noted that recent high-level visits from both sides have led to positive trajectory in bilateral relations and agreed to take necessary steps to further build on this momentum. Foreign Minister Qureshi expressed satisfaction at the important decisions taken by the two sides during 7th APTTCA meeting held on 17 November in Kabul including commencing

**Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed satisfaction at increasing high-level leadership exchanges imparting a steady momentum to bilateral cooperation in diverse fields**

of negotiations on PTA, progress on revision of APTTA, agreement of cooperation between Customs, and understanding about having an MoU on cooperation between the Central Banks. Foreign Minister Atmar thanked Foreign Minister Qureshi for Pakistan's support in the Afghan peace process and for the support extended to Afghan nationals during Covid-19 as well as facilitation of trade, transit and pedestrian movement. The two sides also agreed that sustained peace and stability, enhanced trade, and connectivity would contribute to regional prosperity.

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## Pakistan attaches great importance to its ties with Nepal

**P**resident Dr Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan attaches great importance to its ties with Nepal and wants to further expand and strengthen bilateral relations with Nepal in the areas of mutual benefit. He stated this while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Nepal, Syed Haider Shah, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Congratulating the Ambassador-designate over his appointment

as Ambassador of Pakistan to Nepal, the President said that Pakistan and Nepal had considerable potential to further improve economic, political and cultural relations. He underscored the need for exploring new sectors of bilateral economic cooperation like agriculture, pharmaceuticals, IT, textiles and surgical instruments. The President expressed the hope that the new Ambassador

would actively work for further strengthening economic and cultural relations between the two countries. He asked the Ambassador-designate to expose India over human rights abuses in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and other Minorities groups of India during his interaction with the diplomatic community.

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## Chinese Ambassador H.E. Mr. Nong Rong appreciated the security arrangements done for the Chinese people and CPEC projects in Pakistan

**H**.E. Mr. Nong Rong, Ambassador of People's Republic of China in Islamabad appreciated the Security provided by Pakistan for Chinese and CPEC Projects. Islamabad- Federal Minister for Interior, Brig (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah met with the Ambassador of China, H.E. Mr. Nong Rong at the Ministry of Interior. He welcomed the Ambassador to Pakistan and the two discussed bilateral ties. Acknowledging the time tested friendship of Pakistan and China, the Federal Minister for Interior, Brig (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah said that the two countries are like two bodies one soul and that the cooperation between the two has only strengthened over the years.

The Ambassador agreed with the Minister and said that the cooperation between Pakistan and China has always proven to be fruitful and very productive. H.E. Mr. Nong Rong appreciated the security arrangements done for the Chinese people and CPEC projects in Pakistan. "Ensuring fool proof security for CPEC projects and overall environment is our utmost priority" the Federal Minister for Interior said. "We have increased the manpower and overall strength of FC and Frontier Corps to make sure that there is no problem



faced in the smooth functioning of CPEC projects" he added. The Ambassador thanked the Minister for cooperation in Visa related affairs to which the Minister replied that overall process

of visa issuance has been streamlined and we try that there are no hurdles faced by people.

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## Iranian FM visits Pakistan to discuss bilateral cooperation

By Mian Fazal Elahi

**D**r. Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of Iran called on the Prime Minister. They discussed efforts for strengthening of bilateral relations and issues related to peace and security in the region. Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to enhance mutually beneficial economic cooperation with Iran including bilateral trade, investments and commercial interaction. The two sides should work together in all earnest. The Prime Minister emphasized the need to deepen connectivity to harness benefits from regional economic integration. He expressed his commitment to work to resolve the issues in implementation of Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project including the financing of pipeline infrastructure and the scope of snap back clause. The Prime Minister said that Pakistan was working towards realizing our vision of a peaceful and inter-connected region for shared progress and prosperity. We believe that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan is vital for economic progress of the region and Pakistan and Iran as the two neighbouring countries can make important contribution for achieving this objective. He also thanked the Iranian leadership for their steadfast support to the principled struggle of Kashmiris. The Iranian Foreign Minister appreciated the increasing high level interaction between the two countries. He said the mutual efforts of the two countries have resulted into enhanced economic and people-to-people interaction,







which should be further strengthened. Dr. Javad Zarif also appreciated Pakistan's efforts for strengthening border management to prevent illegal cross border activities.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi received Foreign Minister of Iran Dr. Javad Zarif. Their one-on-one meeting was followed by delegation-level talks. Foreign Minister Qureshi underscored the importance Pakistan attaches to its relations with Iran as a fraternal country and important neighbour.

The two Foreign Ministers reviewed all aspects of bilateral relations and exchanged views on regional and international issues.

Foreign Minister Qureshi extended condolences over the loss of precious lives in Iran due to Covid-19 and commended the Iranian government's efforts to contain the pandemic.

The Foreign Minister emphasized the importance of optimally utilizing the existing bilateral mechanisms to increase cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, connectivity, security and people-to-people exchanges and to strengthen mutual collaboration in multilateral fora. In this regard, he underlined the need for regular interactions at multiple levels.

On Afghanistan, the Foreign Minister underlined that peace in Afghanistan was paramount for sustainable stability and prosperity in the region. Reaffirming Pakistan's support for Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, Foreign Minister Qureshi highlighted Pakistan's positive contributions. He added that the Intra-Afghan Negotiations (IAN) offered a historic opportunity which all sides must seize to secure an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement. The two sides agreed on close coordination to support efforts for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan.

Foreign Minister Qureshi apprised Dr. Javad



Zarif of the worsening humanitarian and human rights situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

He also highlighted India's illegal actions to change the demographic structure of the occupied territory. On behalf of the people of Pakistan, the Foreign Minister conveyed deep appreciation for the Supreme Leader's steadfast support for the Kashmir cause.

The two Foreign Ministers exchanged views on the rising Islamophobia in different parts of the world and agreed to undertake efforts to counter this negative trend.

H.E Dr Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister

of Iran called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ.

During the meeting matters of mutual interest, regional security situation including Afghan reconciliation process, Pak-Iran border management and border markets were discussed. COAS said that enhanced Pakistan-Iran cooperation will have positive impact on regional peace and stability.

Foreign Minister Zarif appreciated Pakistan's positive role for regional stability, especially Afghan peace process and pledged to keep working for better relations between two brotherly countries.



## Prime Minister's participation in the 20th Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Heads of State

Prime Minister Imran Khan participated in the 20th Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Heads of State (SCO-CHS) in video conference format. The meeting was chaired by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Other participating leaders included Chinese President Xi Jinping. The SCO-CHS is the highest forum of SCO. It adopts documents and decisions that provide policy guidelines for determining priorities and major areas of activities of the Organization. In his remarks during the Summit meeting, Prime Minister Imran Khan shared Pakistan's perspective on a range of global and regional issues -- including Covid-19, multilateralism and UN's role, need for implementation of UNSC Resolutions for peaceful settlement of outstanding disputes, Afghan peace process, countering terrorism, combating Islamophobia, stemming illicit financial flows, addressing climate change, poverty alleviation and role of youth. The Prime Minister underscored the imperative of common approaches to limit the spread of infectious diseases, ameliorate their effects, and develop potential remedies. He emphasized the central role of WHO in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and offered to share Pakistan's experience in combating the pandemic in an effective manner. The Prime Minister also lauded China's effective handling of the pandemic and thanked China for extending material and technical support to other countries, including Pakistan, in their efforts to contain the virus. The Prime Minister also highlighted China-Pakistan collaboration

in vaccine development. The Prime Minister highlighted his "Global Initiative for Debt Relief" for developing countries to mitigate adverse economic effects of the pandemic.

**The Prime Minister warned against the role of "spoilers" both within and outside Afghanistan. He stressed that the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland with dignity and honor should be an essential part of the peace negotiations**

Welcoming measures taken by G20 and the International Financial Institutions, the Prime Minister stressed the need for further steps to help improve liquidity in developing countries

and restore growth. The Prime Minister highlighted the importance of CPEC in SCO's vision of regional connectivity and economic integration, especially in complementing SCO's pivotal role in the emerging confluence between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union. The Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the central role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security and advancing global sustainable development. He particularly stressed the importance of faithful implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions as a pre-requisite for creating an environment of stability and cooperation. The Prime Minister called for strong condemnation and resolute opposition of unilateral and illegal measures to change the status of disputed territories in violation of UNSC resolutions. The Prime Minister reiterated that there was no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and that a negotiated political settlement was the best way forward. He reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. Referring to Pakistan's positive contribution in facilitating the U.S.-Taliban Peace Agreement, the Prime Minister called upon the Afghan stakeholders to seize this historic opportunity to secure an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement. He added that reduction in violence was absolutely imperative, which would help strengthen the momentum of recent positive developments. The Prime Minister warned against the role of "spoilers" both within and outside Afghanistan. He stressed that the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland with dignity and honor should be an essential part of the peace negotiations. The Prime Minister expressed support for SCO's call for effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear issue. He welcomed SCO's emphasis on data security and conveyed strong support for China's Global Digital Data Security Initiative. The Prime Minister called for condemnation and accountability of perpetrators of state terrorism against people living under illegal occupation in disputed territories. He said that it was wrong to use terrorism-related allegations as a political tool to malign and target any country, religion or race. The Prime Minister underscored the importance of learning lessons from the victory against Nazism and Fascism during the Second World War, steadfastly opposing all extremist and xenophobic tendencies, including racist ideologies inspired by neo-Nazism and Islamophobia and called for focusing on building interfaith and cross-cultural bridges. The Prime Minister stressed that willful provocations and incitement to hate, especially on religious grounds, should be universally outlawed. The Prime Minister





urged the SCO member states to continue to call for mutual respect of all religions and beliefs and for fostering a culture of fraternity and peace. The Prime Minister welcomed SCO's focus on fighting corruption and economic crimes. Advocating firm opposition

**The Prime Minister urged the SCO member states to continue to call for mutual respect of all religions and beliefs and for fostering a culture of fraternity and peace**

to illicit financial flows from developing countries, which impoverish these nations and severely retard their development endeavours, he called for efforts to bring back the stolen wealth to enable the affected nations realize their legitimate aspirations for development and a hopeful future. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of providing relief to the poor segments of the society. In this context, he thanked all members for supporting Pakistan's initiative

for establishment of an SCO Special Working Group on Poverty Alleviation. The Prime Minister called for pooling of efforts to fight the threat posed by climate change. He stressed the importance of fulfillment of all commitments made in the Paris Agreement, in particular the commitment to mobilize US\$ 100 billion annually as climate finance. He also highlighted Pakistan's "Ecosystem Restoration Initiative" which includes the planting of 10 billion trees over the next three years. The Prime Minister expressed Pakistan's gratification on becoming a member of the SCO Youth Council and said that Pakistan highly valued cooperation in tapping the immense potential of our youth and involving them in the socio-economic uplift of our societies. The Prime Minister proposed a six-point way forward: (i) creating a knowledge-bank of best practices to guide the member states through the second wave of COVID-19 and beyond; (ii) working out a Strategy and an SCO Action Plan to mitigate the adverse economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the short, medium and long-term, including by prioritizing an SCO unified framework for emergency preparedness developed in consultation with WHO; (iii) taking a united stand that the COVID-19 vaccine must be viewed as a "global public good", affordable and accessible to all; (iiii) member states should call for more measures by G20 to meet common challenges like the climate change, deteriorating environment, widening inequality within and among nations, poverty, disease, hunger and sustainable development.

This should include measures to stop financial outflows from developing countries to off-shore bank accounts in rich countries; (v) formulation of a multi-year SCO Youth Strategy with a focus on building partnerships among educational institutions; and (vi) development of SCO Partnership for Technology offering scholarships and exchange programmes for

**The Prime Minister highlighted the importance of CPEC in SCO's vision of regional connectivity and economic integration, especially in complementing SCO's pivotal role in the emerging confluence between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union**

youth in the scientific field. The SCO-CHS adopted 16 documents including the Moscow Declaration that highlights common position of all member states on issues of regional and global importance.

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## Serena Hotels sponsored crafts extravaganza called “Embroidering Dreams”

Serena Hotels sponsored a three-day crafts extravaganza with Behbud Association called “Embroidering Dreams”, which kicked off on night with an inaugural event featuring an exclusive fashion show.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the exhibition, the First Lady Samina Arif Alvi said that even Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah believed that Pakistan could only progress if the women participated in industrious activities side by side with men.

She applauded Serena Hotels for supporting Behbud Association, a non-profit organization providing employment to thousands of women artisans for over 50 years at the grassroots level and reaching out to the underprivileged women in urban slums.

The opening event was attended by notable members from the diplomatic corps, foreign dignitaries, corporate and business sectors. Stringent compliance with Covid-19 health and safety protocols and SOPs were observed at the event.

Embroidering Dreams was an exhibition of exquisite handmade products promoting traditional needlework and embroideries of Pakistan. The three-day exhibition aimed to celebrate home based workers and women artisans of Pakistan, that continue to produce

such marvelous artefacts under trying circumstances. Guests witnessed different types of traditional crafts/needlework that come from various regions of Pakistan including Ralli, Kantha, Chikankari, Block Printing, Smocking, Cutwork, Cross-stitch, Taarkashi, Phulkari, Crochet, Knitting etc. The master artisans were present at the stalls to showcase a live display of their craft and technique. A large number of people attended the exhibition on all three days and enjoyed the detailed tour of the exquisite crafts.

Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels appreciated Behbud Association for the wonderful work which he said was very inspiring and a model of learning for Serena Hotels, which also actively projects and promotes traditional crafts as part of its overall CSR initiative of supporting empowerment of rural women by enhancing their economic prospects. Mr. Boolani said Pakistan was blessed with so much talent in traditional crafts and it was a privilege for Serena to play a role in showcasing them.







Ms. Abida Malik said that Behbud was run entirely by women volunteers and has over the years evolved into Pakistan's premier brand for ethical and sustainable fashion. Behbud, inaugurated in 1972, is ranked as one of the largest and oldest non-profit organizations in Pakistan, providing employment to thousands of women artisans for over 50 years.

Having trained 300,000 artisans spanning five generations, Behbud, at its core, aids marginalized women by providing them with free of cost vocational training in local embroideries, free healthcare, counseling and education for their children. The non-profit also provides educational facilities in the form of a comprehensive adult literacy program,

has set up a Behbud Primary School (in the capital's Saidpur Village), a Behbud Model High School (in Rawalpindi) and eight home schools (from Pre-Nursery till Grade 5), for the children of the underprivileged communities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

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## Italian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E Mr. Andreas Ferrarese calls on CNS Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi at NAVAL HQ Islamabad

Italian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Andreas Ferrarese held one on one important meeting with the Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi at Naval Headquarters Islamabad. "H.E Mr. Andreas Ferrarese Ambassador of Italy to PAKISTAN visited NHQ, Islamabad and called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi. Both the dignitaries discussed matters related to mutual interests, regional security and bilateral collaborations,"



## Italy and Pakistan always ready to further improve the bilateral ties and cooperation



By Bilal Zafar

Federal Minister for Interior, Brig (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah met with the Ambassador of Italy, H.E. Mr. Andreas Ferrarese at the Ministry of Interior. Bilateral ties and areas of mutual interest were brought under discussion during the meeting. The Ambassador also spoke about cultural promotion and areas related to language understanding at both ends. The Federal Minister for Interior, Brig (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah brought the topic of Islamophobia under discussion and asked the Ambassador about his views. To which the Ambassador responded that they have told their people to be careful

regarding this matter. He also said that Pakistani community has grown stronger in Italy over time and the relations between the two sides have been very stable. Elaborating on his views regarding the statement of French President, the Federal Minister said that the words of French president had hurt the sentiments of Muslims across the globe. He said that the increasing concept of Islamophobia is alarming. "Tolerance and coexisting are very important in current context" he added. Interior Minister said that the Honor of Prophet (PBUH) must be protected by all means. Hateful comments and discriminatory approach will create unrest. He

added. While discussing regional peace, the Federal Minister said that solution of Kashmir problem is mandatory for achieving peace in Asia. The Ambassador appreciated the cooperation from all ends and said that we hope the relationship between the two countries will strengthen over time. Federal Minister for Interior, Brig (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah said that the Government of Pakistan, specifically the Ministry of Interior will provide all possible support to further improve the bilateral ties and mutual cooperation.

