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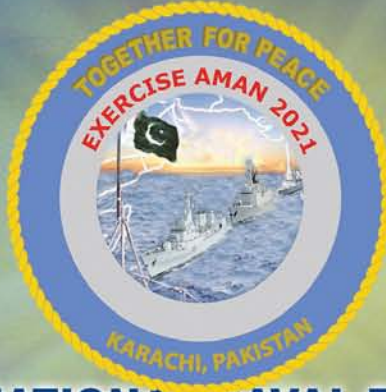
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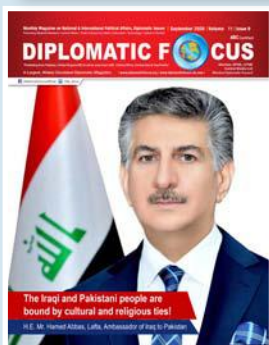
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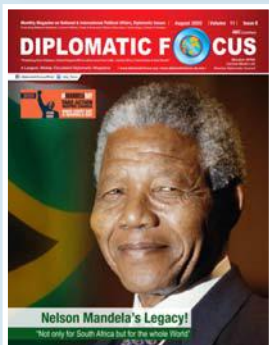
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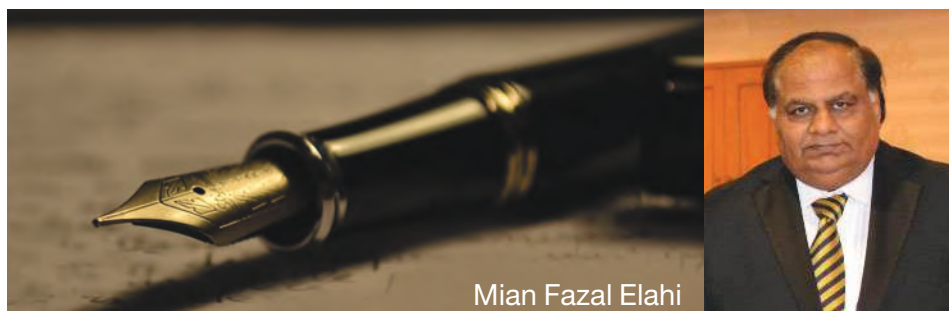
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Mian Fazal Elahi

Significant contributions made by Pakistan, Turkey and Azerbaijan for promotion of peace, stability and development in their respective regions and the mutual desire of their peoples to further advance these ideals for shared prosperity and security in the broader region.

In the Trilateral Meeting discussed about challenges and emerging threats confronting their countries including but not limited to threats of foreign sponsored acts of terrorism, cyber-attacks, hybrid forms of warfare, targeted disinformation campaigns, and escalating trends of Islamophobia affecting the peaceful co-existence of Muslim communities in many countries. In the Trilateral Meeting underlined the need to intensify cooperation for food and energy security, environment, sustainable development and climate change and called for greater international cooperation for timely response and achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Pakistan Navy holds the seventh Multinational Maritime Exercise 'Aman 2021' in which naval forces from 45 countries along with their assets and delegations being held under the theme of "Together for Peace."

The aim of organizing the Aman maritime exercise is to maintain peace and sustainability in the region and improve the retaliation capabilities.

Exercise AMAN is planned with focused objectives to project positive image of Pakistan as a country contributing towards regional peace/ stability and to consolidate PN's position in the regional maritime arena. Displaying of united resolve against terrorism and crimes in maritime and to develop coalition building and multi-layered security cooperation to promote a safe & sustainable maritime environment.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka are two important countries of the South Asian region that enjoy very cordial and friendly relations. They have also extended cooperation to each other in different sectors, and are keen on further strengthening their relation through frequent exchange of delegations at varying levels. Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi visited Sri Lanka. He met with Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and discussed deepening bilateral ties between the two countries. Pakistan has close relations with Sri Lanka and it hopes to widen the scope of cooperation between the two countries to include trade, investment, defense, tourism, and multi-industry capacity building.

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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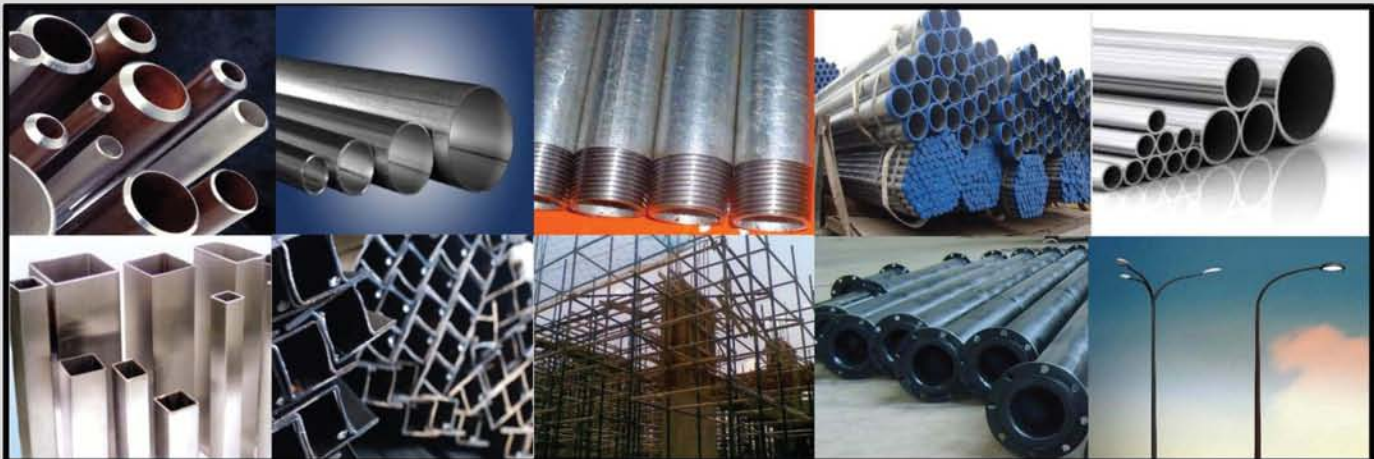
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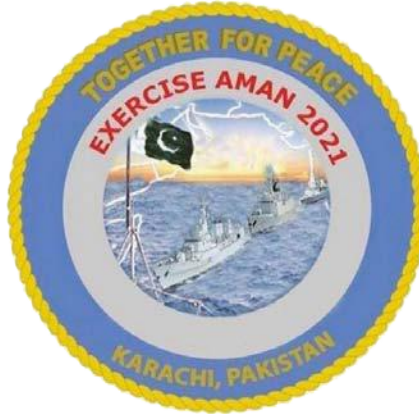


Exclusive Interview of

Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi
Chief of Naval Staff



CNS INTERVIEW FOR MULTINATIONAL EXERCISE AMAN-21



How you view the regional maritime environment? What are the key challenges Pakistan is facing in domestic and regional maritime domain?

Ans. In my assessment, global geo-political environment is ambiguous, volatile and is characterized by realignment of interests. Pakistan is in midst of a complex geo-political and geo-economic competition prevailing in the region. The Indo-US strategic partnership, simmering US-Iran stand-off, regional developments in Middle East and the ongoing peace process in Afghanistan presents challenges and opportunities; necessitating careful management of our relations with global as well as regional powers.

Pakistan enjoys a very unique geostrategic location; it faces Indian Ocean and is located close to Gulf of Oman, and Strait of Hormuz which host 30% of all sea borne trade. Pakistan's 90% trade is sea borne and most of our energy requirements are met through sea. Pakistan being a responsible state has always contributed towards Maritime Security in its area of responsibility and beyond.

The most dominant threat to regional security as well as to Pakistan emanates from India's state sponsored Hindutva mindset, continued brutalities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) and war mongering bellicose

approach. On our western seaboard, any strategic miscalculation may manifest into a precarious situation for shipping plying on international energy SLOCs. Moreover, the ongoing conflicts in Yemen and Syria are also impinging upon regional maritime security.

In non-traditional domain and in the wider region maritime terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking and human smuggling are main challenges being faced. Pakistan Navy is also committed towards internal security and aid to civil power duties. In

short, key challenges to our maritime security arise from traditional to non-traditional threats with an ominous mix of hybrid ones.

What are your comments on PN participation in multilateral Coalition Maritime Forces (CMF) and conduct of Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSP)?

Ans. Pakistan is a firm believer of preserving peace and stability in the maritime domain. PN is contributing significantly in maritime security and counter piracy efforts in the Indian Ocean





Region (IOR) nearly since last two decades. In order to fulfil our international obligation to ensure Maritime Security in the region, we joined Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150) in 2004. Similarly, to counter the increasing acts of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and Horn of Africa PN joined the Combined Task Force-151 (CTF-151) in 2009. PN officers have commanded both these Task Forces for 20 times. So far, PN has been the largest contributor to Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Operations second only to United States Navy.

While we continue to be part of CMF, commensurate with the changing geostrategic realities in the region, since 2018 PN has instituted Maritime Security initiative of "Regional Maritime Security Patrol" (RMSP) to fulfil international obligations for Maritime Security and protect own national interest in the IOR with strategic autonomy. Pakistan Navy Ships with embarked helicopters are undertaking Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSPs) along important maritime areas in Indian Ocean Region. The broad objectives of RMSP include contribution towards maintaining good order at sea. That means not only deterring and curbing the menace of piracy but also confronting maritime terrorism, narco-trade, arms and human smuggling and other illicit activities at sea. Another important aspect of RMSP is to enhance collaboration and interoperability with regional navies.

What are the major strands of Pakistan Navy force development and future procurement program?

Ans. Progressive capability development is an important pillar of my Vision for Pakistan Navy. We have contracted for construction of Destroyers and Corvettes with the support of friendly countries. As warships are the mainstay of any Navy, induction of more ships is in the offing. In addition, we have also contracted for acquisition of Hangor Class Submarines from China. We are also focussing on induction of modern air platforms. In addition, we are modernizing our existing Fleet of warships. In order to absorb new technologies and platforms, we are also focusing on capacity and capability enhancement of our Shipyard, workshops and

skilled manpower for which we are blessed with full support of our Government.

What steps Pakistan Navy has undertaken to enhance vigilance and to combat illicit activities like terrorism, drug trafficking etc in your area of responsibility?

Ans. In past, the coastline of Pakistan except at Karachi, Ormara and a few other places was not very well monitored and consequently nefarious elements were able to exploit the same for drug and human trafficking. In order to enhance vigilance and to respond to any emerging threat all along the coast, the establishment of Coastal Security and Harbour Defence Force (CS&HDF) is a giant leap forward to effectively plug exploitable gaps in our coastal monitoring mechanism. CS&HDF comprises number of Security Stations along the entire coast, which are equipped with Radar, Electro Optic Sensors, Automatic Identification Systems and response elements to provide gapless coverage along the coast.

Moreover, Task Force-88 has been established as a component of CS&HDF for security of maritime projects related to CPEC, Gwadar Port and its seaward approaches. This Task Force comprises Ships, Fast Attack Craft, Air Units, UAVs and Maritime Special Warfare Teams providing round the clock security.

We understand that maintenance of conducive maritime environment and security is key to our regional maritime growth. In this regard, PN has established a Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) in 2012. The Centre aims to maintain maritime picture in own area of interest by harnessing efforts of relevant national agencies and international stakeholders in order to contribute towards regional maritime security. The centre is growing and developing its linkages; till now has linked itself to 48 national and 7 international organizations for sharing of information related to maritime safety and security.

In addition, PN being cognizant of non-traditional threats prevailing in our region remains vigilant and ready to cooperate with international partners to curb this menace wherever required. I must mention here that

nearly, 7000 Kgs of Hashish and 2 tonnes of Cannabis resin have been confiscated by PN Ships as part of Combined Maritime Forces Security Operations.

What is PN vision behind conducting AMAN Exercise?

Ans. Pakistan is a peace-loving country and has always strived to maintain good relations with all regional and extra-

regional countries. In line with this national policy, Pakistan Navy has been playing its role by actively engaging with the navies of all littoral states in the Indian Ocean Region and beyond. In order to enhance collaboration, interoperability in maritime domain, PN took the initiative of organising multinational exercise AMAN in 2007. The 7th exercise of this series is being held in February 2021 in which more than 42 countries from across the globe are likely to participate. The enhanced number of Navies' participation reflects growing trust in the value of the Exercise and PN's credibility in bringing navies of the East and West under a common platform for good of the global commons.

AMAN exercise is a clear manifestation of Pakistan's commitment towards regional maritime peace and stability embodied in its motto 'Together for Peace'.

What is the importance and relevance of Exercise AMAN for other countries in the region and international partners?

Ans. The purpose of the multinational exercise AMAN is to engage our partners, promote cooperation and interoperability between the regional and extra regional navies operating in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).





To avail these opportunities, the participation of regional and extra regional navies has been steadily growing since its inception in 2007. All littoral states in the region, and international stakeholders, recognise that maritime environment in the wider region is facing number of challenges like terrorism, piracy, drugs smuggling, arms trafficking and natural calamities. The vastness of oceans, and easy availability of newer technologies has made maritime arena an attractive avenue for these illegal activities. Therefore, a consensus is growing that myriad maritime security challenges of the present era require collaborative approach at regional and international level. This can be achieved by enhancing cooperation, better understanding and interoperability amongst the navies. Exercise AMAN is therefore Pakistan's humble but focussed initiative in this direction and manifestation of PN commitment towards promoting peace and stability in the maritime region.

Besides AMAN, what initiatives are being taken by Pakistan in terms of defence diplomacy with the neighbouring countries and major naval forces?

Ans. Pakistan Navy through naval diplomacy is actively contributing to the nation's foreign policy objectives by showing Pakistan's flag in the countries far and wide; through Key Leadership Engagements; Navy to Navy Expert Level Talks; Overseas Deployments; and participation in bilateral/ multilateral international exercises on regular basis. Last year PN Ships undertook maiden overseas deployment around Africa in line with the

Government's 'Engage Africa Policy'. During the port visits apart from operational and collaborative activities with host navies, PN ships also established medical camps to help the local communities and to generate goodwill. As we speak, one PN Ship is on an overseas deployment cum humanitarian assistance mission to deliver aid to some African countries.

Additionally, Pakistan Navy is participating in all regional and international efforts and initiatives taken for maintaining good order and cooperation at high seas. In the same spirit,

we have been participating in multinational exercises, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) efforts and we have undertaken Non-Combatant Evacuation of stranded Pakistani and foreign nationals from conflict zones.

PN also routinely represents Pakistan's maritime perspective in international fora and is also a member of Indian Ocean Naval symposium (IONS) and an observer in the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS).



PAKISTAN NAVY INITIATIVE FOR PEACE IN THE



By Rashid Nazir Choudhary

Pakistan has always been an avid supporter of regional peace and stability. Pakistan's commitment to the principle of 'peaceful coexistence' and desire for greater regional harmony and cooperation is also reflected through Pakistan's armed forces participation in UN Peacekeeping missions, UN mandated Combined Maritime Task Forces 150 & 151, participation in regional and extra-regional joint bilateral and multilateral exercises. To demonstrate Pakistan's commitment to peace, contribute towards regional maritime security and enhance cooperation and interoperability between regional and extra regional navies, Pakistan Navy took an initiative of holding Multinational exercise AMAN in 2007, which is being conducted biennially. Till to date six exercises have been conducted and 7th exercise is planned in February 2021. Since then, this exercise has become a major International Naval event which is evident from growing number of participations. This is also reflective of Pakistan's growing positive image and success of Ex AMAN.

The main objective/ theme of AMAN series of multinational exercises are to promote regional cooperation and stability, greater interoperability and to display a united resolve against terrorism and crimes in maritime domain including piracy. The exercise concept is to develop Responses, Tactics, Techniques and procedures (RTTPs) against non-traditional threats through tactical warfare planning, followed by high-end warfare serials at sea such as Naval Gunfire, VBSS, Anti-piracy, Operations, Combine Anti-Submarine Exercise, Communications, Boarding and Air Defence.

Exercise AMAN is planned with focused objectives to project positive image of Pakistan as a country contributing towards regional peace/ stability and to consolidate PN's position in the regional maritime arena. Displaying of united resolve against terrorism and crimes in maritime and to develop coalition building and multi-layered security cooperation to promote a safe & sustainable maritime environment. Enhance tactical interoperability between regional and extra regional navies thereby acting as a bridge between the regions and to validate

tactical procedures to counter non-traditional threats in maritime domain. Overall, AMAN exercise is a intermingling of multinationals with depiction of their respective cultures.

A brief overview of yesteryears AMAN exercises include first exercise conducted in March 2007. During the exercise, 14 x naval ships from Bangladesh, China, France, Italy, Malaysia, UK and USA navies participated. Special Operations Teams (SOF)/ Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams from Bangladesh and Turkey also participated in Special operations associated to the exercise. Overall, 28 countries participated in the exercise with naval assets and 29 observers. The second exercise, AMAN-09 was held in March 2009. During this exercise, 14 warships, 02 aircraft and 9 SOF teams of Australia, Bangladesh, China, France, Japan, Malaysia, UK, Nigeria, Turkey and USA participated. Overall, 24 countries participated in the exercise with the naval platforms and 29 observers. In third Exercise AMAN-11 held in March 2011 28 countries participated with naval assets and observers. Total of 11 ships from Australia, China, France, Indonesia, Italy,

WORLD MULTINATIONAL EXERCISE AMAN 2021



Malaysia, Saudi Arab and USA participated. Three aircrafts from Australia and Japan and 03 SOF/ EOD/ Marines teams from China, Turkey and USA also participated during the exercise. Overall 28 countries participated in the exercise with the said assets and 43 observers.

The fourth Exercise AMAN-13 was held in March 2013. Navies of 29 countries participated in the said exercise with 12 ships, 02 aircraft, 06 SOF/ EOD teams and 36 observers. Fifth Exercise AMAN-17 conducted in North Arabian Sea from 10-14 Feb 2017. 12 ships from Australia, China, Indonesia, Russia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, UK and USA participated. In addition, SOF/ EOD/ Marines teams from China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Russia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and UK also participated in the exercise. A total of 34 countries including Pakistan participated in the exercise with the said assets and 67 observers. The 6th Exercise AMAN-19 conducted from 08-12 February 2019. 11 x Ships from Australia, China, Italy, Malaysia, Oman, Sri Lanka, Turkey, UK and USA participated. Whereas, Japan participated with 01 x Ships and 2 x P3Cs as Pre-AMAN participation. Moreover, 15 x SOF/EOD/





Marines teams from China, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Nigeria, Poland, Sri Lanka, Turkey, UK and USA also participated in the exercise. A total of 46 countries participated in the exercise with 113 observers.

The conduct of exercise AMAN is divided into Harbour and Sea Phases. Some of important events include Opening Ceremony on arrival of foreign warships. Wreath laying at martyrs monuments, Table Top Discussions on professional topics friendly sport matches, Maritime Counter Terrorism Demo by Special Services Group (N)/ Pak Marines. Various Calls and visits including inter-ship visits. International Band Display and International Cultural Display and Food Gala. Beside the other Activities, International Maritime Conference (IMC) under aegis of National Institute of Maritime Affairs, Bahria University. The highlight of the event includes presence of eminent speakers and delegates from across the globe. In the sea domain, an International Fleet Review (IFR) is scheduled toward the end of exercise. During IFR, various operational activities are conducted that include Replenishment at Sea, Counter Piracy Demo by PN MSW Team, Rocket Depth





Charge (RDC) firing, Surface Firing on Killer Tomato, Fly Past by Air Units (Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Airforce and Foreign participating Aircraft) and Man and Cheer Ship in honour of the Chief Guest. In addition to IFR, other sea activities including various exercises to practice response against maritime security threats in a multinational environment are also demonstrated. On land, Special Operation Forces (SOF), Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Marines teams participate in the exercise. The SOF/ EOD/ Marine personnel have the frontline role against the threat of maritime terrorism and other crimes. Therefore, a number of exercises to develop Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs) for combined action by multinational forces against asymmetric threats are also planned. Overall, AMAN series of exercise are a manifestation of trust and confidence of international community on Pakistan's efforts for ensuring peace & stability in the region and their desire to work/ operate with Pakistan and Pakistan Navy.







