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HAPPY NEW YEAR 2022



**PM Imran urged
the world not to link their support
with the Taliban,
but rather that they must think of 40
million people**



**Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi received transport
Minister of Uzbekistan, H.E Makhamov Ilkhom Rustamovich at Ministry
of Foreign Affairs**



Kyrgyz Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E Aibek Artykbaev called on Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at Parliament House on the sidelines of 17th Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers



Bosnian Foreign Minister Dr Besera Turkovic met Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan with H.E Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs Azerbaijan



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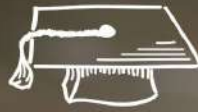


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
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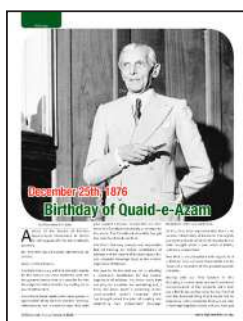
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*Ceremonial
Collection*



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The 17th Extraordinary Session of Council of Foreign Ministers of Organization of Islamic Cooperation held in Islamabad. Envoys from 57 Islamic nations as well as observer delegations particularly the UN system, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), international and regional organizations and non-OIC members including the P-5, European Union and major countries like Germany and Japan, were among the attendees.

25 Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul Freight Train will play a vital role in improving economies

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Minister for Railways Azam Khan Swati, Adviser to Prime Minister for Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood, Ambassador of Iran Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini, Ambassadors of Turkey, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan inaugurated the Economic Cooperation Organization ECO rail Islamabad Tehran Istanbul Freight Train in Margalla Railway Station, Islamabad.

56 Azerbaijan, Pakistan sign protocol of 7th meeting of joint intergovernmental commission

The signing ceremony of the Protocol of the seventh meeting of the Joint Azerbaijan-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission was held, reports referring to the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense Industry.

66 Kazakhstan embassy celebrates 30th anniversary of National Day

Ambassador of Kazakhstan H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin organised a reception to mark the 30th anniversary of the National Day of Kazakhstan at Islamabad. Chief Guest of the eve was Mr. Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Federal Minister for information and Broadcasting. A large number of diplomats, members of civil society attended the reception.

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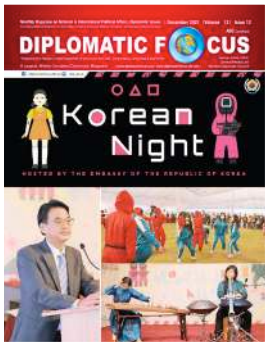
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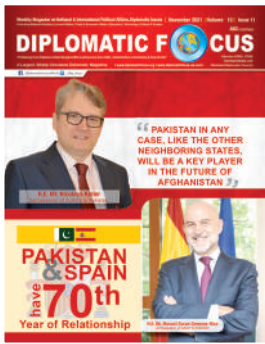
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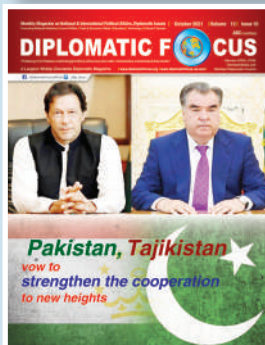
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Our previous Issues



Mian Fazal Elahi

Many countries applauded Pakistan for hosting the successful summit of OIC foreign ministers' council. The summit was held in Islamabad with a focus on the looming economic and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. The political shift made donor countries cut off financial assistance to Afghanistan and isolate it from the global financial system. The OIC conference was convened to devise a way to help the Afghan people amid a gradual economic meltdown of their state. The summit was attended by about 70 delegations from OIC member states, non-members and regional and international organizations. World leaders, govt functionaries, diplomats, analysts termed meeting as milestone achievement for Pakistan.

The launching of the Pak-China Business Investment Forum is surely an important development as the move would help speed up economic cooperation between the two friendly countries under phase-two of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and a step further towards the cherished objective of making Pakistan a hub of industries under vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan. The forum is aimed at increasing investment in Pakistan and promotion of business to business industrial cooperation. Following the participation of over seventy companies in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Conference held in March last year, it was agreed in to establish a business forum with the cooperation of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan and the Board of Investment to enhance business to business cooperation. The forum consists of eighteen Chinese and nineteen Pakistani companies. The PM Imran Khan said that Pakistan must learn urban planning from China to tackle disparity in resource management arising out of rapid population growth. As premier investment promotion agency, the Bol has, no doubt, embarked upon a comprehensive and aggressive campaign to project Pakistan as an attractive investment destination. However, in view of the fact that there is tough competition for attracting investment, the Government will have to take innovative approaches both for improvement of the investment climate and sector-specific incentives. The hard work of the Bol and other relevant ministries and departments can produce the desired results when necessary steps are taken to reduce the cost of doing business, there is harmony among various policies, continuity of policies is ensured and exchange rate is stabilized.

Team of "Diplomatic Focus" wishing to all a very Happy New year 2022.

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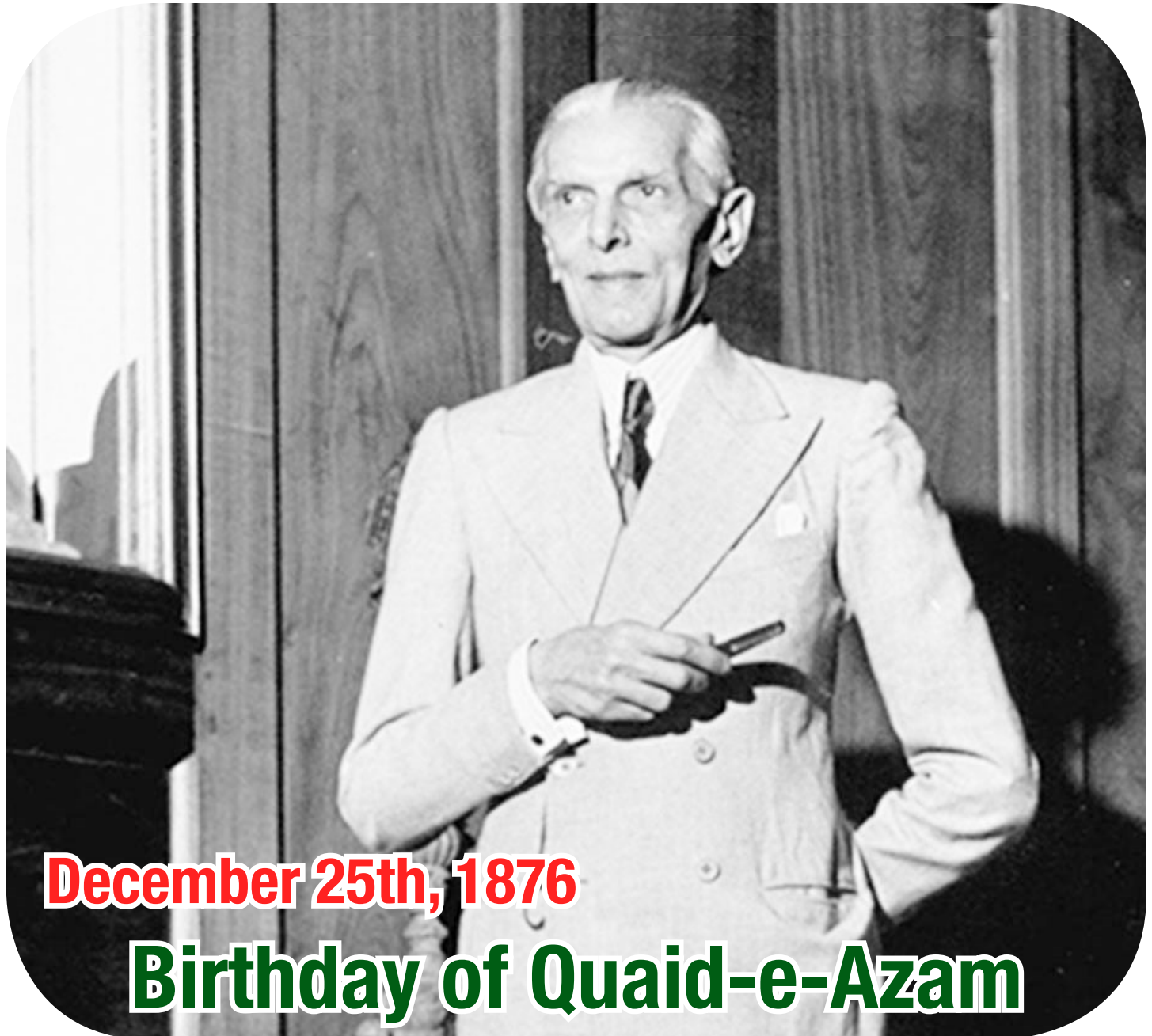
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YOUR
HUNGER'S
ULTIMATE
SOLUTION





December 25th, 1876

Birthday of Quaid-e-Azam

By Muhammad Bilal Zafar

Address of the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on 11th august, 1947 to 1st constituent assembly.

Mr. President (Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah):

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I cordially thank you, with the utmost sincerity, for the honour you have conferred upon me the greatest honour that it is possible for this Sovereign Assembly to confer by electing me as your first President.

I also thank those leaders who have spoken in appreciation of my services and their personal references to me. I sincerely hope that with

your support and your co-operation we shall make this Constituent Assembly an example to the world. The Constituent Assembly has got two main functions to perform.

The first is the very onerous and responsible task of framing our future constitution of Pakistan and the second of functioning as a full and complete Sovereign body as the Federal Legislature of Pakistan.

We have to do the best we can in adopting a provisional constitution for the Federal Legislature of Pakistan. You know really that not only we ourselves are wondering but, I think, the whole world is wondering at this unprecedented cyclonic revolution which has brought about the plan of creating and establishing two independent Sovereign

Dominions in this sub-continent.

As it is, it has been unprecedented; there is no parallel in the history of the world. This mighty sub-continent with all kinds of inhabitants has been brought under a plan which is titanic, unknown, unparalleled.

And what is very important with regards to it is that we have achieved it peacefully and by means of a revolution of the greatest possible character.

Dealing with our first function in this Assembly, I cannot make any well-considered pronouncement at this moment, but I shall say a few things as they occur to me. The first and the foremost thing that I would like to emphasise is this remember that you are now a Sovereign legislative body and you have got

all the powers. It, therefore, places on you the gravest responsibility as to how you should take your decisions. The first observation that I would like to make is this. You will no doubt agree with me that the first duty of a Government is to maintain law and order, so that the life, property and religious beliefs of its subjects are fully protected by the State.

The second thing that occurs to me is this. One of the biggest curses from which India is suffering I do not say that other countries are free from it, but, I think, our condition is much worse is bribery and corruption. (Hear, hear.) That really is a poison.

We must put that down with an iron hand and I hope that you will take adequate measures as soon as it is possible for this Assembly to do so.

Black-marketing is another curse. Well, I know that black-marketers are frequently caught and punished. According to our judicial notions sentences are passed, and sometimes fines only are imposed.

Now you have to tackle this monster which today is a colossal crime against society, in our distressed conditions, when we constantly face shortage of food and or the essential commodities of life. A citizen who does black-marketing commits, I think, a greater crime than the biggest and most grievous of crimes.

These black-marketers are really knowing, intelligent and ordinarily responsible people, and when they indulge in black-marketing, I think they ought to be very severely punished, because they undermine the entire system of control and regulation of food-stuffs and essential commodities, and cause wholesale starvation and want and even death.

The next thing that strikes me is this. Here again is a legacy which has been passed on to us. Along with many other things good and bad, has arrived this great evil -the evil of nepotism and jobbery.

This evil must be crushed relentlessly. I want to make it quite clear that I shall never tolerate any kind of jobbery, nepotism or any influence directly or indirectly brought to bear upon me. Wherever I find that such a practice is in vogue, or is continuing anywhere, low or high, I shall certainly not countenance it.

I know there are people who do not quite agree with the division of Indian and the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Much has been said against it, but now that it has been accepted, it is the duty of every one of us to loyally abide by it and honourably act according to the agreement which is now final and

binding on all. But you must remember, as I have said, that this mighty revolution that has taken place is unprecedented. One can quite understand the feeling that exists between the two communities wherever one community is in majority and the other is in minority.

But the question is whether it was possible or practicable to act otherwise than has been done. A division had to take place. On both sides, in Hindustan and Pakistan, there are sections of people who may not agree with it, who may not like it, but in my judgment there was no other solution and I am sure future history will record its verdict in favour of it. And what is more it will be proved by actual experience as we go on that that was the only solution of India's constitutional problem. Any idea of a United India could never have worked and in my judgment it would have led us to terrific disaster.

May be that view is correct; may be it is not; that remains to be seen. All the same, in this division it was impossible to avoid the questions of minorities being in one Dominion or the other. Now that was unavoidable. There is no other solution. Now what shall we do? Now, if we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor.

If you will work in co-operation, forgetting the past, burying the hatchet, you are bound to succeed. If you change your past and work together in a spirit that every one of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what is his colour, caste or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations there will be no end to the progress you will make.

I cannot emphasise it too much. We should begin to work in that spirit and in course of time all these angularities of the majority and minority communities the Hindu community and the Muslim community because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis and so on and among the Hindus you have Brahmins, Vashnavas, Khatri, also Bengalese, Madrasis and so on will vanish.

Indeed if you ask me this has been the biggest hindrance in the way of India to attain its freedom and independence and but for this we would have been free peoples long long ago. No power can hold another nation, and specially a nation of 400 millions souls in subjection; no

body could have conquered you, and even if it had happened, no body could have continued its hold on you for any length of time but for this. (Applause.) Therefore we must learn a lesson from this.

You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State (Hear, hear).

As you know, history shows that in England conditions some time ago were much worse than those prevailing in India to-day. The Roman Catholics and the Protestants persecuted each other. Even now there are some States in existence where there are discriminations made and bars imposed against a particular class.

Thank God we are not starting in those days. We are starting in the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State. (Loud applause.)

The people of England in course of time had to face the realities of the situation and had to discharge the responsibilities and burdens placed upon them by the government of their country and they went through that fire step by step. Today you might say with justice that Roman Catholics and Protestants do not exist: what exists now is that every man is a citizen, an equal citizen, of Great Britain and they are all members of the nation.

Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.

Well, gentlemen, I do not wish to take up any more of your time and thank you again for the honour you have done to me. I shall always be guided by the principles of justice and fair-play without any, as is put in the political language, prejudice or ill-will, in other words partiality or favouritism.

My guiding principle will be justice and complete impartiality, and I am sure that with your support and co-operation, I can look forward to Pakistan becoming one of the greatest Nations of the world. (Loud applause)

Pakistan & KSA reiterated their desire to take the existing relations into new heights



By Mian Fazal Elahi

Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have reiterated their desire to take the existing relations into new heights in all areas of mutual interest. Both sides underlined the importance to further strengthen parliamentary cooperation between the two brotherly countries. This was discussed at a meeting between the visiting Chairman of Shura Council of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Abdullah Mohammad Bin Sheikh, who along with members of his delegation called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Welcoming the delegation, the President said that Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enjoyed deep historical ties and tremendous cooperation which needed to be further promoted for the mutual benefit of the two sides. He appreciated the Kingdom's historical and continued support, and financial assistance to Pakistan in difficult times. He congratulated the Saudi leadership for its timely initiative to convene the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. He lauded the role played by the Kingdom for mobilizing the international community as well as announcing financial help, during the recently held OIC session of Foreign Ministers for the people of Afghanistan.

He expressed satisfaction that the OIC countries



had given a strong message of hope, solidarity and unity to the people of Afghanistan during this challenging time. The President emphasized that the Islamic Countries should work together to address the challenge of Islamophobia.

The atrocities being committed by India against the innocent people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir were also highlighted by the President during the meeting. He urged the international community to put pressure on India to stop committing human rights violations and grant Kashmiris their right to self-determination in accordance with the UN Security Council's resolutions.

Dr Abdullah Mohammad Bin Sheikh said that he considered Pakistan as his second home and emphasized the need to take practical steps

to further improve bilateral ties. He conveyed greetings to the President from King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman. He also congratulated the President on successfully holding the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC on Afghanistan.

Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy strong fraternal ties firmly rooted in shared faith, culture, traditions, and mutual goodwill.

He said that the people and Government of Pakistan have a deep reverence for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the Saudi Leadership. He underlined Pakistan's desire to strengthen bilateral relations through enhanced cooperation in social and economic

sectors between two brotherly countries. He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation led by a Chairman Shura Council of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Dr. Abdullah Bin Mohammed Al-Sheikh, who is on a three-day official visit to Islamabad.

Speaker Asad Qaiser has said that Saudi Arabia had always played a positive role in maintaining peace in the region. While mentioning about looming humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, the Speaker said that it seeks the immediate

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia agree to hold parliamentary conference on Afghanistan and Kashmir

attention of the international community. He said that people in Afghanistan were in dire need of food, medicines, clothing, fuel and other necessities of daily life. He further said that the role of Saudi Arabia is of paramount importance in this regard. He said that Pakistan desires peaceful, stable and independent Afghanistan as its neighbor and the support of Saudi Arabia would help Afghanistan to get out of this crisis.

He also appreciated the vibrant role of Saudi Arabi in deterring the looming humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and its announcement of financially supporting Afghanistan in a Special meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held successfully in Islamabad last week. The Speaker appreciated the suggestion of Chairman Saudi Shura for holding a parliamentary conference on Afghanistan and Kashmir. he said that both the Secretariats would work on that proposal.

The Speaker said that Saudi Arabia had always been a strong proponent of economic development in Pakistan and had generously helped Pakistan in crisis. He appreciated the recent billion dollars economic package for Pakistan. He appreciated Saudi Investment in diverse sectors in Pakistan. He added that Saudi Arabia has been very considerate about the resolution of problems faced by Pakistani expatriates working in the Kingdom. He also said that the Pakistani diaspora in Saudi Arabia has an important role to play in strengthening



the economy of Pakistan. He said that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan shared unanimity of views on regional and international issues being confronted by the world. He said that Parliamentary exchanges would help to further strengthen people-to-people and commercial relations.

Underscoring the need for regional peace, Speaker Asad Qaiser said that regional peace is imperative for regional socio-economic development. He said that the looming humanitarian Afghan crisis may jeopardize the life of common people in Afghanistan and this crisis demand interference by the international community on humanitarian grounds. while talking about atrocities on innocent Kashmiris in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK), he said that resolution of Kashmir dispute as per UNSC resolutions is imperative for regional peace. He said that the Indian Government had resorted to illegal and unconstitutional actions of depriving Kashmiris of their right of identity.