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## PAKISTAN NAVY SHIP ZULFIQUAR VISITS THE PORT OF AQABA, JORDAN

Pakistan Navy Ship ZULFIQUAR (with embarked helicopter) visited the Port of Aqaba, Jordan, as part of Pakistan Navy overseas deployment to Mediterranean/Red Sea. Upon arrival, ship was received by Defence Attaché (Pakistan) Amman and the Royal Jordanian Naval Force (RJNF) Liaison Officer.

During stay at port, Commanding Officer PNS ZULFIQUAR called on senior Jordanian Navy and Government officials including Commander Royal Jordanian Naval Force, Colonel Hisham Al Jarrah. During the interactions, matters of mutual interest were discussed and contribution of Pakistan Navy to regional peace and maritime security were also underlined. Besides, Indian atrocities at illegally Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) were highlighted. The Commanding Officer conveyed well wishes from Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi for the people of Jordan in general

and RJNF in particular. He also extended his gratitude for whole hearted support provided by RJNF in making ship's stay comfortable. During stay at Aqaba, Commander Royal Jordanian Naval Force also visited PNS ZULFIQUAR.

Pakistan Navy Ship ZULFIQUAR, after sailing from the Aqaba port conducted passage exercise with RJNF Fast Attack Craft Al Hassan (P 102), and Patrol Crafts, Mohamamd-1 & Mohamamd-2.

Pakistan Navy, in line with Government policies stand ready to play its role for maritime safety and security in the region. The visit of PNS ZULFIQUAR is a reaffirmation of PN-RJNF collaboration and will further serve to foster brotherly relations between Pakistan and Jordan.

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Commanding Officer PNS Zulfiquar exchanging souvenirs with Commander Royal Jordanian Navy Force onboard Pakistan Navy Ship Zulfiquar during Overseas deployment





# Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



MR. JULIEN HARNEIS, UN RESIDENT AND HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR CALLED ON PRESIDENT DR. ARIF ALVI AT AIWAN-E-SADR ISLAMABAD



PAKISTAN'S AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO UKRINE, MAJOR GENERAL (R), NOEL ISRAEL KHOKHAR CALEED ON PRESIDENT DR AIF ALVI AT THE AIWAN-E-SADR, ISLAMABAD.



Ambassador of Afghanistan Mr. Najibullah Alikihil called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser at Parliament House.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Security Division and Strategic Policy Planning, Dr. Moeed W/ Yusuf met Australian High Commissioner, H.E Dr. Geoffrey Shaw in Islamabad.



Ambassador of Pakistan to Syria, Air Marshal (R) Saeed Muhammad Khan called on Advisor to the Prime Minister on Commerce and investment, Abdul Razak Dawood in Islamabad.



H.E Bela Fazekas, Ambassador of Hungary to Pakistan called on MOS/Chairman, Board of Investment, Atif R. Bukhari at BOI, Islamabad.



Indonesia Ambassador H.E Mr. Adam M. Tugio Called on Muhammad Sualeh Ahmed Faruqi, Federal Secretary Commerce in Islamabad.



SAPM on National Security, Dr Moeed Yusuf met British High Commissioner, Christian Turner.



# Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Army chief Gen Bajwa meets Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Najibullah Alikhil



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Security Division and strategic Policy Planning, Dr. Moeed W. Yusuf Met Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan H.E. MR. Kuninori Matsuda in Islamabad



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, Muhammad Usman Dar Chairs the First Meeting of Technical Advisory Committee on Pakistan Youth Development Index at Islamabad.



British High Commissioner, H.E. DR. Christian Turner called on Advisor to the PM on Commerce and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood in Islamabad.



Ambassador of Hungary to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Bela Fazekas called on Advisor to the PM on Commerce and investment, Abdul Razak Dawood in Islamabad.



On Behalf of the Government of Pakistan, Mian Asad Hayaad Din, Secretary Petroleum Division signed the IGA between Russia and Pakistan for Pakistan Stream Gas Pipeline project. Federal Minister For Energy Mr. Omar Ayub Khan and Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Petroleum Mr Nadeem Baber also witnessed the occasion.



Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Muhammad Azam Khan Swati called on by Egyptian Ambassador H.E. Mr. Tarek Mohammed Dahrough at his Office.



Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf Bin Saeed Ahmed Al-Malkiy called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser at Parliament House.





## Jordan values its close fraternal relations with Pakistan and seeks to expand them further: Ambassador of Jordan

By Bilal Zafar

**A**mbassador of Jordan Major General (Retd) Ibrahim Yala Al Madani called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser in Parliament House, this afternoon. Issues of mutual interest and enhancing bilateral relations came under discussion. Speaker Asad Qaiser said that relations between Pakistan and Jordan are based on strong foundations of religion, brotherhood, culture and history. He said that parliamentary diplomacy can play an important role in promoting bilateral relations between the two Islamic brother countries. He also stressed the need for

enhancing bilateral trade which did not commensurate with the existing economic potential on either side. The Speaker also spoke about the stance of both the countries on important regional and global issues. He expressed the need to further enhance cooperation at CPA and IPU level for joint input on issues confronting the region and the world at large. He also stressed the need to tackle the growing trend of Islamophobia in the West. He said that Muslim Ummah should adopt a common strategy to eradicate Islamophobia. Ambassador Major General (R) Ibrahim Yala Al-Madani said that Jordan

also values its close fraternal relations with Pakistan and seeks to expand them further. He said that Jordan seeks to boost economic and trade cooperation with Pakistan. He said that undoubtedly there are excellent trade opportunities between the two countries that can be tapped for mutual benefit. He agreed to further enhance parliamentary ties between the legislatures of Pakistan and Jordan. He said that apart from cooperation in diverse economic sectors, collaboration to tap tourism potential in Pakistan and Jordan should also be pondered.

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## Pakistan and Egypt are brotherly countries and custodians of ancient cultural heritage: Egyptian Ambassador

Islamabad 19th November 2020: Speaker National Assembly has stressed for a common strategy to counter growing trend of Islamophobia in the western world. The Speaker also stressed for interfaith dialogue to bring harmony and tranquility amongst the religions. The Speaker was talking to Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan Tarek Mohamed Dahroug who called on him in Parliament House.

Speaker Asad Qaiser said that unity among Muslims is essential for the solution of the problems presently faced by the Ummah. He underlined the need for adoption of a common strategy by the Muslim Ummah to eradicate Islamophobia. He termed the growing trend of Islamophobia, a threat to world peace. He said that utterance of blasphemous remarks and publication of caricatures in France has hurt the feelings of the entire Islamic world. He also stressed the urgent need for Dialogue between religious scholars for the promotion of inter-faith harmony for lasting peace in the world. The Speaker also invited President of Al-Azhar University, Egypt to visit Pakistan.

The Speaker said that relations between Pakistan and Egypt are based on strong foundations of religion, brotherhood, culture and history. He said that Pakistan seeks to strengthen bilateral ties through promotion of parliamentary and economic ties. He termed Parliamentary diplomacy an apt mode play in promoting bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries. The Speaker said that it was heartening to note that Pakistan and Egypt share a common position on important regional and global issues and vowed to maintain the cooperation in future at all multilateral forums. He also stressed the need to further enhance cooperation with Egypt for economic development and regional development. He noted that countries have



ample opportunities to increase the volume of bilateral trade.

Egyptian Ambassador Tarek Mohamed Dahroug said that growing trend of Islamophobia was also a major concern in Egypt. He agreed for a joint strategy by Ummah to counter that trend and role of religious scholars was of immense importance in that regard. He also stressed for projection of true and peaceful identity of Islam in the world through the use of modern technology.

Referring to his country's ties with Pakistan, the Ambassador said that Egypt values its close and friendly relations and wants to strengthen them

further. He said that Pakistan and Egypt are brotherly countries and custodians of ancient cultural heritage. He agreed that immense potential exists in both countries which could be tapped for mutual benefit. He said that cooperation in diverse sectors would bring both the countries more closer. He also agreed for enhancing parliamentary cooperation between legislatures of both the countries. He said that parliamentarians can play an important role in strengthening bilateral relations. He also suggested for promotion of tourism between both countries.

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## Fifth Round of Pakistan-European Union Strategic Dialogue

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The European Union (EU) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Pakistan) met for the 5th round of the EU-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. The dialogue was held via videoconference between Josep Borrell, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the EU and Vice-President of the European Commission, and Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. During the meeting, they discussed the growing momentum of the Pakistan-EU relations based on the Strategic Engagement Plan signed in June 2019 and agreed to make efforts towards its comprehensive implementation in all areas of cooperation, including through strengthening of existing and new institutional engagements. Foreign Minister Qureshi and High Representative Borrell reviewed the ongoing cooperation on security between Pakistan and the EU. The EU appreciates the progress made by Pakistan towards the meaningful implementation of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Action Plan as acknowledged by the FATF Plenary meeting held in October 2020. The EU encouraged Pakistan to complete the Action Plan. To further their engagement, both sides agreed to hold the first meeting of the new EU-Pakistan Security Dialogue in 2021, including on the fight against terrorism. Foreign Minister Qureshi recognized the EU's financial support of Euro 150 million to help address the Covid19 pandemic in Pakistan. The EU appreciates Pakistan's

assistance in repatriation of stranded EU citizens due to flight disruptions. Both sides discussed ways to further alleviate the social and economic consequences of the ongoing pandemic. In this context, they exchanged views on promoting international cooperation to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and recognized the significance of international debt relief for developing countries. The High Representative/Vice-President and the Foreign Minister expressed a strong political commitment towards the GSP+ preferential trade regime, through which the EU provides significantly reduced customs duties for countries that implement 27 international conventions related to human rights, labour rights, protection of the environment and good governance. They agreed to utilise the GSP+ to its full potential, including by addressing the demand side contraction due to COVID-19 pandemic. The High Representative raised concerns including on the death penalty and the misuse of the blasphemy law. He expressed appreciation for the intention to adopt the anti-torture bill. Foreign Minister Qureshi raised deep concerns over the resurgence of Islamophobic acts in some EU Member States that have hurt the sentiments of Muslims across the world, including in Pakistan. High Representative Borrell raised deep concerns about recent terrorist acts in Europe. Both sides deplored the killing of innocent people and reaffirmed their resolve to strengthen and protect human rights as well as fundamental freedoms, and further promote inter-

faith harmony, religious tolerance and co-existence. The EU informed about its New Pact on Migration and Asylum. The EU and Pakistan agreed to work towards a comprehensive dialogue on migration and mobility, as envisaged under the Strategic Engagement Plan. High Representative Borrell and Foreign Minister Qureshi also discussed ways to enhance their bilateral cooperation to address climate change. High Representative Borrell and Foreign Minister Qureshi exchanged views on regional issues and agreed on a Joint Declaration on Afghanistan (see attached Joint Declaration). Foreign Minister Qureshi apprised the EU about the recent developments in the region. Foreign Minister Qureshi expressed Pakistan's deep concerns about human rights violations by India in Jammu and Kashmir, and its attempts to change the demography of the disputed territory. High Representative



H.E. Mr. Josep Borrell, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the EU and Vice-President of the European Commission

Borrell remarked that the EU is following the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir closely. He underlined the need for restraint, de-escalation of tensions and resolution of the dispute through dialogue and constructive political and diplomatic engagement. Foreign Minister Qureshi and High Representative Borrell exchanged views on other regional issues and reaffirmed their endeavor for promoting peace and prosperity through collaborative efforts. Foreign Minister Qureshi and High Representative Borrell agreed to further enhance Pakistan-EU mutual collaboration and engagement.

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## President ECOSOC speaking in a Virtual meeting of the Group of Friends of SDG Financing with H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General

Ambassador Munir Akram in his capacity as President ECOSOC delivered his remarks in a virtual meeting of the Group of Friends of SDG Financing with the Secretary General Antonio Guterres. Ambassador, thanked for convening this meeting in a format of a conversation with the Secretary General for together with the Prime Ministers of Canada in Jamaica and called this meeting 'a unique exercise' for the United Nations, that has brought the United Nations into the center of this important discussion about a response to this worst crisis that the global community has faced in 75 years. Ambassador shared the concern and frustration of Secretary-General his specific actions, which he has advocated, and which have been echoed by the Special Envoy, saying "it is worth recounting the vaccine; the access to the vaccine, creation of SDR; the extension of the DSSI suspension, and its expansion; access to new funds, concessional finance, the liquidity and sustainability facility". Ambassador added 'investment' both from the public and the private sector, especially in infrastructure, as an action that would be an important part of the response. "The role that has been played by our colleagues both Courtney and Bob from Canada is commendable and I hope that they will continue to play that leadership role and accelerate the work of the six clusters that have been identified": said Ambassador while applauding the role of Group of Friends. "I would hope that these clusters will, on the one hand,



try to identify the emergency measures which the Secretary General and the Special Envoy have mentioned for action this, these emergency measures need to be translated into action" he added. He insisted further that "we will need a coalition of leaders, coalition of the like-minded to reach out at a bilateral level two heads of state and heads of government to central banks to reach out to the G 20 summit when it takes place later this year to reach out in the IMF, IBRD meetings, as well as other United Nations summits that are scheduled to take place. We need to have a coalition of likeminded, which will reach out to the decision makers in order to get an agreement on emergency action" as "the only way" to get action. Ambassador also expressed his commitment to lead the platform of

ECOSOC for "conducting consultations" and hoped that "the six clusters will engage with the ECOSOC in order to see how to advance as our process into translating our advocacy into agreements at the FFD and the high level political forum, ultimately". "I am most grateful to, to the Secretary General for his support, and I look forward to the support from the Secretariat on to the Economic and Social Council. Finally, I believe that the clusters can also be most useful in looking at some of the structural issues. These are issues which we will need to address in the future, but our focus, I believe, at this moment, must be on the emergency action, which the Secretary General and the Special Envoy have identified" he concluded.

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## Ambassador Dr. Ali Ahmed Arain presenting his Credentials to H.E. Jorge Carlos Fonseca, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde

By Mian Fazal Elahi

**H**.E Dr. Ali Ahmed Arain, Ambassador of Pakistan to the Republic of Cabo Verde, with residence, at Dakar, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Mr. Jorge Carlos Fonseca, President of Republic of the Cabo Verde in an impressive ceremony held at the Presidential Palace, Praia on 11 November, 2020 from Parep Dakar. The Ambassador was escorted to the Presidential Palace by a large motorcade. He was received by the Head of State Protocol and the Chief of Staff of the President. During the 30-minute audience, the Ambassador presented his Letters of Credence to the President







which accredited him as the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Cabo Verde. The Ambassador, on behalf of the President and the Prime Minister, conveyed best wishes to President Fonseca, the Government and the people of Cabo Verde. The Ambassador also shared proposals relating to cooperation in the field of Tourism, Renewable Energy and Information Technology. The Ambassador expressed his desire to work for further strengthening relations between the two brotherly countries. President Fonseca warmly welcomed the Ambassador to the Presidential Place. Appreciating friendly relations between Pakistan and Cabo Verde, the President extended warm wishes to the President, Prime Minister and the People of Pakistan. He appreciated the proposed initiatives of the Ambassador and assured that the government of Cabo Verde would do its best to get them materialized. The Ambassador thanked the President for such warm welcome and presented a hand-made Pakistani carpet, which he greatly appreciated.

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## Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan called on Prime Minister of Pakistan



**The Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's strong commitment to timely completion of CPEC projects**

**M**r. Nong Rong, the new Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. The Prime Minister congratulated the Ambassador on his

Prime Minister affirmed the time-tested Pakistan-China "All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership."

Terming CPEC as a transformational project, the Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's strong commitment to timely completion of CPEC projects. The Prime Minister underlined the importance of SEZs, relocation of industry, and enhanced productivity in agriculture sector.

During the meeting, mutual support on issues of core national interest for Pakistan and China was reaffirmed. Ambassador thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him and assured that China will fully support speedy completion of CPEC projects as well as industrialization in Pakistan and

will deepen cooperation with Pakistan in agriculture sector.