An Individual Drop or an Ocean: Exercise Aman upholds Maritime Cooperation



Sardar T. Shahid

The exquisite World Island is floating in the expanse of serene and resource-rich oceans. Sadly, today, both the landmass and oceans are in perpetual flux. The North or the South, the East or the West – the world is extensively self-sufficient in conflicts. The only dearth is of cooperation, of togetherness – for peace, and collective good. Nation-states of the twentieth century's international state system ought to pursue the charter of peace, security and cohesion unveiled upon formation of the United Nations on October 24, 1945. International and regional cooperation forums - political, economic, socio-cultural or military - are engines to propel the very aim. Naval Exercise Aman (an Urdu language word meaning Peace) conducted by Pakistan on biennial basis is one such step in the same direction, marching along with the world, with an objective to build transnational coalition and multi-layered security cooperation for a safe and sustainable maritime environment.

The maritime environment today is stormy, relatively perilous and uncertain. These are the oceans where the pull-and-push amongst different powers, both established and rising ones, is much more pronounced, as oceans continue to carry politico-military power from one shore to other. It seems strategic maritime theology of Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, a US

maritime strategist, is resurrecting in most of the rising nation-states. And, Mahanian philosophy is being asserted which emphasises, and rightly so, that none but the Navies have emerged to be the foremost protagonists for following vital missions:

- First, a nation-state asserts its politico-strategic influence overseas;
- Second, one projects its military power, as means of deterrence or compellance;
- Third, to defend maritime borders against any aggression, and support forces ashore as per overall military strategy of a country
- Fourth, it's a navy and other para-naval outfits such as coastguard organizations or maritime security agencies a state has its disposal to safeguard its maritime interests, wherever and whatsoever are identified in the national strategic designs;
- Fifth, to protect Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) including economic & trade interests, wherein energy need remains foremost of all as it sparks and sustains one's national socio-economic and industrial paraphernalia;
- Sixth, a state may employ a navy in undertaking benign operations such as Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HA&DR) Ops; and combating maritime law enforcement functions against non-traditional threats
- Seventh, a state essentially employs its navy to be one of the premier tools of nation's diplomacy.

All these functions of a navy ride on the turbulent maritime security environment, shaped by Traditional and Non-traditional threats. Such choppy security situation and challenges are almost alike in every region including Indian Ocean. Rather, Indian Ocean, the 3rd largest one after the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, has acquired much greater significance. Owing to its pivotal position bridging the Global East and the West, the Indian Ocean carries around 60% of maritime highways' burden plying through it. Energy fan-faring from the Middle East having 56% of oil and 36% of natural gas reserves of the World make this region in general, and Arabian sea in particular, central to global politics in the perspective of geo-economics. Perpetual geo-strategic bouts of the US with China and Iran, and competition for influence have resulted strategic cyclone in the region. In US Containment policy against China vis-à-vis China's growing maritime muscles and presence in the Ocean are adding to the bitter taste of the US and its allies in the Indian Ocean. Importantly, the US-Iran tussle on nuclear issues has its ripples in the Arabian Sea as well. The premeditated pampering of India in the hands of the US vis-à-vis the former's inflating naval (& other combat) acquisitions is causing military imbalances, rising interest of Japan and Australia in the Indian Ocean in the form of Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue famous (QUAD) have caused a massive military competition in the region. So, saying in few words, Great Powers' competition is back. And, the US has formally recognized this power competition and given much substance to this part of the oceans, even re-baptising the US Pacific Command as Indo-Pacific Command more recently in May 2018, beaming all its attention ranging from South China Sea to the Middle East.



What is the outcome? Great Powers' competition, tug-of-war for politico-strategic influence, extended militarization of the Indian Ocean and the blend of traditional and non-traditional threats causing cracks in maritime security of the region. Consequently, there exists a grave starvation of maritime cooperation and collaboration. All these ongoing developments and happenings in the Indian Ocean have implications for Pakistan. In Pakistan's national security perspective, its strong naval vigilance and collaborative maritime presence in the Indian Ocean is a strategic compulsion, not a choice. A stronger and compatible navy is a core national need, not an option.

Amongst the 38 states of the Indian Ocean, Pakistan remains one of the countries with its politico-strategic weight in the global affairs, and its geographical bearing. For defence of its maritime frontiers, accomplishment of foreign policy goals through naval diplomacy, ensuring forceful maritime security, Pakistan maintains a robust and potent navy in the Indian Ocean region. The Navy, following its national policy of 'peaceful co-existence' continues to advocate greater regional harmony and promote maritime cooperation for regional stability.

Against both traditional and non-traditional threats, Pakistan Navy has demonstrated its commitment for regional harmony and cooperation. Its participation in US-led Combined Maritime Task Forces 150 (Counter-terrorism) and 151 (Counter-piracy) are reflective of Pakistan's policy of collaborative and cooperative engagements for global and regional causes of promoting peace through ensuring security. Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSP), Task Force-88 for maritime security of the gateway of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and Pakistan Navy's active

participation in other regional and international bilateral and multilateral maritime ventures are all but for one purpose of maintaining collective good order at sea.

Amongst various cooperative initiatives in the region, Naval Exercise AMAN (peace) stands unique. It is a multi-national exercise maiden version of which was held in March 2007 with participation of 28 countries, their naval assets and/or observers. So far, six episodes of the Aman exercise have been conducted successfully; marking Pakistan's international engagement and commitment to regional stability and peace. It is an extraordinary international and naval accomplishment for Pakistan, that AMAN is the largest international naval exercise in the world, earlier being the Rim of the Pacific exercise (RIMPAC) conducted by the United States. The 6th AMAN exercise held in February 2019 witnessed participation of ships, aircraft and Special Forces of more than 45 countries and over 110 international observers.

Being optimistic, February 2021 would embrace the 7th AMAN exercise, amidst another non-traditional threat that continues to engulf the whole world – COVID, with Navy's resolve to stand together for peace. During the exercise, the participating navies share best operational practices and undertake diverse range of maritime security operations - ashore and aboard. Prominent amongst these are enhancing Responses, Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (RTTPS), Anti-piracy operations, Combine Anti-Submarine Exercise, Boarding and Air Defence. All these drills are conducted amongst the global navies to exchange best and novel practices in all maritime operations. Cohesion of the world navies on tactical level enhances interoperability and thus

connects the regions. As a result, coalitions are formulated for a multi-layered security cooperation to promote a safe and sustainable maritime environment.

In strategic and multilateral terms, AMAN aided in cementing the trust of the nation-states in the maritime security situation of the region and carved out politico-economic connectivity projects like CPEC and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Interestingly, the two contesting nations, the US and China, the established power and a rising one, participate in this singular exercise under the flag of Pakistan. Thus, Pakistan, through Exercise Aman, bridges international collaboration and provides a cooperative forum for the nations with divergent interests. Not only in the maritime domain, but the Exercise Aman also stands out to be a flag-bearer of effective military diplomacy of Pakistan.

In the words of Ryunosuke Satoro, a Japanese literary legend, "Individually, we are one drop, together we are an ocean." Since today's maritime security challenges are multi-faceted and they harm all the nations of the world alike, nation-states ought to shove off the temptation of being a drop, an illusionism of power. Rather, they all should march along and join hands to nip the maritime threats in the bud, collectively, to pledge and preserve maritime security, for collective good of the Indian Ocean region, and mankind. They should be 'Together for Peace' as Exercise AMAN heralds under the emblem of Pakistan Navy, and the flag of Pakistan.

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AMAN-21 - Fostering Shared Vision for Maritime Security in Indian Ocean



By Muhammad Azam Khan

Aman (peace), a major multinational exercise is a biennial event organised every two years since 2007. This notable effort is organised by Pakistan Navy (PN). It aims to augment inter-navy cooperation. Exercise Aman enhances interoperability potential between regional and other navies. The impressive assembly brings together navies from host of other nations, The cress manning ships from participating nations together with observers from other freely mingle with officers and men of Pakistan Navy. As a transnational platform, Exercise Aman helps to improve professional understanding between navies. The event also serves in raising the image of Pakistan amongst comity of nations. Such events promote Pakistan's cultural values. It provides good understanding of Pakistan to visiting nations. The exercise is a perfect example of maritime diplomacy. Exercise Aman is an enabler to enhance country's standing, promote professional competence of PN personnel and build synergy between participating navies.

Aman-21 is unique in several ways. With its slogan, "Together for Peace", the multinational

exercise comes at a time of some seismic changes taking place globally. These changes are having profound impact on Indian Ocean and its peripheries. For the first time, Russian navy will be participating in this year's naval drills. Other than Russia, Pakistan navy will host 30 countries in Aman-21. The current exercise will be seventh in Aman series. The endeavor is one of the several initiatives Pakistan Navy has relentlessly pursued for past two decades or so. These initiatives validate PN's unfaltering resolve to advance the cause of "freedom of seas" and raise prestige of Pakistan. In holding such exercises PN attempts to eliminate from Indian Ocean illicit activities in all their forms and manifestations. It has largely facilitated smooth and steady flow of commerce on its maritime highways. This is especially true for the western quadrant of Indian Ocean. The exercise also emphasizes developing combined potential for humanitarian assistance in the region.

Never since the end of cold war was the power struggle for global ascendancy been so intense in Indian Ocean as it is today. A new era of multi-polarity is emerging. Unlike the previous instance where Eurasian landmass was the principal battleground, it is the Indian and Pacific Oceans that are now focus of developing rivalry. The power politics is advanced in two oceans via maritime military power. The latest show of power came by way of two phased naval exercise jointly conducted by India, US, Australia and Japanese navies first, in Bay of Bengal and later in Arabian Sea. The exercise is seemingly founded on shared values and commitment to an open, inclusive Indo-Pacific and a rules-based international order. It is however anything but.

In reality, it is a patent show of combined naval strength aimed at "containing" China.

The US cold war policy of "containment" is back after all, the United States must invent "threats" every now and then to keep its own military industrial complex, support factories and research and development facilities humming with activities. Under Modi, India too must create Chinese hysteria it serves two purposes. The alarm keeps New Delhi strategic relevance to the United States alive and buoyant. It also distracts attention of domestic audience from an underperforming economy and shelters a government under blistering criticism in world capitals owing to cruelty and blatant HR violations unleashed against minorities in Kashmir and across mainland India.

The Indian Ocean is 'the world's busiest trade corridor'. Two thirds of global oil shipments and a third of bulk cargo transit via this Ocean, roughly 80 per cent of China's. Around 90 per cent of South Korea's and 90 per cent of Japan's oil passes through the Indian Ocean', Aman promotes a shared vision to reinforce maritime security in the Indian Ocean. The exercise is designed to ensure trade continues to ply unhindered in the Indian Ocean region and with safety and security it merits.

As a large naval assemblage, Aman has no political undertones. It does not aim to target any country except ensure peace and stability. It is focused at counteracting against unconventional challenges like piracy, trafficking, terrorism, natural disaster etc. In recent times, the intensity of transnational criminal activities and other crimes has significantly declined in the





maritime region of interest to Pakistan. Thanks in large part to Pakistan Navy; operations in the UNSCR instituted coalition(s), independent patrolling and exercises like Aman that largely contributed towards this decline. The menace nonetheless still lurks.

Exercise Aman begins with a marathon international conference bringing together renowned scholars and professional experts on contemporary maritime security issues this is followed by diverse panel of experts who engage in extensive discussions the conversation and dialogue in these forums examine disparate challenges and their impact on maritime security. The solutions proffered are optimistic and often helpful. The event is followed by combined maneuvers at sea. Large presence is augmented by observers embarked on board various participating units conducting series of previously agreed drills. It leads to developing synergy and better professional understanding of each other's modus operandi.

Last year saw the global landscape and lives of mankind alter as perhaps never before in known history. The year left a dark indelible imprint on minds of humanity More people died in the United States alone on daily basis than in 9/11 attacks. By third week of December 2020, the death toll in America had reached a staggering 315 K while worldwide deaths were recorded at 1.7 million. There were more than 146 K deaths in India up until third week of December last. A new format of human life has already begun on planet. And it continues to unravel.

Vaccine or no vaccine, the novel corona virus is here to stay More pandemics are likely to hit humanity in coming years Climate change, flawed development models and curse of unchecked capitalism will continue to bring more misery on earth, humanity is encroaching on the habitat of wild species. This brings those still uncovered maladies in contact with humans with devastating results Militaries are not immune to pandemics. Covid provided a taste of environment in which future warfare will likely take place. The combat potential and readiness of any force is directly proportional to the morale and physical well-being of its manpower The men who run and operate military machines too, are susceptible to such external influences.

Future military forces will be grappling with changing nature and character of warfare and impact of advance technologies like AI and drone swarming aerial attacks, they will have to prepare to combat pandemics in rank and file The problem aggravates in case of navies which require working in tight spaces and for extended durations. Automation may not necessarily lead to complete replacement of human beings, yet the story is not new. In 430 BC during the much studied Peloponnesian war. The ancient Greece was struck by a devastating



plague Fought between two powerful alliances of their time, Athens and Sparta. The former experienced a serious setback with outbreak of plague. Between one-third and two-third of the Athenian population, including a prominent general perished. The latter too had to abort its invasion of Athenian land (Attica) to avoid disease.

Indian Ocean is arguably the most contested and competitive ocean expanse in the world today. The great power competition in this century is being played out here Last decade saw an enormous upswing in strategic relationship between India and the US. Three key strategic pacts were inked by the two nations in just last 4 years Following LEMOA (2016) came, COMCASA in 2018 and the latest. a result of 2v2 talks is BECA. The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) will facilitate interoperability of forces and exchange of sensitive, classified information as well as unhindered access to classified data by each party. This information will be supplemented by US satellites. All this will aid in navigation and precise targeting of military assets. In essence, the military resources of adversaries in the region will now be jointly monitored by India and the US.

The navy to navy collaboration between India and the US has meanwhile expanded in all dimensions. The USN-IN joint exercises are the most significant part in military to military

relationship. It is obvious that all such combined moves are aimed against China and Pakistan. The ultimate targets of convergence of strategic interests are Pakistan and China indeed The definitive objective is to disallow China taking foothold in the Indian Ocean and thus preclude functioning of CPEC whose success resides in the port of Gwadar in Balochistan province. This would mean a lasting economic uncertainty for Pakistan and a strategic setback for China's BRI.

The recent dossier containing irrefutable evidence and list of subversive activities composed by RAW inside Pakistan is the ugly face of world's largest democracy. claiming to be fighting international terrorism. Nefarious designs of India by running high profile anti Pakistan international smear campaign was further exposed by European Union when it openly highlighted NGOs/agencies involved. The US and rest of the world will ignore such hideous machinations of Modi's India only at their own peril. Indian Ocean and South Asia are on a dangerous precipice. A small yet robust Pakistan navy continues to uphold "freedom of seas". It yearns for peace together. But this requires a shared collaborative effort. Multinational Maritime Exercise Aman is one small attempt in the direction.

The writer is a contributing columnist on maritime security matters.



AMAN 2021 – A CONTRIBUTOR TO MARITIME PEACE



(By Vice Admiral Asaf Humayun (Retd))

A bright sun shone on the decks of PNS NASR. It was 10th March, the third day of the sea phase of the multinational maritime exercise AMAN 2007. Since early morning, helicopters landed on her deck carrying VVIPs to witness the International Fleet Review. President of Pakistan was the Chief Guest. Governors of Balochistan and Sindh, the Chief Minister of Sindh and the Defence Minister were onboard. Ambassadors of several countries joined for the Review. Commander US Fifth Fleet arrived in a USN helicopter. The occasion wore a festive look and marked

the culmination of AMAN 2007, the first of AMAN series of multinational maritime exercises. Two US aircraft carriers USS Dwight D Eisenhower and John C Stennis closed PNS NASR. The Fleet Review started with a flypast by PN, PAF and US Navy aircraft and concluded with the traditional naval salute of Man and Cheer Ship from the 14 ships of Bangladesh, China, France, Italy, Malaysia, UK and USA led by units of PN Fleet. It was a treat to watch the smartly turned-out men in white lined on the decks of the passing ships cheering the President.

Pakistan Navy has been participating in the United Nations-mandated coalition efforts to keep the Indian Ocean peaceful and free from any unlawful activities. The influence and collaboration built up after an endeavour of 3 years (2004-2007) led to these nations joining the Pakistani sponsored international maritime exercise. Pakistan and Pakistan Navy were rightfully proud of their accomplishment on that day. Pakistan Navy initiated AMAN 2007, without any forethought of making it a regular event. The impressive success and appreciation of this maiden effort convinced Pakistan that the

exercise should become a regular biennial event. Since 2007, six AMAN exercises have been organized with wholesome participation of the regional and international navies.

AMAN is a multidimensional exercise. It comprises of harbour, sea, underwater, aerial and special ops activities. It has participants from all over the world. So far, 18 countries have participated in the six editions of AMAN exercise with ships, aircraft and special operation forces. Many other countries send their observers to witness these exercises. Navies from far off countries such as China, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States come together for these multinational exercises. Forty-six countries participated in AMAN-2019. A similar number is likely to join AMAN-2021.

Organizing these exercises requires tremendous effort in logistics planning, operational finesse and organizational skill. However, it is not only work but some fun as well. AMAN exercises also bring the participants closer culturally through an international food festival and traditional music show. For all the participants these





events turn out to be a memorable part of this maritime exercise. AMAN-2021 in the shadows of COVID-19 will test the acumen of Pakistan Navy and its international partners in these trying environments. The objectives enshrined in the AMAN series of exercises have to be fulfilled even in the time of a pandemic. As an example, PNS Nasr sailed for a humanitarian aid and disaster relief (HADR) mission to the Red Sea African Coast in January 2021.

AMAN exercises have no political agenda or favour any country. Their focus is to develop friendly relationships and cooperation among the participating countries. The focus of the exercise remains to show-case interoperability, camaraderie among naval crews and removing barriers. It features navies and coast guards large and small. We all operate in the same medium; a global common. The large navies come to offer help to smaller nations. The smaller nations participate in the faith that they will earn the respect and collaboration as equal partners. They come together for mutual understanding and vouch to aid each other against non-traditional threats of terrorism, piracy, armed robbery, narco-trade, arms smuggling, human trafficking, illegal fishing and other illicit activities in our neighbouring maritime area.

The Indian Ocean Region is home to 35.4% of the World's population. The GDP of the Indian Ocean Littorals is a minuscule 10% of the World GDP. If you take out the rich nations of the Middle East, the prevalence of poverty in the region is easy to discern. The Indian Ocean is encircled by 29 littoral

states and 6 island nations. It is the main artery of the world oceanic trade. About 80% of the World's oil trade passes through the Indian Ocean. Its shores are home to 23 of the World's top 100 container ports. So, the sea lanes in the Indian Ocean are vital for dry, liquid and gaseous cargoes and their worldwide supply-chain. Peace, stability and security of the Indian Ocean is of paramount importance for the World economy and the livelihood of the poor masses living in the Indian Ocean littorals. The Indian Ocean has not seen conflict between two nation-states

in more than 30 years. However, its security has been threatened by piracy and drug-trafficking. Somali Piracy was controlled by a rainbow coalition of maritime forces from around the world. This cooperative effort was unprecedented and historical. Nations far from the Horn of Africa such as Chile and South Korea participated to curb this menace. Drug-trafficking has seen a rise in the Indian Ocean. The international nature of the high seas makes the oceans particularly vulnerable to the illicit drug trade and other crimes. Countering them is not possible for any nation alone.