Chairman Saudi Shura Council Dr. Abdullah Bin Mohammed Al-Sheikh thanked Speaker Asad Qaiser for according a warm welcome on his arrival in Islamabad. He said that Pakistan had always been at the forefront of issues confronting Muslim Ummah and played its responsible role. He said that Pakistan needs to be felicitated on the successful initiative for bringing Muslim countries on the platform of OIC and he also appreciated the role of Pakistan in raising the conscious of the world to deter the Afghan humanitarian crisis.

He acknowledged that both the countries shared unanimity of views on regional issues especially the grave issues in Afghanistan. He also said that Saudi Arabia always attaches great importance to its fraternal relations with

Pakistan and considers it a sincere friend and brother. He said that these relations are not only among the ruling hierarchies but within the people of both countries.

Chairman Shura Council said that the Parliaments of both countries could play an important role in bringing both nations closer besides promoting bilateral cooperation. He also assured the Speaker that Saudi Arabia would continue its support to Pakistan in its efforts to bring regional stability especially in the context of the volatile situation of Afghanistan. He agreed that the Kashmir issue was a flashpoint, thus needs the attention of the international community.

He suggested holding a parliamentary conference of Islamic Countries in Afghanistan and Kashmir. He praised the role of Pakistani expatriates in the economic development of Saudi Arabia. He assured the Speaker of the resolution of issues as soon the pandemic situation eases. The Chairman Saudi Shura informed that 583 scholarships have been reserved for Pakistani students in Saudi universities.

On a special invitation of Speaker Asad Qaiser, a parliamentary delegation led by Chairman of Shoura Council of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia H.E. Dr. Abdullah Bin Mohammad Al Al-Sheikh visited Pakistan.

The Chairman Saudi Shura informed that 583 scholarships have been reserved for Pakistani students in Saudi universities.



Pakistan attaches utmost significance to its ties with Turkmenistan: President Alvi



By Mian Fazal Elahi

President Dr Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan attaches utmost significance to its ties with Turkmenistan as the two countries enjoy excellent relations in various fields, besides having unanimity of views on major international and regional fora including UN, ECO and SCO.

He said that Pakistan is committed to early completion of TAPI pipeline project.

The President expressed these views while talking to the visiting Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, Mr. Meredov Rashid Ovezgeldiyevich, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Talking to the Turkmen Foreign Minister, the President highlighted the importance of regional connectivity and economic integration, saying that both the countries should join efforts to boost regional connectivity.

The meeting proposed to establish a committee under the Joint Working Group to expedite the

process of early completion of TAPI pipeline.

The President congratulated the visiting dignitary on successful holding of the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC.

He expressed the hope that the Extraordinary Session of OIC countries would succeed in

The meeting proposed to establish a committee under the Joint Working Group to expedite the process of early completion of TAPI pipeline.

getting the international support to address the

growing crisis in Afghanistan.

He urged the international community to realize the gravity of situation in Afghanistan and support it in this hour of need.

He underlined that Afghanistan should not be further squeezed and the blocked money needed to be released to counter the worsening economic and humanitarian crisis.

The President recalled his recent visit to Turkmenistan and said that he held very fruitful meetings with the Turkmen President and both sides emphasized the need for early completion of TAPI Gas pipeline project.

The Turkmen Foreign Minister conveyed to the President the warmest wishes from President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow.

He added that the visit of President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi to Turkmenistan was a great support for them which would further boost bilateral cooperation between the two brotherly countries.



Cabinet approved

Pakistan's first National Security Policy

The National Security Committee, which is the government's top-most consultative and decision-making body for coordinating issues pertaining to national security, approved the policy.

The session, presided over by Prime Minister Imran, was attended by the federal ministers for foreign affairs, defence, information and broadcasting, interior, finance and human rights, the national security adviser, services chiefs and senior officials.

The five-year policy document covering the period 2022-26 is being flaunted by the government as the first-ever strategy paper of its kind that sets out the state's national security vision and guidelines for the attainment of those goals. It will guide the government's foreign, defence and economic policies and decision-making.

It reportedly seeks to leverage the symbiotic linkages among human security, economic security and military security with safety and prosperity of citizens being at the centre of the whole-of-government approach.

It covers both traditional and non-traditional security challenges, including economy, food, water, military security, terrorism, population growth and dealings with the external world, especially major powers.

The document places special emphasis on economic diplomacy as the focus of Pakistan's foreign policy aimed at avoiding being sucked into bloc politics in a world order under transition. It has been prepared by the National Security Division.

Several rounds of feedback consultations

on multiple drafts were held with all state institutions, including provincial governments and the governments of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Over 600 academics, analysts, civil society members and students across Pakistan have been consulted to make the policy process inclusive.

A draft of the policy was earlier this month also shared with the Parliamentary Committee on National Security. The meeting was, however, boycotted by the opposition parties.

The five-year policy document covering the period 2022-26 is being flaunted by the government as the first-ever strategy paper of its kind that sets out the state's national security vision and guidelines for the attainment of those goals. It will guide the government's foreign, defence and economic policies and decision-making.

The National Security Policy is expected to be a dynamic document that will be reviewed each year and on the transition of government to help keep it abreast with its policy priorities in a fast-changing global environment. Work on the policy began in 2014.

National Security Adviser (NSA) Moeed Yusuf

announced that the federal cabinet has given the green light to the country's first-ever National Security Policy, which was approved by the National Security Committee a day earlier.

"It is a truly historic achievement; a citizen-centric comprehensive [national security] policy with economic security at the core will now be pursued in earnest," Yusuf said in a series of tweets.

The policy, which has not been shared publicly yet, will help guide sectoral policies for the fulfillment of the country's national security objectives, the adviser said.

He thanked the civil and military leadership for their support and input, adding that the policy would "never have come to light without Prime Minister Imran Khan's constant leadership and encouragement".

"The success of the policy will lie in its implementation for which a plan has been developed," the NSA further said, adding that a public version of it will be launched by the premier in due course.

Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar said the policy was an important milestone in strengthening Pakistan's national security.

"The comprehensive framework recognises interlinkages between various strands of national security, imperative to meet emerging challenges in [the] evolving global environment through a whole of government effort," he said.

"Pakistan's armed forces will play their due part in achieving the vision laid out in the policy," the ISPR director general said.



Pakistan's decision to host the extraordinary session of the OIC, appreciated

PM Imran urged the world not to link their support with the Taliban, but rather that they must think of 40 million people

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

The 17th Extraordinary Session of Council of Foreign Ministers of Organization of Islamic Cooperation held in Islamabad. Envoys from 57 Islamic nations as well as observer delegations particularly the UN system, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), international and regional organizations and non-OIC members including the P-5, European Union and major countries like Germany and Japan, were among the attendees.

The highlight of the summit was, amongst other things, the Western delegates meeting with the Taliban team led by the Interim Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi.

Afghanistan is heading towards chaos and the 'biggest man-made disaster', warned Prime Minister Imran Khan and called for devising an immediate strategy to address the dire humanitarian crisis in the war-torn country.

In his keynote address at the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Islamabad, PM Imran warned that if the

international community failed to act in a timely way, Afghanistan could potentially become the biggest man-made disaster. "Unless action is taken immediately, Afghanistan is heading for chaos. When it cannot pay salaries to public servants, doctors and nurses, any government is going to collapse. But chaos suits no one. It certainly does not suit the United States," he added.

The prime minister said that owing to a dearth of resources, if the Afghan government remained

unable to fight terrorism, other countries may also face its spillover impact.

Mentioning the presence of Daesh in Afghanistan, and terror attacks inside Pakistan by it from across the Afghan border, the prime minister said the only way to handle the terror outfit was a stable Afghanistan. He said Daesh was capable of carrying out international attacks.

The prime minister said Pakistan also had the



same worry, having faced the biggest collateral damage of the Afghan war with the loss of 80,000 people and a shattered economy, and displacement of 3.5 million people.

The prime minister welcomed the delegates in Pakistan and said ironically, Pakistan had hosted the OIC moot on Afghanistan 41 years ago as no country suffered from conflicts as much as Afghanistan.

He said the situation in Afghanistan was also caused by “years of corrupt government, suspension of foreign aid, freezing of foreign assets and a dysfunctional banking system” which could lead to the collapse of any state.

The prime minister said the OIC had a huge responsibility as it was our religious duty, too, to support the suffering Afghan brethren.

The prime minister urged the world not to link their support with the Taliban, but rather that they must think of 40 million people.

However, he also said that the Taliban would also have to understand that formation of an inclusive government, respect for human rights, particularly women, and disallowing the use of Afghan soil for terrorism in other countries would pave the way for international aid to Afghanistan.

The prime minister, however, asked the international community to be sensitive to the cultural traditions of Afghanistan as well as adjoining areas in Pakistan, particularly considering girls’ education.

He said in case of violation of their traditions, the families would never send their girls to school even if incentivised, but they would willingly do it without any stipend if they felt satisfied.



OIC Secretary General called upon the international community to ensure Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorism.

The prime minister said any chaos in Afghanistan would lead to the mass exodus of refugees which would be unaffordable for Pakistan.

He said developed countries had a problem even with a few thousand refugees, so how could a developing country like Pakistan host hundreds of thousands of them.

He also called for OIC’s unified response on the issues of Kashmir and Palestine, where people were struggling for their democratic rights



guaranteed by the United Nations.

To avert the danger of a complete economic meltdown, F.M. Shah Mahmood Qureshi proposed a six-point plan to OIC for coordinating aid, rebuilding Afghan institutions, increasing investment and providing technical expertise to resuscitate the Afghan economy. He said we should agree to increase investment for the

Afghan people bilaterally or through the OIC in areas such as education, health, technical and vocational skills to the Afghan youth.

A group of experts comprising the OIC, the UN and international financial institutions be established to consider ways and means to facilitate Afghan access to legitimate banking system and ease liquidity challenge of Afghan



people.

We should focus on enhancing food security of the Afghan people and the Islamic organization of food security must lead this effort.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi said we should engage with the Afghan authorities to help meet the expectations of the international community regarding political and social inclusivity, respect for human rights especially of women and girls and combating terrorism.

Alluding to the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and threat of economic meltdown there, the Foreign Minister said this is a moment to extend a collective helping hand and not withhold support.

He said that Pakistan concurred with the United Nations Secretary General that the humanitarian assistance be provided without conditions.

In his remarks, OIC Secretary General Hissein Brahim Taha said the OIC has always supported the Afghan people and the role of the OIC member countries in delivering humanitarian assistance is more necessary than ever before because of the growing challenges faced by the Afghan people. He called on the member countries to deliver humanitarian assistance through the OIC mission in Kabul.

The OIC Secretary General also called upon the international community to ensure Afghanistan never again becomes a safe haven for terrorism.

The OIC Secretary General was appreciative of Pakistan for hosting this important meeting saying this reaffirms its total commitment to the issues faced by our wider Muslim community.

In his remarks, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu stressed that solidarity with the Afghan people is our moral obligation and religious duty. He said the OIC should play a

OIC Secretary General Appreciates Pakistan for hosting this important meeting saying this reaffirms its total commitment to the issues faced by our wider Muslim community.

leading role in mobilizing international support for the Afghan people.

In his remarks, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths said Afghanistan's economy is now in free fall and if we do not act decisively and with compassion, this fall will

pull down the entire population with it.

Alluding to the dire situation in Afghanistan, Martin Griffiths said the need for liquidity and stabilization of the banking system is now urgent not only to save the lives of the Afghan people but also to enable humanitarian organizations to respond.

He said the UN stands firmly with the OIC in its efforts to contribute to the humanitarian endeavor.

The Emergency Relief Coordinator said Emergency Relief Coordinator we will seek funding for our largest ever appeal of four point five billion dollars next year to help the most vulnerable in Afghanistan.

Addressing the OIC meeting, Chairman Islamic Development Bank Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser said that immediate humanitarian relief to Afghanistan is essential to build foundation for economic recovery and development. He said there is a need for medium to long term engagement to promote self-reliance and development beyond immediate humanitarian relief through reconstruction activities.

The Chairman Islamic Development Bank also emphasized the need for the development of agriculture sector in Afghanistan to ensure food security and poverty reduction. He said it is also important to economically empower the Afghan communities especially youth and women.





Addressing the conference, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said Saudi Arabia is committed to joint actions to mitigate the hardships and sufferings faced by the people of Afghanistan.

He said humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan can lead to further instability and impact both regional and international peace.

The Saudi Foreign Minister said the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is committed to the joint actions under the umbrella of the OIC to achieve the objectives of peace, security and helping the needy. He said the people of Afghanistan need urgent need.

Prince Faisal bin Farhan said the situation in Afghanistan calls for communal action from all parties and rejection of all forms and manifestations of terrorism and extremism.

He said the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia urges the member states of the OIC and members of other international organizations to partake in extending the necessary international support to the Afghan people and to prevent degradation of the economic situation.

Speaking on behalf of the Arab group of the OIC member states, Foreign Minister of Jordan Ayman Safadi said we need to act together to protect the sisterly Afghans whose half of the population is facing dangers. He said we need to take initiatives and become effective as well as proactive to protect our brothers.

He said today Afghanistan stands at the crossroads. He said any chaos in the country could lead to instability and resurgence of terrorism there.

The Jordanian Foreign Minister said we have reached a stage where we can only witness the right decision that calls for negotiations and reaching out to each other and to the



entire community with shared goals to help Afghanistan to become once again an effective member of international community.

He said we will be the most adversely affected of the situation in Afghanistan if we do not act in time and perform our duty to help the Afghan people.

Foreign Minister of Niger Yusuf Mohammed, in his remarks, said that over 20 million people of Afghanistan will be facing food crisis by the end of this year. He called for provision of required support to the Afghan people without interfering into the domestic affairs of Afghanistan.

He said it is also important to call upon our brothers in Afghanistan to involve the international community in order to undertake their international commitment and they also have to respect all segments of the Afghan society according to the principles of Islam.

The Niger's leader, who also represented the African Group in OIC said also raised for the legitimate rights of the people of Palestine.

In his remarks, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths said Afghanistan's economy is now in free fall and if we do not act decisively and with compassion, this fall will pull down the entire population with it.

Addressing the OIC meeting, Chairman Islamic Development Bank Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser called for immediate humanitarian relief to Afghanistan to build foundation for its economic recovery and development.

Both the United States and China appreciated the summit and acknowledged Pakistan's role as a bridge state in bringing global leadership to Islamabad to address the pressing issue of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.





PAKISTAN AND KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA SIGN AGREEMENTS FOR WORKERS RECRUITMENT AND SKILLS VERIFICATION

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed two agreements related to Workers' Recruitment and Skills Verification programme of Pakistani workforce being employed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The signing ceremony of the agreements took place during the visit of Mr. Shafqat Mahmood, Federal Minister of Education, Professional Training and National Heritage to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Agreement on Workers' Recruitment will contribute toward further streamlining the process of export of workforce from Pakistan in diverse professions in the Kingdom, while safeguarding their due rights and providing comprehensive legal protection to Pakistani workers employed in Saudi Arabia. The agreement will also help in resolving contractual disputes and taking

legal recourse against recruitment offices, companies or agencies for any violation. The Agreement on Skills Verification will enhance export of skilled and certified Pakistani workforce to the Kingdom. It may be recalled that imparting modern skills and ensuring certification of Pakistani workforce to improve their employability abroad, are key areas among the Prime Minister's Priority Sectors. Certification for our skilled manpower will create opportunities for technical workforce in Pakistan to get internationally recognized trainings and certifications. Signing of these agreements paves the way for building strategic partnerships and complementary relations between various Ministries and Departments of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. In line with the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, quality service delivery to the expatriate community remains a key priority of the Ministry and Pakistan Missions Abroad.



In 'labor of love,' Pakistani artist carves birthday gift for Saudi king



By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

In what he calls a “labor of love and respect,” Pakistani bas-relief sculptor Khalil Najmi has carved a special set of portraits of King Salman that he hopes to present to the Saudi monarch as a gift on his birthday, December 31.

Najmi has been working as a bas artist since the 1980s, painting and carving portraits of world leaders that have been acquired by diplomats and top Pakistani government and military officials. But the greatest honor of his life, the artist says, is if he can present his work to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques “as a birthday gift.”

“The portraits of Saudi leadership are the outcome of three years of a labor of love and respect,” Najmi told Arab News earlier this month.

He said he had spent three years working on relief portraits of King Salman, his late father and the founder of Saudi Arabia, King Abdulaziz, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The three sets of portraits of the Saudi leaders are made in wood, bronze and fiber resin. The resin ones Najmi has painted to achieve a three-dimensional photo effect.

“For the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, every Pakistani holds deep love and respect,” he said. “I want to touch

the hearts of Saudis through my art work.”

Najmi’s work also includes portraits of UAE leaders Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, and Sultan Qaboos of Oman. In an interview with Arab News in September, when asked about his ultimate dream as an acclaimed artist, he said he wanted to present the portraits of Saudi leaders to Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman.

“I have produced these portraits with great love for the Saudi royal family,” he said. “I hope he can graciously grant me the honor to personally present them to him as a souvenir.”



Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ.

During the meeting, matter of mutual interest, regional security, and current situation especially collaboration / partnership in tackling the Humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan were discussed.

COAS said that Pakistan understands the role of Japan in Global and Regional affairs furthermore COAS said that, we look forward to increase our bilateral relationship.

Gen Bajwa underscored the urgency for swiftly devising an institutionalized mechanism for channeling humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan in order to avert a looming humanitarian catastrophe. He also underscored the importance of peace and reconciliation initiatives in Afghanistan.

Gen Bajwa also emphasized that peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute is essential for

Pakistan understands the role of Japan in Global and Regional affairs furthermore, we look forward to increase our bilateral relationship, COAS

stability in South Asia and that Pakistan wants cordial ties with all its neighbors in pursuit of regional peace and prosperity.

The Ambassador of Japan Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro appreciated Pakistan's role in Afghan situation, special efforts for regional stability and pledged to play his part for further improvement in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels.





King Salman send aid convey to Afghanistan

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Saudi Arabia's King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KS relief) has sent two relief planes to Afghanistan, carrying 1,647 food baskets and 192 aid bags it will benefit around 280,000 people in Afghanistan.

The Supervisor General of KS relief, Abdullah al-Rabeeh, stated that the aid comes via the implementation of the directives of Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Al-Rabeeh also said that the Saudi relief air bridge to Afghanistan includes the operation of six relief planes, which carry essential food and aid, weighing 197 tons and 238 kilograms.

Each Kit comprises two quilts, men's and women's shawls, 10 pairs of socks for men, women and children, 4 children caps, 2 set of children sweater & jacket and men's and women's warmers.

KS relief will be sending further aid carried by 200 relief trucks, which will be launched via a land convoy from Pakistan and distributed to families in Afghanistan, according to al-Rabeeh. KS relief is the humanitarian arm of Saudi Arabia, as it manages, coordinates and supervises the Kingdom's international aid.



Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Charge d' Affaires of United States of America Ms. Angela Aggeler called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser at Parliament House



Federal Minister for Narcotics control Birg (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah met with the Ambassador of Kazakhstan H.E. mr. Yerzhan Kistafin and Liason Officer of National Security Committee of Republic of Kazakhstan col berik Jannassayev in Islamabad.



Japanese Ambassador Wada Mitsuhiro called on Federal Minister Syed Ali Haider Zaidi to discuss trade development opportunities in Maritime Sector



Secretary General of Saarc, Mr. Esala Ruwan weerakoon called on Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at Ministry of Foreign Affairs



6 member delegation headed by national security advisor of Pakistan Dr Moeed Yusuf visited Moscow on the invitation of Secretary of the Security council of Russia



Advisor to the PM on commerce and investment Abdul Razak Dawood in a meeting with H.E. M Madikiza high commissioner of South Africa



The Ambassador of State of qatar H.E. Shaikh Saoud bin abdul rahman al thani called on Federal Minister for education Shafqat Mahmood at Islamabad.



Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed expressing his condolences with Sri Lankan High Commissioner at Islamabad.

Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Ali Haider Zaidi with Ms. Aishth Nahula minister of Trasport and Civil Aviation of the Maldives on the Sidelines of the International Maritime Organization Assembly Meeting in London



Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri in a meeting with Deputy Speaker of Shura Council of Qatar Dr. Hamda bint Hassan Al Sulaiti



Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi meeting his Qatari counterpart Minister for Transport Jassim Saif Ahmed Al Sulaiti



Member delegation of the US senate including senator Richard Burg John called on Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad.



Secretary General NATO Jens Stoltenberg received Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at NATO HQ's in Brussels



Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Brig (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah presenting Souvenir to the Canadian High Commissioner



Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium Spohie Willeme received the foreign minister of Pakistan Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi upon arrival at the Egmont palace Brussels



Federal Minister Syed Fakhar Imam received the ambassador of UAE to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Alzaabi



Outgoing Australian HC pays farewell call on COAS

Geoffrey Shaw, Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan paid a farewell call to General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and bilateral cooperation were discussed. COAS

stressed upon the need for sincere efforts to avert a looming humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

He underscored the importance of peace and reconciliation initiatives in Afghanistan. COAS thanked visiting dignitary for his services in Pakistan and acknowledged his contributions

for fostering strong ties between the two countries.

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's role in Afghan situation, role in regional stability and pledged to keep working for better relations between the two countries.



Greek Ambassador pays farewell call on COAS Bajwa

By Monitoring

Ambassador of Greece to Pakistan Andreas Papastavrou paid a farewell call to the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa at Pakistan army's general headquarters in Rawalpindi.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), matters relating to mutual interest, regional security situation especially the current situation in Afghanistan, and cooperation in

various fields came under discussion during the meeting.

General Bajwa stressed the need for global convergence on Afghanistan and sincere efforts to avert a looming humanitarian catastrophe.

The COAS said that Pakistan remains committed to cooperate with its international partners for peace in the region and ensuring a stable and prosperous future for the Afghan people.

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's role in the Afghan situation, special efforts for border management, role in regional stability and pledged to keep working for better relations between the two countries.

The Army Chief thanked the Greek Ambassador Andreas Papastavrou for his services in Pakistan and acknowledged his contributions to fostering strong ties between the two countries.



Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul Freight Train will play a vital role in improving economies

By Ayaz Khan Bazai

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Minister for Railways Azam Khan Swati, Adviser to Prime Minister of Pakistan for Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood, Ambassador of Iran Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini, Ambassadors of Turkey, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan inaugurated the Economic Cooperation Organization ECO rail Islamabad Tehran Istanbul Freight Train in Margalla Railway Station, Islamabad.

The train has resumed its operations after a gap of 10 years. The train will cover 1,990 km inside Pakistan, passing through Quetta into Taftan at the Iranian border and on to Tehran and Tabriz covering about 2,570 km and the train will reach Istanbul after covering 2,000 km in Turkey.

Currently two freight forwarders, Maxtel Logistics and Haroon Brothers would carry the trade. In the first phase waggoned trains would carry the trade followed by containerized trains in second phase.

Azam Khan Swati, Pakistan's Minister of Railways said that strengthening and expanding ECO rail cooperation can contribute to regional stability

and peace. Adding to that Swati highlighted the importance of ITI freight train and stated that this service will open the doors for business and connectivity in the region. He further said that passenger service will also start soon.

The Advisor to the Prime Minister for Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood said that

Regional Connectivity is one of very important pillars of our Strategic Trade Policy Framework

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmoos Qureshi appreciated the resuming of ITI, furthermore he said ITI train will play important role in in regional connectivity and will promote economic activity in the region.



Global trends: possible impact in 2022

By Gen. Talat Masood

As the year 2021 comes to a close it is important to look at the major global and regional events and trends that will influence the politics and economy of the world and how these would affect our lives in the coming years.

Covid-19 will be a major challenge especially for Europe, Russia, Latin America and Africa. China, by adopting stern measures, is expected to keep its spread under control. Although Pakistan has been able to largely restrict its spread by the use of vaccines, the new strain of Omicron and resurgence remain a threat.

The remarkable achievement in the field of medicine was the speed at which vaccines had been developed by major producers and distributed globally in less than a year.

The world is still adjusting to the adverse fallout of the pandemic on the global economy with strategic significance for the world order. The US and most countries suffered economic decline and are now striving to revive it, although the impact of the new variants on global health introduces another element of uncertainty. One country whose economy continues to fare well despite the pandemic is China.

In 2020 and 2021 its economy grew by approximately 2.5%. This was no mean achievement and according to experts would hasten its march to be the world's largest economy by 2027.

Economic success and political stability have given China the confidence to take measures to consolidate its internal power and extend its outer reach by being more geopolitically assertive. These tendencies were reflected in its supply of medicines and vaccines and its handling of the territorial dispute with India and in dealing with the integration of Hong Kong with the mainland.

The US and Western countries are taking several economic and political measures to thwart China's rise that have implications for countries like Pakistan.

The spread of Covid-19 as a pandemic is a stark reminder that nations need to prepare themselves to deal with such extraordinary challenges. Unfortunately, instead of cooperating in fighting the pandemic at the global level and complementing each other's efforts, the US and China are competing

strategically that could lead to dividing the world in different spheres of influence. The alternate view is that in some ways competition brings in the best and allows less developed nations to benefit from both.

Major powers, by delivering vaccines and medicines to developing countries, have used the spread of pandemic to strategic advantage. Claiming superiority within the hierarchy of vaccines in terms of quality is another area of competition between major powers.

The US and Western countries grade Chinese vaccines inferior in its effectiveness but irrespective of their claim the Chinese through better organisation and mass vaccinations have been the most successful in combating the pandemic.

To prevent the ill effects of climate change, China and the US ought to be cooperating closely, but on the contrary, the same instincts of competition govern their policies.

The race for having monopoly on raw materials that are essential components for achieving a carbon-free economy such as batteries, magnets, etcetera has already started. The very concept of inter-dependence for promoting global economy has been replaced by severe competition and mutual sanctions.

Countries of the developing world are under pressure for choosing one or the other major power which is reminiscent of the Cold War era. Many major polluters like Brazil and other Latin American, South Asian and African countries remain indifferent to this ominous challenge.

A comprehensive approach has to be adopted in dealing with traditional and non-traditional threats. Nonetheless, as indications are the Sino-US competition would intensify. Perhaps it would not be as serious and conflictual as the US-Soviet Cold War but still create sharp divisions within the international system and place countries like Pakistan in difficult position that aims at having a strategic partnership with China and good relations with the US.

Some of the European countries like Germany and Italy, besides being part of the Western camp, would like to maintain mutually beneficial economic and commercial relations with China.

The outcome of the competition between China and the US will also depend on the stability and intrinsic strength of their political and economic



systems. No doubt, China has made remarkable progress in promoting economic progress and political stability. It claims to have practically wiped out poverty which is an extraordinary achievement considering that their population of over a billion people.

But will China be able to continue with its upward march in the face of the hostile economic and political policies of the US? Is it that easy for the US to shift its economic focus away from China? Which alternate markets are available to it that have the capacity for mass production and at the same cost?

The progress in the scientific and technological field and the stability of the political systems will ultimately determine whether the US will continue to influence and dominate the world or in a decade or so China will be a serious rival.

Russia and China presently are focused on the stability of nations at the regional level. China's interest in the stability of Pakistan is for everyone to see. Along with Russia and Central Asian states, it is working towards promoting peace in Afghanistan.

The spillover effect from an unstable Afghanistan seriously affects the security and economy of neighbouring countries. It is disconcerting the way the Taliban government is treating women and confirms that they haven't changed from their medieval thinking.

Their policies could encourage retrogressive elements and groups within Pakistan and neighbouring countries. More so it would give the US and Western countries good reason to withhold aid and recognition at the official level.

No less important is the race to dominate the space. In this, the US and Russia will remain in the lead but China is expected to fast catch up. It is making progress with several space-related initiatives which the US and its allies find disconcerting. There are clear signs that space would be another area of competition between major powers.

Remembering BB & Her Journey to Martyrdom



By Bashir Riaz

Shadow, I will miss you. I thank u for all you did for the party and me from the time I met you in 1977. Forgive me if I hurt you but I want you to know I always values your support.

God bless you. Bibi” In this brief email, sent from her Black berry phone, Mohtarma Shaheed

Benazir Bhutto was foretelling her journey to martyrdom. Often, people who are strong are also cold and distant. But not Shaheed Bibi. She was the iron-lady of Pakistan and yet her heart was filled with empathy for others.

She always stood by her party workers during difficult times and they remember her compassion even today. Her separation forever has strengthened their connection with her, as they are more determined than ever to carry forward her vision and her legacy.

Shaheed Benazir Bhutto was also inspired by Sufi thought and a sense of humility reflected in her personality. Retrospectively, it is as if she knew what was coming. She had a sense of the upcoming journey that led to her martyrdom. One day, we had a conversation over lunch in August of 2007 which has become etched in my memory.

“Bibi, you are returning to Pakistan, please accept my apology for any unintentional contempt or disregard on my part.” “No, I should apologise to you for any wrong on my part,” she replied. “Life is unpredictable and indeed, I should apologise for any shortcomings on my part,” I said.

She reiterated her comment and said, “You will live longer than me.” I was shocked and said, “May you live a long and healthy life.” She said, “Bash, you will live a long life—longer than mine.”

Her words came true on the unfortunate eve of December 27, 2007 when her life was cut short and she was martyred. That day, she passed on from this world, while surrounded by her supporters, just after a jalsa where slogans of long live Bhutto and long live Pakistan were reverberating.

She gave her life during a gathering for the upcoming election at that time. Her efforts for democracy are undeniable and till the end, she

stood by her mantra that democracy is the best revenge.

Even today, when I think about BB’s words, I wonder, how did she know? I don’t know the answer to that even now, but indeed, she had an inkling, a premonition about what she was facing and yet, she did not step away or hide from the danger that was always lurking around the Bhuttos. There is no doubt that she was a brave soul.

On August 24th of 2007 was Sanam Bhutto’s birthday. Shaheed BB had already sent her children to Dubai but she stayed behind for her sister’s birthday.

It would be the last birthday they celebrated together. BB was to return to Dubai the next day. She was supposed to go to the airport from her cousin’s house and she called me there, as it was our tradition that I would say goodbye to her when she would be leaving and welcome her upon arrival at the airport.

That day, however, this was not possible due to shortage of time. It was the first occasion when I missed the opportunity to say goodbye to her before she took off. Her travel plans were kept confidential because a lot of people wanted to meet her if they knew she would be present at the airport.

I still had the opportunity to have a detailed conversation with her and I expressed my unease that it feels like a wrong start, a broken tradition, just before her historic return to Pakistan.

On October 18, 2007, the suicide bombing targeting her was the beginning of a series of unfortunate events. She survived that day but it was a clear message to deter her from her mission of propagating democracy.

She refused to cower and went to condole with the families of her workers who had lost their lives

in the Karsaz incident. She continued her election campaign as well. In early November, she visited Lahore and was staying at Latif Khosa’s house. She met journalists and party-workers during this time. But she was limited to that house by the government to contain her political activities

. Her meetings were monitored and even I was not allowed to see her on the pretext that I had just met her a day ago. She went to Islamabad where in a press-conference, she encouraged party workers to continue preparations for the elections at full pace and do not get discouraged by the tactics of the government.

In this, she stood firmly with her people and she herself enthusiastically participated in the election campaign.

Shaheed BB was a strong believer in the reality of death. No one can slow it down or stop it—no one can halt the bullet after the trigger has been pulled.

This way of thinking gave her immense strength and she raised her voice at the international level against atrocities being committed against oppressed nations. The leaders of Palestine called her “Daughter of Islam”. In Delhi, she accepted and granted legitimacy to the All Parties Hurriyat Conference as the voice of Kashmiris.

Life was made difficult for Shaheed BB but no one can forget or erase her footprints from Pakistani politics, and especially not from the minds of the millions of her supporters whose hearts continue to beat for Benazir Bhutto, even fourteen years after her untimely demise. Zinda hai Bibi, Zinda hai.

The writer is the former Press Secretary for Benazir Bhutto, Chairperson of Bhutto Legacy Foundation and Senior Advisor to Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Courtesy to Pakistan Observer



Investigation of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto assassination



By A. Rehman Malik

Fourteen years have passed and PPP workers are still waiting for justice in the Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto assassination case.

As a nation, we were so unfortunate that we lost such a visionary, heroic and charismatic international leader. The tragic incident of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's assassination took place during the caretaker government when General Musharraf was President.

The initial investigation was carried out by the then hierarchy and it was very surprising that the crime scenes were washed away immediately after the crimes both in Karsaz Karachi and Liaquat Bagh Rawalpindi whereas the washing of crimes is never done in such cases especially in murder cases and that in the case of Former Prime Minister of the country.

Instead of keeping the evidence safe, they were ordered to clear, which raises several questions. All these aspects and various suspicions were taken seriously so that investigations could be carried out to uncover the facts and reach the real culprits.

The Liaquat Bagh attack was not the first while many life attacks were made that included first in 1993 when Osama bin Laden had pumped a lot of finance to religious parties in Pakistan, second in the same year when Abdul Shakoor, Yousaf Ramzi, Capt. Abdul Hakim @ Majid, Munir Ibrahim, and Abdul Shakoor planned to assassinate Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto during her election campaign at Nishtar Park, Karachi through shooting for which weapons were provided by Khalid Al-Sheikh (mastermind of 9/11 incident) through Abdul Shakoor.

In another attempt, on 12th December 2007, one of the terrorists was able to touch the vehicle of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto after a PPP gathering at Pabbi and the same terrorist group kept on chasing Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and conspired and planned assassination attempt on her at Arbab Niaz Stadium, Peshawar after public



meeting on 26th December 2007. The case of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto assassination was transferred from Punjab police to FIA under the orders of the then Federal Government. A high-powered JIT was constituted for further investigation of the case.

The Team (JIT) of FIA led by Mr. Tariq Khosa, included Mr. Khalid Qureshi, the then Director CTW/FIA as lead investigator, Mr. Bin Amin, the then IGP Islamabad, Mr. Azad Khan, Mr. Sajjad Haider, and Mr. Ghulam Asghar Jatoti. The outcome of the investigation by the JIT is fully reflected in the report. This report dispels the false impression engineered by some with their ulterior motives that the PPP leadership during its tenure had been unable to investigate the case to its logical conclusion which stands negated as below.

The summary of the investigation will further shed the light on the investigation and trial and also how Ch Zulfikar Ali, the special prosecutor of this case was assassinated. It remained a mystery in the minds of investigators as to how the only

US drone hit in Khyber Agency to kill Obaid ur Rehman alias Chattan who was the main handler of Bibi's murder plan.

Despite all difficulties, a hidden force was acting odd to stop the investigation, the courageous police and FIA officers managed to arrest many and were able to piece the evidence together and bring the accused to justice.

The accused were found guilty and the competent court convicted them and the matter is pending in court. The investigation process was very transparent and both the Parliament and the Sindh Assembly were kept informed. It has been recently found that one suicide bomber, Ikramullah, who slipped away from the scene and after spending a long time with Bait Ullah Mehsud moved to Afghanistan. The incumbent chief of TTP Mufti Noor Wali has confirmed his presence in Qandahar and it is confirmed that two life attempts have been made last year but he escaped. It is also a mystery about which odd forces want to kill him as even a day before to appear in an interview with BBC London, he was

attacked in Afghanistan resultantly the interview could not take place.

I had written a letter to then-Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal on January 30, 2018 demanding that a request be made to Afghan president to deport Ikramullah, a surviving suicide bomber, and Abu Mansoor Asim Mufti Noor Wali, the author of 'Inqilab Mehsud South Waziristan: From British Raj to American Imperialism'. I had stated "Interrogation Ikramullah's and Abu Mansoor Asim Mufti Noor Wali will further unearth the facts of the conspiracy behind assassination of Benazir Bhutto," I had also requested that Interpol be also requested to issue red notices against Ikramullah and Abu Mansoor Asim Mufti Noor Wali enabling Pakistan to request for the deportation of these two TTP leaders."

Sadly, no progress was reported despite of the second reminder to expedite Ikramullah deportation. I had also written to the government of Afghanistan for their deportation but no response.

Later on May 17, 2018, in another letter to then Minister of Interior, while taking notice of the release of five terrorists of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) who were declared guilty of murdering Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, by Joint Investigation Team (JIT) of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), I as Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Interior had demanded to immediacy place the names of Abdul Rashid, Aitzaz Shah, Rafaqat Hussain, Husnain Gul and Sher Zaman on the Exit Control List (ECL) to avoid them fleeing from the country.

The salient features of the said investigations are as under:

The crime scene was washed away by the then administration within one hour and twenty minutes of the incident, which had a negative effect on the collection of forensic evidence of the incident.

The washing away of the crime scene of any such incident was nothing but to hamper the investigation of the case. This act of the then administration was, therefore, clearly against the law. Senior police officers who were found involved in tampering with the police official log register were prosecuted and convicted.

The JIT also investigated the washing away of the crime scene and found the involvement of officials. The JIT interviewed and interrogated several people in this regard and the list is in the JIT report. The JIT was able to identify the conspirators, instigators, abettors, handlers and executors and brought them to justice.

Many miscreants involved in the murder were mysteriously killed at various check posts and full details of such accuseds are part of the JIT report. The UN investigators also found that the then government did not provide adequate security for the former prime minister, according to the Blue

Book.