**China will fully support speedy completion of CPEC projects as well as industrialization in Pakistan and will deepen cooperation with Pakistan in agriculture sector**  
**Chinese Ambassador**

**Ambassador thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him and assured that China will fully support speedy completion of CPEC projects as well as industrialization in Pakistan and will deepen cooperation with Pakistan in agriculture sector**

appointment and extended best wishes for a fruitful term. The

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## H.E. Mr. Nong Rong, Ambassador of China, called on General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee at Joint Staff Headquarters, Rawalpindi

**H**.E. Mr. Nong Rong, Ambassador of China, called on General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee at Joint Staff Headquarters, Rawalpindi. Matters related to geostrategic

environment and further strengthening of security & defence cooperation between the two countries were discussed during the meeting.

Both sides reaffirmed the commitment that

being 'Iron Brothers' and 'All-Weather' friends, Pakistan and China would continue to forge deeper strategic ties.

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## Mr. Nong Rong Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan called on the Minister for Planning & Development



**H**.E. Mr. Nong Rong the new Chinese ambassador to Pakistan called on the Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar here in Islamabad on Thursday. matters related to bilateral relations projects under China Pakistan Economic Corridor came under discussion.

Minister Asad Umar welcomed the ambassador on his new assignments and

extended best wishes for his endeavors. He said that China –Pakistan relationship extends beyond the government to government cooperation as the bond between the people of the two countries was also very strong.

The Minister and Ambassador discussed the CPEC projects in detail, especially those related to Industrial Cooperation. They expressed satisfaction on the JWGs meetings held in the recent weeks, for various sectors. They agreed

to work together to make the second phase of CPEC a success.

The Chinese Ambassador thanked the Minister and said that the Chinese side also highly values the relationship and it would be his endeavor to build on the work done in the last many years.

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# G20 member states Contributed \$21 billion to fight against COVID-19

King Salman confident Riyadh G20 summit will deliver 'significant and decisive results'

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring Desk

As the Group of Twenty (G20) forum's 15th meeting got under Saudi Arabia's King Salman, in his opening remarks, expressed confidence in the outcome of the summit, being held virtually for the first time since its founding owing to the coronavirus pandemic.

"I am confident that the Riyadh summit will deliver significant and decisive results, and will lead to the adoption of economic and social policies that will restore hope and reassurance to the people of the world," he said.

The hope is that the two-day G20 Leaders' Summit, being held under Saudi Arabia's presidency, will lay the foundations for a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The meeting has brought together economies that account for about 85 percent of global GDP to discuss the most challenging socio-economic issues.

"It is unfortunate that we are unable to host you in person in Riyadh, due to the exceptional circumstances that we are all facing this year," King Salman told other G20 leaders. "Our peoples and economies are still suffering from this shock. However, we will do our best





to overcome this crisis through international cooperation.”

The Nov. 21-22 summit, expected to be dominated by the pandemic and its economic repercussions, is not the first meeting of the leaders in Riyadh. In March, just a few weeks after COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic, King Salman hosted an extraordinary virtual gathering aimed at forging a common strategy to confront the unprecedented challenge.

“We expressed our commitment during our extraordinary summit to urgently mobilize resources, and we all pledged, at the onset of the crisis, over \$21 billion to support the global efforts to combat this pandemic,” King Salman said on Saturday. “We took extraordinary measures to support our economies by injecting over \$11 trillion to support individuals and businesses.”

“We also extended our social safety nets to protect those prone to losing their jobs or source of income. To this end, we have provided emergency support to the developing countries, including the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative to the low-income countries.

“This has been an extraordinary year. The COVID-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented shock that affected the entire world within a short period of time, causing global economic and social losses.”

The G20 presidency rotates between member countries, and in December 2019 Saudi Arabia became the first Arab country to assume the role. Each presidency typically concludes with the G20 Leaders’ Summit, a powerful gathering of heads of state that made its debut in 2008.

The normal G20 calendar has been changed due to restrictions put in place across the forum’s membership in response to the pandemic. G20 leaders and ministers have held virtual meetings to coordinate the international response to the crisis and put the global economy on a pathway to recovery.

#### IN NUMBER

\$21 billion: Contribution of G20 member states to fight against COVID-19.

King Salman stressed that the Riyadh summit was inclusive of the interests of all countries and not just G20 member states. “The theme of our presidency is ‘Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century for All,’” he noted, adding: “Although the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to adjust our focus rapidly to face its repercussions, the subject areas under this general theme, namely ‘Empowering People,’ ‘Safeguarding the Planet,’ and ‘Shaping New Frontiers,’ remain essential to overcome this global challenge and shape a better future for our people.”

King Salman urged G20 leaders to address the vulnerabilities exposed by COVID-19 while working to protect lives and livelihoods. “Although we are optimistic about the progress



Saudi Arabia's King Salman at the G20 Riyadh summit





# G20 *Riyadh*



**G20 LEADERS' SUMMIT**  
**21-22 NOVEMBER 2020**

made in developing vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics tools for COVID-19, we must work to create the conditions for affordable and equitable access to these tools for all peoples," he said.

With G20 countries adopting the Riyadh Initiative on the Future of the World Trade Organization, which aims to make the multilateral trading system more capable of facing any challenges, King Salman said: "We must continue to support the global economy and reopen our economies and borders to facilitate the mobility of trade and people. We must provide support to the developing countries in a coordinated manner to maintain the development already achieved over the past decades."

Pointing out that the inaugural leaders' summit was held in response to the 2008 global financial crisis, King Salman said: "The outcomes achieved are ample proof that the G20 is the most prominent forum for international cooperation and for tackling global crises. Today, we are working together again to face another, deeper global crisis, that has ravaged people and economies."

Looking to the future, King Salman said: "The G20 is promoting access to opportunities for all, especially women and youth, and building a future that protects our land, our oceans, our natural resources. The leaders of the G20 came together to give hope, to agree on a way forward that ensures we protect the people and build a better future."

The opening virtual ceremony saw a number of heads of government and heads of state deliver short speeches wishing the summit all success.

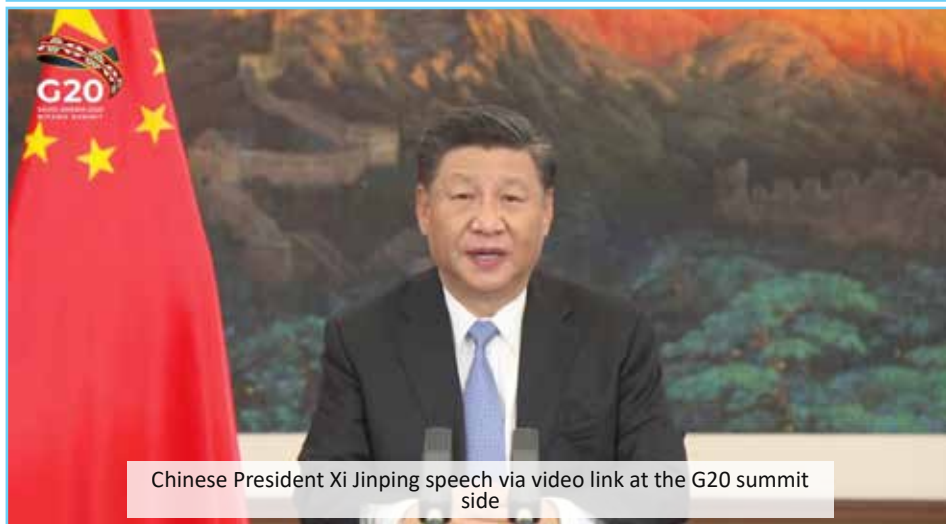
Boris Johnson, the UK prime minister, praised Saudi Arabia's Neom city, which he said represents "a greener future" for the world, "If we were in Saudi Arabia today," he said, "we may have visited the exciting new city of Neom, whose origins I was able to inspect a couple of years ago, built on the sands of fossil fuels but powered by green hydrogen, under an enviable climate and an enviably reliable sun to provide inexhaustible solar energy."

He added: "That future will only be possible if the world's leading economies drive forward more ambitious action, more quickly to prevent further catastrophic climate change."

Pedro Sanchez, Spain's prime minister, said the summit is a unique opportunity to establish



Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman chairs the final session of the G20 Riyadh Summit.



Chinese President Xi Jinping speech via video link at the G20 summit side



Saudi Arabian Hawks and civilian aircraft fly over Riyadh to mark the G20 summit.





UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson delivers his message to the G20, in which he praised Saudi Arabia's future city NEOM.



Italy's Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte attending the virtual G-20 summit Riyadh.

a collective road map to work for “prosperity, sustainability, equality, and well-being, to work for the benefit of our economies but above all for the benefit of all citizens.”

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the responsibility and importance of the G20. “The decisions taken at the Riyadh summit will be decisive in not only alleviating the negative impact of the pandemic, but also in meeting the expectations from the G20,” he said.

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro said that ever since the outset of the coronavirus crisis, the leaders had emphasized the importance of taking care of people's health and of the economy at the same time. “Time has proven us right,” he said. “We must uphold our firm commitment to work toward economic growth, the freedom of our peoples and the prosperity of the world at large.”

Giuseppe Conte, Italy's prime minister, said the Riyadh summit will reflect the G20 forum's commitment to rapidly recover from the crisis, and to find solutions for the major challenges currently facing humanity.

We must stand united in the use of opportunities offered by this crisis to create a new, better normal,” he said. “Italy, as the upcoming 2021 presidency, is determined to build upon the outcomes of the Riyadh summit and to continue promoting the important action of the G20.”



Russian President Vladimir Putin addressing the G20 summit

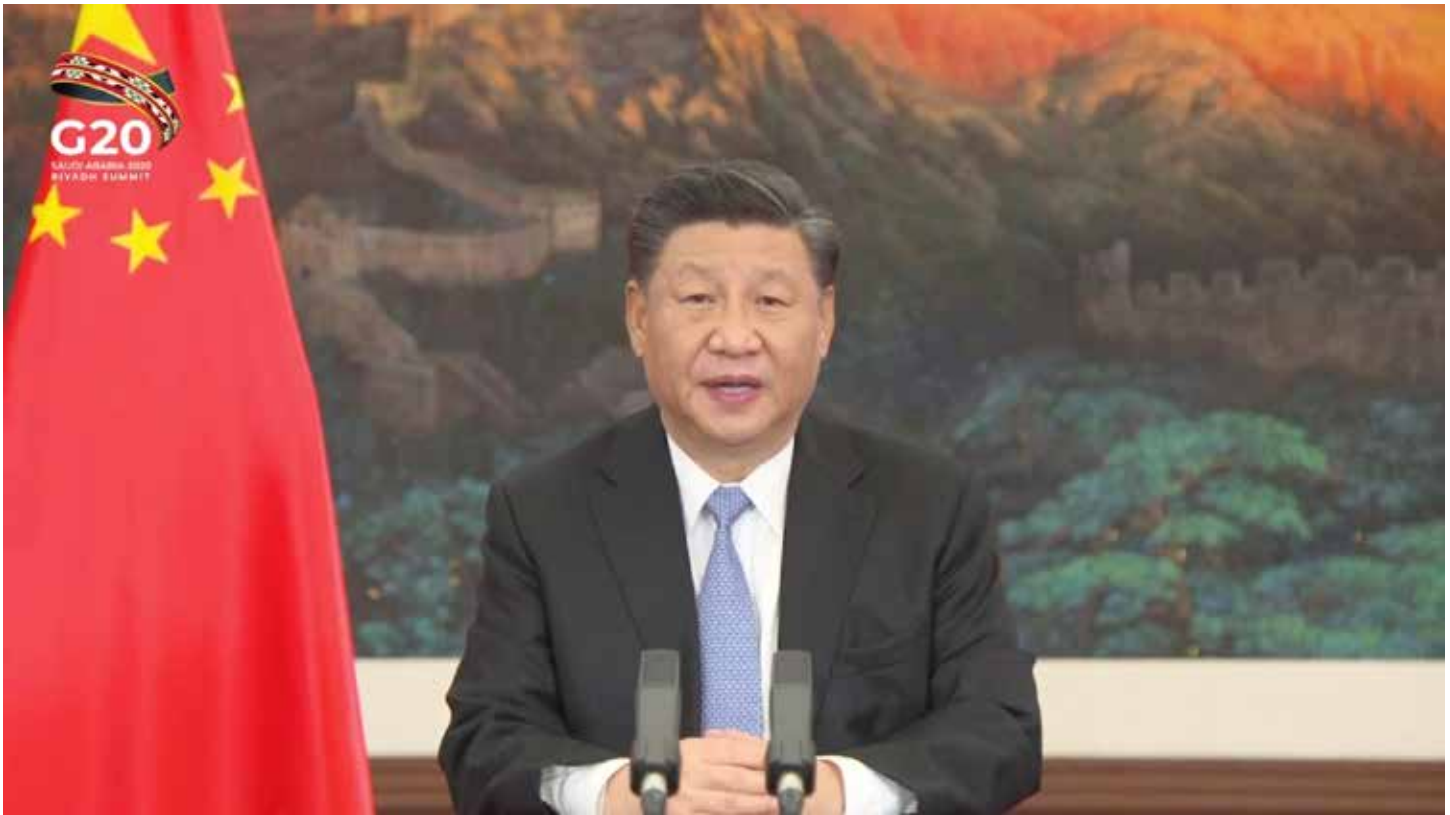


President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen at the G20 Press Briefing on November 20, 2020.





# Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People's Republic of China At The G20 Riyadh Summit



Dear Colleagues,

Friends,

The Earth is our shared home. We may follow the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind and pitch in to tackle climate and other environmental challenges and protect the blue planet. Let me share with you my thoughts on what G20 could do:

First, we could strengthen our response to climate change. G20 should continue to take the lead in tackling climate change. We need to follow the guidance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and push for the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. Not long ago, I announced China's initiative to scale up its nationally determined contributions and strive to peak carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. China will honor its commitment and see the implementation through.

Second, we could deepen the transition toward clean energy. China applauds Saudi Arabia's initiative on Circular Carbon Economy, and supports the shift to low-carbon energy in the post-COVID era to achieve the goal of Sustainable Energy for All. China has put in place the world's biggest clean energy system, and has led the world in the output and sales of new

energy vehicles for five years running. Under the recommendations for formulating China's 14th five-year development plan and the long-range goals for 2035, China will pursue clean, low-carbon, safe and efficient use of energy and accelerate the growth of new energy and green industries to promote greener economic and social development in all respects.

Third, we could protect the ecosystem with a respect for Nature. China supports deepening G20 cooperation in reducing land degradation, conserving coral reefs, and cleaning up plastic from the ocean. Through cooperation in these

and many other areas, we could build a stronger defense for global ecological security. The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be held in the Chinese city of Kunming in May next year. China welcomes the participation of all parties and hopes the meeting will set goals and take actions to ensure the protection of global biodiversity in the years ahead. Let us work together for a clean and beautiful world.

Thank you.

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# Xi Jinping Delivers Keynote Speech at APEC CEO Dialogues



On November 19, 2020, President Xi Jinping attended the APEC CEO Dialogues in Beijing via video link and delivered a keynote speech entitled “Fostering a New Development Paradigm and Pursuing Mutual Benefit and Win-win Cooperation”. He highlighted that our world is an indivisible community with a shared future. We need to intensify all-round global cooperation against COVID-19 and promote global recovery. China strives to foster a new development paradigm, maintain further opening-up, and deepen international cooperation for shared benefits, in order to deliver a brighter future in the Asia-Pacific and across the world.

Xi Jinping pointed out COVID-19 once again shows that the interests of all countries are closely interwoven and that humankind shares a common stake. Our world is an indivisible community with a shared future. All countries should act in the spirit of partnership and get through this tough time together. We need to step up policy communication and coordination, intensify all-round global cooperation against COVID-19 and keep global economy open. By doing so, we can defeat the virus at an early date and achieve robust, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth for all.

Xi Jinping stressed that the fundamentals sustaining China’s steady and long-term economic growth remain unchanged. We will develop a full understanding of the new development stage, apply the new

development philosophy, and foster a new development paradigm.