Multinational maritime exercises such as AMAN aim to meet non-traditional security threats jointly. They improve the interoperability and tactical proficiency between the coalition nations and enhance effectiveness in supporting maritime security objectives. The word AMAN is synonymous with maintaining peace and order. Pakistan Navy has been in the forefront of maintaining security as part of coalition forces CTF 150 and 151 and patrolling even singly far reaches of the Indian Ocean. AMAN 2021 manifests Pakistan Navy's desire in maintaining peace, stability and security in the Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean. It will show the world our collective resolve to maintain 'AMAN' in our maritime domain. So true for the gathering of the mariners, in the words of Shakespeare, "Our navy is addressed, our power collected."

The writer is an Honorary Fellow at National Institute of Maritime Affairs.



New Envoys presented their credentials to President Dr. Arif Alvi



By Mian Fazal Elahi

President Dr. Arif Alvi has called for increased trade, investment, defence and cultural cooperation with all friendly countries. He said that Pakistan was home to some of the world's most revered Buddhist sites and expressed the hope that tourists from friendly countries would increasingly visit Pakistan.

He made these remarks while talking to the Residents Ambassadors-designates of Korea, Nepal, Belarus and Non-Residents Ambassadors-designates of Ireland, Kosovo, Mali and Sierra Leone, who made separate calls on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Earlier, the Resident Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Korea, Mr Suh Sangpyo, the Resident Ambassador-designate of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, Mr Tapas

Adhikari, the Resident Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Belarus, Mr Andrei Metelitsa, and Non-Resident Ambassador designate of the Republic of Ireland, Ms Sonya McGuinness, the Non-Resident Ambassador designate of the Republic of Kosovo, Mr Ilir Dugolli, the Non-Resident Ambassador designate of the Republic of Mali, Mr. Dianguinadit Yaya Doucoure and the Non-Resident Ambassador designate of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Mr Alie Badara Kamara presented their credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi at a ceremony.

The President congratulated the newly appointed Ambassadors and expressed the hope that they would play their role in promoting commercial and cultural relations with Pakistan.

While talking to the envoys separately, President Dr Arif Alvi said that Pakistan's ranking in the Ease of Doing Business Index had improved

tremendously and foreign investors needed to take advantage of investment friendly environment of the country. He added that Pakistan wanted to strengthen bilateral ties with friendly countries in all dimensions.

He said that Pakistan was taking all possible measure to promote relations with countries in African region under its "Engage Africa" policy and was willing to offer experience and expertise as well as technical assistance to African countries in all areas of mutual interest.

He also briefed the envoys about the atrocities and gross Human Rights violations being committed by India against the innocent people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

He urged the international community to play its rightful role to stop India from committing such blatant violations of International Law.



Pakistan attaches great importance to its ties with Jordan

By Mian Fazal Elahi

President Dr. Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan attaches great importance to its ties with Jordan and wants to maintain mutually beneficial cooperation with the brotherly country in all fields of mutual interests. He said that both countries enjoyed excellent relations which were based on common faith, cultural affinities and shared perceptions of regional and international issues. He stated this during a meeting with the visiting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of Jordan Armed Forces, Major General Yousef Ahmad Al-Hnaity, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The President expressed satisfaction over the cordial relations and emphasized the need to further strengthen the defence and economic cooperation between the two brotherly countries. He also highlighted the sufferings of Muslims of India, particularly the atrocities being committed by Indian security forces against the Muslims population of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). The President said that the continued restrictions against the Muslim population of IIOJK by India were hampering dissemination of information, supply of medicines and other essentials. He emphasized the need for a united call by the International community to force India to lift the restrictions against Muslim population of IIOJK. He commended the Kingdom's efforts to ensure peace and stability in the Middle East region. Earlier, the President conferred 'Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military)' on Major General Yousef Ahmad Al-Hnaity, in recognition of his illustrious services for promoting defence cooperation between the Armed Forces of the two countries, at a Special Investiture Ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The ceremony was attended by senior military and civil officials of the Government of Pakistan.



Beigum Samina Arif Alvi meeting with Mrs. Noufah Awad Ibrahim Al Badawi Spouse of Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Jordan Armed Forces at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

Pakistan and Turkey have agreed to further solidify and expand bilateral cooperation in all fields

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Pakistan and Turkey have agreed to further solidify and expand bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade and culture. It was agreed at a meeting between President Dr Arif Alvi and the visiting Turkish delegation, led by Turkish Foreign Minister, Mr Mevlut Cavusoglu, which called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Welcoming the delegation, the President said that Pakistan and Turkey enjoyed excellent relations and both countries needed to further enhance economic and cultural relations for the mutual benefit of the two countries. He informed that Pakistan's ranking of Ease of Doing Business had tremendously improved and Turkish investors needed to capitalize on investment opportunities in Pakistan. He expressed satisfaction over Turkish investment in Pakistan which had grown over USD 1 Billion. The President deeply thanked the Turkish leadership for its principled stance on Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He asked the Foreign Minister to convey his gratitude to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for raising the voice of Kashmiris during his recent speech at UN General Assembly. He also appreciated Turkey's leading role in the global efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic by providing assistance and support to Pakistan and other countries. The Turkish Foreign Minister said that Turkey was keen to improve trade relations with Pakistan. He added that Turkey would continue encouraging Turkish companies to invest in Pakistan. Mr Mevlut Cavusoglu assured that his country would continue to support Pakistan at international fora. He appreciated Pakistan's support to Azerbaijan on Nagorno Karabakh. Both sides underlined the need to work closely on joint initiatives to combat Islamophobia, hate speech and other manifestations of intolerance towards Islam. Later, the President conferred the award of Hilal-e-Pakistan on Turkish Foreign Minister, at a special investiture ceremony, in recognition of his services for the promotion of international peace and security as well as Pak-Turkey relations. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. During the meeting, Pakistan-Turkey bilateral relations and regional and international issues were discussed.

Reaffirming the exceptional nature of Pakistan-Turkey political relationship, the Prime Minister stressed the importance of transforming it into a robust economic partnership. The shared resolve on both sides to further upgrade trade, investment, defence, educational and cultural cooperation was reaffirmed.

The Prime Minister thanked Turkey for its steadfast support on the Jammu & Kashmir dispute and highlighted the detrimental Indian actions posing a threat to peace and security.

In the regional context, the Prime Minister underscored the importance Pakistan



attached to a peaceful solution of the conflict in Afghanistan. In this regard, he highlighted Pakistan's positive contribution to the Afghan peace process and the imperative for all Afghan stakeholders to work for bringing down violence leading to ceasefire and securing an inclusive and broad-based political settlement.

The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of working to combat Islamophobia and promote better understanding of the reverence Muslims have for the Holy Prophet (PBUH). It was agreed to maintain high-level exchanges and further build Pakistan-Turkey strategic relationship to the mutual benefit of the two countries and peoples.

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi received Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu at the Foreign Office. The two Foreign Ministers held extensive exchange of views on bilateral, regional and global issues.

On the bilateral plane, the two Foreign Ministers noted with gratification the positive momentum in brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkey marked by exceptional mutual trust and deepening cooperation in diverse fields. The resolve to ensure timely implementation of decisions, taken during the last session of High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) in Islamabad in February 2020, was reaffirmed. Foreign Minister Qureshi underscored the importance of building a stronger economic partnership, including by realizing the vision in

the Strategic Economic Framework (SEF).

Thanking Turkey's firm support to Pakistan on core issue of Jammu & Kashmir, Foreign Minister Qureshi briefed his Turkish counterpart on the grave human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) and underscored the importance of peaceful solution of the Jammu & Kashmir dispute in accordance with relevant UN resolutions.

The Foreign Minister highlighted Pakistan's positive contributions to the Afghan peace process and facilitative role in advancing the cause of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The Foreign Minister expressed satisfaction at the ongoing cooperation between the two countries at the multilateral forums including at the UN, OIC and ECO. The determination to continue extending strong mutual support to each other on all issues of core interest was reiterated. Expressing concern on the growing phenomenon of Islamophobia, it was agreed to increase collaboration to reflect the true values of Islam and enhance interfaith harmony globally.

An MoU relating to cooperation in the education field (working of Turkish MAARIF Foundation) was signed following the conclusion of delegation-level talks. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Pakistan's Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mahmood signed the MoU.

Naval Chief meets President Dr. Arif Alvi



News Agency

The Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi called on President Dr Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

While talking to the naval chief, the president

said that Pakistan Navy played vital role in defending the maritime frontiers as well as securing the economic interest of the country by providing security to Gwadar Port and CPEC sea routes.

He expressed the hope that Pakistan Navy, under the leadership of Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi, would successfully overcome the maritime challenges being confronted the country.



H. E. Dr. Aman Rashid Ambassador designated of Pakistan to Mexico

News Agency

President Dr Arif Alvi has asked Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Mexico to make concerted efforts for promotion of relations with Mexico in diverse fields including trade, investment, culture, tourism and education. He stated this while talking to the Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Mexico, Dr Aman Rashid, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The President said that Pakistan attached

great importance to its relations with Mexico and wanted to further expand cooperation in various areas of mutual interest. He highlighted that the government was focusing on increasing trade and investment with all countries and stressed the need to increase bilateral trade volume with Mexico. He also underscored the need to initiate high-level visits between the two countries which would further enhance bilateral relations. He asked the ambassador

to work for the image-building of the country as well as expose the atrocities and human rights violations being committed by India in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The President congratulated Dr Aman Rashid on his assignment as Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to the United Mexican States and expressed the hope that he would work to further cement bilateral ties between the two countries.



Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov visited Pakistan

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The President of Pakistan President Dr. Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan highly values its relations with Azerbaijan which are based on common faith, historic and cultural linkages. He underlined the need to expand the bilateral volume of trade and further promote cultural and commercial cooperation between the two brotherly countries. He gave these remarks while talking to the Foreign Minister, Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov Jeyhun Bayramov, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today.

The President congratulated the Government and people of Azerbaijan over the liberation of Nagorno-Karabakh and reaffirmed Pakistan's support for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. He appreciated Azerbaijan's role as a member of the OIC Contact Group on Kashmir and thanked Azerbaijan for its support to the cause of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The President expressed the hope that the successful conclusion of the 2nd meeting of Pakistan-Azerbaijan-Turkey Trilateral Dialogue, at Islamabad, would give impetus to growing trilateral ties and open new avenues of cooperation among the three brotherly countries.

The Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Mr Jeyhun Bayramov, said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan had great potential for increasing trade and cultural cooperation. He thanked the Government of Pakistan for supporting Azerbaijan's stance on Nagorno-Karabakh. He stated that his country would continue to stand by Pakistan on Kashmir issue at all international fora.

President Dr Arif Alvi also lauded the role of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation for the welfare of persons with disability by providing them 100 wheelchairs. He remarked that Heydar Aliyev Foundation, under the patronage of the First Lady of Azerbaijan, was performing commendable humanitarian services in Pakistan.

During the meeting, views were exchanged on matters relating to bilateral relations and regional and international issues.



The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the excellent quality of bilateral political relations and emphasized the importance of enhancing bilateral trade and energy cooperation.

The Prime Minister extended sincere felicitations on Azerbaijan's recent success in liberation of its occupied territories. On Azerbaijan's call for support in reconstruction and development of liberated territories, the Prime Minister assured of all possible assistance from Pakistan.

Foreign Minister Bayramov conveyed cordial greetings of President Ilhan Aliyev to Prime Minister Imran Khan.

He also expressed gratitude for Pakistan's support on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and reaffirmed Azerbaijan's consistent support and solidarity on the Jammu & Kashmir dispute.

The Azerbaijan Foreign Minister also affirmed Azerbaijan's desire to upgrade bilateral cooperation in all fields.

On the invitation of Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov, will be visited Islamabad on 13-14 January 2021. This will be the first bilateral visit from Azerbaijan at

Foreign Minister level, since 2010.

The two Foreign Ministers will hold delegation-level talks and review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations. At the start of the new year, the visit will provide an opportunity to explore ways and means to deepen bilateral cooperation in diverse fields.

Apart from reaffirming the excellent political relations, the two Foreign Ministers will discuss possibilities for enhanced collaboration in the fields of oil and gas, agriculture, railways and education.

Azerbaijan is a key country of the South Caucasus region and Pakistan's long-standing friend and partner. The two countries are bound by an exemplary relationship anchored on common historic, religious and cultural links.

Both countries have been closely collaborating on issues of mutual interest at regional and international fora. Azerbaijan in its capacity as the member of OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir has been steadfastly supporting the just and legitimate cause of the Kashmiri people. During his visit, Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov will also call on the President and the Prime Minister and meet with other dignitaries.





Leader Hezb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami, Afghanistan Ustad Karim Khalili visited Pakistan

By News Agency

Ustad Karim Khalili, Leader of the Hezb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami Afghanistan, called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. The exchange of views covered progress in the Afghan peace process and bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Prime Minister conveyed Pakistan's commitment to strengthen the bilateral relationship with Afghanistan, including trade and economic ties and people-to-people linkages. The Prime Minister underscored his longstanding position that there was no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and that a negotiated political settlement was the only way forward. Noting that the Afghan people had suffered gravely due to prolonged conflict in the country, the Prime Minister stressed that after the Afghan people, Pakistan was most desirous of peace and stability in Afghanistan. Reiterating Pakistan's consistent support to the Afghan peace process, the Prime Minister underscored that the Intra-Afghan Negotiations process must be pursued with perseverance and patience for an inclusive and broad-based solution. The Prime Minister recalled his recent interaction with Afghan leaders and underlined that Pakistan's message to all sides was to work together for a peaceful solution. The Prime Minister particularly underscored the importance of reduction of violence leading to ceasefire. The Prime Minister added that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan will open up new vistas of cooperation in trade and regional connectivity. He also assured the Afghan delegation of Pakistan's continued support for human resource development through scholarships and socio-economic development projects in Afghanistan.

Ustad Karim Khalili Leader Hezb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami, Afghanistan calls on Foreign Minister Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi received Ustad Mohammad Karim



Khalili, Leader of the Hezb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami, Afghanistan, and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, views were exchanged on Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and progress in the Afghan peace process. The Foreign Minister reiterated Pakistan's consistent support for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan. He underscored that after the Afghans, Pakistan was the country most desirous of peace in Afghanistan. The Foreign Minister underlined that the people of Pakistan and Afghanistan were linked through immutable bonds of history, faith, culture and traditions.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Afghanistan in all fields. The Foreign Minister highlighted the various steps taken by Pakistan to strengthen bilateral and transit trade and introduction of revised visa policy to facilitate Afghan nationals. Foreign Minister Qureshi said Pakistan had always emphasized that there was no military solution of the Afghan conflict and that a negotiated political settlement was the only way forward. He stressed the importance of an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political solution through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. Highlighting Pakistan's positive contribution

to the various milestones achieved so far, the Foreign Minister reaffirmed that Pakistan will continue to facilitate the Afghan peace process. He stressed that the Afghan leadership should seize this historic opportunity to establish lasting peace in Afghanistan through the Intra-Afghan Negotiations. The Foreign Minister reiterated Pakistan's call on all sides to take measures for reduction in violence leading to ceasefire. He also cautioned against the role of 'spoilers' within and outside Afghanistan, who did not wish to see return of peace in Afghanistan and the region. Foreign Minister Qureshi further expressed the hope that the return of peace and stability in Afghanistan would provide a strong impetus to economic development, regional integration, and connectivity, benefitting Afghanistan and the region. Foreign Minister Qureshi also emphasized Pakistan's commitment to safe and dignified return of Afghan refugees to their homeland. Ustad Karim Khalili thanked for Pakistan's consistent support to Afghanistan, particularly in the peace process and for hosting millions of Afghan refugees for the last many decades. He appreciated the various steps taken by Pakistan to strengthen trade between the two countries and facilitate Afghan nationals through revised visa policy.



Pakistan attached utmost importance to its ties with Cuba

News Agency

President Dr Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan attached utmost importance to its ties with Cuba and wants to further enhance bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade, economy, health and culture for the mutual benefit of the two countries. He said that Pakistan deeply appreciated the Cuban assistance in the wake of 2005 earthquake

by sending medical teams and providing scholarships to Pakistani medical students. The President gave these remarks while talking to the outgoing Cuban Ambassador, Mr. Gabriel Tiel Capote, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. While underlining the need to boost bilateral trade cooperation, the President said that both countries needed to identify and explore areas where the two countries can expand trade and investment cooperation.

He also stressed the need for cultural and parliamentary exchanges between the two countries. The President expressed the hope that the outgoing Ambassador would continue to work to promote relations between Pakistan and Cuba. He congratulated the envoy on successful completion of his tenure in Pakistan and expressed best wishes for his future endeavours.



Japan places significance on its relations with Pakistan

H.E. MATSUDA Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, held a meeting with Foreign Minister H.E. Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

Ambassador MATSUDA stated that Japan places significance on its relations with Pakistan which has the importance as a gateway to the region, and expressed his satisfaction that the two countries have build a cordial friendship for a long time. Japan is further promoting

the relationship with Pakistan in various areas, the Ambassador added. He commended the significant efforts made by the Government of Pakistan to facilitate the Afghan peace process.

In response, Foreign Minister Qureshi expressed his appreciation to the historical friendship from the Japanese government and the people of Japan, including various assistance from Japan. He stated that Pakistan would like to continue working closely with Japan through

implementing economic cooperation and expanding trade and investment.

Both sides agreed to vitalize dialogues on various levels and in broad areas such as political, security and economic issues throughout 2021.

Furthermore, they also agreed to closely coordinate and cooperate to prepare for the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relationship in 2022.



Excerpts from the Independence Day speech of His Excellency Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the President of Sri Lanka

“I am the leader that you searched for. I will discharge the responsibility you have entrusted to me, with commitment and dedication”,

“Throughout history, strong civilizations were built and nations developed by those who worked on targets by looking positively towards the future. At this juncture, our nations’ development requires precisely that kind of vision”,

His Excellency Gotabaya Rajapaksa,

the President of Sri Lanka made these remarks addressing the nation at the 73rd Independence Day celebrations held at the Independence Square today 4th February 2021.

The policy of not selling national economic hubs to foreigners remains unchanged, President added.

Measures will be taken to change the out dated laws and regulations

that affect the general public as well as the domestic and foreign companies said the President adding that majority of the people who supported him at the Presidential election did so to fulfil common needs.

“I am always prepared to fulfil the genuine expectations of the public that supported me with honest intent”.