Investigators found that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had been on the hit list since 1993, which was set up during the investigation.

Yousuf Ramzi had made two life attempts on Benazir Bhutto in Karachi. The security escort responsible for the safe journey of the motorcade of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto from residence to Liaquat Bagh and back was removed and shifted to another place before Mohtarma had finished her public address. The responsibility was fixed wherein the then CCPO Rawalpindi was responsible for removing the security escort to another place of duty.

The contingency plan in case of an emergency was not followed and the damaged vehicle of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was diverted to a hospital further away from the incident scene and the ambulance and paramedical staff were not detailed in the security plan.

The then CCPO of Rawalpindi police did not allow the doctors to carry out the post-mortem of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and gave false statements in this connection.

The then Federal Government had invited a team of Scotland Yard police of UK with a very limited scope of investigation. They were only tasked to find out the cause of death. Although the team concluded that Mohtarma was not hit by any bullet which caused her death, but this conclusion was not in absolute terms.

The confessions of the following accused persons were substantiated with independent forensic evidence to prove their criminal act in the court of law including the DNA of the joggers used by the terrorist/suicide bomber, recovered from the house of one of the accused persons.

Aitezaz Shah had knowledge of the conspiracy besides having identified the voice of Baitullah Mehsud. Sher Zaman also had knowledge of the conspiracy. Hasnain Gul was in contact with conspirators in Madrassa Haqqania, i.e. Qari Ismail, Ibad-ur-Rehman, and Nasrullah. He received the handler, Nasrullah, and the suicide bomber at Pir Wadahi Bus Stand and lodged them at the house of Rafaqat Hussain, co-accused. He also conducted reconnaissance in November 2007 and kept the suicide jacket at his home. Muhammad Rafaqat, along with Hasnain Gul picked the suicide bomber and his handler from the Bus Stand and kept them at his house overnight. He also took Nasrullah to Liaquat Bagh and Rashid Ahmed Turabi had knowledge of the conspiracy. He also identified Abdullah alias Saddam, Qari Ismail, Nasrullah, and suicide bomber Bilal.

It may be mentioned here that the PPP leadership was of the firm view that the assassination of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had international dimensions with a wider conspiracy plan. The PPP Government, therefore, requested the UN Secretary General to constitute an Inquiry

Commission to investigate the case in order to unearth the conspiracy. The Inquiry Commission submitted its Report in May 2010 wherein it primarily held the then Federal Government responsible for not providing Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed adequate and proper security. It also discredited the findings of the committee appointed by the then Punjab Government with regard to washing of the crime scene. On the basis of the findings of the Inquiry Commission, the Federal Government decided to transfer the case to FIA for further investigation and constituted a high-powered JIT as mentioned above.

The investigation carried out by the JIT had led to the facts that:

The conspiracy was hatched at Room No 96 of Madrassa Haqqania, Akora Khattak by the former student of the said Madrassa. One Ibad-ur-Rehman, a former student of Madrassa Haqqania had brought the suicide bomber to the Madrassa from then TTP chief Baitullah Mahsud and stayed in Room No. 96 overnight.

The JIT collected the original admission record with photographs, addresses and parentage from the Madrassa of those students who conspired and then executed the conspiracy.

Accused Nasrullah, who had brought suicide bombers in Rawalpindi on December 26, 2007 and Ibad-ur-Rehman, the planner and ex-students of the Madrassa were later on found to have been killed in separate operations by the LEAs.

The JIT did their best job and brought facts to the light as all those involved in the assassination of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto were identified, chased, arrested, prosecuted, and convicted under the law. Unfortunately, a two-member Rawalpindi bench of the Lahore High Court comprising Justice Mirza Waqas and Justice Sardar Serfraz granted bail to Abdul Rashid, Aitezaz Shah, Rafaqat Hussain, Husnain Gul, and Sher Zaman on their appeal whose roles are well explained above. Since the case is still pending in the court of law, therefore, I refrain from shedding light on some of the most crucial aspects of the case but in the meantime, we hope that we will get justice.

Conclusion — Anti Shaheed Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto's groups had decided to eliminate as part of their agenda and finally it was carried out under the direction of Baitullah Mehsud which has been fully established by the JIT. I would like to reiterate my request to the Government of Pakistan to request the Government of Afghanistan to extradite Ikramullah to Pakistan and also take the matter to Interpol for issuing his red warrant.

The writer is Former Interior Minister of Pakistan, author of five books, Chairman Institute of Research & Reforms (IRR) Islamabad/ Global Eye. He can be reached at: rmalik1212@gmail.com, Twitter @Senrehmanmalik

Year of living on the edge

By Maleeha Lodhi

Trends in the outgoing year do not indicate an optimistic outlook for Pakistan's politics and economy in 2022, when general elections will only be a year away. The political temperature will rise exponentially and the environment will also be more fraught with reinforcement of prevailing trends. The year 2021 saw greater polarisation and divisive politics in the country, mounting tensions between the government and opposition and extremist forces calling the shots in confrontations with the authorities.

The economic challenge intensified. Inflation soared and shortages of essential commodities and services multiplied, especially gas supplies. Financing gaps increased in the government's budget and the country's trade account. Delay over an IMF programme eroded business confidence and dampened stock market sentiment. This gloomy scenario was reflected in rising public discontent and concern about the future. A Consumer Confidence Survey by IPSOS, a Paris-based research firm, found 87 per cent of people felt the country was going in the wrong direction in late 2021.

Perhaps the most unedifying aspect of 2021's raging government-opposition confrontation was how it produced a political discourse in which invective and incendiary rhetoric eclipsed any meaningful discussion of policy issues. Political leaders spent more time vilifying their opponents than articulating their position and how to address the country's challenges. Those in power seemed to equate government performance with demonising rivals while opposition leaders returned the compliment by using similar tactics. The tone and content of political discourse plunged to new depths of incivility. Bitter polemics and shallow and provocative narratives put paid to any reasoned debate. This evoked public disdain for both sides and degraded the country's democracy.

If parliament's role is deemed to be an important indicator of the health of democracy this too did not inspire much confidence. Parliament was mostly reduced to a rubber stamp by the ruling party with the opposition unable to mount meaningful resistance. The most stunning demonstration came last month when over 30 bills were passed, including an electoral amendment to permit electronic voting machines, without debate and in a matter of just hours. This set a new record for legislating without consensus.

The hybrid political system continued to hold sway with occasional indications of civil-military disagreements. The most significant was over

the appointment of the head of Pakistan's premier intelligence agency. However, it was the overall impact of this arrangement on the polity that had significant implications for both democracy and the army's reputation. Because the government repeatedly relied on the establishment to cobble together majorities for parliamentary votes and maintain its coalition this prevented it from learning the political skill of managing the legislature, building consensus and accommodating other views. This and other forms of behind-the-scenes political activism by the military weakened its claim of neutrality and undermined its traditional role of arbiter.

The opposition appeared directionless and in disarray for much of the past year. Formed as an alliance of 11 parties, PDM was weakened with the exit of PPP and ANP. It never recovered and its subsequent activities, despite their sound and fury, posed little challenge to the government. The two major opposition parties also offered few solutions to the country's problems. The biggest party, PML-N was unable to reconcile the 'divide within' between two divergent approaches and narratives and decide whether it wanted to pursue a confrontational or conciliatory approach towards the military establishment. It has to resolve this dilemma well ahead of elections.

For the ruling party, Punjab remained its Achilles heel, with a weak and lacklustre provincial leadership unable to provide an effective administration. Its poor management produced internal party discord and contributed significantly to PTI losing political ground in the province — the make-or-break battleground in general elections.

The overall lack of governance at the centre also contributed to political setbacks faced by the ruling party in by-elections. It continued to muddle through and govern unilaterally without a clear direction. Morality lectures rather than focus on policy priorities seemed to increasingly preoccupy its leadership. However, two initiatives by the government that were widely appreciated were expansion of the Ehsaas programme and introduction of the health card in Punjab and KP. Aiming to help the underprivileged, these programmes brought credit to the government.

The most important and consequential issue that dominated 2021 was the deteriorating state of the economy despite a modest recovery following the government's Covid-related stimulus measures. Political uncertainty and looming elections complicated the economic situation deterring both domestic



and foreign investment. Delay in resuming the IMF programme depleted foreign exchange reserves, put pressure on the rupee and eroded market confidence. Inflation became a politically explosive issue, rising significantly for a combination of reasons, including supply side and monetary factors, while unrestrained subsidy schemes also contributed to it.

High inflation is likely to persist undermining the benefit of four per cent growth projected for the coming year. The global dislocation of supply chains will also add to economic difficulties. All this will exact a political cost for a government going into elections. So will prior actions it is obliged to take — although necessary — such as raising electricity tariffs, to access IMF money.

The outgoing year also saw mounting government debt, both internal and external, with public debt rising to over 90pc of GDP. Power sector debt also rose exponentially, compounding the circular debt problem which still awaits meaningful resolution. The fragile macroeconomic situation will continue to be challenging in 2022 with the persistence of negative trends especially a high fiscal deficit, low foreign exchange reserves (due to debt service requirements), growing current account deficit and stagnant private investment levels. The use of bank credit to finance the public sector will continue to crowd out private investment with detrimental effects on the economy.

Once the IMF programme resumes in the coming year it will ease the country's balance of payments difficulties. But more structural reforms will be needed to unlock funds from other multilateral and bilateral donors. Fiscal vulnerabilities will remain and will have to be carefully managed as will domestic and external risks to the economy in 2022. It will however be the government's ability to bring down inflation that will be the decisive economic factor in determining its political fortunes with elections approaching.

The writer is a former ambassador to the US, UK & UN. Courtesy to Dawn

ECP should keep an eye on internet voting

By Kanwar M Dilshad

While addressing a ceremony to sign the Election Amendment Bill 2021, President Dr Arif Alvi said that, don't be afraid of a simple electronic voting machine that will help hold a fair election and bring an end to rigging.

People have to trust it, it's not very technical and is very convenient. A country progresses by adopting new things.

The EVMs would ensure holding of fair elections, which had long been desired in Pakistan, as every election was followed by controversies and claims of rigging that also impacted the credibility of respective governments.

While there is a lot of concerns and controversies over the use of electronic voting machines, a greater transparency is also needed on the EVMs of voting rights for Overseas Pakistanis as per Articles 218 and 226.

This must be kept in view that Overseas Pakistanis can generally be divided into three categories.

The first are the Pakistani Original Card holders who have surrendered their Pakistani nationality and use the card to facilitate their travel.

The second are the holders of the National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis, many of whom are dual nationals. The third are those Pakistanis who are working abroad but retain their green passports.

Lumping them all together for enfranchisement makes little sense. Those in the first category have made a deliberate choice to renounce their Pakistani nationality and become loyal citizens of another state.

This provides them voting rights in their new country of citizenship, and they also pay taxes accordingly.

Making a case for them to have voting rights in Pakistan, whose citizenship they have relinquished. The second category of dual nationals getting voting rights is also problematic.

They have taken an oath of allegiance to another country and, therefore, cannot claim eligibility for voting in their country of birth.

In the past, being opposition leader, Imran Khan had himself opposed the idea of giving dual nationals a right to vote.

It is the third category of people. Pakistani citizens working abroad who have the strongest claim for enfranchisement.



They have retained their citizenship, pay taxes here and do not have divided loyalties.

Therefore, they have the full right to be given right to vote in the next general elections.

The complications may require a practical and solution-oriented approach.

For instance, many countries like the Middle Eastern countries that host Pakistani workers don't follow an electoral system of governance and may have reservations if Pakistan asked for preparations for voting.

Similarly, logistical issues regarding transparency in the casting of votes also require detailed deliberations.

It is suggested that the Prime Minister, being the Leader of the House, should consult with the ECP directly.

On the other side, Senator Faysal Vawda is battling a tough situation over dual nationality as his intra court plea has been dismissed by the Islamabad High Court and directed him to appear before the ECP in connection with his dual nationality case.

The petition stated that since Mr Vawda had furnished an affidavit to the Returning Officer declaring at the time of contesting elections that he was not a national of any other country, he had made a false statement on oath, under Article 62-1 of the Constitution.

It is a well known fact that nomination papers are self contained documents, his opponent approached the ECP that Mr Vawda may be disqualified for hiding information pertaining to

his dual nationality.

In this background, the honourable Court passed a judgment asking the ECP to conclude the proceedings within one month and advised Vawda to face the inquiry before the ECP.

The political leadership's ideological orientation, commitment to democracy and the broad policies that it pursues determine the direction and future stability of the State.

This is particularly relevant for Pakistan, which was created as the homeland for Muslims of India in 1947.

In the first scenario it's my considered opinion that the Governance system in Pakistan has time and again failed and one-party rule seems to be the only solution that can put the nation on track.

The one-party system has been in China since 1948 and it has proved to be successful both for the country and the people.

Pakistan needs to take a step forward and abandon present multi-party democracy for some time and pursue a single-minded agenda for betterment of the country and seven provinces may be created to break the political monopoly of elite pressure families.

In this regard, the 1962 Constitution may be kept in view as some relevant Articles are in favour of stability.

The writer is former Secretary Election Commission of Pakistan and currently Chairman National Democratic Foundation. Courtesy to Pakistan Observer



Japan, Pakistan agree on better industrial cooperation

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Pakistan and Japan have agreed to enhance cooperation in industrial sector especially modernization of local engineering industry.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between Minister for Industries and Production, Makhdoom Khusró Bakhtyar and newly appointed Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan Wada Mitsuhiro in Islamabad.

The two sides decided to extend existing Small and Medium Enterprises, mobile manufacturing policies and improved ease-of - doing-business steps taken by government of Pakistan for industrial sector.

The two sides decided to extend existing Small and Medium Enterprises, mobile manufacturing policies and improved ease-of - doing-business steps taken by government of Pakistan for industrial sector

The Minister discussed the business opportunities for Japanese Automobiles companies under framework of new automobile policy focusing on localization and making the auto sector export-oriented.

He said these steps would revolutionize the automobile industry of Pakistan by connecting it to global supply chain and distribution channels.

The Minister also informed the ambassador on Mobile Device Manufacturing Policy. He said Pakistan's existing economic environment provides excellent opportunity for Japanese companies to investment in mobile phone manufacturing.

Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan announces key discovery



By M.Saeed Yousafzai

The archaeologists have discovered the most ancient Buddhist apsidal temple of Pakistan in Bazira area of Barikot tehsil in Swat.

The site was discovered by archaeologists of Ca' Foscari University and Italian Archaeological Mission in collaboration with the provincial department of archaeology and museums.

Italian Ambassador to Pakistan Andreas Ferrarese told Dawn that he was excited that the new discovery was also made by Italian archaeologists.

"It is so impressive to find something common between the archaeology of Pakistan and that of Italy. It is something that shows that even in antiquity we have a kind of globalisation where people had exchange of certain techniques and ideas of culture and religions which is astonishing. The more we search for the past, the more we find that we have future together," he said.

According to Prof Luca M Olivieri, the director of Italian Mission, it is possible to date the foundation of the Buddhist sacred structure



to the Mauryan period, certainly to the 3rd century BC.

This was followed by a major reconstruction undertaken in the 2nd century BC.

When the Greeks arrived and refortified the city of Bazira, known to them from the times of Alexander the Great, they found an existing structure constructed during the Mauryan period at the time of Ashoka.

Since then, after the rule of King Menander in the mid-second century, the monument was enhanced and kept in function for centuries till the third and fourth century when it was eventually abandoned, as the Kushan city of Bazira was razed by an earthquake.

At the end of the excavations more than 2200 objects - sculptures, coins, inscriptions, ceramics, ornaments, iron weapons, stone tools - were found, restored and handed over to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. In the fifties of the previous century, he said, F A Khan carried out a systematic campaign of archaeological

excavations, which brought to the light amazing information.

The Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan started sondages at Bir-kot-ghwandai (Bazira) in 1977 when Professor Giorgio Stacul discovered the earliest sequence of the site (1700-800 BCE) with important discoveries of a typical painted pottery of Chalcolithic period.

From 1993 to 1995, survey of the entire area was conducted. In 1996, the whole ghwandai (hill) was acquired on lease.

Earlier, Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese said Pakistan and Italy were great friends. He said the two countries had a lot in common in the culture and history.

The envoy appreciated Luca M. Olivieri and his team for tremendous achievements in Pakistan in the field of archaeology. He vowed to enhance the partnership and cooperation to a new level in the years to come. Government officials and archaeologists participated in the event.

Indian troops in their unabated acts of state terrorism martyred 210 innocent Kashmiris during year 2021



In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Indian troops in their unabated acts of state terrorism martyred 210 innocent Kashmiris including five women during the year 2021.

According to a report released by Kashmir Media Service, 65 of the martyrs were killed in fake encounters or custody.

The killings by the troops rendered 16 women widowed and 44 children orphaned. The

troops molested 13 women and destroyed 67 residential houses and structures in the year.

487 persons were injured due to the use of brute force on protesters while 2,716 people including Hurriyat activists and prominent human rights defender Khurum Parvez were arrested during house raids and crackdown operations by Indian troops and police.

The report said that in the month of

December 2021 alone, Indian troops martyred 31 Kashmiris.

It pointed out that since 5th August 2019, when Modi-led fascist Indian government revoked the special status of IIOJK, the troops martyred 515 Kashmiris.

It added that 95,948 Kashmiris have fallen to the Indian bullets in the occupied territory since January 1989 till date.

India blocks foreign-funding of Mother Teresa Charity Foundation

In India, Modi-led Fascist government has blocked foreign-funding of Mother Teresa Charity Foundation, aimed at consolidating its RSS-inspired agenda through out the country.

In a statement, India's home ministry confirmed that it has not renewed the

foreign funding registration due to adverse inputs.

The Missionaries of Charity affiliated thousands of volunteers undertake welfare projects like homes for abandoned children, schools, clinics and hospices in India.

Hindu hardliners have long accused the

charity of using its programmes for mass conversion to Christianity. However, the charity has denied these allegations

Meanwhile, in her tweet, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee flayed Indian government for the decision.



Zhongtong Bus to boost Pakistan's green, intelligent transportation

Zhongtong Bus, one of the biggest and earliest listed bus manufacturers in China, will continue to strengthen technological innovation to boost the development of Pakistan's green and intelligent transportation, Jaffery, Zhongtong's Representative said.

The company has provided 80 18-meter hybrid buses for the Green Line Rapid Transit Service (BRTS) Karachi's first modern public transport project, which can handle 135,000 passenger trips per day.

In an interview, Jeffery said that with great responsibility, Zhongtong is truly grateful for the trust of the Pakistani government, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

Regarding public transport as one of the main driving force of reforms, Pakistan adopts Zhongtong new N-series for its first batch of new energy public transport in the country's largest city, which will undoubtedly bring epoch-making significance to the upgrading of local public transport system.

