

Monthly Magazine on National & International Political Affairs, Diplomatic Issues | March - April 2022 | Volume 13 | Issue 03-04  
Promoting Bilateral Relations | Current Affairs | Trade & Economic Affairs | Education | Technology | Culture & Tourism

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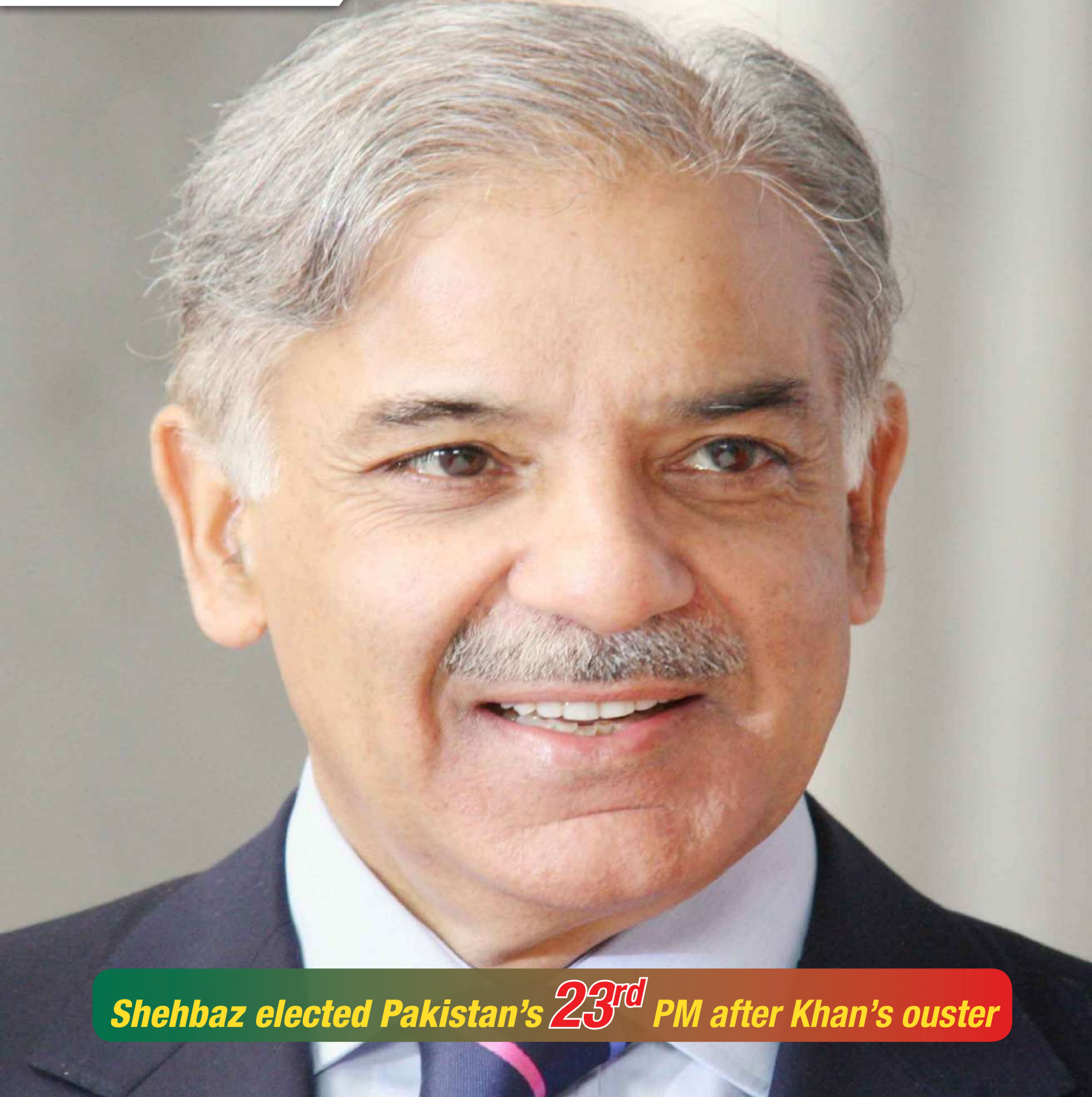
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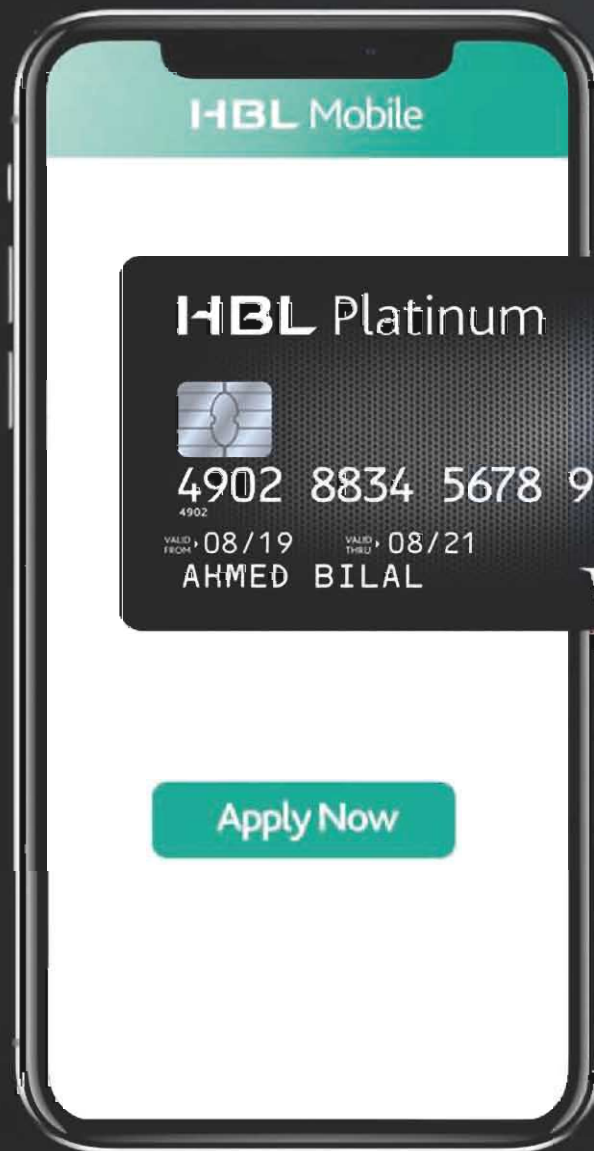