Independence Day Message

It is with immense pride that we celebrate our 73rd Independence Day today. It is an opportunity to remind ourselves of the unfaltering spirit and commitment of our people in the fight for freedom. Sri Lankans have stood the test of time, fighting many a battle, gallantly, in the long struggle to gain political, religious and cultural independence. Today, we are at a point in our journey where we must work collectively to ensure that the freedom we won, not once but twice, is a meaningful one for all Sri Lankans. Despite the many challenges we faced as a nation last year, we have embarked on a journey and adopted policies that focus on the growth of the economy by giving preference to locally produced items. The 'Vistas of Prosperity' Manifesto has carefully studied and identified areas

in each sector that need reform, to better serve Sri Lankans, not limiting, 'working towards a better tomorrow to achieve a prosperous Sri Lanka', to mere words, but a reality that is tangible and meaningful to all. History tells the story of a nation and its people who have always stood resolute in battles against any local, foreign and terrorist outfits that threatened the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka. Our people's dedication and patriotism to protect our beautiful motherland reflect how we, as a nation, have stood against numerous challenges and continue to do so in these trying times. The biggest challenge the world faces today is the COVID-19 global pandemic. As we work collectively towards our shared quest to overcome these perilous times, I believe that the unfaltering Sri Lankan spirit will unite and stand strong in defeating this pandemic and emerge victorious. In celebrating our Independence, we remember all those who have paid with life and limb to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our nation, time and time again. We also take a moment today, to remember those men and women who are the frontline soldiers battling this current pandemic we are facing, giving selflessly of their skills and time to protect Sri Lanka and her people. I express my heartfelt gratitude to all Sri Lankans for their contribution towards the success of our motherland. Happy 73rd Independence Day.

Message of Prime Minister
Honourable
Mahindra Rajapaksa



Message of Minister Foreign Relations Hon Dinesh Gunawardena

Let us be committed to overcome challenges

It is a pleasure for me to be able to congratulate all in Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankans around the world, on the occasion of the 73rd anniversary of gaining independence to Sri Lanka.

We celebrate with pride, the activities of our past national heroes and war heroes for the freedom, independence and sovereignty of the country, as a great and proud nation in the world and as a nation against the social, economic and political oppression due to colonization of the country for four hundred and fifty years by the Western foreign invasions. We recall with reverence, their commitment and determination to liberate our motherland, by working unitedly as Sri Lankans without any discrimination, in liberating Sri Lanka from the Portuguese, Dutch and English. Today marks the 73rd anniversary of the independence

gained on 04th February 1948, which we commemorate with great pride.

The independence we gained on 04th February 1948 and the declaration of Sri Lanka as a Republic on 22nd May 1972 have enabled us to be completely free from the British rule.

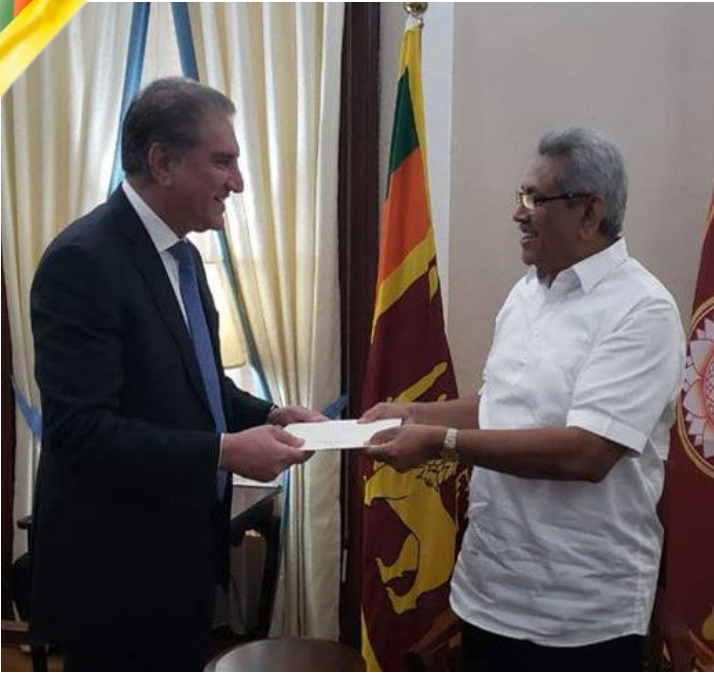
Let us also remember that today, we all pledge to make Sri Lanka's President His Excellency Gotabaya Rajapaksa's vision, 'Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour' a reality and to build a free, independent, sovereign and prosperous Sri Lanka, after seventy-three years of overcoming various challenges.

We must also keep in mind, the challenges that have arisen nationally and internationally against the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of this country. We are determined to make Sri Lanka a prosperous

country, maintaining friendly relations with the nations of the world, after defeating 30 years of separatist and brutal terrorism. Meanwhile, we and the whole world are facing an unpredicted global pandemic today. We can overcome the COVID-19 pandemic that is plaguing the world as well. It is the responsibility of all of us to support the Government's programme to defeat this pandemic, which is based on the world's advanced technology and the local traditional experience.

With the independence we have gained, we will continue to advance as an independent, sovereign, democratic and unitary state, maintaining Sri Lanka's dignity, pride and identity while maintaining friendly cooperation with all states, prioritizing the neutral and non-aligned foreign policy.

HIGH LEVEL VISITS





High Commission of Sri Lanka Celebrated 73th Independence Day of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

73rd Independence Day of Sri Lanka was celebrated at the Sri Lanka High Commission in Islamabad with the participation of religious leaders, Sri Lankan community and students living in Islamabad. National Flag was hoisted by HE the High Commissioner Vice Admiral Mohan Wijewickrama followed by national anthem.



Activities involving the High Commission





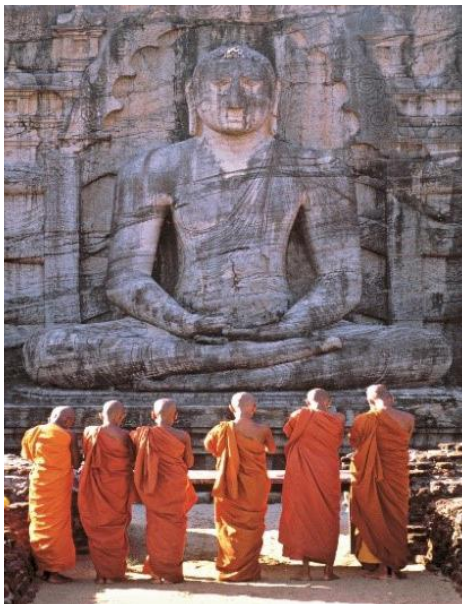
SRI LANKA – TREASURE OF HERITAGE

Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon, island country lying in the Indian Ocean and separated from peninsular India by the Palk Strait. It is located between latitudes 5°55' and 9°51' N and longitudes 79°41' and 81°53' E and has a maximum length of 268 miles (432 km) and a maximum width of 139 miles (224 km). Proximity to the Indian subcontinent has facilitated close cultural interaction between Sri Lanka and India from ancient times. At

a crossroads of maritime routes traversing the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka has also been exposed to cultural influences from other Asian civilizations. Ancient Greek geographers called it Taprobane. Arabs referred to it as Serendib. Later European mapmakers called it Ceylon, a name still used occasionally for trade purposes.

The distinctive civilization of Sri Lanka, with roots that can be traced back to the 6th

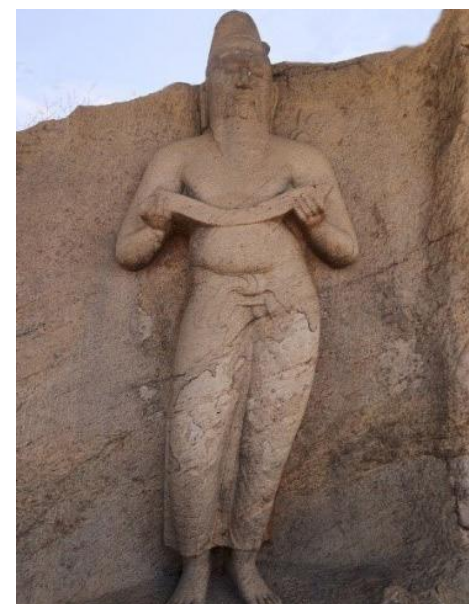
century BCE, is characterized by two factors: the preservation of Theravada Buddhism (the orthodox school of Buddhism having its literary traditions in the Pali language) and the development over two millennia of a sophisticated system of irrigation in the drier parts of the country. This civilization was further enriched by the influences of Hinduism and Islam.



In 1948, after nearly 150 years of British rule, Sri Lanka became an independent country, and it was admitted to the United Nations seven years later. The country is a member of the Commonwealth and the South Asian



Association for Regional Cooperation. Colombo which emerged as the main urban centre during British rule, remains the executive and judicial capital of Sri Lanka; Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte, a Colombo suburb, is the legislative capital. For



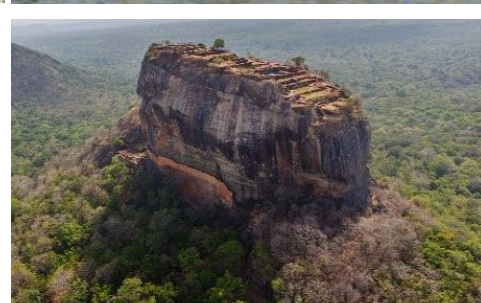
administrative purposes, the country has been divided into nine provinces and subdivided into 25 districts.



Few places in the world can offer the traveller such a remarkable combination of stunning landscapes, pristine beaches, captivating cultural heritage and unique experiences within such a compact location. Within a mere area of 65,610 Sq/kilometres lie 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 1,330 kilometres of coastline - much of it pristine beach - 15 national parks showcasing an abundance of wildlife, nearly 500,000 acres of lush tea estates, 250 acres of



botanical gardens, 350 waterfalls, 25,000 water bodies, to a culture that extends back to over 2,500 years. One of the top 5 tea producing countries in the world, Sri Lanka satisfies over 11% of the global demand for tea and is one of the largest exporters of handpicked orthodox tea to the global market. Despite Sri Lanka's adoption of other varieties of Ceylon Black Tea continues to be country's speciality.





Widely considered one of the best surfing destinations in Asia, if not the world, life in Arugam Bay is built around the exhilarating sport. During the surfing season – from May to September – streets swell with the cheerful, eager surfing crowd. Grand pageant in Asia.

Once a year, in July or August, the Esala Perahara journeys city streets in a wave of colour, beckoning devotees in their thousands from island wide as well as visitors, to witness a procession like no other. Esala Perahera in Kandy is the grandest of the country's traditional festivals. It is organized by the Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Tooth Relic) in honour of the Sacred Tooth Relic and the gods Natha, Vishnu, Kataragama and the goddess Pattini.

The Dalada Perahara as it was originally called commemorates the time when Buddha's sacred tooth relic was first brought to Sri Lanka from India, and allows devotees to venerate the

Tooth Relic as it is carried through the streets in a casket on the back of a magnificent tusker elephant.

Missing a safari trip through the wilderness of the Yala National Park would be a regret for any wildlife lover here in Sri Lanka. It is teeming with wildlife and home to endemic leopards and the Asian elephants

"LONELY PLANET" described Sri Lanka as the most sought out tourist destination in the world in 2019.

Before the Covid19 pandemic the government set an ambitious target of achieving 7 Mn tourists by 2025. With the closure of the Airports the most affected by the pandemic had been the leisure sector. Sri Lanka opened the main airport in January this year and have set out certain guide lines and have commenced to permit and encourage visitors.



Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



The outgoing Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Mr. Pham Hoang Kim, called on President Dr Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad



German Ambassador to Pakistan H.E Mr. Bemhard Schlagheck called on Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed in Islamabad.



Non-Resident Ambassador of Kosovo, H.E. Ilir Dugolli called on Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad



Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Maliki, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on Syed Fakhar Imam, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research in the Ministers Office



Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf Bin Saeed Al-Maliki called on Federal Minister for Aviation Division Ghulam Sarwar Khan in Islamabad.



H.E. Nawaf Bin Saeed Ahmed Al-Malki, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakista called on Federal Minister for Energy Omar Ayub Khan at Islamabad.



Ambassador of Greece H.E. Mr. Andreas Paspatavou called on Federal Minister for Defence Pervez Khattak in Islamabad.



H.E. Mr. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Saleem Al-Zaabi Ambassador of United Arab Emirate called on Minister for Defence Production Ms. Zobaidda Jalal in Minister of Defence Production



General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited Qatar

By Mian Fazal Elahi

General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited Qatar on two days official visit. During the visit, COAS witnessed passing out parade at Ahmed Bin Muhammad Military College. He appreciated high standards of institution and its efforts towards grooming of young cadets to take on challenges of future battlefield.

Later, COAS called on His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani - Emir of the State of Qatar, His Excellency Doctor Khalid Bin Muhammad Al-Attiya - Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Defence Affairs and Lieutenant General (Pilot) Ghanim Bin Shaheen Al-Ghanim - Chief of Staff Qatar Armed Forces. During the meetings, matters of mutual interest, defence & security cooperation and regional geopolitical environment were discussed. Qatari leadership reiterated that Pakistan and Qatar share brotherly relations of strategic value. While expressing their satisfaction over level of defence relations between the two Armed Forces, both sides underscored the importance of further enhancing the cooperation.





Japan provides 1,986 million Japanese Yen for the Project for the Installation of Weather Surveillance Radar

By Biilal Zafar

The Government of Japan has agreed to provide grants approximately worth 1,986 million Japanese Yen (Equivalent to around 19 million USD / around 3,057 million PKR) for installation of weather surveillance radar in Sukkur, Sindh province.

Notes to this effect were signed and exchanged between H.E. MATSUDA Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan and Mr. Noor Ahmed, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs in Islamabad and a Grant Agreement (G/A) on the details of implementation of the project was signed and exchanged between Mr. FURUTA Shigeki, Chief Representative, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Pakistan Office and Ms. Syeda Adeela Bokhari, Joint Secretary (Japan/NGO/INGO), Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Weather surveillance radars have been upgrade in Islamabad, Karachi and to be establish in Multan under JICA's grand aid. Under this project, a new weather radar is developed in Sukkur, Sindh province. It covers a gap for weather surveillance and develops a weather surveillance radar network which can cover around 90% of the whole country. It is expected that this project will enhance capacity on weather surveillance of Pakistan and contribute to mitigation of damages caused by natural and hydro-meteorological disasters. In the signing ceremony, H.E. MATSUDA Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan stated " the Government of Japan will continue to work together with Pakistan to make this country disaster-resilient, making good use of experience and expertise Japan has gained from many disasters in the

past." and Mr. FURUTA Shigeki mentioned "Enhancement of weather surveillance capacity will mitigate the damage caused by natural disasters". Both emphasized importance of

disaster management. Through this grant aid, the Government of Japan and JICA continues to assist disaster management conducted by the Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan.





CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF ADMIRAL MUHAMMAD AMJAD KHAN NIAZI VISITS KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Monitoring Desk

Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi is on official visit to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). During the visit, the Naval Chief called on Chief of General Staff and Commander Royal Saudi Naval Forces.

Upon his arrival at Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) Headquarters Riyadh, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi was received by Commander Royal Saudi Naval Forces Vice Admiral Fahad bin Abdullah Al Ghofaili. A smartly turned out contingent of RSNF clad in ceremonial dress presented Guard of Honour. The Admiral was given comprehensive briefing on RSNF setup and ongoing operations. The Naval Chief also visited their Command and Control Centre.

Later, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi called on Chief of General Staff General Fayyad bin Hamid Al Ruwaili and Commander Royal Naval Forces Vice Admiral Fahad bin Abdullah Al Ghofaili separately. During the interactions, matters of mutual interest and bilateral defence ties were discussed. The dignitaries acknowledged brotherly relations between Pakistan & Saudi Arabia and appreciated the contributions of Pakistan in spearheading various initiatives for maintaining peace and stability in the region. In addition, role of Pakistan Navy in training and capacity building of RSNF was also appreciated.

This visit is expected to greatly enhance the bilateral cooperation between both the countries in general and navies in particular.



Chief of Air Staff of Pakistan meets with the top Military Leadership of Turkey

By Rana Bilal

Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan, who is visited Turkey, held meetings with the senior Turkish defence officials and discussed ways to further promote Pakistan-Turkey defence ties. The visiting Pakistani dignitary separately called on Minister for National Defence of Turkey Mr. Hulusi AKAR, Chief of the Turkish General Staff General Yasar GÜLER, Turkish Air Force Commander General Hasan KÜÇÜKAKYÜZ, and Head of the Presidency of Turkish Defence Industries Prof. Dr Ismail Demir. During his interaction with the top Turkish defence officials, the Chief of Air Chief of Pakistan reiterated his commitment to enhance cooperation with Turkey in the fields of defence production, security and training by capitalizing on the respective strengths of each side. He also appreciated the Turkish defence production sector which has made good progress over the last few years. Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan had a detailed meeting with the Turkish Air Force Commander General Hasan KÜÇÜKAKYÜZ. He thanked Turkey for the regular participation of Solo Turk in the national day celebrations of Pakistan. Various matters of mutual interest aimed at further promoting ties between the air forces of the two brotherly countries were deliberated. Both sides discussed in detail how the air forces of the brotherly countries could enhance collaboration and exchange expertise in meeting the challenges of the contemporary world. This included Pakistan's participation in the Anatolian Eagle multinational exercise in Turkey, Turkish Air force participation in various exercises organized by Pakistan Air Force, training and exchange of pilots, as well as defence production. During his stay in Ankara, Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan also visited Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI), leading technology firm HAVELSAN as well as Military Electronic Industries of Turkey (ASELSAN) and Turkey's defence contracting firm ASFAT.





Trilateral Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Turkey was held in Islamabad

By Monitoring Desk

The 2nd Trilateral Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkey was held in Islamabad. The meeting concluded with the signing of Islamabad Declaration by the three Foreign Ministers. The text of the Declaration is as follows:

At the invitation of Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and with the participation of H.E. Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Second round of Trilateral Dialogue of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the three countries was held in Islamabad on 13 January 2021.

The Ministers,

Emphasizing the existing cordial ties among the three countries, based on fraternity, historic and cultural bonds, mutual respect and trust;

Desirous of deepening further cooperation built on outcome of the first Trilateral Meeting held in Baku on 30 November 2017, in all areas of mutual interest, including political, strategic, trade, economic, peace and security, science and technology and cultural fields;

Mindful of the significant contributions made by Pakistan, Turkey and Azerbaijan for promotion of peace, stability and development in their



respective regions and the mutual desire of their peoples to further advance these ideals for shared prosperity and security in the broader region;

Conscious of the myriad challenges and emerging threats confronting their countries including but not limited to threats of foreign sponsored acts of terrorism, cyber-attacks, hybrid forms of warfare, targeted disinformation campaigns, and escalating trends of Islamophobia

affecting the peaceful co-existence of Muslim communities in many countries;

Expressing serious concerns on the grave human rights violations and crimes against humanity committed against the Muslim communities in various parts of the world;

Fully aware of the far-reaching implications of the COVID 19 pandemic as well as the vulnerability of the respective regions to

adverse impacts of climate change; Expressing solidarity with the government and people of Azerbaijan in their efforts to rebuild and rehabilitate liberated territories;

And reaffirming commitment towards developing regional consensus for peace and development;

Reiterated their strong and unequivocal support for safeguarding and defending the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders of their respective States;

Agreed to enhance joint efforts on combating Islamophobia, discrimination and persecution of Muslim minorities, in particular at the regional and international fora;

Recognized the contribution of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process in peace, stability and economic prosperity in Afghanistan and in the region, and appreciated the efforts of the Government of Pakistan in facilitating a political solution to the issues in the region, expressed their support to Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process;

Renewed their resolve to strengthen cooperation in peace and security in line with various international and regional instruments to combat all forms and manifestations of terrorism, transnational organized crime, trafficking of drugs, narcotics, trafficking in persons, money laundering, crimes against cultural and historical heritage and cybercrimes;

Reaffirmed the most recent OIC resolution 10/47-Pol on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute adopted in Niamey in November 2020 and Communiqués of OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir and expressed deep concern over the unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, continuing grave human rights violations in and efforts to change the demographic structure of Jammu and Kashmir, and reiterated their principled position for a peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions;

Resolved to support a just, sustainable and realistic and

mutually accepted settlement of the Cyprus issue, as well as the issues in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean on the basis of international law;

Reiterated their support for putting an end to the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict and normalization of relations on the basis of sovereignty and territorial integrity and internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions;

Committed to promote cooperation in defence and security fields, including through sharing best practices, capacity building, new and emerging technologies and regular exchange of visits;

Discussed the far-reaching implications for economic growth and public health due to COVID 19 pandemic, agreed to exchange information, research, expertise and best practices, and called for enhanced international cooperation and solidarity to effectively and comprehensively addressing the challenge, keeping in view financial and capacity limitations of developing countries; Decided to intensify and deepen cooperation for enhancing trilateral trade & investment and encouraged the relevant ministries of the three countries to develop a robust Action Plan with concrete recommendations regarding easing of duties, tariff and non-tariff barriers, transportation costs, better coordination among the banking sectors and protection of mutual investments, for consideration and approval by the leadership; Determined to enhance cooperation on regional connectivity in transport, trade, energy, people-to-people contacts, education, social and cultural exchange, tourism, and ICT, including through improving and strengthening air, rail and road links and regional connectivity initiatives at various regional fora; Underlined the need to intensify cooperation for food and energy security, environment, sustainable development and climate change and called for greater international cooperation for timely response and achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.