Jeffery explained that this new generation of Zhongtong public transport platform will bring Karachi citizens a more convenient and clean travel experience that is intelligent and comfortable.

In order to fit the local road condition, Zhongtong bus specially optimizes its power system for better performance when climbing

slopes. In addition, through lightweight design and "Zhongtong Fourth-Generation Energy-Saving Control Technology", the fuel-saving rate of the buses can reach a maximum of 35%. The vehicle is also equipped with 118.4kwh battery. On a single charge, each bus can run 98km with electric power only.

Pakistan adopts Zhongtong new N-series for its first batch of new energy public transport in the country's largest city, which will undoubtedly bring epoch-making significance to the upgrading of local public transport system

The stops of the Green Line and Orange Line are all designed with modern ticket-selling and check-in facilities, and the vehicles are also equipped with a complete set of intelligent equipment, including omni-directional CCTV cameras, on-board WIFI, automatic stop announcement, online monitoring, audio-

visual entertainment facilities, etc.

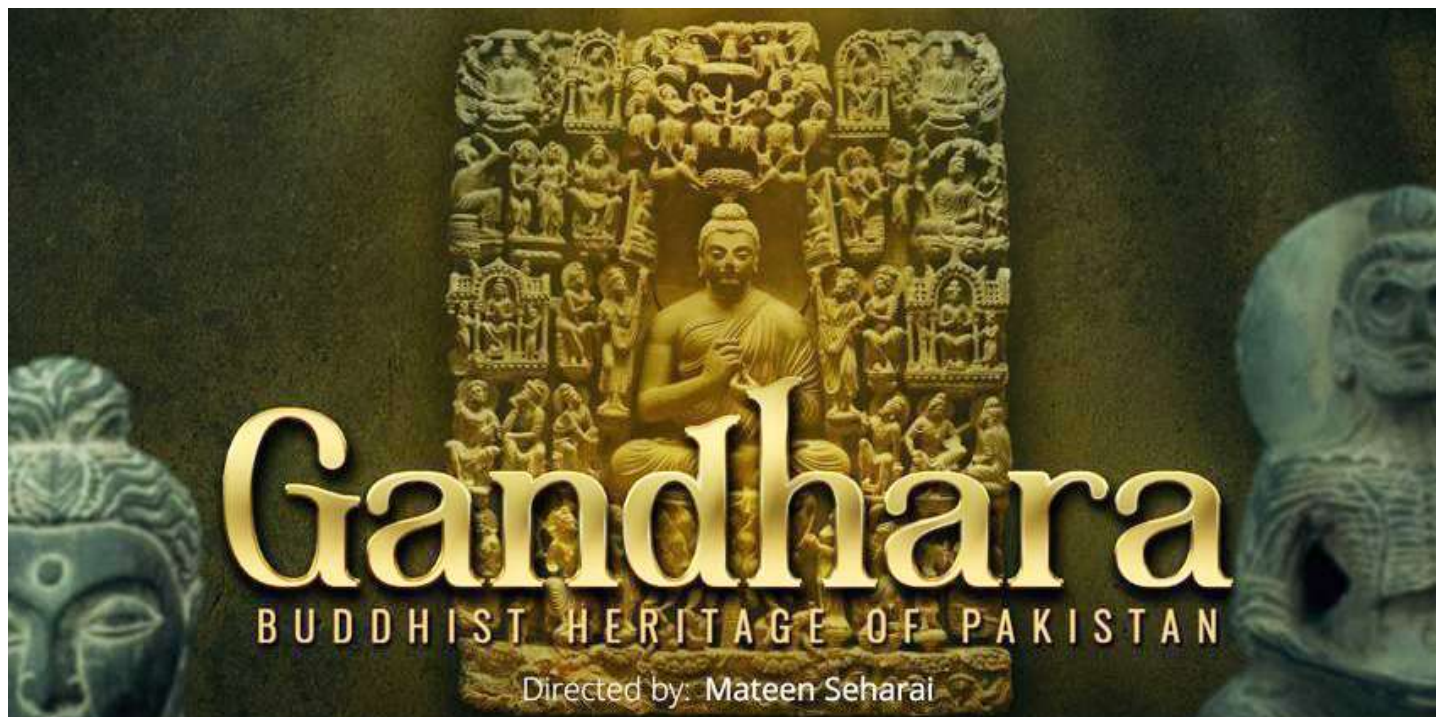
"In the later stage of the project, we will vigorously promote more intelligent and modern systems to improve local public transport services," Jeffery highlighted.

It is learned that Zhongtong Bus has been selling vehicles in Pakistan for over ten years. In 2017, its high-end buses entered the Pakistani market. In 2020, it won the bid of 100 Karachi BRT, marking its presence in both high-end intercity bus and city bus market.

"Zhongtong has been cooperating with Pakistani agents to build a production line with an annual production capacity of 1,000 buses. Jeffery added, "in the future, high-end buses will be produced locally, which can greatly promote local employment and achieve win-win results."

In recent years, more and more Chinese bus and passenger car brands have launched CKD (Completely Knocked Down) cooperation in Pakistan. Commenting on this, Jeffery said that Pakistani people generally have a good impression of Chinese brands and are supportive of their entrance into the local market.

With the unbreakable friendship between China and Pakistan, it is expected that there will be more and more cooperation for the well-being of the people in both countries.



The premiere show of the documentary film “Gandhara” co-produced by Govt. of Sri Lanka and Govt. of Pakistan was held in Sri Lanka. Special participation was of the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. The film is directed by Mateen Seharai, a British Pakistani filmmaker.

“Gandhara” is a documentary film produced by the High Commission of Pakistan in Sri Lanka with the support of and in coordination with the Ministry of Religious and Cultural Affairs of Sri Lanka.

The documentary was launched at Temple Trees (Prime Minister’s office) by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, in the presence of venerable Buddhist monks, Speaker of Sri Lankan Parliament , cabinet and state ministers, MPs, ambassadors of Buddhist countries, as well as business, tourism and media fraternity of Sri Lanka.

To direct this important film, a British Pakistani filmmaker Mateen Seharai has been selected. Along with his film making skills, he has also mastered the subject of art, culture and especially Gandhara. The film is co-produced by Kaushalya Wickramasinghe and production is managed by Muhammad Sajjad.

Gandhara was an ancient civilization in the areas of Kabul, Peshawar, Swat and Taxila, traces of which are found in northwestern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan.

One of the Tooth Relics of the Lord Buddha, discovered from the Gandhara region is preserved at Taxila Museum in Pakistan. It is the region where the Gandhara Buddhist

civilization reached its pinnacle of glory from 1st century AD to the 7th century AD.

The first anthropomorphic statue of Lord Buddha was created in the region now called Pakistan. Also known for one of the world’s oldest Buddhist University, Thakshashila, Taxila in Pakistan is home to some of the most sacred Buddhist artifacts found during archeological excavations around the 12th century. A sapling from the sacred Bodhi Tree in Anuradhapura, gifted by the government of Sri Lanka to the government of Pakistan, also grows in the gardens of Taxila Museum.

Apart from Taxila, this large series of Gandhara archaeological sites in Peshawar,





Swat, Saidu Sharif and other parts of Pakistan is of important and special significance to the Buddhism.

In order to present this heritage to the Buddhist world in general and Sri Lanka in particular, the idea of “Gandhara: The Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan” was conceived. Launched with the blessings of the Prime Minister and Minister of Buddha Sasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs, Mahinda Rajapaksa and the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan, this documentary will open up new avenues in religious tourism as well as strengthening cultural and people to people ties between the brotherly countries of Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

With the special permission from the Government of Pakistan, both local and foreign technicians led by director Mateen Sehrai from England began filming the documentary in different parts of Pakistan and beautifully highlighted the Gandhara and Buddhist heritage in Pakistan molded into documentary format.

It takes the viewers on a visual journey along the Gandhara Buddhist heritage sites of Pakistan. In this journey, the viewers not only get a chance to see this great heritage up close but also get important and extensive information about it.

The documentary is based on a screenplay that explores the historical ruins and artifacts captured in a realistic way while also exploring background historical information.



Agrahera Kassapa Thero is the Senior Adviser to the entire project. The script has been prepared by Vidyajothi Prof. Nimal Silva while the screenplay is written by Mateen Sehrai. Renowned music director Dr. Ruwin Dias prepared the background score. The dubbing and editing is done by local Sri Lankan artists.

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa along with other viewers watched the film with keen interest. He said that this is not just a film but an important legacy which will always prove to be a historic step for the world in terms of Buddhism.

Acting High Commissioner of Pakistan Tanvir Ahmad Bhatti said that “Gandhara” was conceptualized with the aim of bringing the peoples of Sri Lanka and Pakistan together through their shared history and heritage. The film is beautifully made which is

admirable.

On the occasion, Dr Kirindey Assaji Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Gangaramaya Temple gave his blessings for the success of the documentary and closer relations between the two countries.

The documentary, co-produced by the Government of Pakistan and the Government of Sri Lanka, will soon be screened in local cinemas in Sri Lanka, as well as on local TV channels and in different countries of the world, and will also be translated into various languages.

The film is expected to be premiered in Pakistan in January with the participation of Prime Minister Imran Khan as well as other important personalities from Sri Lanka.

COMMEMORATIONS OF 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF IRAQI STATE

Speech of

H.E. Hamid Abbas Lafta, **Ambassador of Republic of Iraq**

In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful.

Excellencies and distinguished Ambassadors
Ladies and gentlemen.

Assalam u Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi Wa barakatu

Today we are celebrating the centenary of the founding of the Iraqi State. On 23rd August, 1921, the world welcomed Iraq as a country with its geographical, international entity. Embodying a history and civilizations that spanned for thousands of years, civilizations that enriched the world with its culture, science and knowledge.

During the nineteenth century, Iraq did not stop its cultural, economic and political movement and its role in the region and the world, especially after the sufferings of world wars by the international community. It was a destination for Arabs and Muslims to seek worldly and religious knowledge, Iraq was the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and many regional and international organizations.

This year, we are going through the centenary of the establishment of the Iraqi State by the first late King Faisal, May Allah have mercy upon him. After closing the page of the Ottoman and British occupation, which is considered an immortal day in the memory of Iraqis, especially in the shadow of the historical events that preceded the establishment of the Iraqi State.

In May 1920, the Twentieth Revolution erupted after the disappointment of Iraqi Natives at Britain's failure to fulfill the promises for an independent state. This led a peaceful march that started from the city of Al-Rumaitha in southern Iraq to demand the formation of an Arab government affiliated to a national council elected by the people. Later on it turned into armed confrontations with the occupied forces that included all Iraqis.

The Twentieth Revolution was an important turning point in the modern history of Iraq in which all the meanings of heroism and

sacrifice were embodied. It was a real start in gaining freedom and independence from the British occupation and an explicit rejection of foreign domination and control over the country; as a result a constituent assembly was formed headed by the Prime Minister of the transitional government at the time. The Naqib Al Ashraaf of Baghdad, Abdul Rahman Al-Naqeeb, who performed many tasks, most notably the election of a king to the throne of Iraq, the formation of Iraqi ministries, institutions, departments to perform governmental tasks. That continued until Prince Faisal bin Al Hussein was elected King of Iraq on 23rd August, 1921. The monarchy in Iraq lasted for nearly 37 years, during which three kings succeeded in ruling until 1958. It ended and the government transitioned into a republican type of government.

Iraq was one of the first countries that managed to get rid of the British Mandate and gain full independence. According to a resolution of League Council that was similar to the current UN Security Council, which represented the international legislative authority at that time, issued on 3rd August 1932. It also included the recognition of Iraq as the 57th state countries of the world and a new member of the League of Nations. Iraq was also able to obtain status of the state according to international law on 3rd October, 1932.

As you know, due to the recklessness and tyranny of the dictatorial regime that controlled Iraq from 1968 to 2003, the wars and the siege that was imposed on the people, followed by the occupation and terrorism of al-Qaeda and ISIS and the former dictatorial regime made against the neighboring Islamic Republic of Iran, and against the sister State of Kuwait, The country and the people of Iraq were subjected to difficult, compelling and destructive conditions.

Iraq has defended, sacrificed blood and wealth not only for its land, sovereignty and dignity, but also fought ISIS and defended human dignity everywhere for the security and stability of the world and the region. Terrorism did not only target Iraq but as a matter of fact, it targeted



all countries and capitals of the world. Iraq has become and still is a starting point for regional and international cooperation to combat terrorism, takfiri and extremist ideology. It is a platform for information exchange, cooperation, security and coordination against terrorist ideology and extremism.

My brothers and sisters, the remembrance of this occasion represents the culmination of the efforts of Iraqis and their continuous quest to form their identity that brings together the different spectrums of the Iraqi people, and the efforts made over the past hundred years to build their free, independent, democratic and pluralistic state in which all Iraqis can live united by a written constitution. It was a time when Iraq held its legislative elections, which represent its inclination to achieve freedom and democracy.

In the face of these human and cosmic challenges, we as an international community, as member states of the United Nations, no longer have before us other than the approach of peace, not war, the approach of cooperation, not fighting, and the approach of construction, not destruction.

Let us declare war on pests that threaten human health, let us declare war on poverty and corruption, and let us declare war on erosion factors that threaten our climate and existence. We strongly value our growing relations with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and opening up horizons for cooperation in cultural and military fields, as well as its efforts to play an effective role in extending regional security and stability.

We thank you for your presence here and accept my utmost thanks and appreciation.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad has been chosen as one of the best Ambassadors of the Year 2021



The media group of the Center for Diplomatic Studies in Islamabad held the fourth honoring ceremony to select a number of distinguished ambassadors from among the ambassadors accredited to Pakistan, at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, Pakistan on 25/11/2021, in appreciation of the efforts of distinguished ambassadors at the diplomatic community level and more influencing the diplomatic relationship of Pakistan with their countries, who were

chosen by a committee that included a number of ambassadors, heads of media institutions, Pakistani political and diplomatic research centers.

Ambassador Hamid Abbas Lafta, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad, has been chosen from among the distinguished ambassadors, along with the ambassadors of Morocco, Yemen, Spain, Somalia and China, the head of the European Union mission and the director of the World

Health Organization office in Islamabad.

The ceremony was held under the patronage of the Pakistani Minister of Information and Communication, Mr. Farrukh Habib, who presented appreciation awards and commemorative shields to the ambassadors who were chosen on the occasion, and was attended by a group of ambassadors accredited to Islamabad and senior political, diplomatic, media, social and business figures in Pakistan.



Senate Standing Committee on Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs of the Senate of Pakistan hosts the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Islamabad

Senate Standing Committee on Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs of the Senate of Pakistan hosted H.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad, accompanied with Mr. Ayad Ayoub Saadi, Accountant at the Embassy.

The session was started by the Chairman of the Committee Senator Mohammad Talha Mahmood by welcoming H.E. the Ambassador and reviewing the growing Iraqi-Pakistani relations, after which the issue submitted by the embassy was discussed. As the State Bank of Pakistan and other Pakistani banks have refused to receive foreign missions' revenues in hard currency (US Dollars) and demanded to transfer the deposits in local currency (Pak Rupees).

In this session, the Ambassador reviewed the social and political linkages that unite the two countries, the work of the consular section in



the embassy which is issuing visas to thousands of visitors and giving other consular services after obtaining the fees of the services in US dollars. According to reciprocity between the two countries, the Embassy cannot exchange this money as it belongs to the official account of the country.

This important topic was discussed in the presence of representatives of the Federal

Board of Revenue (FBR) and Habib Bank (HBL), in which the Embassy account is opened, as well as the representative of the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Iraqi Mission won the support of all the attendees from the senate and experts, and it was agreed to reconsider the issuance of new laws and instructions, and to re-receive the mission's funds in US dollars.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad receives the Commander of the Pakistani Military Air Base Kamra

H.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad has received Air Marshal Muhammad Mughees Afzal, the new commander of the Pakistan Military Air Base in Kamra at the embassy headquarters on 23/11/2021.

Both sides discussed strengthening relations between the two countries, especially the military field.

Air Marshal Afzal briefed about the activities of the Military Aviation Complex specialized in the manufacturing, re-manufacturing and restructuring of warplanes, in addition to the complex's (four) factories, including the military aircraft manufacturing factory, and the project to produce Pakistani JF-17 aircraft, which is the pride of Pakistani industry, referring to the intention to send a technical delegation to Iraq for the purpose of exchanging experiences with the Iraqi pilots on the (Super Mashak) plane.

On the other hand, His Excellency the Ambassador invited the guest, Mr. Mughees, to visit Iraq, and to discuss with the relevant authorities in a way that enhances relations and supports the exchange of experiences between the two sides.



The Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad holds a celebration ceremony at the centenary of the establishment of the Iraqi State

The Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad held a celebration ceremony on 10/12/2021 to mark the centenary of the establishment of the Iraqi State (1921-2021). The ceremony was attended by the Pakistani Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Mr. Noor ul-Haq Qadri, the Former Secretary of Foreign Ministry for Arab Affairs, Dr. Khalid Maimon, and the current Secretary, Mr. Javed Ahmed Imrani, Director Arab Affairs department and Director of the Middle East Department in Foreign Ministry, in addition to the Arab Ambassadors and a number of Foreign Ambassadors. The ceremony was attended by Mr. Zulfi Bukhari, Former Advisor to the Pakistani Prime Minister, and the representative of the Pakistani Army Staff Office, along with a large number of Pakistani businessmen, public figures and media channels.

At the beginning of the celebration, the Iraqi national anthem was played, followed by a speech by the Iraqi Ambassador to celebrate this occasion, during which he reviewed the history of the establishment of the Iraqi State from 1921 to the present day, shedding light on the Twentieth Revolution and the uprising of the Iraqi People against the occupation, demanding their independence and sovereignty. The ceremony also included a presentation of



a short documentary film prepared by the Mission. As a culmination of this occasion, the Mission prepared and printed an introductory brochure for this occasion that included a brief

explanation of the history of Iraq from the beginning of civilizations in Mesopotamia to the establishment of the Iraqi State.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad meets the Federal Minister of Finance of Pakistan



H.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta / Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq has met with His Excellency the Pakistani Minister of Finance, Mr. Shaukat Tarin, on December 15, 2021, in the presence of the Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan for Religious Affairs / Sheikh Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi.

The Ambassador assured that Iraq and

Pakistan have fraternal relations based on solid foundations of common ties, pointing out that Iraq was one of the first countries to recognize Pakistan.