First, we will expand domestic demand as a strategic priority and ensure smooth flow of economic activity. China will continue to deepen supply-side structural reforms and usher in a higher stage of well-adjusted balance where demand drives supply and supply, in turn, creates demand.

Second, we will vigorously make scientific and technological innovations to foster new growth drivers. We will implement an innovation-driven development strategy and upgrade industrial chains.

Third, we will continue to deepen reform and energize the market. We will take more steps and remove with greater resolve deep-seated systemic and institutional barriers to modernize China’s governance system and capacity. Xi Jinping emphasized that China is already deeply integrated into the global economy and the international system. By fostering a new development paradigm, we are not pursuing a closed-door circulation, but open and mutually reinforcing domestic and international circulations.

The new development paradigm will enable China to fully unlock its market potential and create greater demand for other countries. China will further cut tariffs and government instituted transaction costs, and open a number of demonstration zones for creative

promotion of import trade to increase import of quality goods and services.

The new development paradigm will enable China to open up wider and share more opportunities for common development with other countries. China will continue to advance trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and improve its system for foreign investment management based on pre-establishment national treatment and negative list.

The lawful rights and interests of foreign investors will be protected. China will open up the service sector in a well-planned way, and foster a market-oriented, world-class business environment underpinned by a sound legal framework. China will give its pilot free trade zones greater power. At the same time, China will continue to firmly support the multilateral trading system, and get more actively involved in reforming the system of global economic governance.

The new development paradigm will enable China to continue to deepen international cooperation for shared benefits.

We will take a more active part in the international division of labor, get more effectively integrated into global industrial, supply and value chains. We welcome cooperation with every other region, country, or company that wants to do so. China will adhere to multilateralism and the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. China will work to pursue high-quality Belt and Road cooperation with its partners, and deepen cooperation on green development.

Xi Jinping stated that the Asia-Pacific is our shared home. Last year, I proposed building an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future featuring openness, inclusiveness, innovation-driven growth, greater connectivity and mutually beneficial cooperation.

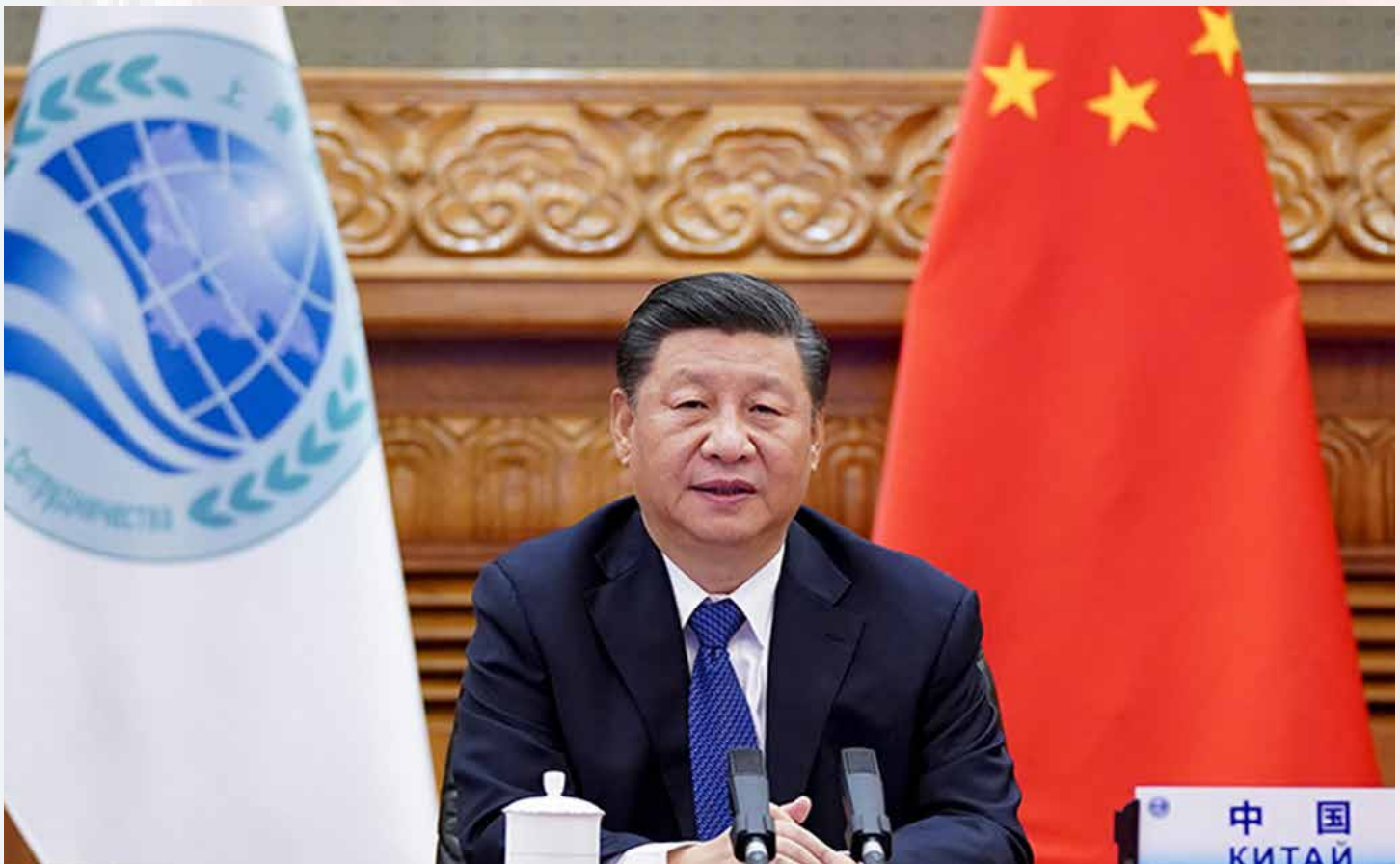
We shall not forget that we are a community with a common stake, but move toward closer regional economic integration instead, so that we can turn our vision into reality and deliver a better life for people in the region.

Xi Jinping concluded by stressing that the day will come when we finally beat COVID-19 and win victory in this fight.

Let us work in solidarity and weather the storm together. Let us stay true to openness and cooperation and make development and circulations at home and overseas reinforce each other. Together, we can surely deliver a brighter future for all of us, both here in the Asia-Pacific and across the world!

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## Xi Jinping Attends the 20th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization



On the evening of November 10, 2020, Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the 20th meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) via video link and delivered an important speech entitled “Carrying Forward the Shanghai Spirit and Deepening Solidarity and Collaboration for a Stronger Community with a Shared Future”. Xi stressed that the SCO is required to carry forward the Shanghai Spirit, step up anti-epidemic cooperation, safeguard security and stability, deepen practical cooperation, and nourish people-to-people amity to build a community of health, a community of security, a community of development and a community of cultural exchanges for all, so as to take more steps toward building a community with a shared future for mankind.

The meeting was presided over by Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose country holds the rotating presidency of the SCO. It was attended by leaders of other SCO member states, including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Acting President and

Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Zhaparov, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, and Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, as well as the heads of standing bodies, including SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov, and Director of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) Jumakhon Giyosov. It was also attended by the heads of state of the SCO, observer states, including Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Mongolian President Khaltmaa Battulga, and Belarusian Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko, as well as the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Xi stressed that since its founding, the SCO has set an example for a new type of international relations that features mutual respect, equity, justice and win-win cooperation. In the face of COVID-19, we have backed each other up to tide over the difficulties together. Such solidarity has injected positive energy into both the SCO's steady development and international cooperation against the coronavirus.

Xi pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic

has accelerated shifts in the international landscape. The world is entering a period of turbulence and transformation. The international community now faces a major test with choices to be made between multilateralism and unilateralism, openness and seclusion, cooperation and confrontation. “What is going on with the world?” “What shall we do about it?” - These are the questions awaiting answers from the people of our time. People across the world increasingly yearn for a better life. The trend toward peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit is unstoppable. History has proven and will continue to prove that good-neighborliness will prevail over a beggar-thy-neighbor approach, mutually beneficial cooperation will replace zero-sum game, and multilateralism will win over unilateralism.

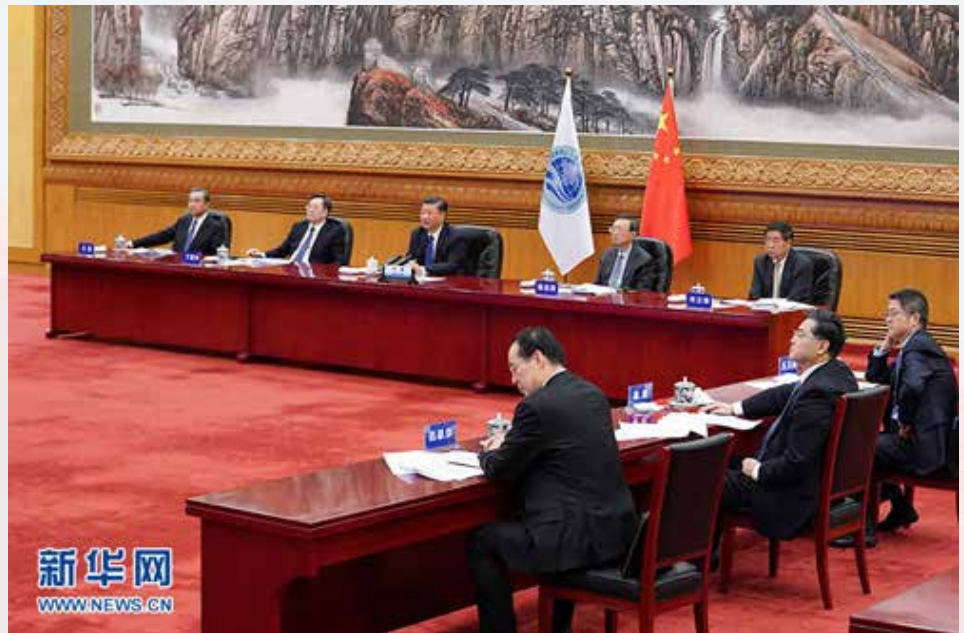
Xi stressed that in the current circumstances, the SCO is required to carry forward the Shanghai Spirit and deepen solidarity and collaboration, so as to contribute more to the stability and development of countries in the region and take more steps toward building a community with a shared future for mankind.

First, we need to step up anti-epidemic cooperation and build a community of health for all. We need to strengthen joint response to COVID-19, uphold regional and global public health security, support the World Health Organization's crucial leadership role, oppose attempts to politicize the pandemic or mislabel the coronavirus, and jointly resist any "political virus". China proposes that hotline contacts be created between SCO members' centers for disease control (CDCs), and will actively consider SCO countries' need for vaccines.

Second, we need to safeguard security and stability and build a community of security for all. We need to act on the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and address all forms of threats and challenges effectively. We need to firmly support countries concerned in their law-based efforts to steadily advance major domestic political agenda, firmly support countries in safeguarding political security and social stability, and firmly oppose interference by external forces in the domestic affairs of SCO members under whatever pretexts, and resolve disputes and differences through dialogue and consultation. It is important that we forestall terrorist, separatist and extremist attempts to exploit the pandemic for disruption, and deepen SCO members' enforcement cooperation. China welcomes the participation of all parties in the Global Initiative on Data Security launched by China.

Third, we need to deepen practical cooperation and build a community of development for all. We need to forge greater synergy of the Belt and Road Initiative with national development strategies as well as region-wide cooperation initiatives such as the Eurasian Economic Union, ensure unimpeded economic flows in the region, speed up the resumption of work and production, expand mutual investment, and step up cooperation in digital economy, e-commerce, artificial intelligence and smart cities. Next year, China will host a China-SCO forum on the digital economy industry in Chongqing. We need to implement more joint projects that deliver real benefits to peoples. China supports setting up an SCO joint working group on poverty reduction.

Fourth, we need to nourish people-to-people amity and build a community of cultural exchanges for all. We need to promote mutual learning between our civilizations, support the exchanges and cooperation in the fields covering education, culture, tourism, sports, media and women's welfare. China will host an SCO non-governmental friendship forum next year, and provide communication platforms for 600 young people in the coming three years.



Xi Jinping stressed that we need to act to champion multilateralism and follow the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits to improve global governance and uphold the international order. The SCO needs to expand its network of partnerships and play a more active role in international and regional affairs.

Xi Jinping stressed that China is speeding up efforts to foster a new development paradigm and putting new mechanisms in place to build an open economy of a higher standard. China will remain committed to a win-win strategy of opening-up and welcomes all parties to capitalize on China's development opportunity and make active endeavors to deepen cooperation with China.

Xi Jinping concluded by emphasizing that next year marks the 20th anniversary of the SCO. Let us hold high the banner of the Shanghai Spirit, forge ahead with strong cooperation, strive for the better development of the Organization, and build an even closer community with a shared future for us all.

Foreign leaders who participated in the meeting made positive comments on the progress of SCO cooperation in various fields, and said that challenges and threats are increasing in the current international situation, while the COVID-19 pandemic is having a serious negative impact on global politics, economy and society. Countries should work together to combat the epidemic and oppose stigmatization of other countries under the pretext of the epidemic. Member states should uphold multilateralism, safeguard the international order based on the UN Charter and international law, uphold the rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core, and promote

an open world economy. Member states should uphold the Shanghai Spirit of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for the diversity of civilizations and pursuit of common development to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Member states should respect the path chosen by their own people and oppose interference by external forces in their internal affairs. Cooperation in trade, investment, production capacity, transportation, energy, innovation and the digital economy should be strengthened to improve people's livelihood and eradicate poverty. People-to-people exchanges should also be deepened. Member states should support the synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian Economic Union, work together to fight the terrorist, separatist and extremist attempts, safeguard data security and biosecurity, and resolve disputes peacefully through dialogue and consultation to safeguard regional security, stability and sustainable development.

It was decided at the meeting that Tajikistan will take over the rotating presidency of the SCO.

The meeting adopted and issued the "Moscow Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO Member States" and a series of statements on joint response efforts against the novel coronavirus infection, in connection with the 75th anniversary of victory in World War II, on cooperation in international information security, on cooperation in the digital economy, on countering the spread of terrorist, separatist and extremist Ideology, including online, and on countering the drug threat.

Ding Xuexiang, Yang Jiechi, Wang Yi and He Lifeng attended the meeting.

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## Chinese Premier at the 23rd China-ASEAN Summit

It is a great pleasure to meet you all again. I would like to thank the Vietnamese government and Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc for your hard work in putting this meeting together. I look forward to our in-depth discussion on China-ASEAN cooperation and common development into the future.

This has been an unusual year for the world as COVID-19 seriously affected the development and external interactions of all countries. Either in combating the coronavirus or recovering the economy, we must stay the course of openness and cooperation. In his keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the third China International Import Expo, President Xi Jinping reaffirmed that China will join hands with all other countries to create opportunities in opening-up and tackle difficult problems through cooperation.

Since the start of COVID-19, China and ASEAN have taken the lead in conducting regional anti-epidemic cooperation. We have met online several times and discussed in-depth ways for tackling the immediate challenge. Thanks to our joint efforts, we have overcome the impact of the pandemic and resumed the growth of China-ASEAN economic cooperation and trade. In the first three quarters, China-ASEAN trade reached 481.81 billion US dollars, up by five percent year-on-year, making ASEAN China's largest trading partner. China's industry-wide foreign direct investment in ASEAN topped 10.72 billion US dollars, jumping 76.6 percent year-on-year. These figures speak volumes about the strong foundation and potential of our cooperation.

Such achievements are a further testament to the growing maturity and stability of China-ASEAN relations after three decades of development. Among ASEAN's dialogue partners, China has been number one on many fronts. China was the first to join the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the first to forge strategic partnership with ASEAN, the first to start FTA negotiations with ASEAN, and the first to give unequivocal support for ASEAN centrality in East

Asian regional cooperation. China and ASEAN working in concert has been a key underlying factor behind the strong momentum of China-ASEAN cooperation and its important role in ensuring regional stability and prosperity.