Pakistan specific focus on Economic Diplomacy with African Countries

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Under Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi's FM Connect platform, African envoys to Pakistan were invited to the Foreign Office, to cultivate a greater connect and interaction between the envoys and the Foreign Minister of Pakistan with a specific focus on Economic Diplomacy.

This iteration of FM Connect was held in follow up to the third virtual envoys meeting on economic diplomacy chaired by the Foreign Minister, with a principal focus on Africa, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 'Engage Africa' policy. FM Connect is in cognizance of the Foreign Minister's economic diplomacy agenda and his focus on Pakistan's shift from Geo-Politics to Geo-Economics.

Envoys from the Federal Republic of Somalia, the Kingdom of Morocco, Mauritius, the Republic of Tunisia, the Republic of South Africa, the State of Libya, the Republic of Sudan, Kenya and the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria attended FM Connect where Foreign Minister Qureshi reinforced the importance of strong trade ties between Pakistan and Africa and discussed the various ways such ties could be strengthened.

Noting the importance of Africa as the "continent of future", with 54 countries and a population of 1.3 billion, the Foreign Minister said, Pakistan enjoyed friendly relations and political goodwill in African countries that can be translated into a more robust economic partnership.

Recognizing this, Pakistan had embarked on the

'Engage Africa' initiative, aimed at expanding Pakistan's diplomatic footprint and deepening economic engagement with Africa.

Indeed as part of his initiative on Public Diplomacy, Foreign Minister Qureshi has consistently sought to strengthen Pakistan's footprint of engagement and inclusion and today's envoys meeting marks another in a series

of regular engagements with key stakeholders. To this end, he first introduced the FM Connect platform in 2019, in line with his commitment to drive the Foreign Office into a modern era of communications, collaboration and innovation, opening the doors to his office to promote the exchange of ideas and discussion across stakeholders from the business community, youth, international press and academia.



FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIRTUAL MEETING ON ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY WITH PAKISTANI ENVOYS IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

By Bilal Zafar

In line with Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi's long-term focus on economic diplomacy, a third virtual envoys meeting on the subject, chaired by the Foreign Minister. With emphasis on Africa, and held under the Government's 'Engage Africa' initiative, Pakistan's Heads of Missions in Abuja, Addis Abba, Algiers, Nairobi, Tripoli, Port Louis, Rabat, Pretoria, Niamey, Khartoum, Dar es Salam, Dakar, Harare and Tunis participated in the meeting. Underlining the shift from geo-politics to geo-economics, the Foreign Minister emphasized the importance of economic diplomacy as a key component of modern diplomatic practice. The Foreign Minister said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was at the forefront of safeguarding and protecting Pakistan's economic interests through initiatives like the Prime Minister's Global Initiative on Debt Relief for Developing Countries. The Ministry and the Missions abroad were also working on advancing the Roshan Digital Account and the Home Remittances and the Prime Minister's Economic Outreach Initiatives.

Noting the importance of Africa as the "continent of future", with 54 countries and a population of 1.3 billion, the Foreign Minister said, Pakistan enjoyed friendly relations and political goodwill in African countries that needed to be translated into a more robust economic partnership. Recognizing this, Pakistan had embarked on the 'Engage Africa' initiative, aimed at expanding Pakistan's diplomatic footprint and deepening economic engagement with Africa. Foreign Minister Qureshi stated that, as part of this initiative, Pakistan's outreach and presence in Africa was being significantly enhanced. An Envoys Conference on Africa was held in November 2019, followed by the first ever Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference in Nairobi in January 2020. He remarked that the initiative had started paying off, with a 7% growth in Pakistan's trade with Africa, despite the Covid-19 related challenges. The Foreign Minister encouraged Envoys to cultivate and broaden mutually beneficial trade and economic partnerships with African countries, focusing on key goals of trade promotion, financial inflows, investments, remittances, tourism and technology transfer. During the meeting, the Pakistani Envoys apprised the Foreign Minister of their activities in economic and commercial domain.

They highlighted specific steps in follow-up of the Trade Development Conference and apprised of measures to strengthen existing linkages and forging new ones for enhanced

economic collaboration. In keeping with Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision, the Foreign Minister has consistently sought to strengthen Pakistan's economic diplomacy footprint. The Foreign Minister has been regularly holding virtual meetings on economic diplomacy with

Pakistani Envoys in key countries. Today's virtual Envoys meeting focusing on Africa region is the first of a series of region-specific economic diplomacy meetings scheduled over the coming months.



General Manager of the Islamabad Marriott Hotel received the Turkish Foreign Minister

General Manager of the Islamabad Marriott Hotel Mr. Maurizio Romani received the Turkish Foreign Minister H. E. Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu, along with a high level Turkish delegation, including Ertugrul's leading stars Nurettin Sönmez(Bamsi) and Ayberk Pekcan(Artuk Bey).



Cake Cutting ceremony with K2 mountaineers

Celebrating the success of the Nepalese Team with the General Manager of the Islamabad Marriott Hotel Mr. Maurizio Romani and his staff. The mountaineers that made history, by making a historic winter ascent of Pakistan's K2



Assistant Foreign Minister of Asian Affairs of the state of Kuwait calls on the Foreign Minister Qureshi



By Rana Bilal

Ambassador Ali Suleman Al-Saeed, Assistant Foreign Minister on Asian Affairs of the State of Kuwait, called on Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, today. Foreign Minister Qureshi reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to forge stronger bilateral relations with the State of Kuwait. He stressed the importance of deepening and diversifying bilateral cooperation -- in particular in the areas of trade, investment, manpower export, and food security. He also underscored the importance of facilitating travel between the two countries, which could be instrumental in significantly enhancing bilateral interactions in myriad fields. Foreign Minister Qureshi lauded the positive and constructive role played by the Kuwaiti leadership towards the resolution of differences among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The Assistant Foreign Minister reciprocated the Foreign Minister's views on further fortifying the bilateral relationship. He said his visit reflected the keenness of the leadership of Kuwait to enhance cooperation and collaboration with Pakistan in diverse arenas. During the meeting, the two sides expressed satisfaction at mutual collaboration in multilateral organizations, in particular the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic

Cooperation (OIC). Views were also exchanged on regional developments, including stability in the Gulf/Middle East and CPEC. The Assistant Foreign Minister of Kuwait is on an official visit

to Pakistan to hold the Third Round of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC). The last round was held in Kuwait in May 2016



HE Chief of Staff of Qatari Armed Forces met with HE Chief of Staff of Pakistan Air Force. They reviewed military cooperation relations between the two sides, and means of strengthening and developing them. The meeting was attended by a number of senior officers from both sides.



WHO Representative in Pakistan, Dr Palitha Mahipala (Right) & Director of Central Health Establishment, MoNHSR&C, Dr Irfan Tahir (Left) during donation ceremony of Antigen Testing Kits

WHO Tremendous Support to Contain COVID-19 New Variant

WHO Pakistan has provided technical and operational support to the Government of Pakistan for COVID-19 pandemic preparedness and response at Points of Entry in compliance with the IHR. The assistance included strengthening capacities for entry and exit screening for early detection, active case finding and referral of COVID-19

cases including equipment, IEC material and PPE supplies. Trainings were conducted at major Points of Entry (POE) for capacity building of staff focusing on orienting COVID-19 related emerging guidance and implementation of national SOPs derived from WHO technical guidelines.

As part of the continuing support, Dr Palitha Mahipala WHO Representative in Pakistan recently donated COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Testing kits to strengthen the testing capacity at Points of Entry (POE) to comply with the new travel restrictions for the inbound passengers from the UK and South Africa to contain the spread of new UK SARS COV2 variant.



Pakistan is a fundamental and important partner for Iraq: Minister Fuad Hussein

By: Zanib Ashraf

Foreign Minister Mr. Fuad Hussain received the Minister for Defence Production, Ms. Zobaida Jalal on Tuesday 01/26/2021 in the building of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry.

The two Ministers discussed ways to strengthen and develop bilateral relations between the two countries on issues of common interest, including the security aspect in a way that achieves the common interest of the two

Minister Fuad Hussein stated that Pakistan is a fundamental and important partner for Iraq, and the two countries are linked by long-standing relations and common factors, including countering terrorism and extremism and stressed the need for bilateral cooperation in the field of military industry.

On the other hand, the two sides stressed the need to activate the Iraqi-Pakistani joint

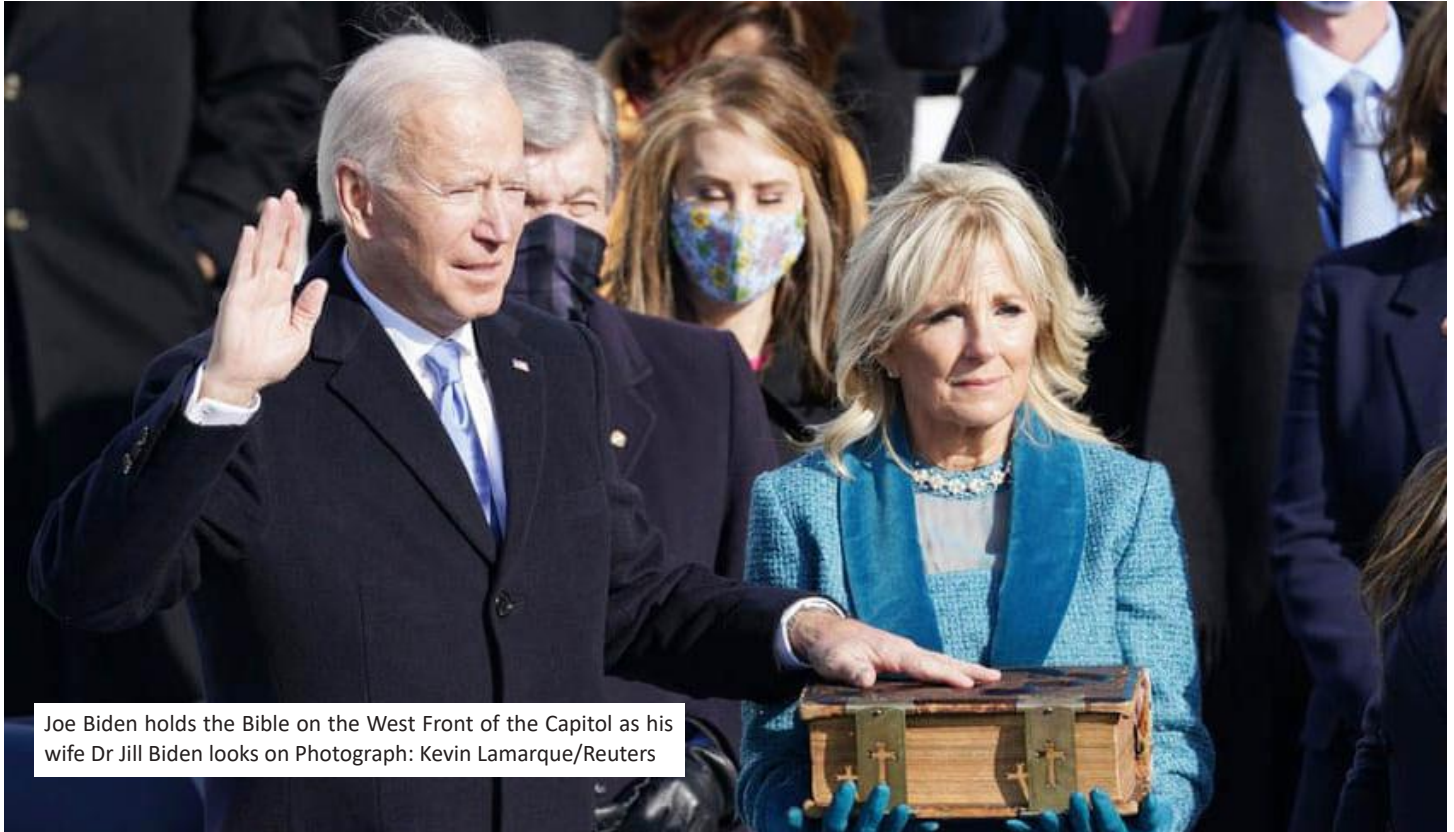
committee and expedite the completion of agreements and memorandums of understanding between the two countries.

The two sides also discussed the issue of religious tourism and ways to facilitate the granting of entry visas to Pakistani visitors wishing to visit the holy shrines in Iraq, given their great importance to Muslims in the world.

Both Iraq and Pakistan stressed the importance of bilateral cooperation in the field of military industry and calls for activation of joint Iraqi-Pakistani committee and expedite the completion of agreements and memorandums of understanding between the two countries

friendly countries.





Joe Biden holds the Bible on the West Front of the Capitol as his wife Dr Jill Biden looks on Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

Oath taking ceremony of President-elect Joe Biden

By: Mian Fazal Elahi

President-elect Joe Biden became President Biden at noon Eastern time, after he took the oath of office to become the nation's 46th commander in chief.

Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts conducted the swearing-in ceremony. Biden placed his hand on a family Bible.

The ceremony took place on the West Front of the U.S. Capitol, on the same stage that was stormed by pro-Trump insurrectionists just two weeks ago. Stringent security measures are in place to protect the nation's leaders from any more violence.

Between the security risks and the raging coronavirus pandemic, the in-person audience

has been limited to a small fraction of the typical crowd. Millions of viewers are expected to be watching from home. A solemn event conducted virtually may be the new normal for this pandemic, but it still marks a surreal departure from the traditional inauguration ceremony.

For Biden, the swearing-in marks the end of a decades-long, hard-fought quest for the presidency — and the beginning of a new challenge, as the administration combats simultaneous crises while governing a deeply divided nation.

Curious about what, exactly, Biden is swearing to? The presidential oath of office is laid out in the Constitution:



Kamala Harris is sworn in as vice-president as her husband Doug Emhoff holds the Bible Photograph: Andrew Harnik/AP





"I do solemnly swear [or affirm] that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." The option to "affirm," rather than swear, is rarely used, and is provided for those whose religious beliefs do not support swearing. After his swearing-in, Biden will deliver an inaugural address. You can follow live annotations by NPR journalists [here](#).

As is customary, Biden's swearing-in follows the swearing in of the vice president. Kamala Harris was sworn in by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, using two Bibles: one that used to belong to Thurgood Marshall, and one that belonged to Regina Shelton, a close family friend and mother figure to Harris.





President Biden pleaded for national unity in his inaugural address

By: Mian Fazal Elahi

Chief Justice Roberts, Vice President Harris. Speaker Pelosi, Leaders Schumer, McConnell, Vice President Pence, my distinguished guests and my fellow Americans, this is America's day.

This is democracy's day. A day of history and hope of renewal and resolve through a crucible for the ages. America has been tested anew and America has risen to the challenge. Today, we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy. The people, the will of the people, has been heard and the will of the people has been heeded.

We've learned again that democracy is precious. Democracy is fragile. At this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed¹. From now, on this hallowed ground, where just a few days ago, violence sought to shake the Capitol's very foundation, we come together as one nation, under God, indivisible, to carry out the peaceful transfer of power, as we have for more than two centuries.

As we look ahead in our uniquely American way: restless, bold, optimistic, and set our sights on the nation we can be and we must be.

I thank my predecessors of both parties for their presence² here today. I thank them from the bottom of my heart. And I know, I know the resilience of our Constitution and the strength, the strength of our nation. As does President Carter, who I spoke with last night, who cannot be with us today, but whom we salute for his lifetime of service.

I've just taken the sacred oath each of those patriots have taken. The oath, first sworn by George Washington. But the American story depends not on any one of us, not on some of us, but on all of us, on we the people who seek a more perfect union.

This is a great nation. We are good people. And over the centuries, through storm and strife, in peace and in war, we've come so far. But we still have far to go. We'll press forward with speed and urgency, for we have much to do in this winter of peril and significant possibilities, much to repair, much to restore, much to heal, much to build, and much to gain. Few people in our nation's history have been more challenged or

found a time more challenging or difficult than the time we're in now. A once-in-a-century virus that silently stalks the country. It's taken as many lives in one year as America lost in all of World War II. Millions of jobs have been lost. Hundreds of thousands of businesses closed. A cry for racial justice, some 400 years in the making, moves us. The dream of justice for all will be deferred no longer.

The cry for survival comes from the planet itself, a cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear. And now a rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront and we will defeat. To overcome these challenges, to restore the soul and secure the future of America requires so much more than words. It requires the most elusive of all things in a democracy: Unity. Unity.

In another January, on New Year's Day in 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. When he put pen to paper, the president said, and I quote: "If my name ever goes down into history, it'll be for this act. And my whole soul is in it." My whole soul was in it today. On this January day, my whole soul is in this: Bringing America together, uniting our people, uniting our nation. And I ask every American to join me in this cause. Uniting to fight the foes we face: anger, resentment, hatred, extremism, lawlessness, violence, disease, joblessness and hopelessness. With unity, we can do great things, important things. We can right wrongs. We can put people to work in good jobs. We can teach our children in safe schools. We can overcome the deadly virus. We can reward, reward work, and rebuild the middle class and make health care secure for all. We can deliver racial justice and we can make America once again the leading force for good in the world.

I know speaking of unity can sound to some like a foolish fantasy these days. I know the forces that divide us are deep and they are real, but I also know they are not new. Our history has been a constant struggle between the American ideal that we're all created equal and the harsh, ugly reality that racism, nativism, fear, demonization have long torn us apart. The battle is perennial and victory is never assured.

Joe Biden and Jill Biden wave as they arrive at the White House. Through civil war, the Great Depression, (Photograph: Alex Brandon/EPA)

world war, 9/11, through struggle, sacrifice and setbacks, our better angels have always prevailed. In each of these moments, enough of us have come together to carry all of us forward. And we can do that now. History, faith and reason show the way, the way of unity. We can see each other not as adversaries, but as neighbors. We can treat each other with dignity and respect. We can join forces, stop the shouting and lower the temperature. For without unity, there is no peace — only bitterness and fury. No progress — only exhausting outrage. No nation — only a state of chaos.

This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge. And unity is the path forward. And we must meet this moment as the United States of America. If we do that, I guarantee you we will not fail. We have never, ever, ever failed in America when we've acted together.

And so today at this time in this place, let's start afresh, all of us. Let's begin to listen to one another again. Hear one another, see one another, show respect to one another. Politics doesn't have to be a raging fire, destroying everything in its path. Every disagreement doesn't have to be a cause for total war. And we must reject the culture in which facts themselves are manipulated and even manufactured.