His Excellency called for the opening of direct banking channels between Iraq and Pakistan through governmental and semi-governmental banks, to provide banking

services between companies, in addition to opening letters of credit and transferring funds, which is an important step to increase commercial and banking activity between the two countries. Mr. Shawkat welcomed these proposals, expressing his support for them due to the common interest of both sides.

Iraq participates in the Session of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Islamabad



The 17th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was held in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, during the period from 18th -19th December 2021, to discuss the serious humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, in which all the member countries of the Organization participated. Iraq has been represented by a delegation headed by the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad, Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta.

During the session, His Excellency Ambassador Hamid Abbas Lafta delivered the statement of Iraq, on behalf of His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fuad Hussein, in which he emphasized Iraq's position in supporting the relief efforts provided to the Afghan people, and also stressed Iraq's position calling for the formation of a comprehensive government in Afghanistan that represents all sects of



the Afghan people and committed to the principles of human rights and work to prevent Afghanistan from turning into a safe haven for terrorist organizations. The statement also affirmed Iraq's stance and continuous position in supporting the rights of the Palestinian People to self-determination, stressing the Arabism of Jerusalem and rejecting the practices of the Zionist entity in changing its Arab and Islamic identity. The Session witnessed speeches by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi,

Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, in addition to more than twenty foreign ministers, representatives of member states, representatives of permanent members of the UN Security Council, International donor countries and organizations invited to participate in the session.

The Iraqi delegation was consisted of Counselor Mr. Sulaiman Khalid, and First Secretary Ms. Wassan Jabbar Abdullah.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad visits the Pakistan Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI)

At the invitation of the President of the Pakistani Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Muhammad Shoaib, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad, H.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, visited, on December 15, 2021, the "Gujranwala Business Exhibition" organized by the Gujranwala Business Center (GBC) accompanied by him a number of embassy staff.

Mr. Shoaib gave a briefing about the Chamber's business and projects, as this chamber is the fourth largest independent and organized network that supports more than (21,000) small and medium businesses in Pakistan.

The President of the Chamber of Commerce expressed the desire of companies and businessmen in Gujranwala in particular to



enhance prospects for cooperation with Iraq in the field of trade and industry of all kinds and fields (ceramics, textiles, cooking tools, agriculture, paper, rice, medical equipment and medicines, steel, iron and aluminum), and inquired about the investment and commercial opportunities available in Iraq, and about the

guarantees and banking facilities that Iraqi banks provide to the foreign investors.

The Ambassador assured that the Iraqi market is open to all countries and import best quality and efficient goods, and that Iraq is looking forward to greater cooperation with Pakistan in the field of trade and investment of all kinds.



Pakistan-Korea Friendship Forest Initiative (Phase-II) held at the Korean Embassy

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

Hailing the participation of Korea in the country's historically largest afforestation programme of the Prime Minister Imran Khan, Special Assistant to PM on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam on said the incumbent government is committed to work with global community to tackle adverse fallouts of the global warming on lives and livelihoods of the people. Addressing a launching ceremony of Pakistan-Korea Friendship Forest Initiative (Phase-II) held at the Korean Embassy, PM's aide Malik Amin and the Korean Ambassador to Pakistan Suh Sangpyo pledged to work closely for boosting PM Imran Khan's green initiatives, particularly the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme (TBTP) for boosting the country's climate resilience.

The Korean ambassador told the participants of the event that under the Pakistan-Korea Friendship Forest Initiative (Phase-II), 10,000 saplings of different fruit and non-fruit species would be planted in different parts of the country to improve the environment and strengthen livelihoods of the local communities.

He recalled that the Korean government had already planted 6,000 saplings of different varieties in support to PM Imran Khan's TBTP,

which has gained a global recognition and appreciation.

"The Korean government looks at the largest

The PM's aide thanked the Korean ambassador for gifting 10,000 saplings, reflecting Korean government's recognition of the PM Imran Khan's Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme and support to his vision for clean green Pakistan

afforestation programme of the Pakistani government as an opportunity to help improve the country's overall environmental conditions and enhance resilience against unfolding deleterious impacts of climate change on various socio-economic sectors," the Korean Ambassador to Pakistan Suh Sangpyo told SAPM Malik Amin Aslam during a meeting on the sidelines of the event.

He also assured the SAPM the Korean government's all-out support to help build up capacity of the country's various sectors to cope with negative impacts of the climate change through transfer of technical know-how, technology related to, among others, water, energy, agriculture and forestry sectors.

The PM's aide thanked the Korean ambassador for gifting 10,000 saplings, reflecting Korean government's recognition of the PM Imran Khan's Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme and support to his vision for clean green Pakistan.

Later, The SAPM and Korean Ambassador kicked off the plantation by planting a pine tree sapling at the Embassy of Korea and exchanged views on the green vision of both both governments, which aims at sustainable socio-economic growth, climate resilience, environmental conservation and protection.

Ambassador Nong Rong's Speech at the Award Ceremony 2021 for Outstanding Pakistani Staff of the CPEC Projects



H.E. Mr. Asad Umar, Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives,

H.E. Mr. Khalid Mansoor, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on CPEC Affairs,

H.E. Mr. Ying Xiong, Director General of Department of International Affairs of NDRC of China,

Mr. Yang Jianduo, Chairman of All Pakistan Chinese Enterprises Association,

Outstanding Pakistani Staff of the CPEC Projects,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Happy New Year!

I am very glad to attend the Award Ceremony 2021 for Outstanding Pakistani Staff of the CPEC Projects. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. It is also a year witnessed the deepening of all-round cooperation between the two countries. In particular, the CPEC project despite the challenge of pandemic, has made great achievement. In this regard, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to H.E. Planning Minister Asad Umar, H.E. SAPM Khalid Mansoor, and H.E. DG Ying Xiong, for all the contributions you have made!

During this year, the CPEC has always been the focus of our two countries. May it be on May 21st, when the leaders of the two countries exchanged congratulatory messages for the 70-year anniversary; or on July 24th when the third China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue took place; or on October 26th, President Xi Jinping called Prime Minister Imran Khan on the phone, both parties expressed their will to jointly build the CPEC, to promote cooperation in agriculture, digital economy and people's livelihood, and bring more benefits to the local people, and comprehensively build the health, industrial,

trade, digital, and green corridors, so as to build the CPEC into a demonstration project for high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative. On September 23rd, the 10th JCC meeting was successfully held, setting the path for the future cooperation, and added one more Joint Working Group on Information Technology Industry, opening up new areas of great potential for cooperation.

Especially, we are very pleased to see that Prime Minister Imran Khan attaches great importance to the CPEC. He chaired a series of meetings on CPEC, including the one for industry development, and held two seminars with Chinese entrepreneurs. Pakistan government established the China-Pakistan Relations Steering Committee to coordinate and resolve CPEC issues; introduced the special visa policy for CPEC to facilitate investment; set up a Foreign National Security Cell to strengthen security measures. These practical measures have injected more confidence in the development of the CPEC.

Good news also comes from different sectors of cooperation. With joint efforts, the Rashakai Special Economic Zone has been launched, the north part of the Gwadar Free Zone is under construction, the Matiari-Lahore HVDC Transmission Line has brought Pakistan into a new era of AC-DC hybrid power grid, the Karot Hydropower Project started water storage, the Gwadar Technical and Vocational Institute was completed. These developments brought by the CPEC, from the perspective of individuals, will create more jobs, increase their incomes and improve their skills; from the perspective of the country, will boost Pakistan's economic and social development, promote industrialization and urbanization, and enhance the connection of the nation and the region as a whole.

The achievements of the CPEC are not possible without joint efforts of staff from

both China and Pakistan. They are not only the constructors and participants of the CPEC, but also the witnesses and promoters of history. In particular, the 27 outstanding Pakistani staff who participate in the award ceremony today, are outstanding representatives in this regard. You have shown your diligence and dedication in promoting the CPEC and building your motherland. You are the pride of your company, your family, and the country! Your vivid and touching stories have showcased the CPEC in promoting employment and benefiting the local communities, in jointly building the BRI and achieving mutual benefits. Your success will surely encourage more people to devote themselves to the construction of CPEC and make more contributions to the development and prosperity of Pakistan and the friendship between China and Pakistan.

On the occasion of the end of this year, on behalf of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, I would like to extend my warm congratulations to the winners of the award for outstanding Pakistani staff! At the same time, I would like to thank the CPEC companies and all their employees, as well as the All-Pakistan Chinese Enterprise Association, represented by Mr. Yang Jianduo, for the efforts made for the smooth advancement of the CPEC!

The CPEC, as a landmark project of China-Pakistan cooperation in the new era, and a successful regional economic cooperation platform, provides a broad stage for people to display their talents and realize personal values. It is hoped that the Chinese and Pakistani staff will cherish the opportunity, contribute to the construction of the CPEC with practical actions, and continue to consolidate the iron friendship between China and Pakistan.

Congratulations again to all the winners!

Chin-Pak Dosti Zindabad!

Pakistan, China vows to tap full potential of Gwadar port, free zone under CPEC

Pakistan and China resolved to redouble the efforts to tap the full potential of Gwadar port and free zone under the mega project of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Both sides also agreed to make sure that the local population of Gwadar and surrounding areas fully benefit from these projects by utilising the massive opportunities being created in various sectors.

The governments of Pakistan and China held meetings of the two Joint Working Groups on Gwadar and Socio-Economic Development through video conferencing.

The sixth session of the Joint Working Group on Gwadar was co-chaired by Secretary Planning Development and Special Initiatives Abdul Aziz Uqaili and Ying Xiong, Director General of the National Development and Reforms Commission of China.

Secretary Economic Affairs and Maritime Affairs, representatives of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Aviation, Defence, CPEC Authority, PPIB, GPA, government of Balochistan, GDA as well as representatives of their counterparts in China participated in the meeting.

The meeting reviewed the implementation status of the CPEC projects in Gwadar and deliberated upon the future course of action with regard to development of Gwadar city, port and the free zone.

Both sides expressed satisfaction on steady progress made on various projects including full operationalisation of Gwadar Port and its inclusion in the Afghan transit trade route; finalisation of the Smart Port City Master Plan; completion of the Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute; substantial progress on Eastbay Expressway; commencement of work on New Gwadar International Airport and the Pak-China Friendship Hospital.

It was noted that Gwadar Free Zone Phase -1 had been successfully completed, while work on the much larger Phase – 2 covering an area of 2,221 acres had been started.

The meeting emphasised on the need for finalisation of marketing and investment plan for free zone along with its implementation



strategy. The meeting was informed that the plan would soon be submitted for consideration of the cabinet committee on CPEC.

Chinese enterprises, including Zhejiang DRC, China Communication Construction Company, Zhejiang Seaport and Huazhang Technology made presentations during the meeting on their planned investments in low carbon recycling park, within the Gwadar Free Zone. Pakistani side assured the investors of full support and cooperation for their ventures.

It was noted that despite the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting travel restrictions the projects in Gwadar were implemented at a steady pace. The meeting also took note of various operational issues faced by the projects during the course of the year. It was noted that several issues had been resolved through

It was noted that Gwadar Free Zone Phase -1 had been successfully completed, while work on the much larger Phase – 2 covering an area of 2,221 acres had been started.

intervention of relevant authorities.

Both sides resolved to address any remaining issues on priority.

The meeting was also informed that the government of Pakistan was actively implementing various projects, in close collaboration with the provincial government to ensure provision of all the necessary facilities in Gwadar. The projects include linking Gwadar to the national electricity grid; provision of water to Gwadar city from nearby dams; establishment of University of Gwadar and Gwadar Safe City project and certain other projects in the socio-economic domain.

Meanwhile, the third meeting of Joint Working Group on socio-economic development under

CPEC was held under the co-chairmanship of Abdul Aziz Uqaili, Secretary, Planning Development and Special Initiatives and Deng Boqing, Chairman, China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) to review the progress of current projects and deliberated on potential new projects to enhance cooperation in the socio-economic development under CPEC.

The group was established in November 2018 under CPEC framework to ensure that economic dividends of CPEC projects reach the less developed areas and peoples' livelihood are improved.

Both sides expressed satisfaction on steady progress of the first Batch (17 fast track) projects of and second batch (10 priority) projects despite the Covid-19 pandemic. The convenor from Pakistani side thanked the government and people of China for their generous support to Pakistan for tackling the Covid-19 pandemic, especially the timely supply of vaccines.

He also thanked the Chinese counterparts for their support and assistance to the government of Pakistan for socio-economic development.

The chairman of CIDCA reiterated China's strong support for the people and government of Pakistan and stated that the two iron brothers have always helped and supported each other. He recalled Pakistan's support to China in the early phase of the pandemic and stated that such help is highly valued.

Pakistani side shared the proposed third batch of projects for consideration of Chinese counterparts. The projects were finalised after due consultations with stakeholders including all provinces, AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan.

It was decided to further enhance bilateral cooperation and implementation mechanism by constituting sub-committees at working level on both sides.

The meeting was attended by representatives of federal ministries and all the provincial governments, AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan and 11 relevant departments of the government of China. The embassies of the two countries also joined the meeting.



Outstanding Pakistani staff of the CPEC projects Awarded

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

Pakistan's Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar said on Wednesday that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) continues to be a flagship project of the overall development strategy of Pakistan.

Speaking at an awarding ceremony for outstanding Pakistani staff of CPEC projects, Umar said that apart from being a vital element for his country's economic development, CPEC is also proving as a cornerstone of the economic relationship between China and Pakistan.

At the event held in the Chinese Embassy, 27 Pakistani employees working at different CPEC projects were awarded for their outstanding contributions. The representatives of the employees expressed their gratitude to CPEC for giving them a chance to excel.

Umar called on the Pakistani employees working in world-class Chinese companies to make full use of opportunities to contribute to the development of the companies and projects as well as for their personal growth and development.

Lauding the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Umar said the Chinese leadership has a vision of shared prosperity through connectivity among the countries.

"Shared prosperity is really a path-breaking model for the world. I hope all countries in

the world not only take advantage of the opportunities being generated out of the BRI but take a similar approach, where we believe in a common bond of humanity, and we try and work together for shared prosperity," he added.

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong said that CPEC, as a landmark project of the BRI, provides a broad stage for people to display their talents and realize personal values.

"It is hoped that the Chinese and Pakistani staff will cherish the opportunity, contribute to the construction of CPEC with practical actions, and continue to consolidate the ironclad friendship between the two countries," he added.

Ying Xiong, director general of the Department of International Affairs, Office of the Leading

Group for Promoting the BRI in China, addressed online that the CPEC projects are in full swing and all operations are going smooth despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Even in the face of the severe impact of COVID-19, the CPEC projects still enjoy smooth operation. There is no stop of the CPEC projects construction, no job cut for Pakistani staff and no withdrawal of the Chinese workforce. The CPEC construction has bucked the trend with continuous new achievements," Ying said.

These fruitful achievements have once again demonstrated the unbreakable China-Pakistan friendship, and showed to the world the strong vitality and huge potential of the BRI, he added.



Pakistan simplifies process of investment in SEZs for Chinese companies, foreign investors: Asad

Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Asad Umar said that Pakistan has simplified the process of investment in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs), not only for the Chinese companies but also for other international investors.

Addressing the Award Ceremony of the 27 outstanding Pakistani staff of the CPEC Projects here at Chinese Embassy, he said two days ago the prime minister has approved the simplified approval process for industries and companies which are willing to invest and operate in SEZs.

In addition to this, both federal and provincial government have developed a mechanism to facilitate the companies which are interested to invest in SEZs. He said that despite of Covid-19, the year of 2021 has seen remarkable progress in CPEC.

He said, "We have seen the completion of projects and most importantly broadening of the CPEC that is through the industrial cooperation framework work and now its showing results such as construction work at Allama Iqbal, Rashakai SEZs as well as expansion of Special Economic Zone in Gwadar.

The north zone which the prime minister inaugurated few months back is 35 times larger than the south zone and that shows the confidence of Pakistan's commitment towards progress and future of CPEC. He said in the second phase of CPEC both countries are focusing on agriculture and science and technology sector.

Asad Umar said in the 10th JCC meeting Pakistan and China signed to work in domain of information technology. China has made tremendous progress in information technology domain and Pakistan is now starting to see significant progress in this area such as during the last year the export of Pakistan's information technology services outside of Pakistan is grew by 47% and this year, hoping 38 percent. Therefore, there are tremendous opportunities for Pakistani and Chinese companies in information technology. The minister said that CPEC is broadening in all



fields and many projects started in first phase has been completed or about to complete. This is testimony of not just the quality of relationship between Pakistan and China but evidence of our strong bond and commitment for completion of CPEC projects, he added.

He said that the BRI is truly historic as it was conceived for the development and propensity for all the humanity. The minister further said that President Xi Jinping's vision to enhance prosperity through connectedness among the countries and shared prosperity is a remarkable model for the world. Asad Umar also appreciated China for supporting Pakistan during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Answering to a question, he said that the opponents of CPEC are not only opposing CPEC through words but also sponsoring terrorism. However, Pakistan is taking effective security measures and no CPEC project has been spoiled by the terrorist activities. Moreover, the Prime Minister is personally reviewing security of Chinese projects and workers. The minister also congratulated the Pakistani staff working for CPEC projects and said that Chinese companies would have seen the quality of the Pakistani professionals is as good as the world because they are hardworking and willing to learn.

CPEC continues to be a flagship of the overall development strategy of Pakistan as well as a cornerstone of economic relationship between China and Pakistan, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Khalid Mansoor, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on CPEC Affairs, said this year was 70th years of vibrant growing diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. Previously it was limited to bilateral relationship but now it is long-term economic partnership through shared future through the CPEC.

He said despite disruption of normal life all over the world because of the pandemic, the CPEC projects have not faced any constraint due to firm mutual commitment of both countries. Ying Xiong, Director General, National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of China said that all-weather strategic cooperative partners, China and Pakistan have continuously

strengthened strategic communication and safeguarded common interests.

China's development and growth is in the interest of Pakistan, and it is also China's sincere hope that Pakistan can enjoy stable development for its prosperity. Addressing the ceremony, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Nong Rong said that this year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. The CPEC project despite the challenge of pandemic, has made great achievement.

During this year, CPEC has always been the focus of our two countries. President Xi Jinping called Prime Minister Imran Khan telephonically on October 26, this year and both expressed their will to jointly build the CPEC, to promote cooperation in agriculture, digital economy and people's livelihood, and bring more benefits to the local people.

He said both the leaders reiterated their resolve to comprehensively build the health, industrial, trade, digital, and green corridors, so as to build the CPEC into a demonstration project for high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative.

He said that the 10th JCC meeting was successfully held, setting the path for the future cooperation, and added one more Joint Working Group on Information Technology Industry, opening up new areas of great potential for cooperation.