First, we have pursued the path of solidarity and development by upholding good neighborliness and friendship. China and ASEAN are permanent neighbors and close partners, and our people enjoy a deep bond of friendship. In times of adversities, from the two financial crises, to major natural disasters such as tsunamis and SARS and to the sudden onslaught of COVID-19, we have always stood together and looked out for each other in the spirit of a community with a shared future.

Second, we have pursued the path of common development by promoting win-win cooperation. China-ASEAN cooperation is open, inclusive and delivers benefits to both sides. Seeing each other's development as crucial opportunities, we have promoted integrated and interconnected development by synergizing development plans and strengthening connectivity, and advocated multilateralism and free trade. These common endeavors have made the pie of shared interests bigger; they have not only facilitated our own development, but also injected a strong impetus into the stable economic development of the region and beyond.

Third, we have pursued the path of peaceful development by adhering to dialogue and consultation. Peace and stability are the preconditions for development and prosperity. It is natural for neighbors to sometimes run into frictions. But, if handled properly, these frictions will not disrupt the course of development. We all believe that countries should respect each other, seek common ground while putting aside differences and settle differences and disputes through friendly consultations. Such shared commitments have fostered a regional environment of peace and stability.

Fourth, we have pursued the path of coordinated development by putting people first. For us, the fundamental interests of the two billion people of China and ASEAN countries are always the top-order priority. In the face of COVID-19, we have cared deeply about life and livelihood, extended a helping hand to those most in need and made joint efforts to protect the life, security and health of all our peoples. We have also facilitated practical cooperation to safeguard and enhance peoples' well-being in light of their real needs.

Colleagues,

As the pandemic continues to spread across the world, global recovery will be a difficult and tortuous process. Rising protectionism and unilateralism have put the global governance system and multilateral institutions in jeopardy. Economic and social development at the regional and international levels face serious challenges.

It is encouraging to see that the pandemic situation has largely stabilized in East Asia and is turning for the better. Countries in our region are reopening economies in an orderly manner with normalized containment measures in place. More and more positive factors indicate a steady return to economic and social progress.

Last month, the Communist Party of China (CPC) convened the Fifth Plenum of its 19th Central Committee and adopted the Recommendations of the CPC Central Committee on Formulating the 14th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Goals for 2035. The Recommendations proposed that China embrace a new development philosophy for high-quality development and move expeditiously to forge a new development paradigm. As China strives to expand domestic demand, we will pursue opening-up at a higher level. This will enable us to better match the two huge markets of China and ASEAN, bring out greater dynamism from within our economies, and contribute to regional economic recovery and sustainable development. As China's close economic and trading partner, ASEAN will be the first to benefit from this development strategy.

China has always regarded ASEAN as a priority in our neighborhood diplomacy. We firmly support ASEAN's community-building, support ASEAN's efforts in strengthening its centrality in regional cooperation, and support ASEAN's greater role in building an open and inclusive regional architecture.

We are ready to work with ASEAN to cement good-neighbourliness, uphold multilateralism and free trade, and push for more concrete outcomes in various areas of our cooperation by implementing the Strategic Partnership Vision 2030, and the recently finalized Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2021-2025). These joint efforts will not only boost development on both sides, but also facilitate economic recovery within the region and safeguard regional and global peace and stability.

To achieve this goal, I propose that China and ASEAN work together in the following areas:

First, we need to defeat COVID-19 together and upgrade public health cooperation. As there appears to be no end in sight to the pandemic, vaccine R&D will be key to a complete victory against the virus. China is reaching out to several ASEAN countries on vaccine R&D and production cooperation, and will actively

consider ASEAN countries' needs when our COVID vaccines are developed and deployed. This will be China's concrete action to promote vaccine accessibility and affordability.

China is ready to hold more "Friends of Vaccines" activities in collaboration with the ASEAN Committee in Beijing or through other channels to promote information sharing and cooperation. We would like to launch the Liaison Mechanism for Public Health Emergencies with ASEAN at an early date, earnestly implement the China-ASEAN Cooperation Program on Public Health Management, and ensure the success of the third China-ASEAN Health Cooperation Forum. We will carry out more practical cooperation projects with ASEAN, including the China-ASEAN Human Resources Training Program of Health Silk Road, the China-ASEAN Training Program for Public Health Executives and other similar programs to help ASEAN countries build capacity. We support ASEAN in establishing the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and the ASEAN Regional Reserve of Medical Supplies for Public Health Emergencies. China offers to lead efforts in setting up an APT reserve of essential medical supplies to pool resources from different quarters and optimize the distribution and utilization of emergency response supplies in our region. We will continue to support WHO in playing its role, enhance international cooperation and joint pandemic response, and work for a global community of health for all.

Second, we need to focus on economic cooperation and trade and boost regional economic recovery. China actively supports ASEAN in adopting and implementing the Comprehensive Recovery Framework and steadily reopening the economy. We welcome the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). It will be an important step for regional countries to uphold the multilateral trading system and build an open world economy, which is vital to deepening regional economic integration and stabilizing the global economy.

China is ready to work with ASEAN to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the full establishment of the China-ASEAN FTA and release a report on its 10-year development. Going forward, we need to further implement our free trade agreement and the upgrading protocol, and promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation in the region. China will import more high-quality agricultural products from ASEAN and encourage Chinese businesses to increase investment in ASEAN. We also welcome your active participation in the 17th China-ASEAN Expo to share in our market opportunities.

China wishes to further leverage the bilateral "fast tracks" and build a regional "fast track" network. Our two sides need to further synergize the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with ASEAN's development plans, hold the meeting of the Connectivity Cooperation Committee at an early date to discuss priority cooperation areas and projects, and steadily advance the China-Laos Railway, the China-Thailand Railway, the Jakarta-Bandung Railway and other major projects. China has completed the first stage of fund-raising of the China-ASEAN Investment Cooperation Fund II, totaling one billion US dollars. The Fund will be officially established and put into operation as soon as possible to support ASEAN's major projects in such fields as infrastructure, energy and resources, and boost regional economic and trade exchanges.

Third, we need to create highlights in digital economy and foster new sources of growth for cooperation. The importance of digital economy has been further revealed in the context of COVID-19. ASEAN has adopted the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025, and China is formulating a national plan on IT application for the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025). On such basis, our two sides need to leverage the opportunities of the Year of Digital Economy Cooperation to synergize digital development strategies and boost infrastructure development and transformation in this field. We need to intensify cooperation on innovation in e-commerce, smart city, big data, 5G and other areas, and promote joint R&D, technological exchanges and human resources development. In this connection, China welcomes the release of the Initiative on Building China-ASEAN Partnership on Digital Economy. Now what is needed is to work out follow-up plans to put it into practice.

China has put forward the Global Initiative on Data Security, and it would be useful for our two sides to establish a China-ASEAN Cyber Dialogue mechanism to share experience and enhance capacity building cooperation in areas such as cybersecurity and digital governance. We need to release the Plan of Action on a Closer Partnership of Science, Technology and Innovation for Future (2021-2025) as early as possible. China hopes to make the China-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Science and Technology Cooperation a regular one and stands ready to host its second meeting in 2021 for in-depth communication and exchanges on scientific and technological innovation.

Fourth, we need to promote sustainable development and strengthen preparedness for risks. Pursuing sustainable economic and social development is our shared objective. China welcomes the decision to make 2021 the China-ASEAN Year of Sustainable Development Cooperation and stands ready to step up cooperation on ecological conservation, environmental protection, disaster prevention and mitigation, climate change, and poverty reduction. China will ensure the success of the China-ASEAN Social Development and Poverty Reduction Forum as a platform for us to share experience on digitally enabled poverty reduction. We look forward to the early adoption and implementation of the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2025), and stand ready to hold the China-ASEAN High-level Forum on Green and Sustainable Development. We also welcome your active participation in the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) to be held next year in Kunming.

China welcomes the establishment of a China-ASEAN Ministers' Meeting on Disaster Management and expects the first meeting to be held as early as possible. China is ready to work with ASEAN to build a Partnership on Blue Economy. We look to work with you to put it into practice in an expeditious manner. China will make good use of the China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Fund and other resources to support early harvest projects in relevant fields. The Lancang-Mekong cooperation and China and BIMPEAGA cooperation are important components of China-ASEAN cooperation. We will encourage greater synergy between these cooperation mechanisms and the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor to help facilitate ASEAN integration and promote balanced and coordinated development of the region.

Our two sides need to further enrich cooperation in other areas. To build up cooperation on defense and non-traditional security issues, China will continue to hold the China-ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting, the exchange programs for Chinese and ASEAN military think tanks and young and middle-aged officers, and the joint naval exercise of China and Southeast Asian countries. We will continue to work for a direct hot line between our defense departments and will convene the second "Security for Prosperity" China-ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Law Enforcement and Security Cooperation in China next year.

Our two sides need to keep working closely for the approval and implementation of the Outreach Program on Revised Rules of Origin under CAFTA Upgrading Protocol and the program on building ASEAN Tourism Digital Platform, as part of Chinese assistance. Next year, China will contribute another 10 million US dollars to the China-ASEAN Cooperation Fund to support the China-ASEAN Young Leaders Scholarship and other signature projects on cultural exchanges. This will provide impetus to social and cultural cooperation, the third pillar of China-ASEAN relations.

Colleagues,

The South China Sea is the shared home for countries in the region. The situation there has on the whole been stable. This is attributable to the fact that China and ASEAN countries, bearing in mind the larger interests, have actively managed differences with the "dual-track" approach, deepened cooperation, fully and effectively implemented the DOC and steadily advanced the COC consultations.

Over the past 18 years, the DOC has served as a guide for the parties to enhance dialogue, trust and cooperation. As an upgraded version of the DOC, the COC will be a more substantive, effective and operable document that provides further institutional safeguards for peace and stability in the South China Sea. China remains firmly committed and determined to conclude the COC consultations at an early date. We call on all parties to overcome the impact of COVID-19, think creatively, and accelerate the consultations in a flexible and pragmatic way. By so doing, we will demonstrate to the international community that we have the wisdom and capability to properly manage the situation in the South China Sea and safeguard its peace and stability. China will positively consider convening face-to-face consultations in China, as soon as the COVID-19 situation allows, to advance the second reading of the COC. Safeguarding peace and stability in the South China Sea is the shared aspiration of countries in the region, and dialogue is the right way forward to resolve disputes.

Colleagues,

Next year will mark the 30th anniversary of China-ASEAN dialogue relations. Our friendship and cooperation, which is fully established, will move toward greater maturity as we both enter an important period of development. Taking the 30th anniversary as an opportunity, we proposed elevating our relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership. China will stand in solidarity with ASEAN countries to address the difficulties head on. Together, we will usher in even brighter prospects for the China-ASEAN strategic partnership and contribute even more to peace, stability, development and prosperity of the region.

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## CPEC is a major pioneering project of the Belt and Road Initiative

**C**RI: At a recent press conference, Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Babar Iftikhar, Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations of the Pakistan Armed Forces, accused India of supporting terrorist forces in Pakistan and sabotaging the building of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), with relevant evidence published. What is your comment?

Zhao Lijian: I responded to relevant questions previously. China opposes terrorism in all manifestations and any double standard on counter-terrorism. We call on the international community, especially regional countries, to carry out counter-terrorism cooperation and safeguard collective security. China appreciates Pakistan's contribution to the international counter-terrorism cause. We firmly support Pakistan's efforts to combat terrorist forces and safeguard national and regional peace and security.

CPEC is a major pioneering project of the Belt and Road Initiative. It is of great significance to not only the common development of China and Pakistan, but also regional connectivity and common prosperity. We are confident that with the support from the international community, China and Pakistan will ensure the

smooth and successful building and running of CPEC. Meanwhile, we believe that any attempt to disrupt the building of CPEC would be foiled eventually.

Reuters: Japanese Prime Minister said that Japan aims to expand the CPTPP. Will State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi discuss China's possible participation in the CPTPP during his upcoming trip?

Zhao Lijian: China is a staunch supporter of trade liberalization and facilitation and also an important participant in Asia Pacific cooperation and economic integration. For various free trade arrangements, as long as they serve economic integration of the Asia Pacific, comply with the principles of transparency, openness and inclusiveness, and uphold the WTO-centered global free trade regime, China remains positive and open towards them.

I just released information on State Councilor Wang Yi's visit to Japan. As for details of his visit, we will release relevant information in due course.

Kyodo News: During State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Japan, will the two sides talk about President Xi Jinping's visit to Japan?

Zhao Lijian: I just released information on State Councilor Wang Yi's visit to Japan. As for details of his visit, we will release relevant information in due course.

South China Morning Post: Reports say that China and India will soon hold the 9th round of Commander-level talks. Do you have something to share on preparations for the 9th round and any details on the 8th round of talks?

Zhao Lijian: China and India have been in communication with each other through diplomatic and military channels, working to ease up and cool down the situation on the ground. We've already released information on the 8th round of talks. We will release information on the 9th round when we have them.

Beijing Daily: When asked whether he regretted that Canadian border authorities arrested Meng Wanzhou at a Q&A session of the APEC CEO Dialogues on November 19, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said "Do I regret that Canada lived up to a long-standing extradition treaty with our closest ally? Absolutely not." Do you have any comment?

Zhao Lijian: I've also got some questions for the Canadian side. First, why Canada is the only country that "abides by" its extradition treaty with the US on this matter? The United States has extradition treaties with many countries. Second, do other countries that have such treaties with the United States not abide by their obligations? Third, why don't they do what Canada does? This is because they don't want to be part of the US' dirty scheme and to serve the US' self-interest at the expense of their own people.

China's position on the Meng Wanzhou incident is clear and firm. It must be stressed that in the face of all these facts and questionable points disclosed, no matter how hard the Canadian government tries to hide the truth and mislead the public, it will never change the political nature of the Meng Wanzhou incident, and the disgraceful role of the Canadian government as the US' accomplice and pawn.

We also noted that more and more insightful people in Canada have spoken out, asking the Canadian government to independently make the decision to release Ms. Meng Wanzhou, and among them are political leaders, lawyers, judges and retired diplomats. We urge the Canadian leader to heed their voices of justice and reason.

Xinhua News Agency: Mongolia continuously reported a few domestic COVID-19 cases in recent days and its government has announced the state of alert across the country and adopted a number of measures on epidemic control and prevention. As its close neighbor, would China provide assistance and support to Mongolia?

Zhao Lijian: China and Mongolia are friendly neighbors linked by mountains and rivers. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the two countries have joined hands with each other in fighting

the epidemic and achieved positive outcomes. Recently, there has been new changes in the COVID-19 situation in Mongolia and its government and people are taking proactive anti-epidemic measures. China is closely following the situation and keeping close communication with the Mongolian side. The Chinese government has decided to provide a batch of nucleic acid testing equipment and reagents to Mongolia in emergency to help and support its anti-epidemic efforts. China will continue to actively provide assistance in light of the demand from the Mongolian side to the best of our ability. We wish and believe that under the leadership of its government, Mongolia will defeat the epidemic at an early date.

China Daily: Not long ago, the World Bank projected that global per capita incomes are expected to decline by 3.6% this year, which will tip 88 million to 115 million people into extreme poverty. How do you view the role China plays in global poverty alleviation?

Zhao Lijian: This year is the concluding year for the completion of the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects and to end extreme poverty in China. Elimination of poverty in all its forms, including extreme poverty, is the biggest global challenge and a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development.

China has been sharing experience on poverty eradication with the world and contributing to global endeavor in this regard. Over the past 40 years or so after China's reform and opening up began, according to World Bank statistics, 800 million Chinese were lifted out of poverty. China will lift all rural residents living below the current poverty line out of poverty within this year, thereby meeting the target of eradicating extreme poverty set out in Agenda 2030 ten years ahead of schedule, making historic contributions to poverty elimination and peaceful development across the world. China's visions on poverty alleviation, including "targeted poverty reduction" and "tailoring policies to local conditions", are drawing more and more attention from the international community. China has recently put together a selection of poverty reduction cases in the form of a book titled *Eradication of Poverty: China's Practices* to share our experience and practice. You are most welcome to follow and report our work and outcomes in this area.