My fellow Americans, we have to be different than this. America has to be better than this. And I believe America is so much better than this. Just look around. Here we stand in the shadow of the Capitol dome, as was mentioned earlier, completed amid the Civil War, when the Union itself was literally hanging in the balance. Yet we endured, we prevailed. Here we stand looking out on the great Mall where Dr. King spoke of his dream. Here we stand, where 108 years ago, at another inaugural, thousands of protesters tried to block brave women marching for the right to vote. And today we marked the swearing-in of the first woman in American history elected to national office: Vice President Kamala Harris. Don't tell me things can't change.

Here we stand across the Potomac from Arlington Cemetery, where heroes who gave the last full measure of devotion rest in eternal peace. And here we stand just days after a riotous White House where they could use violence to silence the will of the people, to stop the work

of our democracy, to drive us from this sacred ground. It did not happen. It will never happen. Not today, not tomorrow, not ever. Not ever.

To all those who supported our campaign, I'm humbled by the faith you've placed in us. To all those who did not support us, let me say this: Hear me out as we move forward. Take a measure of me and my heart. If you still disagree, so be it. That's democracy. That's America. The right to dissent, peaceably, the guardrails of our republic, is perhaps this nation's greatest strength.

Yet hear me clearly: Disagreement must not lead to disunion. And I pledge this to you: I will be a president for all Americans. All Americans. And I promise you I will fight as hard for those who did not support me as for those who did.

Many centuries ago, St. Augustine, a saint in my church, wrote to the people was a multitude defined by the common objects of their love. Defined by the common objects of their love. What are the common objects we as Americans love, that define us as Americans? I think we know. Opportunity, security, liberty, dignity, respect, honor and, yes, the truth.

Recent weeks and months have taught us a painful lesson. There is truth and there are lies, lies told for power and for profit. And each of us has a duty and responsibility, as citizens, as Americans, and especially as leaders, leaders who have pledged to honor our Constitution and protect our nation, to defend the truth and defeat the lies. Look — I understand that many of my fellow Americans view the future with fear and trepidation. I understand they worry about their jobs. I understand, like my dad, they lay in bed at night, staring at the ceiling, wondering: Can I keep my health care? Can I pay my mortgage? Thinking about their families, about what comes next. I promise you, I get it.

But the answer is not to turn inward, to retreat into competing factions, distrusting those who don't look like you or worship the way you do, or don't get their news from the same sources you do. We must end this uncivil war that pits red against blue, rural vs. urban, conservative vs. liberal. We can do this if we open our souls instead of hardening our hearts. If we show a little tolerance and humility, and if we're willing to stand in the other person's shoes, as my mom would say, just for a moment, stand in their shoes. Because here's the thing about life: There's no accounting for what fate will deal you. Some days when you need a hand. There are other days when we're called to lend a hand. That's how it has to be. That's what we do for one another. And if we are this way, our country will be stronger, more prosperous, more ready for the future. And we can still disagree.

My fellow Americans, in the work ahead of us, we're going to need each other. We need all our strength to persevere through this dark winter. We're entering what may be the toughest and deadliest period of the virus. We must set aside politics and finally face this pandemic as one nation. One nation And I promise you this, as the Bible says: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." We will get through this together. Together.



Look, folks. All my colleagues I served with in the House and the Senate up there, we all understand the world is watching, watching all of us today. So here's my message to those beyond our borders: America has been tested and we've come out stronger for it. We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again. Not to meet yesterday's challenges, but today's and tomorrow's challenges. And we'll lead, not merely by the example of our power, but by the power of our example.

We'll be a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress and security. Look — you all know we've been through so much in this nation. And my first act as president, I'd like to ask you to join me in a moment of silent prayer to remember all those who we lost this past year to the pandemic. Those 400,000 fellow Americans. Moms, dads, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, friends, neighbors and co-workers. We will honor them by becoming the people and the nation we know we can and should be. So I ask you, let's say a silent prayer for those who've lost their lives, those left behind, and for our country.

Folks, this is a time of testing. We face an attack on our democracy and on truth, a raging virus, growing inequity, the sting of systemic racism, a climate in crisis, America's role in the world. Any one of these will be enough to challenge us in profound ways. But the fact is, we face them all at once, presenting this nation with one of the gravest responsibilities we've had. Now we're going to be tested. Are we going to step up? All of us? It's time for boldness, for there is so much to do. And this is certain, I promise you: We will be judged, you and I, by how we resolve these cascading crises of our era.

Will we rise to the occasion is the question. Will we master this rare and difficult hour? Will we meet our obligations and pass along a new and better world to our children? I believe we must. I'm sure you do as well. I believe we will. And when we do, we'll write the next great chapter in the history of the United States of America. The American story. A story that might sound something like a song that means a lot to me.

It's called "American Anthem." There's one verse that stands out, at least for me, and it goes like this:

The work and prayers of a century have brought us to this day.

What shall be our legacy? What will our children say?

Let me know in my heart when my days are through.

America, America, I gave my best to you.

Let's add. Let us add our own work and prayers to the unfolding story of our great nation. If we do this, then when our days are through, our children and our children's children will say of us: They gave their best, they did their duty, they healed a broken land.

My fellow Americans, I close the day where I began, with a sacred oath before God and all of you. I give you my word, I will always level with you. I will defend the Constitution. I'll defend our democracy. I'll defend America and I will give all, all of you. Keep everything I do in your service, thinking not of power, but of possibilities, not of personal interest, but the public good. And together we shall write an American story of hope, not fear. Of unity, not division. Of light, not darkness. A story of decency and dignity, love and healing, greatness and goodness. May this be the story that guides us. The story that inspires us and the story that tells ages yet to come that we answered the call of history. We met the moment. Democracy and hope, truth and justice did not die on our watch, but thrived. That America secured liberty at home and stood once again as a beacon to the world. That is what we owe our forebears, one another and generations to follow.

So, with purpose and resolve, we turn to those tasks of our time. Sustained by faith, driven by conviction, devoted to one another and the country we love with all our hearts. May God bless America and may God protect our troops. Thank you, America. (Courtesy to The Washington post)



Biden moves to reverse Trump policies

New US president signs orders on COVID, climate and 'support for underserved communities'

By: Mian Fazal Elahi

- President Joe Biden, after being sworn in as the 46th president of the United States, has signed a raft of executive orders to roll-back the policies of his predecessor, Donald Trump.
- Vice President-elect Kamala Harris has been sworn in as vice president, becoming the first woman, and person of colour, to serve as the US government's second in command.
- President Donald Trump left the White House early on Wednesday and became the first president in more than 150 years not to attend his successor's inauguration.
- The inauguration crowd size was limited as a result of security concerns prompted by the deadly riot at the US Capitol on January 6.
- Trump was impeached for "incitement to insurrection" for his role in the Capitol mayhem, becoming the first president in US history to be impeached twice.

This was Al Jazeera's live coverage of inauguration day, from Tamila Varshalomidze, Joseph Stepansky, Mersiha Gadzo and Kate Mayberry. Fireworks light up Washington sky. Some pictures from the just-wrapped 'Celebrating America' event, which brought Biden's inauguration day to an end.





Visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Turkmenistan

By: Bilal Ahmed

On the 20th of January 2021, a two-day visit to Turkmenistan of a representative Azerbaijani delegation headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Aziz oglu Bayramov has started.

On the following day, the head of the MFA of Azerbaijan was received by the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov.

Then, the meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Aziz oglu Bayramov was held in the premises of the MFA of Turkmenistan. The diplomats have stated with satisfaction the high level of bilateral ties in political, trade-economic and cultural-humanitarian areas.

It was especially noted that the present visit of the head of MFA of Azerbaijan to Ashgabat complements the start of a new stage of energy cooperation between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. In this regard, the significance of joint steps on resource use and collaboration on the Caspian Sea was highlighted.

The diplomats highlighted the efficiency of political-diplomatic dialogue between the two countries. They

discussed bilateral issues, as well as the aspects of regional and international agendas. In this regard, the importance of collaboration of Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan in the framework of regional and international formats was underlined. The possibilities of expanding economic and investment cooperation, including through the use of transport-transit potential of the two countries that possess modern automobile, railway and sea infrastructure were also discussed. The importance of the Transit and Transport Cooperation Agreement between Turkmenistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Lapis Lazuli) was also emphasized. As known, the parties intend to facilitate unfolding of the Lapis Lazuli route capabilities in the framework of the trilateral intergovernmental format of collaboration in the area of transport and communication. The issues of expanding cultural and humanitarian ties were discussed. It is noted that the people of Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan are united by firm historic, cultural and spiritual values. The opportunities of holding joint events within the current year that was declared as the International Year of Peace and Trust by the UN General Assembly upon the initiative of Turkmenistan were discussed.





Gulf leaders attend the 41st GCC summit in Al-Ula

By: Mian Fazal Elahi

The General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) announced today the conclusion of the 41st GCC Summit, in the city of Al-Ula, Northwest of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Summit was chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and attended by their Highnesses and Majesties leaders of the six member states and H.E. Dr. Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf, GCC Secretary General.

At the conclusion of the summit, The GCC Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf expressed his gratitude towards their Majesties and Highnesses of the GCC for their unequivocal efforts in making this historic summit a success, demonstrating the unwavering commitment of the GCC to overcome any obstacle that obstructs its way working towards furthering economic integration and development for the citizens of the cooperation council

The GCC Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf said: "The 41st GCC summit marks a new era of the GCC, representing a union of partnerships, strength and unity as we embark together on the fifth decade of this union. This historic summit reiterates the devotion of their Majesties and Highnesses of the Gulf to achieving the Council's firm objectives to continue coordination, integration, and interdependence across all sectors and in the face of division. The future of the GCC in this new era, under the leadership of their Majesties and Highnesses, will foster development, ensure stability and security, and will provide hope and opportunity for the citizens of member states.

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Leaders of the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) signed the Al-Ula declaration, named after the Saudi city where the summit is

being held, and a final communique.

In response to the gracious invitation from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, king of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, may God protect him, the Supreme Council held its 41st summit in the city of Al-Ula on Tuesday, 21st Jumada I, 1442 AH, corresponding to January 5, 2021.

The summit was chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, crown prince, deputy prime minister and minister of defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and was attended by:

- His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates and ruler of Dubai.
- His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, crown prince, deputy supreme commander and prime minister of Bahrain.
- His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, the deputy prime minister for cabinet affairs in the Sultanate of Oman.
- His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the emir of the State of Qatar.
- His Highness Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, the emir of the State of Kuwait.

Secretary-General of the GCC Nayef Falah al-Hajraf also participated in the meeting.

The Supreme Council expressed its deep sadness and grief over the death of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said, may God have mercy on his soul. The life of the late sultan of Oman was filled with great works and achievements, and his journey was full of sincere contributions and tireless work towards the progress and prosperity of the Sultanate of Oman and its

people. The Council offered its sincere condolences and sympathy to the sultanate of Oman, its leadership, government and people, and to the Arab and Islamic nation as a whole for this great loss. The Council showcased the role of the late Sultan in promoting the journey of the Gulf Cooperation Council, along with his fellow leaders of the GCC states, and his great efforts in serving the Arab and Islamic causes, and promoting regional and world peace.

The Supreme Council expressed its deep sadness and grief over the death of His Highness Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, the emir of the State of Kuwait, may God have mercy on his soul. The life of the late emir was filled with great works and achievements, and his journey was full of sincere contributions and tireless work towards the progress and prosperity of the State of Kuwait and its people. The Council offered its sincere condolences and sympathy to the State of Kuwait, its leadership, government and people, and to the Arab and Islamic nation as a whole for this great loss. The Council showcased the role of the late emir in promoting the journey of the GCC, along with his fellow leaders of the GCC states, and his great efforts in serving the Arab and Islamic causes, and promoting regional and world peace.

The Supreme Council expressed its sincere condolences and sympathy to the Kingdom of Bahrain on the death of His Royal Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, prime minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, may God have mercy on his soul, recalling the achievements of the late prince in promoting joint Gulf actions.

The Supreme Council welcomed His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, the sultan of Oman, may God protect him, and expressed its full confidence that the sultan, with his wisdom, will enhance the active participation of the Sultanate of Oman in pushing forward the blessed march of the GCC and achieve its noble goals, along with his fellow leaders of the GCC states, by maintaining the security of the GCC and preserving the systems to achieve stability.

The Supreme Council welcomed His Highness Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the emir of the State of Kuwait, may God protect him, and expressed its full confidence that

His Highness, with his wisdom, will enhance the active participation of the State of Kuwait in pushing forward the blessed march of the GCC and achieve its noble goals, along with his fellow leaders of the GCC states, by maintaining the security of the GCC and preserving the systems to achieve stability and prosperity for the GCC states and their peoples.

The Supreme Council congratulated the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, king of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, may God protect him, for his chairmanship of the 41st summit of the GCC, expressing its appreciation for the eagerness and interest in his opening speech to push forward the march towards joint cooperation of the GCC states in all areas.

The Supreme Council expressed its deep appreciation and gratitude for the tremendous and sincere efforts made by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, president of the United Arab Emirates, may God protect him, and his esteemed government, during the UAE's chairmanship of the 40th summit of the GCC, and the important steps taken and achievements made. The Council congratulated His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain, may God protect him, on the Kingdom of Bahrain's chairmanship of the 41st summit of the GCC, wishing the country success in promoting the journey of the GCC in all fields.

The Supreme Council praised the sincere efforts made by the late His Highness Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah of the State of Kuwait, may God have mercy on his soul, to heal the rift between the member states. The Council expressed its appreciation and gratitude for the efforts of His Highness Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the emir of the State of Kuwait, may God protect him, as well as the efforts made by the United States in this regard.

The Supreme Council welcomed the signing of the Al-Ula Declaration, which aims to strengthen the unity and solidarity between the member states, restore the normal joint Gulf actions, and preserve the security and stability of the region

he summit produced important decisions in the health, economic, political and social fields, which will reflect positively on the support and promotion of the international



Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman welcomes Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani upon his arrival to attend the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) 41st Summit in AlUla, Saudi Arabia



Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman welcoming Deputy Prime Minister of Oman, Fahd bin Mahmoud upon his arrival in the city of AlUla in northwestern Saudi Arabia for the 41st Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit



Emir of Kuwait Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman upon his arrival in the city of AlUla in northwestern Saudi Arabia for the 41st Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit



Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman welcoming his counterpart from Bahrain, Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, upon his arrival in the city of AlUla in northwestern Saudi Arabia for the 41st Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit

cooperation in facing crises and working towards a better future for all.

The Supreme Council commended the steps taken to raise the level of representation of the Saudi-Bahrain coordination, to be headed by the crown princes of the two countries. The Council welcomed the positive results of the Joint Coordination Council meeting held on December 24, 2020, which aims to enhance the joint bilateral relations in a way that promotes the integration of the two sister states and push forward towards joint goals and aspirations of the GCC states and their people. The Council also welcomed the appointment of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa as prime minister of Bahrain, wishing him success in performing his duties.

The Supreme Council commended the UAE's Hope probe space mission which will reach Mars next February, and the launch of the Barakah nuclear power plant under the UAE's Peaceful Nuclear Energy Program, as these projects emphasise the interest in science, technology, renewable energy and space exploration, which promote development. The council stressed the importance of the exchange of experience between the member states in these areas.

The Supreme Council declared its full support for the success of the UAE's hosting of the Dubai Expo 2020. The council stressed that the success of this global event is a success for all GCC states and its people, by organising major events that enhance dialogue and facilitate communication between cultures, firmly establishing the region's position as an international hub for business.

The Supreme Council took note of the announcement of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the emir of the State of Qatar, may God protect him, to hold the Shura Council elections next October, praising this step. The council stressed the importance of coordination and cooperation between legislative chambers of the GCC states.

The Supreme Council congratulated the State of Qatar on the election of His Excellency Mr Ahmad Bin Abdulla Bin Zaid Al Mahmoud, the speaker of the Shura Council, as board chair of the Global Conference of Parliamentarians Against Corruption for the period of

2019-2021.

The Supreme Council praised the preparations made by the State of Qatar to host the 2022 Football World Cup, reaffirming its support for the State of Qatar in anything that leads to the success of the upcoming World Cup.

The Supreme Council commended the State of Qatar's hosting of the Horticultural Expo 2021, themed "Green Desert, Better Environment", which is to be held in Doha from October 2, 2023, to March 28, 2024. The expo aims to encourage innovative solutions, reduce desertification, support agriculture, and promote environmental awareness and sustainability in desert areas.

The Supreme Council congratulated US President-elect Joe Biden on winning the presidential election. The Council stated its aspiration to strengthen the historical and strategic relations with the US and work together to achieve peace and stability in the region and the world. The Council also extended its wishes for the fellow American people to achieve progress and prosperity under the leadership of the president.

The Supreme Council extended thanks and appreciation for all personnel at the forefront of the pandemic including health and medical teams, security teams, civil defence and female and male volunteers for the sacrifices and contributions they are making to deal with coronavirus pandemic, paying tribute to the souls of the victims who have sacrificed their lives for the safety of others.

The supreme council expressed its appreciation of the member states for their solidarity at the regional level and support for international efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic, through their generous support to humanitarian and medical organisations and agencies, as well as to the affected countries and people, stressing the importance of continuing global collective cooperation and coordination to face the consequences of this pandemic.

Vision of the custodian of the two holy mosques

The Supreme Council expressed its satisfaction with the progress made in implementing the vision of King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, which promotes and activates joint Gulf actions, as outlined by the



Bahrain Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa signing the Al Ula statement during this summit



Kuwait Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al Sabah signing the Al Ula statement during this summit



U.S. White House Senior Adviser Jared Kushner attends the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) 41st Summit in Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia January 5, 2021



Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani signing GCC summit documents in the Saudi city of Al-Ula, January 5, 2021

Supreme Council during the 36th GCC Summit held in December 2015.

The Supreme Council assigned all ministerial and technical bodies, councils, committees, the Secretariat General, and all other GCC agencies to implement the remaining steps in the vision, by doubling their efforts within a specific timeframe, including the implementation of economic unity, joint defence and security systems within the Cooperation Council. The vision's terms also include developing a unified and effective foreign policy that preserves the Council's interests and benefits, helping it avoid regional and international conflicts, and meet the goals and aspirations of GCC citizens.

The Council instructed the Secretariat General to submit a comprehensive report for the next summit to the Supreme Council, clarifying what has been implemented from the terms of the vision, and to submit proposals that would help alleviate any difficulties facing the implementation of the vision.

Joint Gulf actions

The Supreme Council looked into the outcome of the implementation of its decision made at the 32nd GCC Summit regarding the proposal of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, may God have mercy on his soul, which constitutes moving the Gulf states from a place of cooperation to a place of union, instructing the Supreme Council to continue its efforts in achieving this transformation, as well as the Ministerial Council and the head of the specialised body to implement the necessary measures towards this transformation, and to inform the Supreme Council during the next Summit of what has been achieved.

The Supreme Council reviewed the developments made regarding the joint Gulf actions, and stressed the importance of preserving the Council's achievements and accomplishments.

The Council also directed the competent bodies in the member states, Secretariat General and the ministerial and technical committees to redouble their efforts to achieve the noble goals stipulated in the Statute of the Cooperation Council. The Supreme Council praised the efforts of the GCC states to enhance the

mechanisms of integrity, efficiency, governance, transparency and accountability in government agencies, and the fight against corruption. It also called for the strengthening of joint cooperation in its fight against corruption within the framework of the GCC, its agencies and the specialised Gulf organisations.