The Ambassador said that the Prime Minister Imran Khan attaches great importance to the CPEC. The Pakistan government established the China-Pakistan Relations Steering Committee to coordinate and resolve CPEC issues; introduced the special visa policy for CPEC to facilitate investment; set up a Foreign National Security Cell to strengthen security measures. These practical measures have injected more confidence in the development of the CPEC.

He said with joint efforts of both countries, the Matiari-Lahore HVDC Transmission Line has brought Pakistan into a new era of AC-DC power grid, the Karot Hydro power Project started water storage and the Gwadar Technical and Vocational Institute was completed.



The Donation ceremony of APCEA held in collaboration with TCF Pakistan

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The Donation ceremony of All-Pakistan Chinese Enterprises' Association Corporate Social Responsibility Project was held in collaboration with The Citizen

Foundation Pakistan at Dhoke Chaudhrian Campus. This donation of Rs.4.66M including 600 uniforms, 10kW captive solar power station & water purification system. It was a joint effort of six other Chinese companies with APCEA, and

is dedicated to the development of children's education. A MOU was signed between the two parties which ensures such long-term collaborative endeavours in the future.





China gifts 7,000 saplings to support environment protection efforts

By Mian Fazal Elahi

China gave 7,000 saplings to support the prime minister's Billion Tree Tsunami programme and help Pakistan in its fight against climate change.

In a ceremony held at the Chinese embassy here, Ambassador Nong Rong and Minister for Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam jointly planted a tree in the mission's premises to mark the event.

Talking to media on the sidelines of the event, Aslam said the donation is very significant for

Pakistan, and the trees will be planted along major highways in the country and will be tagged to show the gift of the Chinese government and the Chinese people to commuters travelling along the roads.

Commenting on the relationship between Pakistan and China in the past 70 years, Aslam said: "These are 70 years of friendship, brotherhood, and one of the strongest brotherhoods that Pakistan has with any country.

We share not only our past but also our future.

I am very thankful to China for becoming a part of Pakistan's green vision."

Speaking with media, the ambassador said they gifted the trees on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan.

The Chinese and Pakistani governments have been supporting each other in nature conservation, and the two sides are practising the idea of a green Belt and Road to promote the high-quality development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he added.



Pakistan, China to expedite promotion of investment, industrial cooperation

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Pakistan and China have agreed to promote investment and industrial cooperation on a fast track basis during the 15th Session of Pakistan-China Joint Economic Committee (JEC) on Economic, Trade, Scientific & Technical Cooperation held.

The virtual meeting was co-chaired by Vice Minister of China Ren Hongbin and Economic Affairs Division Secretary Mian Asad Hayaud Din.

In his opening remarks, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan commended the government of China for hosting the JEC after a long gap of eleven years and expressed his satisfaction at the successful seventy-year bilateral friendship between Pakistan and China.

To highlight the significance of the event, Omar Ayub referred to the bilateral agreement for the establishment of the JEC, signed in 1982, and called it the basis of bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

During the committee meeting, the minister highlighted that Pakistan and China are entering into the next phase of CPEC wherein Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are being established. "The SEZs would be helpful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), establishing industrial units, creating employment opportunities and boosting economic activities in the country," he said.

"Similarly, the operationalisation of Gwadar Port will also create momentum in external trade," he added.

China has been Pakistan's largest trading partner for six consecutive years since 2015. At present, China is Pakistan's main source of imports and second-largest export destination.

The Economic Affairs minister further highlighted that Pakistan has immense investment opportunities in various sectors. "Pakistan provides a conducive and liberal investment environment to foreign investors and entrepreneurs. All foreign investments are fully protected under Foreign Private

Investment Promotion & Protection Act, 1976, and Protection of Economic Reforms Act, 1992. Now, SEZs are being established to meet global challenges of competitiveness with state-of-the-art infrastructure and connectivity," he stated.

Omar explained that the SEZ incentive package includes a ten-year exemption from income tax and a one-time exemption from all Customs duties and taxes on the import of capital goods.

He added that textile, leather, pharmaceutical and surgical industries of Pakistan are considered as best in the world and that products manufactured by these sectors are exported around the globe.

"Accordingly, Chinese investors can benefit from the huge potential of Pakistan's industrial sector. In this regard, Small & Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) and the Board of Investment (BOI) can collaborate with Chinese counterparts for enhancing cooperation in the industrial sector," he further added.

He also emphasised the importance of the

China has been Pakistan's largest trading partner for six consecutive years since 2015

agriculture sector for food security and rural development, inviting China for mutual cooperation in the areas of agricultural research, enhanced productivity, value addition and food processing through establishment of joint ventures (JVs) and business-to-business (B2B) contacts.

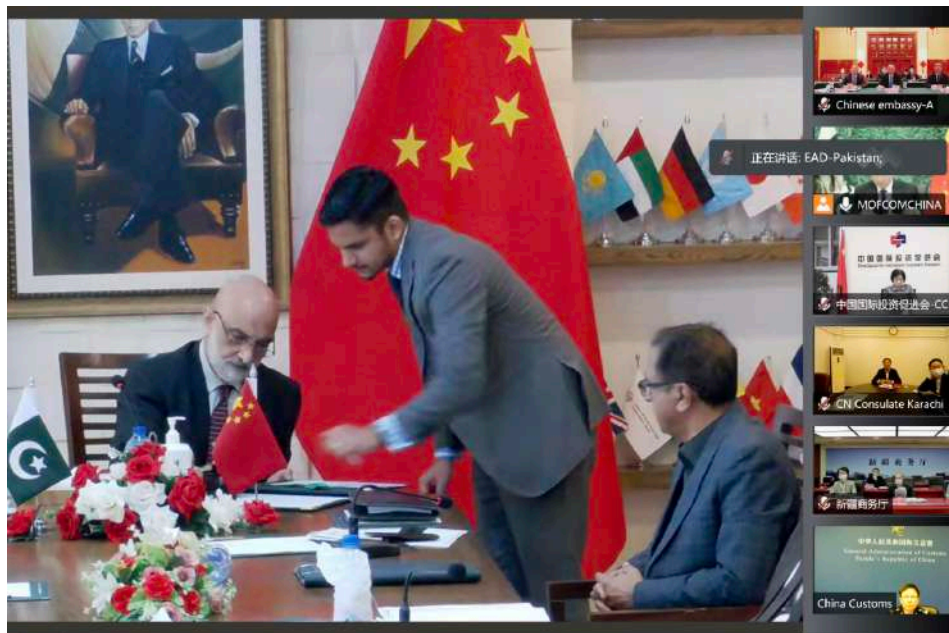
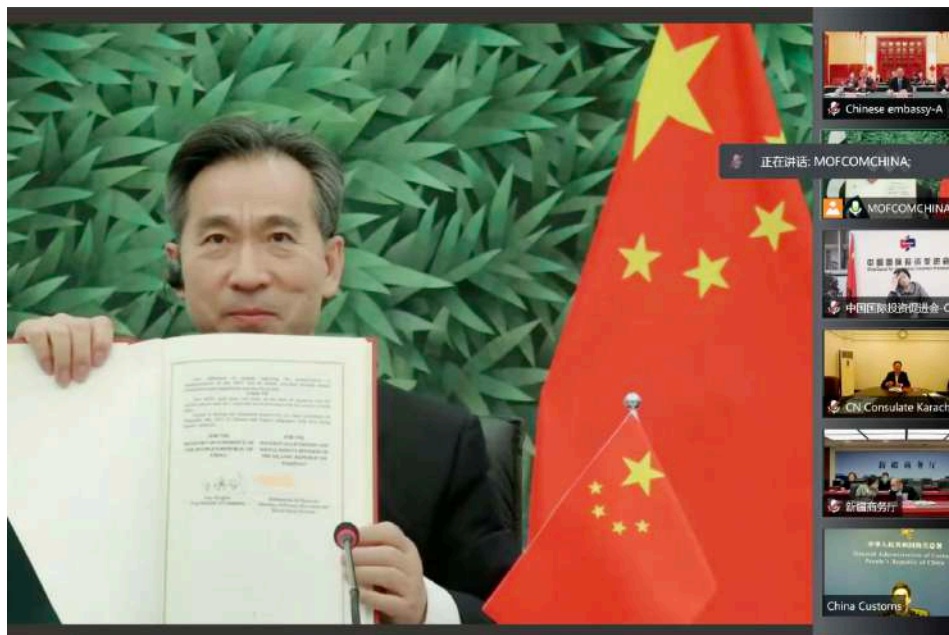
Furthermore, both sides also discussed matters related to development projects in energy, infrastructure and social sectors, agreeing to promote investment and industrial cooperation in these specific areas on a fast track basis. In addition, strengthening of cooperation under multilateral framework was also discussed.

Vice minister Ren Hongbin also exchanged opinions and reached extensive consensus with Secretary of Economic Affairs of Pakistan Asad Hayat Dinon in areas such as promoting of the high-quality development of "Belt and Road" initiative through joint efforts, strengthening cooperation against Covid-19 pandemic and making joint efforts in implementing Chinese government assistance projects for Pakistan, effectively safeguarding the safety of Chinese enterprises and personnel in Pakistan, strengthening cooperation under the multilateral framework. Vice minister Ren Hongbin also found common ground with Secretary of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Shahzada on poverty alleviation in the field of commerce, which would enrich the economic and trade cooperation between China and Pakistan.

The 15th JEC is a complete success finished with the China and Pakistan delegations' signing of the MoU of the establishment of a working group between Xinjiang and the Ministry of Economic Affairs of Pakistan under the framework of JEC and the MoU of cooperation for poverty alleviation in the field of commerce.

In his concluding remarks, Vice Minister of China Ren Hongbin commented that the discussions on bilateral economic relations between delegates will meet the objectives of deepening bilateral relationship between the two countries.

He also hoped that the next session of Pak-China JEC will be held soon in Pakistan.





Launching ceremony of 4th Type 054 A/P Frigate held at China

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

The Launching ceremony of 4th ship of Type-054 A/P Class Frigate constructed for Pakistan Navy was held at Hudong Zhonghua (HZ) Shipyard, Shanghai, China.

Out of four state of the art frigates, the first Type-054 A/P ship namely PNS TUGHRIL has been commissioned and reached Pakistan, said a Pakistan Navy media release here received. The Type-054 A/P Frigates would be one of the most technologically advanced

surface platforms of Pakistan Navy Fleet, fitted with latest surface, subsurface, anti-air weapon systems, Combat Management System and Sensors.

The induction of these ships will enhance Pakistan Navy Fleet's war fighting capabilities, contribute in maintaining peace, stability and power equilibrium in the Indian Ocean Region.

While addressing at the Launching ceremony, Chief Naval Overseer Commodore Rashid

Mehmood Sheikh lauded the support by PLA (Navy), China Shipbuilding Trading Company (CSTC) and HZ Shipyard for timely completion of this important milestone project despite COVID-19 pandemic.

The ceremony was attended by senior officials of PLA (Navy), CSTC and HZ Shipyard.

Successful launching of 4th Ship of the series is a testimony of deep rooted defence and diplomatic Sino-Pak relations.

Pak-China hold 140 events to mark seven decades of diplomatic relations: Zhao Lijian

Pakistan and China held about 140 events this year to celebrate and commemorate the 70th anniversary of establishment of their diplomatic relations which remained popular from the beginning to the end, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said.

"This year marked the 70th anniversary. The two sides held a series of events in celebrations and commemoration of this important occasion," he said during his regular briefing held here. Sharing some features, he said that the celebrations drew great popularity, adding, "The two sides originally planned for more than 120 activities, but in fact held about 140 events, well above the targets. From the beginning of the year to the end of the year, the celebrations have remained popular." Zhao Lijian said that there was exchange of congratulatory messages between the leaders and high profile receptions to celebrate the anniversary. He said that the two sides also held activities such as signing of deals on becoming friendship provinces and cities,

exchanges covering areas including political, diplomatic, sub-national, educational, scientific, cultural and other sectors.

"These have attracted many young people and renewed the friendship in the new era," he added. About the good results of events, he said the be it virtually or in person, the celebration rose above the pandemic to deepen mutual political trust, strengthen the two peoples friendship and promote practical cooperation in various sectors. He reiterated that China and Pakistan are all weather strategic partners and iron clad brothers and added, "Our friendship is unbreakable and rock firm." The spokesperson said that looking forward, China is ready to work with Pakistan to deepen political trust, promote high quality development of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and enhance exchanges and cooperation across the board.

"Together, we can build a closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in a near era,

taking the partnership to a new height so as to deliver benefits to the people," he added. In the beginning of this year, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and his China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi formally commenced activities to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Pak-China diplomatic relations during a virtual ceremony held simultaneously in Islamabad and Beijing. A logo was unveiled during the ceremony epitomizing the historic nature of Pakistan-China ties which were established in May 21, 1951. The two nations planned to organize a series of events, including exchanges of high-level delegations, people to people contact, cultural exhibitions, photographic exhibitions, fashion events, publication of books spread across the entire year to commemorate the historic milestone.

Both nations also announced to twin a number of cities between China and Pakistan besides holding the webinars of trade and investment.



Pak-China bilateral trade to cross \$25 billion says Ambassador Haque

Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque said that despite COVID-19 pandemic, this year bilateral trade between Pakistan and China was expected to cross \$25 billion value with a great momentum with Pakistan's exports to China expected to cross \$3.54 billion, which was unprecedented and historic figures.

He made these remarks while addressing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)'s Industrial Cooperation B2B Investment Conference in Lahore via video link with the objective of transforming CPEC into a true economic hub by establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Punjab and business ventures in different sectors, China Economic Net reported. Ambassador Moin said, in recent years, our two countries have been focusing more and more on economic and commercial cooperation.

For many years, China, being a largest trading partner, has been the largest source of FDI. He said that Chinese President Xi Jinping once said that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was not an empty slogan, but a visible, tangible, practical initiative, which would bring many tangible reserves and benefits to the region.

CPEC being a flagship project of BRI is an emblem of President Xi Jinping's statement," he added. According to the Ambassador, CPEC is a game changer and a transformational project, which has opened new frontiers for us.



"Pakistan commitment to CPEC remains strong and enduring and we are aware of evil designs of our detractors and adversaries who want to sabotage CPEC," he said, adding "our two

countries therefore, remain vigilant and would not allow anyone to damage China Pakistan friendship and our shared interest".



Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Regular Press Conference

The US' system of democracy is unique but not universally applicable

Democracy is a common value shared by all humanity. It is a right for all nations, not a prerogative reserved to a few. Democracy takes different forms, and there is no one-size-fits-all model.

It would be totally undemocratic to measure the diverse political systems in the world with a single yardstick or examine different political civilizations from a single perspective.

The US' system of democracy is derived from its own practices. This system is unique and not universally applicable.

Over the years, the US, despite the structural flaws and problematic practice of its democratic system, has claimed itself as the "beacon of democracy" and "model of democracy".

It has incessantly interfered in other countries' internal affairs and waged wars under the guise of "democracy", lectured others on democracy in a condescending

manner, and created regional turbulence and humanitarian disasters.

This has drawn widespread criticism from the international community.

The world needs to delve into and examine the state of democracy in the US.

By enumerating facts, statistics and the observations of experts from various countries, the report of "The State of Democracy in the United States", in both Chinese and English versions, aims to take stock of the malaises of the US' democratic system, make an in-depth analysis of the messy and chaotic practices of democracy in the US and the bad consequences of US export of its brand of democracy, and lay bare the hypocritical nature of its democratic diplomacy.

The US also needs to do some soul-searching. We hope the US will face up to its democratic flaws, improve its democratic system and stop the erroneous act of exporting its so-

called democracy.

This is conducive to both the American people and people of the world. No country can dictate standards for democracy or impose its own political system on others, still less use democracy as a tool to suppress others.

There is no perfect system of democracy in the world, nor is there a political system that fits all countries. Whether a country is democratic should be judged and determined by its own people, not by a minority of self-righteous outsiders.

Democracy is established and developed based on a country's own history and adapted to its national context, and each country's democracy has its unique value.

Members of the international community should engage in exchanges and dialogues on democracy on the basis of equality and mutual respect, and work together to contribute to the progress of humanity.



US Senate approves setting up Afghan war commission

The US Senate approved a defence bill on Friday, which calls for establishing an independent commission to scrutinise the Afghan war and to probe options for combating terrorism in the region, including Pakistan.

The proposed 16-member Afghanistan War Commission will produce a report within three years. The members would be selected in equal measure by Republican and Democratic lawmakers. Current and former members of Congress dating to 2001, as well as Cabinet-level and high-ranking defence officials involved in planning US policies on Afghanistan are excluded.

A previous version of the bill also proposed probing Pakistan's role in the Afghan war, but that provision has now been dropped.

The commission, however, can examine how

regional countries influenced the Afghan war and the role they can play in peacefully ending the Afghan conflict.

The summary of the bill states that the bipartisan panel will "examine" the 20-year conflict and will prepare "in-depth" reports on the US ability to counter terrorism in the Pakistan-Afghanistan region.

The commission will also do the "accountability" of the military equipment left in Afghanistan after the US withdrawal and will devise plans for evacuating American citizens and "Afghan allies" still there.

The defence authorisation bill — passed with 88 to 11 votes in the Senate — approved a record \$770 billion for America's defence. It earned the support of more than 80 per cent of the House last week. In both chambers, Republicans

supporting the bill outnumbered Democrats, although Democrats control both the House and Senate.

Underlining America's continued focus on China, the bill includes \$7.1bn for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative and a statement of congressional support for the defence of Taiwan that Beijing claims as its own territory. It also includes a ban on the US Department of Defence procuring products made with forced labour in China's western Xinjiang region.

The bill includes \$300 million for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, which provides support to Ukraine's armed forces, \$4bn for the European Defence Initiative and \$150m for Baltic security cooperation.

Courtesy: Dawn News



Azerbaijan, Pakistan sign protocol of 7th meeting of joint intergovernmental commission

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

The signing ceremony of the Protocol of the seventh meeting of the Joint Azerbaijan-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission was held, reports referring to the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense Industry.

A delegation of the Joint Azerbaijan-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission headed by Co-Chairman, Pakistani Minister for Defense Production Zubaida Jalal Khan is on a visit to Azerbaijan from November 29 through December 3 in connection with the 7th meeting of the Joint Azerbaijan-Pakistan Commission.

The members of the delegation headed by the co-chairman visited the Alley of Honor and laid a wreath at the grave of Azerbaijani national leader Heydar Aliyev.

Then the guests revered the memory of Azerbaijani martyrs.

Co-chairman of the commission from the Azerbaijani side, Minister of Defense Industry Madat Guliyev, and Zubaida Jalal Khan greeted the plenipotentiary participants and other guests from Pakistan.