China is taking concrete actions to support poverty eradication worldwide. While making efforts in our own country, we have also been helping developing countries to the best of our ability. China has been creating more synergies between the BRI cooperation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. According to a World Bank report, BRI projects could help lift 7.6 million people out of extreme poverty and 32 million people from moderate poverty. Through bilateral and multilateral channels, we are helping developing countries with their capacity building, which also contributes to poverty eradication cooperation worldwide.

"The world will be a better place only when everyone is better off." China will continue contributing our strength to international cooperation on poverty alleviation.

Nihon Keizai Shimbun: Does State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi need to be quarantined after his visit to Japan and the Republic of Korea? If yes, for how many days?

Zhao Lijian: We will make arrangements in accordance with relevant national epidemic prevention regulations.

NHK: On State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Japan, what is China's expectation for this visit?

Zhao Lijian: During State Councilor Wang's visit,

China and Pakistan  
will ensure the smooth  
and successful building  
and running of CPEC:  
Foreign Ministry  
Spokesperson Zhao  
Lijian's

he will hold talks with Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and meet with Japanese political leaders.

China-Japan relations have been developing in a sustained and steady manner. China hopes to work with Japan through this visit to implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, deepen high-level strategic communication and cooperation in fighting COVID-19 and resuming work and production, strengthen coordination on international and regional affairs and advance the healthy and steady development of China-Japan relations.

CNR: The 11th Ebola epidemic in the Democratic Republic of Congo has come to an end, according to the DRC Health Minister who announced it on November 18. World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros congratulated the government and people once again on defeating the Ebola epidemic. May I ask what role China has played in the efforts of the DRC to combat the Ebola epidemic?

Zhao Lijian: We are glad to see that the 11th Ebola epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been over. We congratulate the DRC government and the people and pay tribute to the health-care workers who have made important contributions to the fight against the epidemic.

Health-care and medical cooperation is an important part of cooperation between China and Africa. China has been paying close attention to the development of the Ebola epidemic in the DRC and actively provided assistance and support within its capabilities to the DRC and relevant countries in the region to prevent and control the Ebola epidemic. In recent years, China has provided a number of emergency humanitarian assistance and sent expert groups to the relevant countries to assist in the fight against the epidemic, and carried out cooperation with WHO and the African Union in this field. We have been using concrete actions to live up to the China-Africa brotherly friendship sharing weal and woe, which has been spoken very positively by all parties. It is another example to show that solidarity and cooperation is the most powerful weapon in the fight against the epidemic.

At present, China and Africa are working hand in hand to combat COVID-19. China is willing to work with African countries, including the DRC, to implement the outcomes of the FOCAC Beijing Summit and the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19, strengthen the prevention system and capacity building of public health sectors in African countries, enhance their capacity to meet the challenges of major infectious diseases, and build a China-Africa community of health. At the same time, we call on the international community to come up with more concrete measures to help African countries overcome the epidemic at an early date.

AFP: The Canadian Ambassador to China has been allowed to speak virtually to Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, the two Canadians held on spying charges. I wonder if the face-to-face consular access will resume soon?

Zhao Lijian: We stated China's position on multiple occasions. Our policy will be adjusted based on the development of the epidemic situation.

Tass: Andrew Wheeler, the head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is to visit Taiwan in December to discuss cooperation on marine environment protection issues. What is the Foreign Ministry's comment?

Zhao Lijian: China firmly opposes all forms of official exchanges between the United States and Taiwan. This position is consistent and clear. We urge the U.S. side to fully grasp the high sensitivity of the Taiwan question, stick to the one China principle and the three China-US joint communiqués, immediately halt their official ties and interactions with Taiwan in any form, and prudently and properly handle Taiwan-related issues so as to avoid any serious harm to peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and China-US cooperation in relevant key areas. China will make legitimate and necessary reactions in light of the development of the situation on the ground.

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## Chinese Ambassador calls on adviser to the Prime Minister on finance, Dr. Hafeez Shaikh

The Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Nong Rong called on the Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh at the Finance Division in Islamabad. Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh warmly welcomed the new Ambassador and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest during the meeting.

Adviser Finance briefed the Chinese envoy on enhancement of economic cooperation under the umbrella of CPEC, the fragile economy inherited by the present Government, the remarkable economic stability achieved in the pre-COVID-19 period especially in the external sector, the adverse socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fiscal relief initiatives taken by the Government during

the coronavirus crisis.

**Collaboration between the peoples and the Governments of China and Pakistan would continue to expand and strengthen for achieving common objectives and guarantee a prosperous future for both the nations China and Pakistan: Chinese Ambassador**

He appreciated the continuous and unwavering support that China has always

extended to Pakistan during testing times. His Excellency Mr. Nong Rong stressed that the China-Pakistan bilateral relationship is an epitome of enduring

friendship and brotherhood. While discussing progress on CPEC projects, the Ambassador said that collaboration between the peoples and the Governments of China and Pakistan would continue to expand and strengthen for achieving common objectives and guarantee a prosperous future for both the nations. Adviser Finance expressed confidence that H.E. Mr. Nong Rong's tenure would further solidify the friendship between the two brotherly countries.

He assured his full cooperation during Mr. Rong's diplomatic assignment in Pakistan.



## CPEC to help Pakistan to achieve its Economic Goals: NA Speaker

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Speaker Asad Qaiser has said that Pakistan is proud of its all-weather unique friendship and strategic partnership with China. He said that completion of CPEC would help Pakistan to achieve its economic and industrial goals. He said that present government is committed to take that exemplary relation to new heights. The Speaker said this while talking to Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong who called on him at Parliament House, today. While talking to the Ambassador, the Speaker said China and Pakistan have cherished vibrant, friendly relations spreading over decades. He said that those ties were based on regional development, mutual trust, trade and economic cooperation. He added that the cooperation between both countries was rapidly expanding. He said that Pakistan confidently counts on Chinese support at international and regional forums. He underlined the need for cementing parliamentary contacts for further cementing those ties. He asked the Ambassador to convey his good wishes to the Chairman of the Chinese National People's Congress and

to reiterate invitation already extended to him to visit Pakistan. The Speaker also wished good luck to the Ambassador Nong Rong on his ambassadorial assignment to Pakistan. While discussing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Speaker said CPEC was a game changer not only for both the countries but also for the whole region. He said that it would significantly contribute in brining socio-economic development in Pakistan. He said that Parliament out rightly stands with the CPEC, therefore a series of seminars had been arranged to mobilize stakeholders, intelligentsia and other segments of society to increase effectiveness to the project. He invited Chinese Ambassador to attend a Seminar being organized by Parliamentary Committee on CPEC in Peshawar on 13th November. Referring to the inauguration of the recently completed Rashakai Special Economic Zone project, the Speaker said that it will prove a milestone in the industrial development of the country. The Speaker informed that Prime Minister of Pakistan will inaugurate the Special Economic Zone on 21st November, 2020. Ambassador Mr. Nong Kong said that relations between

two countries were exceptional and gaining strength with the passage of time. He said that cooperation between China and Pakistan was clear depiction of the commitment of leadership of both the countries towards each other. The Ambassador said that completion of 1st phase of the CPEC would open new avenues of development for the people of the region. He informed that with the advent of 2nd Phase of the CPEC, socio-economic, industrialization, agriculture and scientific and technological sectors would be focused. He added that the completion of CPEC would change the destiny of the region and would unleash a new era of Pak-China relations. Later, Chinese Ambassador called on Chairman Parliamentary Committee on CPEC Mr. Sher Ali Arbab. Discussion between them mainly focused the measures to enhance cooperation between two countries. It was agreed that the suggestions put forth by the Chinese government regarding areas under collaboration would be forwarded to the concerned forums. The Ambassador apprised the Chairman about the work on prioritized special economic zones in Pakistan.







# Sultanate Marks 50th National Day

## Celebrating Renewed Renaissance, Setting Further Milestones

**M**uscat, Nov 5 (ONA) – On the 18th of November, the Sultanate marks its 50th National Day anniversary. With firm resolve, Omani citizens continue to make more achievements under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, who vowed to upgrade the march of nation building and enhance the pace of progress, striking a high note in Omani people's enthusiasm for an ambitious renaissance that covers all spheres of life.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, who vowed to upgrade the march of nation building and enhance the pace of progress, striking a high note in Omani people's enthusiasm for an ambitious renaissance that covers all spheres of life



Yet, this year's celebration is impinged by sentiments of sour sorrow for the loss of Father of Omani renaissance, the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Bin Taimour, who sculpted this Arabian edifice from scratch, his vigilant eye not missing a flaw in any side of the monument.

# HM Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik Assumes Leadership

## Smooth Transition of Power

Despite the immense calamity that befell Oman, the Arab world and the Islamic nation upon the death of the late Sultan, the 11th of January 2020 was a virtually unforgettable day in the Omani history. On this day, Omanis depicted a unique national saga of loyalty and devotion when the Sultanate surprised the whole world with a smooth transition of power. In gratitude and tribute to the late Sultan, the Royal Family endorsed, with unwavering certitude, the successor chosen by the late monarch to take the helm, given his proven wisdom and farsightedness.

To answer this wish, the Defence Council opened the letter of the late Sultan who “recommended installing Haitham Bin Tarik as the Sultan of Oman due to (what the late Sultan perceived as) traits that qualify him to shoulder the responsibility.”

Omanis bade farewell to “the dearest and finest of men” (to quote HM Sultan Haitham), pleaded mercy on his soul and recalled his everlasting good deeds and the legacy of nation building that he left behind in 49 years during which Omani citizen were the means and mainstay of development.

## Achievements of His Majesty the Sultan:

Within a short span of ten months, His Majesty Sultan Haitham was able to make many achievements. With insight and strong will, he restructured the State’s Administrative Apparatus to keep pace with Oman Vision 2040 whose salient features were drawn out by all segments of society in a manner that responds to His Majesty the Sultan’s aspirations. Under his patronage, the participants determined the future goals and economic, social and cultural approaches for a more verdant phase of development.

## Regulating Administrative Action:

Royal Decree No. 75/2020 on the State’s Administrative Apparatus constituted a turning point in practicing and regulating administrative action in the Sultanate. Its pursuits will shake up the structure by introducing new mechanisms that contribute to streamlining of procedures, maximizing benefits from services and finalizing



them in the shortest possible time in a manner that conforms to Oman Vision 2040.

A strategic approach of Oman Vision 2040 is to accord priority to the development of sustainable governorates and cities by espousing decentralization as a style of governance mentioned in Article (2) of the above-mentioned decree, which states that “the State’s Administrative Apparatus consists of central units like ministries and councils and non-central units like authorities and public establishments.”

Royal Decree No. 101/2020 on regulating governorates and municipal affairs will contribute to the establishment of sustainable development, utilization of resources in the most ideal manner, generating benefits from tourism resources and heritage landmarks of every governorate and managing municipal utilities. The Governorates Affairs Council will facilitate coordination among governorates as they practise their respective specialisations and it will follow up the implementation of developmental projects. It will also assess their performance, evaluate their budgets and monitor investment of their resources.

## Leader Meets People:

His Majesty Sultan Haitham met a number of tribal chiefs (shaikhs) in Dhofar Governorate in the Wilayat of Salalah last September. An aura of dialogue prevailed in the meeting in a style reminiscent of

the late Sultan’s meet-the-people tradition. His Majesty Sultan Haitham expressed his keenness to meet citizens, study their needs and listen to their proposals for the development of their respective wilayats and their views on how to enhance the role of government departments and their services within the country’s comprehensive development plans.

Apart from the role undertaken by Oman Council, through its bicameral chambers (State Council and Majlis A’Shura), coupled with the role of municipal councils in promoting development, such face-to-face meetings represent a practical application of Omani Shura (consultation) method—which is a value derived from the habits and traditions of Omani society.

## Royal directives to tackle coronavirus pandemic:

His Majesty the Sultan’s attention to the people crystalized in the way he tackled coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic since its outbreak in late 2019 in most countries of the world. His Majesty gave orders to form a Supreme Committee to find scopes to deal with the virus: monitor its spread, follow up regional and international efforts to limit its impacts and to devise solutions in accordance with assessment of general health results.

The Supreme Committee, headed by Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al-Busaidi, Minister of Interior, has been on ongoing session and it has embarked



on implementing the Royal directives of His Majesty the Sultan, who presided over one of its meeting last March. In the meeting, His Majesty pledged the government's full support to the Committee. He said that the government "in its mandate to protect the health of citizens and residents, will spare no effort in combating the pandemic and curbing its spread."

### "Waqf (Endowment) Fund" to support health services and "Anti-Covid-19 Support Fund" to enhance the Ministry's efforts:

Meanwhile, an Endowment Fund and an "Anti-Covid-19 Support Fund" were established as prime movers of public support to the Ministry of Health in the battle against coronavirus. His Majesty the Sultan himself donated RO10 million as a personal contribution to the funds. The Royal gesture reaffirms full collaboration between the leader, the government and members of the public, both citizens and residents, to help eliminate the threat of the virus.

The Supreme Committee tasked with tackling developments resulting from coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic took many decisions and espoused precautionary measures to curb the spread of the virus. It imposed partial lockdown in some governorates and total lockdown in other governorates. It also set up Command and Control Points, banned nighttime movement, closed mosques, suspended study in schools and other educational establishments, downsized workforce at public and private workplaces, activated online work, suspended some commercial activities and imposed laws and regulations to ensure abidance

by preventive procedures and stem the spread of the virus.

### Special committee formed to tackle economic impacts of Covid-19:

In view of the heavy toll on the global economy from coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and its repercussions that reflected in the situation in the Sultanate, His Majesty Sultan Haitham gave orders to form an economic committee, an offshoot of the Supreme Covid-19 Control Committee, to deal with the economic impacts of Covid-19 in the domestic front.

Accordingly, a number of decisions were taken and resulted in the Government's offering packages and incentives to private sector establishments and firms. The steps included the establishment of an Emergency Loans Programme which offers assistance to segments of entrepreneurs whose businesses were most severely stricken by the pandemic.

### Foreign Policy

As soon as he assumed power, in his first nation address, His Majesty Sultan Haitham reaffirmed the permanent stands of the Sultanate's foreign policy, saying that the Sultanate advocates peaceful co-existence among nations, good neighborliness and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. His Majesty the Sultan also stressed that he would follow the footsteps of the late Sultan Qaboos Bin Said bin Taimour.

In his speech, His Majesty the Sultan said, "We shall trace the course of the late Sultan, reaffirming

the fundamentals of our country's foreign policy based on peaceful co-existence with nations, good neighborliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, respect for countries' sovereignty and international cooperation in various spheres."

This stance was reaffirmed by the Sultanate's Government last September in a speech delivered by Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al-Busaidi before the 75th general assembly of the United Nations. Sayyid Badr said, "His Majesty the Sultan has reaffirmed beyond any doubt that the Sultanate will continue the prudent policy set by the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Bin Taimour, Founder of Oman's Modern Renaissance and architect of its foreign policy and its international relations over the past 50 years."

In addition, the principles of Omani foreign policy as established in its blessed renaissance espouse dialogue as a means for solving disputes. They also support values of tolerance, justice equality and the settlement of conflicts in accordance with the UN charter and rules of the International Law. This enhanced the Sultanate's regional and international status and made it a lighthouse of peace and security.

It is worth noting that Omani foreign policy principles are derived from basics of Oman's centuries-old civilisation and original values of Omani society that indicate a sincere desire to promote humanity and moderation. As a result, the Sultanate is widely accepted as mediator in the international arena.

### Economy...Oman Vision 2040:

The much-awaited Oman Economic Vision, scheduled to be implemented upon the start of the 10th Five Year Plan in January 2021, meets with serious challenges, including the slump in international oil prices and the global spread of coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

These challenges prompted the government to undertake stringent measures, including a Medium-Term Fiscal Balance Plan (2020-2024) which features many initiatives and programs aimed at establishing solid foundations for financial sustainability, reducing general debt, upgrading the efficiency of government spending, enhancing the State's financial reserves, improving revenues from investment of government (to help the country deal with any challenges) and, thus, setting economic growth upright.