The Supreme Council emphasised the importance of the implementation of all decisions and agreements issued and made by the Cooperation Council. It also stressed the importance of implementing the decisions according to the outlined schedule and the commitment to the contents of these decision because of its importance in protecting the security of member states, maintaining their stability, protecting the safety of the states and the interests of their citizens, as well as creating a stable economic and social environment that enhances the wellbeing of GCC citizens.

The Supreme Council approved the establishment of the Gulf Center for Disease Prevention and Control, under the umbrella of Gulf Health Council for Cooperation Council States. The Supreme Council approved the extension of the validity period of the unified guiding regulation for empowering people with disabilities, and unified guiding regulation for volunteer work as a guideline, for a period of two years.

Economic integration

The Supreme Council stressed the importance of focusing on projects with an integrated strategic dimension in economic and developmental areas, most notably the completion of the requirements of the Customs Union, the completion of the common Gulf market and the railway project. The Council stressed the need to work on developing an integrated system to achieve food, water and energy security, and adopting the goals and mechanisms of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the field of information technology, communication and Artificial Intelligence. The Supreme Council emphasised the importance of continuing to support and encourage small and medium enterprises, believing in their vital role and contributions to the economies of the GCC states.



Oman Deputy Prime Minister Fahad bin Mahmoud signing the Al Ula statement during this summit



Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al Sabah attends the 41st summit of the GCC in Al Ula, Saudi Arabia



Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani attends the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) 41st Summit in AlUla



Dr Nayef Al Hajraf, Secretary General of the GCC at the summit.
Courtesy Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad paid courtesy call upon the Governor of Pakistani Sindh province

During the meeting that happened in Governor House, in Karachi, the commercial capital of Pakistan, both sides discussed mutual relations between the two countries and the ways of developing them in various fields, especially in the field of trade and investment being Karachi the commercial and trade center of Pakistan.

The Ambassador assured his country's special interest to its relations with Pakistan that exist since the tens of years of time and Iraq is very keen to enhance its brotherhood relations in different fields that achieve mutual interests. Honorable Mr. Ismail praised with the great role played by H.E. the Ambassador to develop the relations between the two countries Pointing out to the role played by his country to achieve the mutual issues and praising the victories that Iraqi forces are achieving and wishing Iraq and Iraqi nation and its government the security and stability.



The Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad receives the President and members of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Islamabad



Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad, has received, on 19/01/2021, the President of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Qurban Ali, and his assistants Mr. Muhammad Ali Qaid and Mr. Mirza Abdul Rahman, at the embassy.

They discussed ways of cooperation and linkage

with the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in order to expand the horizons of economic work, and develop the work of chambers of commerce, in a way that strengthens economic partnership, and opens the door for cooperation with the public and private sectors.

The two sides expressed their satisfaction for

the realization of the desire for joint cooperation at the level of commercial and economic work through the establishment of economic forums to introduce the companies of the two parties, and to provide facilities to the traders of the two countries in coordination with the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad meets the President of Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Karachi



H.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad, on 27/01/2021, has met with Mr. Mian Nasser Hayat Maggu, President of Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Karachi and a number of officials of the Federation in Karachi.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed the

volume of mutual trade exchange and their interest to increase it to the level that suits the level of relations that link the two countries.

Both sides discussed the prospects of cooperation and linkages with Iraqi chambers of Commerce and Industry in order to broaden the range of economic work and to develop the relations with trade chambers that enhance

the economic partnership and promote the cooperation between public and private sectors, pointing out to the aspects of import and export and ways of enhancing them.

The Ambassador assured to try to tackle all the problems and to facilitate pakistani business men and investors to issue them multiple visas to Iraq.

Iraqi Minister of Defence H.E Mr. Jumma Inad Sadoon Khattab is presenting a souvenir to Federal Minister for Defence Production Ms. Zobaidda Jalal at Baghdad (Iraq) on 25 January 2021



Italian Ambassador pay visit to IPFTC launched with Collaboration of PFMA

By: Monitoring Desk

Italian Ambassador H.E. Andreas Ferrarese paid a visit to the first of its sort Italy-Pakistan Footwear Technological Center (IPFTC). The undertaking is a joint endeavor of Pakistan and Italian Government activity through Pakistan Footwear Manufacturers Association cooperation. IPFTC is furnished with a CAD-CAM Pattern Grading/Cutting and a Mechanical Physical Tests Laboratory for footwear. All the hardware and specialized help for this venture have been given by the Italian Government and from the Pakistan side, PFMA has offered Managerial help, premises, paid expenses of transportation and customs obligation on gear imported for this office.

PFMA Chairman Imran Malik invited the Honorable Italian Ambassador for his charitable visit and informed about the current working advancement and venture achievement. On this event, while sharing his perspectives he expressed that "I'm thankful to Italian Ambassador whose individual endeavors has made this task fruitful and PFMA would consistently recall the important commitment and endeavors of His Excellency Andreas Ferrarese for his favorable help to Footwear Industry of Pakistan. The IPFTC reinforced Industrial ties between the two nations and empowered Local makers to improve their profitability to carry it at second to none with International principles. PFMA will completely use this office for the advancement of Footwear Industry of Pakistan to create top-



notch shoes utilizing new advances to make it significant sending out Industry of Pakistan". Italian Ambassador H.E. Andreas Ferrarese commended the task progress and applauded the PFMA executive on effectively running it. "I hold in high regard the responsibilities of PFMA Imran Malik to transform this venture into the real world. IPFTC cutting edge apparatus will empower PFMA and its individuals to handle each changing need of this industry.

This participation will fortify our ordinary fraternity attaches with Pakistan and assist Industry with investigating better chances in one another country. I'm overpowered to see its improvement under PFMA the board and confidence that this pattern keeps on improving as we progress further. Italian Government entire heartedly dedicated to reinforced its binds with Pakistan Government on different scenes any place we discover opportunity".

He underlined that the young people of Pakistan are loaded with high potential. Whenever used appropriately by improving their abilities we can make them profitable. Surely the task of IPFTC expects to prepare the adolescent in an imaginative manner to exploit the footwear business and to procure their work in an agile way. IPFTC will offer a total climate for the footwear industry to adjust to the most proper methods to create quality items and improve their current abilities to fulfill the consistently changing needs of the International market. Our collaboration will keep on flourishing upon with more business openings. This creative project will be a venturing stone toward the improvement of Pakistan Footwear Industry in a since quite a while ago run and help to offer help to Local footwear industry to better outfitted themselves with most recent procedures and abilities of the contemporary footwear workmanship.



Lahore-Italian Ambassador H.E. Andreas Ferrarese talking to media persons on his visit Italy-Pakistan Footwear Technological Center (IPFTC).

H.E. Andreas Ferrarese Ambassador of Italy to Islamic Republic of Pakistan called on Governor Punjab H.E. Ch. Mohammad Sarwar and discussed the issues of mutual interest



Alhamra Centre of Art & Culture

The Italian Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Andreas Ferraris visited Lahore Arts Council. He was received by the Chairperson Board of Governors Moneeza Hashmi and the Executive Director Saman Rai. Cultural activities were discussed during the meeting.



Bakhtawar Bhutto-Zardari receive a lot of love, prayers and good wishes' on marriage

Bakhtawar Bhutto-Zardari got married with Mahmood Chaudhry amid pandemic-restricted fanfare and people have been itching for glimpses inside the many events. In a post Bakhtawar Bhutto-Zardari said "We are touched by all the love, prayers and good wishes.

Deciding to get married during Corona meant we were limited by the SOPs," wrote the bride on her Instagram at the end of all the festivities. "Luckily, we were able to capture our joyous times and will be sharing with you through them."







PM inaugurates MG motors launch in Pakistan

By Monitoring Desk

Prime Minister Imran Khan attended the launching ceremony of British motor company MG Motors UK at the Prime Minister's House.

PM Imran Khan, who was the chief guest, said his government was working hard to boost economy and the auto industry. "The arrival of the British motor company MG in Pakistan is a proof that Pakistan's economy has moved in the right direction," said PM Imran Khan. He added that the company will play a crucial role in the development of Pakistan. He said these vehicles being rechargeable and environment friendly enjoy special importance in the world. The premier said the PTI government would continue its efforts to further strengthen the auto industry and termed the launch "encouraging", considering the ongoing coronavirus pandemic situation.

"The demand is great for British cars," said Javed Afridi, one of the key stakeholders in the joint venture between Pakistan's JW-SEZ and Chinese giant SAIC, which now owns the British MG Motor. Afridi, also the CEO of Haier Pakistan, said they have partnered to bring MG Motor cars because of the British heritage factor. "They also want to expand their global presence to Pakistan."

"They are providing cars with high-end technology that will transform the Pakistani auto market," he said. Afridi is also the owner of Pakistan Super League team Peshawar Zalmi. The company has already launched the compact SUV MG-HS. It has also announced that it will launch the MG-ZS 1.5 and MG ZS EV, which is fully electric and has 44.5 KWH of power.

Afridi added that the company now plans to



launch the double cabin pick-up truck MG Extender, which is similar to the Toyota Hilux, and another SUV RX8, which is comparable to the Toyota Fortuner. Both vehicles have 2-litre engines. He said the Extender and RX8 will be

launched one after another next year in March and July respectively. The company will launch other models in early 2021, including sedans and hatchbacks.

Xi Jinping's 2021 New Year address

By Monitoring Desk

Comrades, friends, ladies and gentlemen, greetings to you all!

The year 2021 is arriving. From China's capital Beijing, I extend my New Year wishes to you all! 2020 was an extraordinary year. Facing the sudden coronavirus pandemic, we put people and their lives first to interpret the great love among humans. With solidarity and resilience, we wrote the epic of our fight against the pandemic.

During the days when we addressed the hardships together, we saw the heroic spirit of marching straight to the frontlines, holding posts with tenacity, taking responsibility to get through thick and thin, sacrifices with bravery, and touching moments of helping each other.

From medical workers to the people's army, from scientific researchers to community workers, from volunteers to those who built the projects, from seniors to youths born after the 1990s and 2000s, numerous people fulfilled their missions at the cost of their lives and protected humanity with sincere love.

They pooled their drops of strength into tremendous power and built an iron wall to safeguard lives. Many figures marched ahead without hesitation, many relays were accomplished hand in hand, many scenes showed touching moments, all these vividly illustrate the great spirit of fighting against the pandemic. Greatness is forged in the ordinary. Heroes come from the people. Every person is remarkable!

Our sympathy goes to all the unfortunate ones infected with the coronavirus! We salute all the ordinary heroes! I am proud of our great motherland and people, as well as the unyielding national spirit. Only in hard times can courage and perseverance be manifested. Only after polishing can a piece of jade be finer. We overcame the impact of the pandemic, and made great achievements in coordinating prevention and control and in economic and social development.

The 13th Five-Year Plan has been accomplished in full. The 14th Five-Year Plan is being comprehensively formulated. We are accelerating the pace to set up a new pattern for development, and are deeply implementing high-quality development. China is the first major economy worldwide to achieve positive growth, and its GDP in 2020 is expected to step up to a new level of 100 trillion yuan. China has seen a good harvest in grain production for 17 years in a row. China has seen breakthroughs in scientific explorations like the Tianwen-1 (Mars mission), Chang'e-5 (lunar probe), and Fendouzhe (deep-sea manned submersible). Construction of the Hainan Free



Trade Port is proceeding with vigor.

We also defeated severe flooding. With the military and civilians heedless of danger and difficulty, and standing in unity, we managed to minimize the damage of the floods.

I inspected 13 provincial-level regions and was glad to see people carefully implementing coronavirus prevention and control measures, racing against time to resume work and production, and sparing no efforts to advance innovation. Everywhere were vibrant scenes of confident, resilient people making the most of every minute. In 2020, China made the historic achievement of establishing a moderately prosperous society in all respects and achieved decisive success in eradicating extreme poverty.

We launched the final assault on the fortress of entrenched rural poverty, and cracked this "hardest nut." Through 8 years, under the current standard, China has eradicated extreme poverty for the nearly 100 million rural people affected, and all the 832 impoverished counties have shaken off poverty. These years, I have visited 14 contiguous areas of dire poverty. The unremitting efforts of the folks and the wholehearted contribution of the poverty-eradication cadres often come to my mind.

We still need to stay tenacious like a bamboo deeply rooted in the rocks, keep our feet on the ground, and work hard to paint a magnificent picture of rural vitalization, and steadily march ahead towards the goal of common prosperity.

This year, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, among others, and 30 years of the development and opening-up of Pudong in Shanghai. As I stood on the southern coast as the spring tide surged and on the colorful bank of the Huangpu River, my

mind was filled with a myriad of thoughts.

Pilot trials have become models and leading forces, and explorations to innovate have become leading forces of innovation. The opening-up and reform has created miracles of development. In the future, we should further deepen reform and expand opening-up with greater courage, and create more "Stories of Spring." We are not alone on the Great Way and the whole world is one family. After a year of hardship, we can understand more than ever the significance of a community with a shared future for mankind.

I had many phone calls with friends from the international community, both old and new, and attended many "cloud conferences." What we discussed most was staying united to combat the pandemic. We still have a long way to go in pandemic prevention and control. People from all over the world should join hands and support each other to early dispel the gloom of the pandemic and strive for a better "Earth home." 2021 will see the 100th birthday of the Communist Party of China. Its 100-year journey surges forward with great momentum. Its original aspiration remains even firmer one hundred years later. From Shikumen in Shanghai to the South Lake in Jiaxing City, the small red boat (where the first CPC congress concluded) bore the great trust of the people and the hope of the nation. The boat has sailed through turbulent rivers and treacherous shoals, and has voyaged across violent tidal waves, becoming a great ship that navigates China's stable and long-term development.

The CPC bears its eternal great cause in mind, and the centenary only ushers in the prime of life. We adhere to putting people at the center, stay true to our original aspiration, keep our mission well in mind, break the waves and sail out for our journey ahead, and we will certainly realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. At the historic crossroad of the "Two Centenary Goals," the new journey of comprehensively building a modern socialist country is about to start. The road ahead is long; striving is the only way forward. We have strived, broken through brambles and thorns, and crossed ten thousand rivers and thousands of mountains.

We will continue to strive, march ahead with courage, and create brighter glory! At just this moment, the festive lanterns have been lit, and family members gather for reunion. The New Year is coming. I wish our land to be splendid, our country to be prosperous, and our people to live in peace. I wish you all a harmonious, smooth and auspicious year, full of happiness!

Thank you!

China, EU complete investment agreement negotiations

By Monitoring Desk

Chinese President Xi Jinping and European leaders on Wednesday announced that the two sides have completed investment agreement negotiations as scheduled.

The announcement was made during a meeting between Xi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron, President of the European Council Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen via video link.

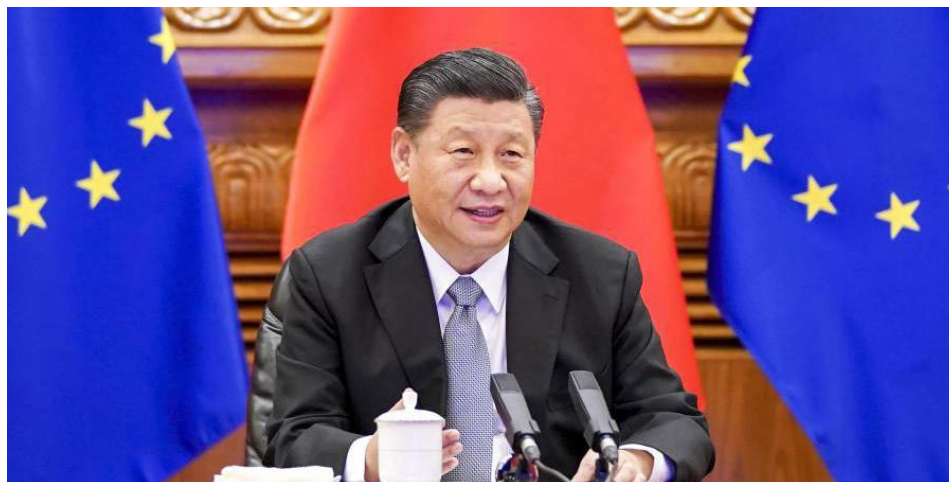
Calling the investment agreement between China and the European Union (EU) as “balanced, high-standard and mutually beneficial,” Xi said the treaty has shown China’s determination and confidence to push high-level opening up.

“The agreement will provide greater market access, higher level of business environment, stronger institutional guarantees and brighter cooperation prospects for mutual investment,” Xi said. The treaty will also greatly boost world economic recovery in the post-pandemic era, enhance the international community’s confidence in economic globalization and free trade, making significant contributions to the building of an open world economy, the Chinese president said.

Stressing China’s commitment to fostering a new development paradigm will provide more market opportunities and cooperation potential for the EU and the world at large, Xi called on the EU to uphold free trade and multilateralism, and provide an open, fair and non-discriminatory business environment for Chinese investors.

Against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes rarely seen in a century, Xi said, China and the EU, through tiding over difficulties and working hand-in-hand, have made fruitful achievements in advancing ties in 2020. In the upcoming year of 2021, China and Europe, as two major global forces, markets and civilizations, should demonstrate a sense of responsibility and take active steps to contribute to global peace and progress, he said.

Xi urged the two sides to enhance dialogue and mutual trust, deepen cooperation, properly manage differences, and work together to nurture new opportunities and open up new prospects.



First, Xi called for coordinated actions of pandemic response to ensure the equal distribution of COVID-19 vaccines as global public goods, especially to make sure the move benefits developing countries. Second, Xi urged joint efforts to promote economic recovery, adding the two sides should step up policy coordination and uphold building an open world economy to bring global industrial and supply chains back on track as soon as possible.

Third, Xi called on the two sides to synergize development strategies, urging intensified efforts in policy coordination, better synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and the Eurasian interconnection strategy, and discussions about cooperation in the digital sector. Fourth, Xi called for speeding up green development, urging the two sides to give full play to their high-level dialogue mechanism on environment and climate, and give mutual support to each other in hosting international conferences on biodiversity, climate change, and conservation of nature.

Fifth, Xi urged multilateral cooperation, adding China and Europe should enhance coordination and cooperation within frameworks including the United Nations, the Group of Twenty (G20), the World Trade Organization, and the World Health Organization, facilitate political settlement of international and regional hotspot issues, actively implement the G20 debt service suspension initiative, and support pandemic response and development in Africa, to promote world development and prosperity.

The European leaders said that despite the impact of COVID-19, Europe and China had maintained

close high-level communication this year and made important progress on a series of issues including the agreement on geographical indications. They said the completion of the investment agreement negotiations was an important milestone in the development of EU-China relations and will also help promote the recovery and growth of the world economy.

The achievements once again showed to the world that although Europe and China have differences on some issues, both sides have the political will to strengthen dialogue and deepen cooperation on the basis of mutual respect to achieve mutual benefit and win-win results, they said. The investment agreement is a high-level one, they said. The European side appreciates China’s further opening up and active moves to promote trade liberalization and investment facilitation. Both sides support multilateralism, and a strong EU-China relationship is conducive to solving global challenges, according to the leaders. The European side appreciates China’s major moves in addressing climate change and helping Africa fight the pandemic, and hopes to continue to coordinate and cooperate closely with China on issues such as global anti-pandemic, climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and WTO reform.

The Chinese and European leaders exchanged New Year greetings and jointly stated that they will maintain close communication in the upcoming new year, jointly advance the agenda of major exchanges between the two sides, and promote the continuous development of China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership.





Sixth China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Media Forum

By Monitoring Desk

The 6th China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Media Forum was held here in Islamabad. The forum was jointly organized by the Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) and China Economic Net (CEN) in cooperation with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan.