Guliyev spoke about the ties between the two countries, the foundation of which was laid by national leader Heydar Aliyev and which are continued by President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.

Moreover, Guliyev expressed gratitude to Pakistan for its constant support and fraternal position regarding Azerbaijan's fair position

during the 44-day second Karabakh war and stressed that the Azerbaijani people highly appreciate it.

The further prospects for expanding economic cooperation between the two countries, an increase in the volume of trade were discussed during the meeting. The views on banking, energy, the defense industry, and transport were exchanged.

While expressing gratitude to the minister for hospitality, Zubaida Jalal Khan stressed that the fraternal relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan will be eternal and stable.

Zubaida Jalal Khan expressed gratification with the visit and said that the 7th meeting of the Joint Azerbaijan-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission will strengthen ties.

An official ceremony of signing the Protocol of the 7th meeting of the Intergovernmental

Commission was held at the end of the event.

Earlier, HE Mr Aliyev president of the Republic of Azerbaijan received Ms Zubaida Jalal Federal Minister for Defense Production and discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two states. The sides praised the successful development of bilateral friendly relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in various fields. The importance of Zubaida Jalal's visit in terms of expanding this cooperation was pointed out.

Recalling with satisfaction his recent meeting with the President of Pakistan, the President of Azerbaijan noted that this meeting was very successful and contributed to the strengthening of bilateral relations.

Touching upon the activities of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Commission meeting to be held in Baku, President Ilham Aliyev expressed his confidence that the event would serve





to expand economic cooperation, increase trade and raise the level of relations between business communities of the two countries. The head of state also stressed the need for setting out investment priorities.

President Ilham Aliyev once again thanked Pakistan for its continued political and moral support for and brotherly stance on Azerbaijan's just position during the Patriotic War and stressed that the Azerbaijani people appreciated it.

In this regard, the President noted that the Azerbaijani side would be pleased to see Pakistani companies among the foreign companies involved in the reconstruction and restoration work in the liberated territories.

Minister Zobaida Jalal stressed that Pakistan highly values brotherly relations with Azerbaijan, noting that these relations had passed the test of time over the years. It was noted that the victory of Azerbaijan in the Patriotic War was celebrated in Pakistan with festive events, describing it as an indicator of brotherly relations between the two countries.

The minister expressed her confidence that the meeting of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Commission would also contribute to expanding bilateral relations.

The sides also highlighted the importance of expanding cooperation in all areas, including trade, energy, transport, tourism, education and military-technical spheres. They exchanged



views on further expansion of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan-Turkey trilateral cooperation format in various directions. The two countries' constant support to each other, both bilaterally and within international organizations was hailed at the meeting. Prospects for the development of military cooperation was discussed during the meeting of Azerbaijani Defense Minister Colonel General Zakir Hasanov with Pakistani Defense Minister, Co-Chair of the Azerbaijani-Pakistani Joint Commission Zubaida Jalal, TurkicWorld reports citing the Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan.

At the meeting, satisfaction was expressed with the development of Azerbaijani-Pakistani relations along the ascending line and the level of strategic partnership, and the main vectors of bilateral military cooperation were discussed.

Azerbaijani defense minister informed about the work carried out in the territories liberated during the 44-day second Karabakh war, which culminated in the victory of the Azerbaijani army under the leadership of the President of Azerbaijan, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Ilham Aliyev.

Expressing satisfaction with the development of Azerbaijani-Pakistani military cooperation, Colonel-General Zakir Hasanov thanked the leadership and people of Pakistan for supporting the fair position of Azerbaijan at all levels, including in international organizations, as well as for the moral support provided to Azerbaijan.

Also, the meeting especially emphasized the important role of friendly relations between heads of state in the development of bilateral relations.





Heads of Diplomatic Mission's Spouses Group in Pakistan visit PBM-run rehabilitation school

By M.Saeed Yousafzai

A group of the wives of different heads of the Diplomatic Missions in Islamabad visited the School for Rehabilitation of

The visiting ladies appreciated the initiative and also vowed to carry out the social services in the country along with Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal.



Child Labour run by Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) and spent time with children there.

They also distributed gifts and talked to the children about their new life of education and learning at the schools.

Among the visiting guests included wives of the Heads of Missions of Turkey, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Kenya, Palestine, Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Egypt.

Managing Director PBM, Malik Zaheer Abbas Khokhar welcomed the distinguished guests and gave a detailed briefing about the PBM's poor friendly initiatives being taken under Prime Minister's Ehsaas Programme to uplift the lives of vulnerable communities of the country. MD PBM told the visiting guests that the PBM was running 159 Schools throughout the country to pull out the children from bonded labour and to impart them education.

These children are also provided pocket money on a daily basis while monthly stipends are also given to their parents. Moreover, uniforms,

books, stationary, healthcare and hair cutting facilities are also available to these children free of charge.

The visiting ladies appreciated the initiative and also vowed to carry out the social services in the country along with Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal.

They also visited all the class rooms and were briefed about the books and different courses being taught to the children. The spouses of the Heads of Diplomatic Missions distributed sweets and books among the students.

RCCI organized a Standing Committee Meeting on Defense and Procurement

By Mian Fazal Elahi

RCCI organized a Standing Committee Meeting on Defense and Procurement where numerous issues and problems being faced by defense and procurement businesses were discussed. Chairman Mr. Azfar Kamal convened the meeting.

President RCCI Ch. Nadeem A Rauf along with Former President Mr. Asad Mashadi ,SVP Asim Mahmood Malik, VP Talat Awan and distinguish RCCI members attended the meeting



Training Session held on Import Export Documentation & WeBOC in collaboration with SMEDA



Training Session on Import Export Documentation & WeBOC in collaboration with SMEDA (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority) held at Chamber House. President RCCI Ch Nadeem A. Rauf, and Vice President Tallat Awan attended the session.

Training session with Pakistan Single Window (PSW) held



President RCCI Ch Nadeem A. Rauf chaired a training session with Pakistan Single Window (PSW) regarding customs and cargo issues. Senior Vice President Asim Mahmood Malik and Vice President Talat Awan were also present.



Pakistan to launch first ecotourism village in March

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

Prime minister's special assistant on climate change Malik Amin Aslam has said Pakistan will launch its first ecotourism village in the mountains of Kaghan Valley in March.

Ecotourism involves responsible travel and sustainable transport, conserving the environment, and improving the wellbeing of locals in an area.

Its purpose is both to educate the traveller and to provide funds for ecological conservation and to benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities. Pakistan's first

ecotourism village in the north western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province will abide by a zero-waste policy, the advisor said.

"The ecotourism project is a unique and practical way which would reduce the environmental footprint of the tourism industry in Pakistan," Aslam said this week. "It will educate not only the hospitality sector but also engage the local community for their livelihood uplifting."

Visits to the ecotourism village will involve a six-day trek on foot, Aslam said, adding that the government wanted to invite the private sector to establish similar camping villages in other parts of the province. The village will

be located at a two-hour jeep drive from the historic Monroe Track which has been restored under the government's 10 Billion Tree Tsunami project.

Located in Shankiari, a town in Mansehra, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the 50-kilometre long hiking trail is about 100 years old and was first marked by Monroe, a British forester. However, the track was later lost.

With 7.5 billion rupees (\$46 million) in funding, the 10 Billion Trees project aims to scale up the success of an earlier Billion Tree Tsunami in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where the government has been planting trees since 2014.

Saudi artist makes portrait of crown prince using gemstones from Jabal Tuwaiq

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

Inspired by the words of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi artist Sarah Al-Zaidi spent five months creating a portrait of him using gemstones and other minerals she collected from Jabal Tuwaiq, a mountain in the north of the Kingdom.

'Himmat Al-Jabal,' which translates as 'Mettle of the Mountain,' was inspired by a comment by the crown prince, who said that 'the Saudi people's mettle is like Jabal Tuwaiq.'



Jabal Tuwaiq is a long, steep slope cutting through the Najd plateau of central Arabia, stretching for about 800 kilometers from Qassim region northwest of Riyadh to the northern edge of Rub' al Khali (Empty Quarter desert) in the south.

Valleys along the sides of Jabal Tuwaiq had been home to communities during centuries past, and the escarpment is now promoted

as a destination for hikers and outdoor lovers.

Al-Zaidi created her innovative, expressive technique after developing a passion for art at an early age.

She collects stones such as obsidian, amber and quartz and uses them, along with other items she collects, such as wood and seashells, to create impressive, mosaic-like works.

Theory, practice of international relations and trends in 2021



By Inam Ul Haque

International Relations (IR) has seen some tumultuous period thanks to one cataclysmic event after another in the last 100 years or so. From the World Wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945) onwards, major IR milestones can be identified as formation of the United Nations in 1945, Korean War (1950-1953), Suez Crisis (1956), Arab-Israel Wars (1947, 1967, 1973), creation of Bangladesh (1971), Iranian Revolution (1978...), Soviet Afghan War (1979-1989), Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), Cold war 1.0 and the breakup of Soviet Union (1989-1991), First Gulf War (1991), US/NATO-Afghan War (2001-2021), and the 2nd Gulf War (2003-2011), etc.

However, the above human-engineered incidents are also buttressed by events like climate change, global warming, calamities and pandemics... Covid-19 (2020...) being the latest. IT revolutions and the advent of microchip in mid-20th Century (1956) impacted greatly on human life and human/inter-state relations. IR is considered a combination of foreign policy and diplomacy. In narrow sense, IR stipulates interaction between/among nation states, whereas, its broader manifestation is the 'totality of interactions between, below or above nation states including communities, peoples and organisations, etc. Foreign policy, on the other hand, is 'a systematic statement of deliberately selected national interests'. Whereas, diplomacy is considered a tool of foreign policy.

It is good to know that Pakistan's first National Security Policy is in the offing, after some 70 years with multiple drafts repeatedly shelved in the past. This would be a big triumph for the National Security Division and all related entities (34) besides Joint Staff HQ, Services HQs and academia/NDU. The document is expected to firmly state national purpose, national objectives and national interests (vital, primary, secondary, permanent, variable, general and peripheral) etc. A yearly review is prescribed to harness changes in the global, regional and domestic environment.

IR stuck to its traditional view up to the end of First WW, when it was focused upon historical description of events. After WW-I, the focus shifted to current affairs. After the Second WW,

IR analysis spanned scientific understanding of the causes of conflict. Its current and modernist view is broad in meaning, scope and extents; is multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional; and spans multiplicity of actors i.e. states, people, societies and institutions. IR today deals with diverse issues impacting upon national interest, power politics, international institutions, global politics/trade and commerce, international/corporate law and multinational organisations, etc.

In a broad survey of approaches and theories to the IR, 'Positivist' Theory, involves liberalism, realism and humanist approaches (putting a premium on centrality of human values/human rights), while taking a linear view of history. The 'Post-Positivist' Theory deals with international society and social constructivism. It opposes the notion of 'power' being 'just there'. The theory gives weightage to the broad human construct (beliefs/cultural practices), institutions and collective identities. The 'Post-Structuralist' Theory deals with issues like feminism, post-colonialism, etc. It tries to redefine power as a construct.

However, we are at the cusp of a new context in the IR. Just a little before the Covid-19, the world under the bonhomie of WTO and EU was jubilant in economic and political integration and globalisation. The competing strands of ethnicity, technology, finance, media and ideas were all working towards this cherished integration. Regionalism and localism were effectively contained; at least that was the perception. Not anymore. Today non-traditional issues (health, migration and emigration, trade and commerce, climate change, sustainable development, inequality, intellectual property) dominate the agenda. And the advent of non-state actors has changed the nature of power (military, economic and smart).

Diplomacy, the art of negotiation, and an effective and tested IR tool is also under transformation on two accounts. First, its nimbleness and softer side is changing into a hardwired format. It is giving in to sanctions, unilateral/imposed/agenda wars and other coercive measures, mostly targeting the already weak and the poor. Non-recognition of the present Afghan government by even the stalwarts of Muslim Ummah, without the US/Western blessing, is a case in point. Diplomatic tools like tact, skillful persuasion, adjustment, allegiances, alliances and agreements, etc are backseat. Diplomatic protocol and etiquette, diplomatic correspondence, messaging and media skills, and diplomatic language, etc are at times, a brazen casualty. The changing face of diplomacy now transforms from 'secrecy to nakedness/brazenness'.

Second, diplomats are under pressure

for quality and acumen. As against the 'traditional view' of 'state-centred approach' in diplomacy, that related to government-to-government relations (primarily in the realm of geo-strategy and security), dealing with limited actors; war and peace; balance of power, territorial disputes, and alliances, etc; the 'modernist view' of diplomacy integrates a plethora of subjects. Its seemingly unlimited canvas encompasses from democracy to human rights, culture to agriculture, climate change to economic development, biotechnology to cooperative networks, private sector to civil society, etc.

Its newer frontiers are now economic diplomacy, digital diplomacy, public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy (China, Russia), diaspora diplomacy, etc. Use of 'nakedness' through 'disruptive technologies and informatics' during negotiations is generally another tough ask. No wonder, our foreign office needs to do a lot of catching up and do it fast and do it regularly. From the above theoretical framework, what can we forecast? Last year, US Council of Foreign Relations identified growing costs for pandemic preparedness by national governments; increased cost because of/and to fight climate change; dependence of future medical trade upon a functional and dependable global supply chain; and growing gap between a younger population and aging leaders in Africa, as some trends to watch in 2021. The list remained inconclusive.

Year 2022 is likely to see continuation of cold hostility between the US and China for global leadership. Block politics would see relative consolidation, given the exponential expense by China through Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), in mostly poor countries. New variants of Coronavirus would keep rattling the US and Europe in particular, continuing shifting of trade and commerce towards East/South. Covid-related restrictions would cause unrest among vast segments of global population. Dissatisfaction with national leaders (perceived as under-performers) would grow. International air travel/tourism would shift domestically. Worldwide economic recovery would remain erratic. Global hotspots like Afghanistan, Middle East, South Asia, South China Sea, Ukraine, Africa, etc would remain hostage to a single-event trigger. Big data control, manipulation and privacy concerns would keep technology giants like Amazon, Facebook, etc under pressure.

However, believing that His rehmat (blessings) eclipses His zehmat (annoyance), let us wish all a happy New Year. The writer is a retired major general and has an interest in International Relations and Political Sociology. He can be reached at tayarinarinam@hotmail.com and tweets @20_Inam

Courtesy to The Express Tribune

Taliban halted the border fencing of Pakistan and Afghanistan

Taliban soldiers in Afghanistan stopped the fencing of border by Pakistani military along the border between the two countries.

Pakistan has completed the 1,615 of total 2,600 (mile) fencing, despite of the strict opposition from Kabul during the Ghani regime.

Afghan defence ministry spokesman Enayatullah Khwarazmi said Taliban forces stopped the Pakistani military from erecting what he called an “illegal” border fence along the eastern province of Nangarhar.

Taliban and Pakistani forces came face-to-face over the border incident, two Taliban officials said on condition of anonymity, and the situation was tense. The spokesperson played down the incident, saying everything was now normal.

The lawless mountainous border was historically fluid before Pakistan began erecting a metal fence four years ago, of which it has completed 90 per cent. The border incident happened the day foreign delegates from around the world gathered in Islamabad for a summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to discuss the unfolding humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan.

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood

Qureshi while addressing the issue said that there were “some complications” pertaining to the fencing of Pak-Afghan border but in addition to that the matter was being discussed with the Afghan Taliban government as he blamed “certain miscreants” for blowing such incidents out of proportion.

The Durand Line agreement was signed between Afghan King Abdul Rahman Khan and British India’s Foreign Secretary Sir Mortimer Durand in 1893. The Durand Line constitutes part of the current border between Pakistan and Afghanistan and not the entire mutual border.



58th Independence Day of the Republic of Kenya Marked

High Commissioner of Kenya H.E. Prof. Julius Kibet Bitok hosted a reception to mark 58th anniversary of Kenyan independence at Islamabad. Chief Guest of the eve was Mr. Shibli Faraz Federal Minister for Science & Technology. A large number of diplomats, members of civil society attended the reception.



UAE Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Hamad Obaid Al-Zaabi hosted a grand reception in Islamabad, which marked five decades of the UAE's formal nationalization and the start of the unification of the Emirates. H.E. Shah Mehmood Qureshi Pakistan Foreign Minister was the Chief Guest of the eve. The UAE was formally established on December 2, 1971 after an agreement was reached between rulers of the six Emirates, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm Al Quwain, Fujairah and Ajman. The seventh, Ras al Khaimah, acceded to the new federation the following year. Since their unification, the seven Emirates have forged a distinct national identity.





Kazakhstan embassy celebrates 30th anniversary of National Day

Ambassador of Kazakhstan H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin organised a reception to mark the 30th anniversary of the National Day of Kazakhstan at Islamabad. Chief Guest of the eve was Mr. Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Federal Minister for information and Broadcasting. A large number of diplomats, members of civil society attended the reception.





Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Publisher/Editor of “Diplomatic Focus” and Mrs. Mian Fazal Elahi hosted a dinner reception in the honor of Diplomatic Community in Islamabad to say goodbye to 2021 and welcomed 2022. “Diplomatic Focus” is leading monthly English magazine focusing on the bilateral relations, current affairs, diplomatic matters between countries and regions. This magazine primarily covers one hundred fifty four countries of the world, their diplomatic/social events, National Days, Economic & Cultural Events. The Group of RBI Media Minds (Print/ Electronics Media Production House) has been publishing the renowned prestigious monthly magazine “Diplomatic Focus” very regularly since 2010 from Islamabad under the leadership of Mr. Mian Fazal Elahi a seasonal and visionary journalist.





Ambassador of Romania H.E. Nicolae Goia hosted a reception to celebrate National Day of Romania at Islamabad. Governor KPK Shah Farman was the chief guest on the occasion while a large number of guests from various walks of life were invited to be part of the National Day celebrations.



Book Launch Ceremony of “The Tajiks in The Mirror of History” Organized

A Book Launch Ceremony of “The Tajiks in The Mirror of History” was jointly organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad at the National Library of Pakistan.

This book is authored by Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, and was translated and published in Pakistan by CGSS and the University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Chief Guest of the occasion was Zaheer ud Din Babar Awan, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs/Adviser to PM, Government of Pakistan. He was of the view that this book will prove to be a milestone in enhancing bilateral ties between Pakistan and Tajikistan.

Ismatullo Nasredin, Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan stated that Pakistan and Tajikistan share many common interests including our history, culture & cooperation in regional

forums. This book will allow Pakistani readers to be better acquainted with Tajik history & culture.

Mr. Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director, CGSS stated that this book will potentially contribute to the pool of Knowledge for Pakistan, it will help our students and faculty members to understand the socio-economic and political dynamics of Tajikistan.





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