The government of the Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Finance, also cut down budgets of government units by 5%, downsizing operational budgets and financial plans of government firms by at least 10% and slashing remunerations of boards of public authorities and establishment and affiliate committees by 50% applying a 5% Value Added Tax by next April (2021). All these measures are expected to supply the budget with a sum of RO 400 million.

The aggregate revenues of the 2020 Budget stood at RO 10.7 billion calculated at a rate of \$58 per barrel, while general expenditure was estimated at RO 13.2 billion, which entails estimated deficit of about RO 2.5 billion or 8% of the Gross Domestic Product.

In his speech last February, His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik outlined the features of the next stage of development. He pointed out that the tasks of government firms will be fully revised with a view to developing them and augmenting their contribution to the economic system. His Majesty

said, "We will study government decision-making with the aim of realizing the supreme national interests of the country. We will accord this aspect our full attention and our support." Accordingly, Oman Investment Authority restructured the boards of directors of 15 government firms coming under its supervision. Also, ICT sector firms were restructured and a project for the foundation of an all-round agricultural products marketing company was announced. The vegetable and fruit marketing company will report to Oman Food Investment Company.

Due to the vital role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in economic growth, the government of the Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Labour, worked to establish a suitable environment for SMEs. The steps included the exemption of SMEs from Omanisation percentages and the allocation of some professions to expatriate manpower. Also, the portal Invest-Ease has introduced many electronic services to the business community. In this respect, His Majesty the Sultan said, "We understand the significance

of the Small and Medium Enterprise Sector and the Entrepreneurship Sector, notably projects based on innovation, artificial intelligence and advanced technologies. Attention will be accorded to training and empowering youth to help them benefit from opportunities offered by these vital sectors so that they could establish the core component of a smart national economy. Our government will follow up the progress made in these domains step by step."

The schema of laws and incentives related to investment helped furnish an attractive climate for investments from home and abroad. These include the Foreign Capital Investment Law. The government capitalizes on investment in Omani ports, particularly the Port of Sohar and the Port of Salalah, in addition to special economic zones (like the Special Economic Zone in Duqm and the Port of Duqm). The tourism sector also forms one of the basic pillars of economic diversification. The government has devised clear-cut strategies to maximize benefits from investment in the tourism sector.



### Electronic Census:

His Majesty Sultan Haitham attaches great importance to Electronic Census of Population, Residences and Establishments due to be held in December 2020. His Majesty the Sultan urged all to cooperate and interact positively with the census procedures so that it could achieve its desired objectives. The outcome of the e-census will cover all aspects of developmental planning.

### Job Security System Law

To provide means of decent living for Omani citizens amid adverse global economic conditions, a Job Security System Law has been promulgated by Royal decree. His Majesty the Sultan donated RO 10 million as a personal contribution towards the foundation of the fund. He also issued directives to speed up the establishment of a comprehensive national Social Security Scheme that provides protection to low-income groups and Social Security Fund beneficiary families against expected impacts of the medium-term Fiscal Balance Plan.

### Education and Research Sector:

His Majesty Sultan Haitham accorded top priority to the sector of education. He gave directives to provide a supportive environment that enhances learning, research and innovation. The aim is to enable Omani citizens to contribute to the forthcoming stage of development.

The National Strategy for Research and

Development has been modernized to keep pace with Oman Vision 2040, notably the development of a cognitive community that is capable of competing and converting knowledge into economic revenue. The setting up of University of Technology and Applied Sciences last August is testimony to this approach of encouraging research and innovation and benefit from advances of artificial intelligence and the 4th industrial revolution (4IR). For the same purpose the name of Ministry of Higher Education has been changed to Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The Sultanate's modern renaissance is influenced by the memorable quote of the late Sultan who said, "We will educate our sons and daughters even under the shade of a tree" (way back in the 1970s). since then, the march of education has gone a long way and, today, educational establishments are set up on each mountain and plain in Oman.

The recent Royal directives to set up six priority schools in the forthcoming stage to the tune of RO 8.85 million reflect the attention accorded by His Majesty the Sultan to the needs of citizens. It is a gesture that denotes his Royal support to education, being the basic requirement for nation building.

### Environment:

Since the outset of its blessed renaissance, the Sultanate has been implementing a policy

of environment protection and pollution prevention. This policy comes within the framework of a comprehensive strategy for sustainable development, conservation of wildlife and preservation of renewable resources.

The government supported this approach by encouraging environment research, exchanging expertise, gathering information, spreading public awareness and instilling basic values and principles that support the goals of sustainable development.

The Environment Authority undertakes the mission of issuing laws deemed necessary for the protection of natural reserves, marine ecosystems and biological diversity. It also introduces the principle of environmental management as a means of raising the capacity of development projects. This is in addition to environment inspection tasks that seek to monitor the situation, assess any negative impacts to the environment and undertake necessary action.

The Environment Authority also seeks to reaffirm the principle of setting balance between development requirements and maintaining environment safety.

The government takes keen interest in analyzing impacts of projects on the environment. This applies to all sorts of industrial, service and infrastructure projects. Regular programmes for monitoring, detection and inspection have been conducted right after the operation of projects,







so that field feedback on the environmental situation around the site could be received and negative impacts addressed immediately.

The Environment Authority executes laws, regulations, decision and national strategy programmes and drafts environment protection plans in keeping with the Sultanate's commitment to international environment agreements within the context of basic goals for sustainable development. National strategies in this field are updated regularly for the management of chemicals and pollutants. The authority issues licenses and environmental clearances. It sets up national networks for the analysis of air quality, among other tasks.

The Environment Authority follows up laws and national plans for the management of coastal areas and control of desertification. It drafts

proposals for the establishment of nature reserves, including temporary protected sites and important sites in cooperation with global organisations.

### Freedom of expression:

The renewed renaissance led by His Majesty the Sultan accords importance to the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Basic Law of the State's Article (29).

The article provides that the law secures to the individuals of society the freedom of expression either through speaking, writing or other means within the boundaries of the law. This has been reaffirmed by His Majesty the Sultan, who said that the State is founded on grounds of freedom of speech, justice and equality of opportunities where people's dignity, rights and liberties are preserved.



### Omani Women:

One of the bright aspects of renewed Omani renaissance under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik is the Royal attention accorded to Omani women. The vital role of women in the nation building march has been highly recognized. His Majesty the Sultan said, "We all have to ensure that women get their full rights guaranteed by law, including their right to work side by side with men across all sectors to serve their country and society."

Last month, His Majesty the Sultan conferred the Order of Royal Commendation on a number of Omani women. The Order was presented by Honorable Lady, the Spouse of His Majesty the Sultan, at a ceremony at Al Baraka Palace on 17 October 2020.

### Youth Sector:

His Majesty the Sultan described youth as "the inexhaustible wealth of nations...its hands that build." He voiced his sincere desire to listen to youth, explore their interests, address their concerns and achieve their aspirations." The celebration of Omani Youth Day on 26 October came as reaffirmation of the Sultanate government's commitment towards this segment of society and its determination to provide them with all means that facilitate their march forward as they contribute to their country's progress.

HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al-Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, gave a speech at the event, saying, "Omani youth have shown that they are highly capable of shouldering their national responsibility.

This confidence stems from their full awareness about their cause and how to serve by it espousing means of advancement, coupled with clear vision and firm resolve to participate in the rejuvenating renaissance of Oman. They are open to the culture of co-existence, love and peace."

His Majesty Sultan Haitham pledged, as he leads the promising reign of the renewed renaissance, that he will elevate Oman, in the coming stage, to the level of aspirations of its people in all spheres.

Citizens participation will be the main pillar of national action, he said, asserting his absolute confidence in the abilities of loyal Omani people to cope with the requirements of the age and the next stage of development, with clear vision, extreme wisdom, steadfastness and self-denial.

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## Sultanate Marks 50th National Day

### Celebrating Renewed Renaissance, Setting Further Milestones

On 18th of November, the Sultanate marks its 50th National Day anniversary. On this auspicious occasion, the glorious 50th National Day, it gives me pleasure to extend to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq (May God protect him) and the Omani people, my highest consideration and regard. Yet, this year's celebration is impinged by sentiments of sour sorrow for the loss of Father

of Omani renaissance, the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Bin Taimour, who sculpted this Arabian edifice from scratch, his vigilant eye not missing a flaw in any side of the monument.

Within a short span of ten months, His Majesty Sultan Haitham was able to make many achievements. With insight and strong will, he restructured the State's Administrative

Apparatus to keep pace with Oman Vision 2040 whose salient features were drawn out by all segments of society in a manner that responds to His Majesty the Sultan's aspirations. Under his patronage, the participants determined the future goals and economic, social and cultural approaches for a more verdant phase of development.

As soon as he assumed power, in his first nation



address, His Majesty Sultan Haitham reaffirmed the permanent stands of the Sultanate's foreign policy, saying that the Sultanate advocates peaceful co-existence among nations, good neighborliness and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

His Majesty the Sultan also stressed that he would follow the footsteps of the late Sultan Qaboos Bin Said bin Taimour. In his speech, His Majesty the Sultan said, "We shall trace the course of the late Sultan, reaffirming the fundamentals of our country's foreign policy based on peaceful co-existence with nations, good neighborliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, respect for countries' sovereignty and international cooperation in various spheres ."In addition, the principles of Omani foreign policy as established in its blessed renaissance espouse dialogue as a means for solving disputes.

They also support values of tolerance, justice equality and the settlement of conflicts in accordance with the UN charter and rules of the International Law.

This enhanced the Sultanate's regional and international status and made it a lighthouse of peace and security. It is worth noting that Omani foreign policy principles are derived from basics of Oman's centuries-old civilisation and original values of Omani society that indicate a sincere desire to promote humanity and moderation.

As a result, the Sultanate is widely accepted as mediator in the international arena. The much-awaited Oman Economic Vision, scheduled to be implemented upon the start of the 10th Five Year Plan in January 2021, meets with serious challenges, including the slump in international oil prices and the global spread of coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

These challenges prompted the government to undertake stringent measures, including a Medium-Term Fiscal Balance Plan (2020-2024) which features many initiatives and programs aimed at establishing solid foundations for financial sustainability, reducing general debt, upgrading the efficiency of government spending, enhancing the State's financial reserves, improving revenues from investment of government (to help the country deal with any challenges) and, thus, setting economic growth upright.



Group photo of His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Omar Al-Marhoun-Head of Mission along with the staff members of Embassy of The Sultanate of Oman in Islamabad

With the aim of taking measures for making its progress / development in way to serve in the higher national interest, His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik ,in his speech last February, gave the framework of the important features of the next stage of development on the comprehensive review and attention.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham pledged, as he leads the promising reign of the renewed renaissance, that he will elevate Oman, in the coming stage, to the level of aspirations of its people in all spheres.

Citizens participation will be the main pillar of national action, he said, asserting his absolute confidence in the abilities of loyal Omani people to cope with the requirements of the age and the next stage of development, with clear vision, extreme wisdom, steadfastness and self-denial. His Majesty Sultan Haitham said, in a Royal address that:

"Nation building is a public responsibility binding upon all. No one is exempted. All should contribute within their capacities.

Oman has been founded and its civilization consolidated with the sacrifices of its people, who relinquished everything dear for the sake

of their country's dignity and supremacy. They exhibited exemplary fidelity in performing their national duties."

The distinguished Oman-Pakistan relations are in continuous and permanent progress, because they are based on a historical reference linking the two brotherly peoples.

These relations will witness a tangible growth in various common fields of interest and that cooperation is well under way in the areas of investment and linking Omani ports with their Pakistani counterparts for strengthening the shipping line between the two countries and that Gwadar port will link the ports of the Sultanate the east gate.

The embassy will work in the near future to arrange meetings between Omani businessmen and their Pakistani counterparts to promote trade aspect between the two countries.

**H.E. Al Sheikh Mohammed Omar Ahmed Al Marhoon the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

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## Telephone conversation between the President of Turkmenistan and the Amir of Qatar

**O**n November 18, 2020, a telephone conversation took place between the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

During the conversation, the heads of states expressed satisfaction with the high level of bilateral ties, as well as the constructive collaboration in the framework of regional



and international structures.

The parties considered the political, trade-economic and cultural-humanitarian aspects of relations between the two states. The closeness of positions of the two countries on key aspects of regional and international agendas was underlined, in particular on

the contribution to the international efforts on the maintenance of peace, security and sustainable development.

The telephone conversation was held upon the initiative of the Qatari side.

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## Turkmenistan and Sweden discuss issues of building the potential of bilateral cooperation

**T**he Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov met via videoconferencing with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Sweden, Ms. Ann Linde.

During the constructive conversation, the diplomats discussed a wide range of bilateral issues, exchanged views on the regional and international agenda.

Also, the heads of the Foreign Ministries of the two countries expressed mutual interest in intensifying contacts in the political-diplomatic, trade-economic and cultural-humanitarian

fields, as well as within the framework of the new European Union Strategy for Central Asia, where there is a promising potential for joint implementation.

During the conversation, the parties also focused on the need to intensify cooperation between the two countries through regional and international structures, in particular the UN and the OSCE.

During the meeting, the Ministers also discussed the prospects for cooperation between the two countries during Sweden's chairmanship in the OSCE in 2021.

The commitment of the Turkmen side was expressed to establish a wide range of dialogue in all areas of mutual interest. In this aspect, they also noted the importance of the joint efforts of the two countries in the context of comprehensive counteraction against the current pandemic situation.

The issues of expanding ties between the parties in the field of the rule of law, gender equality, human rights, education and science, including in the field of high technologies and innovations, were also considered.

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## The delegation of Turkmenistan took part in the 8th meeting of the Secretaries of the Security Council of the CIS member states

By News Agency

**T**he eighth meeting of the Secretaries of the Security Council of the CIS member states was held in the format of videoconference.

At the meeting, the Turkmen delegation was headed by the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, Secretary of the State Security Council of Turkmenistan Ch.Amanov.

The meeting was also attended by the Chairman of the Executive

Committee - CIS Executive Secretary S. Lebedev, Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) S. Zas, including the heads of the security councils of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

It is important to emphasize that Turkmenistan, being an associate member of the CIS, takes an active part in the affairs of the Commonwealth.

During today's meeting, a constructive exchange of views took place on topical issues of the regional and international agenda. In particular, they considered the issues of countering biological threats in the CIS space, as well as the consolidation of efforts to intensify interstate interaction aimed at combating the current pandemic situation and minimizing its socio-economic consequences.

Intensification of cooperation in countering modern challenges and threats in the field of information security, as well as strengthening the cyberspace potential of states became a separate topic of discussion. The participants

also exchanged views on artificial intelligence and its importance in ensuring national security.

In the context of the discussion of regional stability, the heads of the security agencies of the CIS member states emphasized the need for further consolidation of efforts to help strengthen peace and stability in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Developing this topic, the head of the Turkmen delegation noted that Turkmenistan, guided by the principles of permanent neutrality, takes an active part in the peaceful stabilization of Afghanistan and fully supports the peaceful inter-Afghan negotiations. In this context, it was emphasized that Turkmenistan is ready to provide its political space for the next rounds

of peace talks, with the participation of all interested parties.

The Minister of Culture of Turkmenistan took part in the 35th meeting of the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the CIS member states

On November 18, 2020, the XXXV meeting of the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the CIS Member States was held in videoconferencing format.

The delegation of Turkmenistan was headed by the Minister of Culture of the country A.Shamuradov.

At the meeting, the issues of intensifying the cultural exchange of the countries, the progress of the Main activities of cooperation of the CIS member states in the field of culture for 2016-2020, including the possibility of holding the International Exhibition "ARTEXPO" of the CIS member states in 2020-2022, as well as other pressing questions about the area of cultural interaction have been discussed.

During the constructive exchange of views, it was especially noted that humanitarian interaction acts as a factor in strengthening friendship and mutual understanding between the peoples of the countries.

In this context, it was also noted that, fully supporting humanitarian integration, Turkmenistan actively promotes and in practice implements significant initiatives and projects in the field of culture aimed at saturating cultural interaction in the Commonwealth space.