Zheng Qingdong, President and Editor-in-Chief of Economic Daily, and Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director, Pakistan-China Institute gave the welcome addresses. Zheng highlighted the importance of the CPEC media forum and said that since its launch, it has contributed a lot towards building a positive public opinion on CPEC. He said that in the face of the complex international environment, the media of China and Pakistan should take joint actions and form synergies in firmly opposing the negative propaganda against CPEC. Moreover, he said that the year 2021 will be the 70th anniversary of Pak-China diplomatic relations which will be celebrated with zeal and zest in both countries.

Mustafa Hyder Sayed said that Pakistan-China Institute in collaboration with China Economic Net launched the CPEC media forum as an online event and it is held in Beijing and Islamabad in alternate years. Last year, Pakistan-China Institute launched the Rapid Response Information Network (RRIN) which identifies fake news on CPEC and deconstructs them with Facts. Moreover, PCI has also launched a monograph titled "CPEC: Facts Vs Fiction". Mustafa informed the audience that the Pakistan-China Institute will be publishing "The Governance of China", Part 2 and Part 3 in Urdu, which are authored by President Xi Jinping.

Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan, in his keynote speech said that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has achieved significant milestones through joint efforts of the governments, enterprises, and peoples

of both countries. The first phase of CPEC, which focused on energy and infrastructure projects met its successful completion and now, the second phase is set to boost Pak-China cooperation in agriculture and initiate an era of industrialization through the establishment of Special Economic Zones. He commended the role of the media and said that it has played a very important role in the dissemination of facts on CPEC which has resulted in CPEC becoming a household name in Pakistan. Through events like the CPEC media forum, both countries get an excellent opportunity to consolidate the existing all-weather friendship. He also highlighted Pakistan's Medical and moral support to China during its fight against the pandemic.

Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong said that as an important pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and a demonstration

project of China-Pakistan Cooperation, the CPEC plays a significant role to promote the in-depth development of the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership and high-quality growth of the Belt and Road Initiative. He said that high level and quality participation in the CPEC media forum is the testimony to the fact that CPEC has been highly valued in Pakistan. Since its inception in 2015, CPEC Media Forum has brought together the governments, business communities, media, think tanks, and other sectors of China and Pakistan to focus on the construction of the CPEC. While commenting on a recently held meeting of the Joint Working Group on international coordination on CPEC, he said that China would strengthen coordination with academia and think-tanks through CPEC. Since its launch, Pakistan has achieved fruitful results of CPEC cooperation. After the successful





completion of CPEC Phase 1, which focussed on energy and infrastructure, the second phase would focus on industrial cooperation, agriculture, science, technology, and improving the livelihoods of people. Moreover, he highlighted the prospects of CPFTA-II and said that it would solve the issue of the trade imbalance between Pakistan and China.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman, Senate Foreign Affairs Committee and PakistanChina Institute commended the resilience of CPEC which progressed with full speed and vigor during COVID-19. He said that not a single Pakistani working on CPEC sites was laid off. While commenting on the recently held meeting on Joint Working Group on international coordination, he said that there will be an increased focus on media and thinktank collaboration to take CPEC forward. The meeting also welcomed third party participation in CPEC.

Mr. NI Siyi, Deputy Director, Office of Editor-in-chief, Xinhua News Agency said that since the launch of CPEC, there has been close cooperation between the media houses of both countries. When Prime Minister Imran Khan visited China in October 2019, INP and Xinhua news signed an agreement to take this cooperation to next level. He called for airing more stories on CPEC which evoke people's engagement. Moreover, he said that the media of both countries need to highlight the importance of the 70th anniversary of Pak-China diplomatic relations in 2021.

Mr. Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission gave a very comprehensive presentation on CPEC Phase two. He said that CPEC is a multilayered project. In the first phase which ended in 2020, the focus was on improving infrastructure and solving the issue of energy. In the second phase which will end in 2025, processing and manufacturing industries will be developed and efforts will be made to ensure improvement in people's livelihoods and balancing regional economic development. In the third phase (2025-2030) also called the period of maturity, the indigenous

mechanism for sustainable economic growth will be in place and CPEC will be ready to play a leadership role in the region.

Ms. Zhao Qiao, Director, Department of Urdu, Asian & African Center, China Media Group said that the media of both countries fought misinformation regarding Pakistani students in Wuhan during COVID-19 by interviewing them

2021 will be the 70th anniversary of Pak-China diplomatic relations which will be celebrated with zeal and zest in both countries

and communicating the true perspective. She called for enhanced media ties between two brotherly countries and said that steps should be taken at the governmental level to increase people-to-people exchanges between Pakistan and China.

Senator Azam Khan Swati, Federal Minister for Railways highlighted the importance of the ML-1 project and said that it would transform the socioeconomic fate of Pakistan and the whole region by giving a boost to connectivity. This project, he said will create employment opportunities for the locals and improve

the logistics infrastructure in the country. Moreover, he thanked China for standing with Pakistan through thick and thin and said that in the coming days, this cooperation would be diversified and made more comprehensive. He said ML-1 would cover 80% of Pakistani territory and 78% of the population of Pakistan

Mr. Mudassir Tipu Director-General (China), Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan termed CPEC as a transformational and consensus-oriented project. He said that COVID-19 cooperation between Pakistan and China has been exemplary. He also appreciated the Chinese Communist Party for extending full support to Pakistan during the pandemic. Moreover, he also called for closer cooperation between the media of both countries.

Amir Ghauri, Editor of The News talked about the ways to respond to CPEC challenges and said that the coverage of this grand project has seen a significant increase since its launch. He briefed the participants about the importance of connectivity as a result of CPEC. Moreover, he called for upgrading media ties between the two nations. After the speeches, an award ceremony was held in which seven journalists were conferred with "CPEC Communication Award". Those seven journalists were; Muhammad Asghar, correspondent of Associated Press of Pakistan in Beijing; Naveed Hussain, Editor(Print & Digital) Express Tribune; Shafqat Ali, Special correspondent of The Nation; Liu Chang, Journalist of China Media Group Pakistan Bureau; Tariq Sumair, Editor of INP; Amir Ghauri, Editor of The News; Sultan Hali, Columnist, writer, and author of book on China.

At the end of the conference, there was a comprehensive question/answer session from the participants, which lasted for over 15 minutes. The CPEC Media Forum had huge online participation of over 300,000 persons in Pakistan and China, including students and scholars, journalists, and academics, policy-makers, think-tanks, and business and opinion leaders.



NA Speaker and Chairman NPC China agree on formation of Joint Parliamentary Body to oversee CPEC

Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser and Chairman National Peoples Congress of China have agreed for formation of a joint Parliamentary Committee comprising of members from Pakistani Parliament and National People's Congress for effective oversight of CPEC. They were of the opinion that enhanced economic cooperation would give impetus to the existing bilateral relations through parliamentary and economic cooperation. The Speaker Asad Qaiser was talking to Li Zhanshu in a Virtual meeting held today. Both the Presiding Officers directed their respective Secretariats to take necessary steps for constitution of Joint a parliamentary Committee.

During the meeting Speaker Asad Qaiser was accompanied by Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri, Chairman CPEC committee Sher Ali Arbab, Chairman Foreign Affairs Committee Ehsan ullah Tiwana, Convener Pak-China Friendship Group Noor Alam Khan and other members of the National Assembly whereas Chairman NPC was accompanied by Deputy Speaker NPC and Chairmen of the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Law. This virtual meeting is first high level contact between the two presiding officers after the breakout of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Speaker said that Pakistan considers China its closest friend, staunchest partner and an iron brother. He said that consistent progression in the relations exemplifies a unique model of brotherhood. He congratulated his Chinese counterpart on 71st anniversary of Sino-Pak diplomatic relations and Chinese New Year.

Speaker Asad Qaiser said that Pakistan strongly believes in territorial integrity of

China and fully supports One China policy. He said that Pakistan values Chinese support on international and regional forums.

**GOVERNMENT
OF PAKISTAN TO
COMMITTED TO FOIL
ANY ATTEMPT TO
DISRUPT ECONOMIC
ACTIVITY UNDER
CPEC:
NA SPEAKER**

He said that Kashmir being the bleeding wound on the map of the world needed international attention for mitigation of miseries of Kashmiri people and fulfilment of international commitment. He said that China's equivocal support on Kashmir issue is valued by people and government of Pakistan.

Chairman National People's Congress Li Zhanshu said that China also considers Pakistan one of its brother and a closest strategic ally. He said that China would always stand by Pakistan for its defence and maintaining territorial integrity. He said

that Covid-19 was devastating for the China as well as the world, however support of Pakistan specially the parliament had boosted the Chinese moral to fight that disease. He assured the Speaker that provision of covid-19 vaccine was on the top most priority of the Chinese Government.

Speaking about the CPEC, Chairman NPC said that CPEC was of utmost importance for the economies of both the countries. Referring to the instances of terrorism in the region, underlined the need for security of CPEC to keep it moving on right track. Paying special gratitude to the Speaker Asad Qaiser, he said that his support for establishment of special economic zones under CPEC earlier as Speaker KPK Assembly and later as Speaker National Assembly had been exemplary. He said that Gawadar port and other projects under CPEC would play an important role in economic development in Pakistan.

Speaker Asad Qaiser said that CPEC was undoubtedly lifeline for economic development of Pakistan and mechanism had been devised for ensuring security of the CPEC projects. He said that any attempt to disrupt activity under CPEC would not be tolerated. He said that activity under CPEC had gained momentum and the Rasakai Special Economic Zone would be functional soon which would generate economic activity besides providing employment particularly in the KPK province and the country in general. The Speaker proposed a joint Parliament Committee comprising members from Parliament of Pakistan and National People's Congress for effective oversight of the CPEC projects.



CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation Holds the Second Meeting

On December 25, 2020, the Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination (JWG-ICC) under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) held the second meeting in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The meeting was co-chaired by Vice Foreign Minister Luo Zhaohui and Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Sohail Mahmood.

After looking back at the work progress achieved since the inaugural meeting of JWG-ICC on April 9, 2019, the two sides agreed that the two countries' close cooperation and mutual support amid the COVID-19 outbreak has laid the foundation for economic recovery in the post-pandemic era and injected new

momentum into the construction of the CPEC. The two sides reiterated that they will implement the consensus of the two leaders and promote the CPEC to focus more upon industry, agriculture, science and technology, and people's livelihood fields and to reach into less developed areas, so as to make the CPEC a model project for the high-quality development of the Belt and Road cooperation. The two sides reaffirmed that the CPEC is an open and inclusive initiative, and its construction will be launched with third parties following the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits and on the basis of consensus between China and Pakistan through negotiations and full demonstration.

The two sides agreed to continue to publicize the positive role of the CPEC in improving local livelihoods and to clarify inaccurate reports about the CPEC in a timely manner. They encourage the media, film and television, and publishing sectors of the two countries to strengthen cooperation on the CPEC-related topics, and welcome think tanks, experts and scholars of the two countries to conduct bilateral and multilateral exchanges on the CPEC construction, in a bid to jointly expand the CPEC's influence and spur the high-quality development of the Belt and Road cooperation.

The two sides signed the minutes of the meeting, reflecting the consensus reached at the meeting.



Activities of Chinese Ambassador



Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Nong Rong had wonderful and productive meeting with Mr. Murad Saeed, Minister of Communications. Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Nong Rong and Mr. Murad Saeed exchanged views on Communication and transport sector cooperation under CPEC.



Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Nong Rong had an impressive conversation with Amer Ahmed Hashmi, Chairman of Special Technology Zone Authority. New post, new vision! With the joint aspiration of China and Pakistan to expect the information Technology would expand in Pakistan.



Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Nong Rong had a pleasant meeting with Mr. Siraj ul Haq, Senator & Ameer Jamaat e Islami Pakistan on issues of mutual interest. H.E. Mr. Nong Rong Proud to see that China-Pakistan friendship is the cross-board consensus of Pakistan.



Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Nong Rong launched Green Employment Scheme in Gwadar in responding to PM's initiative for Clean Green Gwadar Movement. China will work together with Pakistan to turn CPEC into a model of green BRI to protect & preserve natural environment in the region.



Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Nong Rong had a meaningful and productive meeting with Mr. Syed Fakhar Imam. Minister for National Food Security & Research Mr. Syed Fakhar Imam exchanged views on enhancing Agricultural Cooperation under CPEC.



Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Nong Rong had a productive meetings with Major General M. Aamer Najam, GOC SSD (South) and Rear Admiral Jawad Ahmed, Commander Pakistan Navy Western Command. Appreciated the efforts made by the armed forces in safeguarding the smooth progress of CPEC projects and personnel.



Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Nong Rong visited sites of major projects under the CPEC in Gwadar. H.E. Mr. Nong Rong impressed by the Chinese and Pakistani workers whose joint efforts make Gwadar different day by day amid the pandemic. Chin-Pak Dosti Zindabad!



Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Nong Rong attended the 6th session of All-Pakistan Chinese Enterprises' Association (APCEA) plenary meeting on January 15th, hoping it to fully participate in and promote high-quality development of CPEC.



Foreign Minister Receives Sinopharm Vaccine from China

By: Mian Fazal Elahi

Foreign Minister Mahkdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi received a batch of 500,000 doses of Sinopharm vaccine from the Chinese Ambassador Mr. Nong Rong at a ceremony held at the Nur Khan Airbase today. The vaccine arrived from Beijing early morning through a special flight.

The Foreign Minister thanked the leadership and people of China for sending the gift of Sinopharm vaccine to Pakistan to fight the pandemic. He added that the vaccine had arrived right at the time when Pakistan was grappling with the second wave of COVID-19. Its delivery, coinciding with commencement of celebrations of the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between two countries, reaffirmed the finest tradition that China always stood by Pakistan. It also showed that Pakistan-China friendship was timeless and that China was our staunchest partner.

The Foreign Minister particularly lauded President Xi Jinping's vision that the COVID-19 vaccine, when developed, should be a 'global public good.' Foreign Minister Qureshi expressed special gratitude to State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi for expeditiously sending the vaccine to Pakistan. The vaccine will be used to inoculate the front-line health workers to protect them from COVID-19 and will play an important role in saving precious

human lives, the Foreign Minister added.

It was underlined by the Foreign Minister that recently Phase-III clinical trials of Chinese vaccine CanSino had successfully concluded in Pakistan and Pakistan was deepening co-operation with China in the matters relating to vaccine.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health Dr. Faisal Sultan, Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood, Secretary Health Aamir Ashraf Khawaja, and Executive Director National

Institute of Health (NIH) Major General Aamer Ikram were also present on the occasion.

Pakistan-China cooperation in fighting the pandemic, since its outbreak, has been exemplary. Pakistan firmly supported China's global and regional initiatives aimed at controlling the pandemic. Pakistan has supported China-led regional forums that are meaningfully engaged in containing the pandemic and resuming economic activities across the region.



Dinner Reception hosted by Honorary Consul General of Yemen Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig

Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig Hon. Consul General of Yemen in Karachi Sindh hosted dinner reception in honor of visiting Ambassador of Republic of Yemen H.E. Mohammed Motahar Alashabi to Karachi, attended by diplomats, dignitaries, Govt. officials, leading businessmen, family

members, friends & elite of the city. Group photograph shows: Ambassador of Yemen, Minister for Local Govt. Nasir Hussain Shah. Minister for Education Saeed Ghani, Ajam Khan Durrani DG NADRA Sind, Ishtiaq Baig Hon. Consul of Morocco, Mishal Mohammad Al Ansari Consul General of Qatar, Acting

Consul General of Oman Hamood Naseer Sulaiyam Al Nahdi, Saleem Yousuf Chairman PCB Cricket Committee, Jehangir Shah, Mr&Mrs. Agha Shirazi, Dr. Asif Arian, Imran & Omair Baig, Noreen, Zoyaa, Sonia, Saman, & Faheema.



Diplomatic Focus hosted Dinner Reception

Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi Editor /Publisher/ CEO of Diplomatic Focus hosted a dinner reception on his residence. H.E. Mr. & Mrs. Andreas Ferrarese Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan, family members, Government officials and media persons grace the occasion. Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi also celebrated his son's birthday of "Mr. Mian Furqan Akhtar" on the occasion with cake cutting ceremony. At the end Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi thanked all the guests who make this event delightful.





Dean of Diplomatic corps & Ambassadors of Central Asian Countries visited Rolex outlet

By: Rana Bilal

Kahf International Managing Partner Mr. Abdul Majeed welcomed Dean of Diplomatic corps Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan His Excellency Mr. E. Beyshbiev, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Akan Rakhmetullin, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Mr.

Ismatullo Nasredin, Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/ Publisher of Diplomatic Focus visited Rolex Kahf International located at Beverly Centre, 3-4, Jinnah Ave, F 6/1 Blue Area Islamabad.

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Rahim Bux & Co the first officially accredited Rolex outlet in Pakistan.

At the heart of KAHF is a perpetual passion for horology and so it is that seventy years on KAHF remains family oriented, its name has become synonymous with prestige and reliability, frequented nationally and internationally by all those who share a passion for time keeping.

Over the years Kahf International has introduced numerous watchmaking & jewelry brands, catering to different echelons of Pakistani society.



Dean of Diplomatic corps & Ambassadors of Central Asian Countries visited World Class Suiting

By: Sharyar

World Class Suiting CEO Mr. Ilyas Shafi welcomed Dean of Diplomatic corps Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan His Excellency Mr. E. Beyshbiev, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Akan Rakhmetullin, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

H.E. Mr. Ismatullo Nasredin, Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Publisher of Diplomatic Focus visited World Class Suiting Shop 27,37 Ground Floor Beverly Center Blue Area Islamabad. World class suiting having 40 years of international excellence! Using the most luxurious material we combined all best elements of both gentlemen's' and ladies. Clothing to give you the finest quality tailoring available. our made to measure (custom made) suits, jackets, blazers, shirts, ladies formal and casual clothing are made in the same way as any interaction

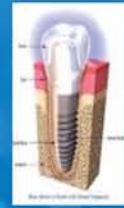
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





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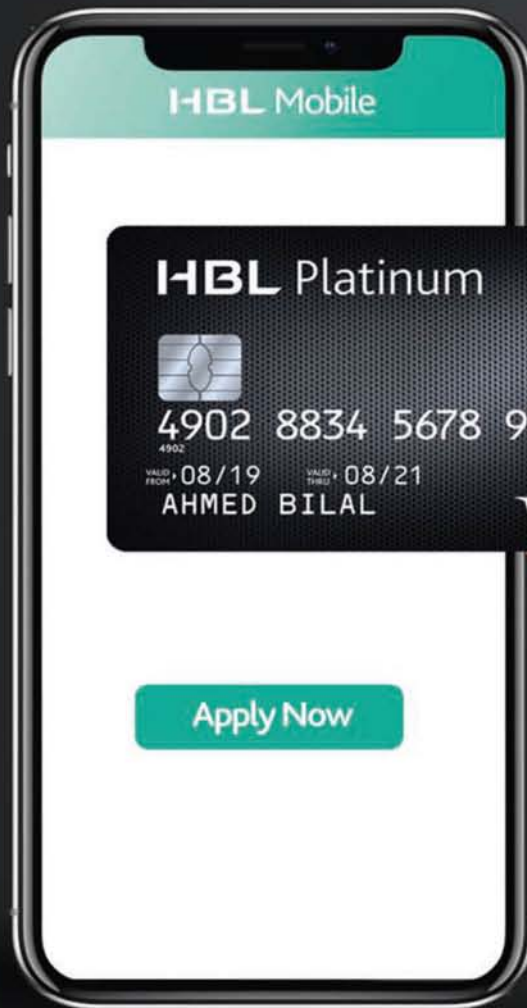
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