So, in 2019, Ashgabat successfully hosted the Forum of the Creative Intelligentsia of the CIS member states. Also, the President of Turkmenistan put forward an initiative to proclaim 2021 within the framework of the Commonwealth as the Year of Architecture and Construction, within which various thematic events are planned.

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# The Republic of Korea Supports WHO for Strengthening Corona Response Efforts in Pakistan



The Government of Korea has provided in-kind assistance of worth US\$ 500,000 to WHO for strengthening the Corona response efforts in Pakistan. Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr Kwak Sung-kyu handed over the donation to WHO Representative in Pakistan, Dr Palitha Mahipala. The handing-over ceremony took place at the WHO Country Office, Islamabad, Pakistan

The Korean donation included Real-time PCR Kits, IgG/IgM Standard COVID-19 kits and Face Masks to support Corona response efforts in



the country. This contribution will support WHO to build up immediate and rapid response mechanism and accelerate its efforts to support the COVID-19 preparedness and response plan of the Government of Pakistan.

The Republic of Korea has always been supportive of WHO response and relief efforts to meet different health needs in humanitarian emergencies and disasters. In April 2020, it provided in-kind assistance of worth US\$ 300,000 to WHO to control the spread of COVID-19 in Pakistan. Through the Korean

support and other partners' assistance, WHO has been able to support the Government of Pakistan on COVID-19 surveillance, points of entry, laboratory and diagnosis, epidemiological analysis, IPC and case management, and community mobilization and sensitization. WHO Representative, Dr Palitha Mahipala stated "WHO Pakistan highly appreciates and admires this unprecedented support from the Republic of Korea to overcome the COVID-19 situation in Pakistan".

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## Pakistan appreciated the humanitarian assistance provided by EU

By M. Bilal Zafar

Maqhdum Khusro Bakhtyar, the Minister for Economic Affairs chaired a high-level Portfolio Review Meeting of European Union-Funded projects in Pakistan. During the meeting, on-going and pipeline projects worth of €493 million and €108 million respectively in Pakistan were reviewed. The Minister for Economic Affairs appreciated and thanked the humanitarian assistance provided by EU during floods and support for temporarily dislocated persons, and most recently for COVID 19 pandemic. He also appreciated the MoU of Multi Indicative Program (MIP) 2014-2020 for Pakistan amounting € 618 million including Development Cooperation in areas



of Rural Development, Good Governance, Human Rights, and Rule of Law in the country. He laid stress to streamline SDGs objectives and European Consensus on Development 2017. The Minister for Economic Affairs underlined the importance for opening up the new bilateral priority areas in the sector of agriculture, industrialisation, digitalization, and climate change for next MIP 2021-2027. He said that Pakistan needed an inclusive economic growth and strengthening SMEs in post-COVID scenario. He underscored the need for

increasing On-Budget financing and focusing on concrete, material projects, rather on technical assistance and capacity building with greater involvement of Government of Pakistan. Secretary EAD, while thanking Ambassador of EU, urged to initiate the process for next Joint Meeting and formal consultations for MIP 2021-27 at earliest. The Ambassador thanked the Minister and Ministry for upbeat and assured to renew the efforts for new agenda and commencement of JCM for MIP 2021-27.

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# President Abbas hails Pakistan's firm positions in support of Palestine

President Mahmoud Abbas, a letter he sent to the Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, praised Pakistan's positions in support of the Palestinian cause.

"We followed with great interest and gratitude your last televised interview, and your honorable statements about the official Pakistani positions that are firm and supportive of the just Palestinian cause," read President Abbas' letter.

President Abbas stressed that Pakistan is a source of pride for every Palestinian in the world as well as for every Pakistani citizen

. "We highly appreciate your adherence to your positions in support of the Palestinian people

to obtain their legitimate rights, despite the pressures that you are subjected to, which confirms your courage, originality and the strength of your resolve, and your commitment to support the causes of peoples demanding justice," President Abbas said in the letter.

The president wished the Prime Minister of Pakistan good health, happiness and success, wishing the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, its president, government and people, continued progress and prosperity.

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## The MFA of Turkmenistan and the Director General of the UN Office in Geneva discussed topical issues of cooperation

By News Agency

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov had a meeting via videoconference with the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament Tatiana Valovaya.

During the meeting, the sides stressed the high level of long-term cooperation between Turkmenistan and the United Nations in various areas. It was noted that this partnership is being replenished with new content in accordance with new realities and challenges.

It was noted that Turkmenistan actively cooperates not only with the headquarters, but also with the regional offices of the UN. Effective contacts continue with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and others. During the meeting, the parties expressed interest in promoting joint work aimed at achieving global security and stability, human rights protection, environmental and energy security.

Cooperation to overcome the coronavirus pandemic and its socio-economic consequences was especially discussed. It was emphasized that Turkmenistan supports the coordinated efforts of the international community to combat COVID-19, in particular through close cooperation with the World Health Organization, which is also headquartered in Geneva. In this context, it was noted that Turkmenistan, within the framework of the 75th session of the General Assembly, proposes to consider the development and establishment of relevant

international instruments in the field of health. The parties expressed their hope for continued effective cooperation for the benefit of all peoples. Turkmenistan supports the processes of non-proliferation and disarmament

During the videoconference with the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament Tatiana Valovaya, Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan noted the importance of strengthening international cooperation for the attainment of overall security and reiterated the interest of Turkmenistan in the promotion of the Single Concept of Security.

In the framework of its neutral status, Turkmenistan is ready to contribute to the international efforts on advancing the negotiations on non-proliferation and disarmament. Being a part of the fundamental treaties and conventions of the UN, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Turkmenistan stands for the advancement of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia.

It was stated that upon the initiative of Turkmenistan and with the assistance of the UN in June 2010, Ashgabat hosted the International Conference on disarmament in Central Asia and Caspian Basin. In this context, the proposal of the Turkmen side on the establishment of permanently functioning platform for political dialogue on disarmament issues in the region was voiced.

The parties emphasized the significance of using preventive measures in disarmament issues. Also the readiness of Turkmenistan to render assistance to the process of enhancement of the capabilities of specialists in the given area was expressed.

A constructive exchange of views took place on the prospects of cooperation.



## “Activities of the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq”



### The Ambassador of Iraq receives the General Secretary of the Pakistan Council on Foreign Relations in Islamabad

**H**.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad, on 04/11/2020, received Mr. Ahsan Mukhtar Zubairi, General Secretary of the Pakistan Council on Foreign Relations.

The President of the Republic of Pakistan and the former Chief Justice of the Supreme

Council are members of this Council.

Mr. Mukhtar gave a brief overview of the council's work and interests, and the files related to it, expressing his desire to cooperate and coordinate with the Embassy, as is the case with all foreign missions in Pakistan.

The Ambassador extended his thanks and appreciation to Mr. Mukhtar, stressing upon the embassy's cooperation for the success of the mission of the Council's work, in line with the development of relations between the two friendly countries.

### The Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad extends its condolences to the brotherly Palestinian Embassy



**H**.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Pakistan, extended his condolences and sympathy to the Embassy of Palestine on 12/11/2020, upon the death of Dr. Saeb Erakat, the General Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, asking Allah Almighty to inspire his family, relatives and brotherly Palestinian People with patience and solace.

H.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad, extended his condolences to the brotherly Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic on 17/11/2020, upon the death of its late Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem, calling upon the Almighty Allah to have mercy on him and to dwell in his peace, wishing the Syrian government and its brotherly People security, safety and stability.



H.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Pakistan, extended his condolences and sympathy to the Embassy of the brotherly Kingdom of Bahrain on 12/11/2020, upon the death of His Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, asking Allah Almighty to inspire his family, relatives and brotherly Bahraini People with patience and solace.



H.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad, on 04/11/2020, has visited the Turkish Embassy in Islamabad to extend condolences upon the earthquake that occurred in the Turkish city of Izmir, which killed dozens of citizens and injured at least (202).

His Excellency offered his sincere condolences and sympathy to the People and Government of the Republic of Turkey, calling on the Almighty Allah to bless the martyrs with his vast mercy, and to bless the wounded with a speedy recovery.

His Excellency affirmed the solidarity of the People and Government of Iraq with the Turkish People and Government.

H.E. Mr. Ihsan Mustafa, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey expressed his appreciation for this visit, and extended condolences to the Turkish People.



The embassy held a farewell ceremony for the Iraqi Air Force delegation at the ambassador's residence, in the presence of a large number of leading military figures and Pakistani officials, on 10/15/2020, in an atmosphere filled with warmth and affection between the two parties and an investment of relations between the two countries.





# IFWA Charity Bazaar

Islamabad Foreign Women's Association (IFWA) extended financial assistance to organizations offering education and vocational training to underprivileged students in the twin cities.

The IFWA announced that part of its Charity Bazaar earnings will go to two bodies dedicated to education and skill development.

The Islamabad Foreign Women's Association (IFWA) held its annual Charity Bazaar on Sunday at the Business Complex Lawn of Islamabad Serena Hotel with the wearing of masks mandatory in view of the COVID-19 crisis. The bazaar was held under the Cultural Diplomacy initiative of the hotel and the management was there to see all went well.



ISLAMABAD SERENA  
HOTEL









# Italian embassy celebrated “Italian Cuisine Week” in Islamabad



In Italy, things are a bit different: we usually care deeply and lovingly about our family's cooking history: grandmas and moms' recipes are passed on with care and pride, a symbol itself of one's own heritage and roots. Some of us are more aware than others of regional characteristics typical of each dish, but it is not usual, when it comes to the kitchen, to look further back than a couple of generations: our knowledge of why we cook in a certain way and why we eat certain things is normally based on oral sources (our elders) and therefore have a limited time span.

The history of Italian cuisine, however, is as long and rich as the country's history itself, its origins laying deep into the ancestral history of Rome, its people and its political, cultural and social power. Italian cuisine has evolved and changed following

the evolution and the changes of Italy itself throughout centuries of wars, cultural mutations and contacts: it's a history as rich, colorful and fascinating as the most amazing of recipes.

This is what we're going to tell you today: a tale of food, traditions, kings and warriors, the centuries long tale of Italian kitchens. H.E. Mr. Andreas Ferrarese, Ambassador of Italy and his wife Albana Ferrarese cooked Italian dishes to initiate the event.

Speaking at the event, the Italian Ambassador also said that the cuisine of his country is one of the most popular cuisines in the world and he adored the rising trend of different Italian food cuisine in Pakistan.

According to Andreas Ferrarese, it is one of his future plans to “bring more Italian food products in Pakistan”. “Italian foods are available

at restaurants but I want more and more people start preparing Italian foods at their homes,” he said.

The Italian ambassador cooked pasta, which the guests enjoyed very much. He told the audience he used to cook this dish when he was a student for it was a cheap dish and easy to cook as well.

The Ambassador said that this year, due to corona pandemic, the Italian cuisine week was entirely focused on the theme of home cooking. “For this purpose, we are sharing our knowledge and our flavors with you,” he said.

Participants of the event, enjoyed Italian foods that included different kinds of Italian pizzas, pastas and Renne with Tuna fish, Quves and Pepperoncino etc.

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## The Embassy of Japan donated Jasmine trees to the Japanese Park in Islamabad

By Mian fazal Elahi

The Embassy of Japan, in line with the PM Imran Khan's initiative, 'Clean-Green Pakistan', donated 20 Jasmine trees to Japanese Park in Islamabad on 10 November.

H.E. MATSUDA Kunigori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, along with the State Minister for Climate Change, Honorable Ms. Zartaj Gul planted Jasmine trees at the Park during a tree plantation ceremony. Mr. Naveed Tareen Khan, Director General Environment, Capital Development Authority, was also present.

While speaking at the ceremony, Ambassador said that "Many local residents enjoy visiting this park, this became a symbol of friendship between Japan and Pakistan". The park opened in 1985 after the then Japanese Prime Minister NAKASONE visited Pakistan and donated playground equipment for the children of Pakistan as a gift from the children of Japan. In 2015 again, Japan refurbished the equipment as the equipment became old.

When bamboo trees at the park had fallen due to the heavy monsoon rain this summer, Ambassador had special interest to rehabilitate the garden by donating new trees to the Park.

In order to make the park clean and beautiful, 'tree planting at the Japanese Park is a small contribution by the Embassy towards a Clean-Green Pakistan initiative of PM Khan", said the Ambassador. He also mentioned that the Embassy had planted trees at its compound last November, aiming to contribute to a clean and green Pakistan.

On this occasion, the Minister and the Ambassador exchanged views on the importance of technical cooperation on the issue of climate change, especially referring to the area of next-generation solar cells, carbon recycling and electric vehicles.

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# Germany to finance projects in health sectors and energy in Pakistan



by Monitoring Desk

**T**he Government of Germany, through KfW (the German Development Bank) and the Government of Pakistan, represented by the Ministry of Economic Affairs signed three agreements with a cumulative value of Euro 18.5 million. These agreements reiterate the support of the Government of Germany to help the Government of Pakistan fight climate change, resolve the energy issues, provide extended health facilities and combat polio in the country.

Under the Women Employment In Private Health Sector, KfW will provide a grant of Euro 12.00 million exclusively for: (i) the establishment of women's health clinics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab to promote self-employment of women in the health sector; (ii) the training of qualified women to run the clinics; (iii) consulting services in relation to the coordination, monitoring and reporting of the measures implemented.

For Polio eradication, the Government of Germany, through KfW will provide an additional grant of Euro 5.00 million to augment the existing support for polio eradication. This will help the Government of Pakistan to finance polio vaccines and meet the costs for vaccination campaigns for implementation

**Government of Germany to help the Government of Pakistan fight climate change, resolve the energy issues, provide extended health facilities and combat polio in the country**

of Pakistan's National Polio Emergency Action Plan. The World Health Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are implementing partners.

Under the climate change/energy component, a grant of Euro 1.5 million is provided to Pakistan to implement Accompanying Services for the Harpo Hydropower Project in the Gilgit-Baltistan region. These accompanying measures are meant to be carried out at the project site in support of the main Harpo Hydropower Project to ensure the project sustainability. The Accompanying Services shall comprise assistance to strengthen the power utility i.e. the Gilgit-Baltistan Power Department as well as accompanying investments in the social infrastructure including relevant consulting measures.

Historically, Pakistan and Germany have enjoyed warm friendly relations since the establishment of our diplomatic ties in 1951. Earlier this year, the Government of Germany, through KfW signed agreements with the Government of Pakistan to provide Euro 27.00 million for Ghara Substation in the province of Sindh and Euro 6.00 million for the Regional Infrastructure Project

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## Satrang Gallery is delighted to exhibit “Silver Lining” by Rahim Baloch

Satrang Gallery is delighted to exhibit “Silver Lining” by Rahim Baloch. Rahim’s exceptionally detailed vivid blue miniature paintings reveal layers of intricate workmanship reflecting the multiple layers of meaning visible in his work. The artist uses specific natural motifs, repeated symbols and colors to portray contrasting human emotions of love and solitude, as well as bitter histories and intertwined narratives. Focusing on the human state of being, and man’s mind. Rahim’s artwork expresses sociopolitical messages for change, within his delicate, detailed artwork.





# Seminar on Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict & Military and Political Resolution



Addressing the seminar titled, "Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict- Military and Political Resolution" organised by Measac Research Centre (MRC), he said Karabakh was historically a region developed during eighteenth century where no Armenians lived before 19th century. He highlighted the historical background of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ali Alizade extended his gratitude to the government and Pakistani nation for its solidarity with people of Azerbaijan on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Director General MRC Mohammad Abdullah Hamid Gul in his welcome address said it was a proud moment to see a Muslim nation fighting back its lost glory. He said, "We are proud of the sacrifices made by Azerbaijani people, leadership and the armed forces in liberating Nagorno-Karabakh region."

Alizade also noted that global powers had never supported Azerbaijan rather endorsed Armenia's illegitimate claims and ambitions to protect Karabakh for Armenia. He said Armenia apart from Karabakh had occupied seven adjacent territories of Azerbaijan to strengthen its occupation. However, in the recent provocations Azerbaijan lost many lives of civilians during Armenia's blatant war crimes committed to repulse Azerbaijan's counteroffensive launched to restore its territorial sovereignty.







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