**Shehbaz elected Pakistan's 23<sup>rd</sup> PM after Khan's ouster**

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A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing black sunglasses and a vibrant green button-down shirt, is seated in a cafe. He is holding a white ceramic cup with his right hand. He is also wearing dark blue trousers and a silver-toned watch with a black dial on his left wrist. The background is a blurred interior of a cafe with warm lighting and green structural elements.

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PREMIUM RANGE





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## Pakistan firm to resolve regional issues through partnership: Gen Bajwa

Pakistan doesn't believe in camp politics, and determined to resolve regional issues through partnership and cooperation. Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa delivered his opening remarks at the second day of the Islamabad Security Dialogue 2022 on April 2 as Chief Guest. General Bajwa said regional security and stability was the component of the country's National Security Policy, adding, and "Citizens' security and prosperity is our priority".

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## President, OIC ministers discuss bilateral cooperation

State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq Dr Fuad Hussein, Foreign Minister of Egypt Sameh Hassan Shoukry, and Foreign Minister of Palestine Riyad al-Maliki, made separate calls on President Dr Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr here on March 22 and exchanged views on bilateral cooperation.

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## Nation celebrates Pakistan Day pledging to ensure strong defence, prosperity

The nation celebrated 82nd Pakistan Day on Wednesday with a resounding commitment to ensure progress, prosperity and a strong defence of the country. The day was observed to commemorate the passage of historic Lahore Resolution on 23rd March in 1940, under which Muslims of the sub-continent set the agenda of a separate homeland for themselves.

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## Pakistan, Uzbekistan vow to further strengthen relations

President Dr Arif Alvi held a bilateral meeting with the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev at Awan-e-Sadar in Islamabad. The two leaders exchanged views on a wide range of issues of bilateral interest and important regional and international matters. The President expressed satisfaction on the upward trajectory of bilateral ties and reiterated the desire to promote multifaceted cooperation in all spheres, including political, trade, economic, defence, security, connectivity, education and cultural exchanges.

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## Japan announces a US\$ 3.45 million grant project to support effective border control and migration management in Pakistan

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad held a signing ceremony of Exchange of Notes for a USD 3.45 million grant project aimed at strengthening the operational capacities of border management authorities to contribute towards comprehensive migration management in Pakistan.

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## Printer

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Karachi Office: Mobile: +92-331-5155515

## Price

Pakistan	Rs.1200	Middle East	50 Saudi Riyal
UK	£ 8	Schengen State	€10
Chinese Yuan:	75	Canada:	\$15
USA:	\$12		

*Published from Islamabad*

February 2022



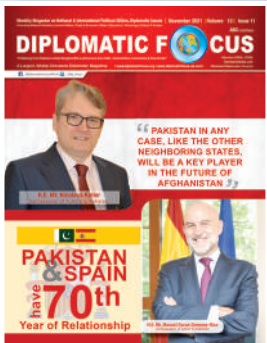
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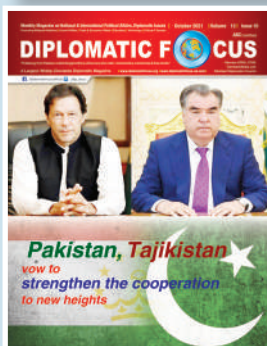
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## Our previous Issues



Mian Fazal Elahi

**M**ian Shahbaz Sharif has started his first-ever turn as Prime Minister of Pakistan in the backdrop of high expectations. He would be leading a multi-party government with its constituents having difference in interests, a highly volatile opposition that has just been ousted, worsening economic conditions and masses who have pinned great hopes on him for urgent and medium-term relief in the face of severe price-hike. Shahbaz is famous as a deliverer, reconciliatory and a leader with passion for progress and improvement, which he proved and set high standards of good governance during his tenures as Chief Minister of Punjab.

No doubt challenges are really tough but Shahbaz Sharif has the ability and courage to tackle them. His has to accommodate his partners in the formation of cabinet and hopefully all parties would nominate their best brains so that the country is brought out of the existing mess in the shortest possible time. The coalition must realize that there is no room for any mistake as success or failure of Shahbaz government will have a bearing for all of them.


Economic experts widely believe that the genie of inflation can be put back into the bottle if a prudent exchange rate policy is devised and followed and this will have to be done with a speed. There would also be a need to do damage control in the realm of foreign affairs in the backdrop of recent tendency to use sensitive foreign policy issues for point-scoring on the domestic front. The work on historic China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative should be accelerated for country's socio-economic development. PTI has declared its intention to give a tough time to the government through street agitation as well as the politics of resignations, but PTI leaders should avoid violence. They should remain calm and focused on coming election.

Pakistan hosted extraordinary summit of foreign ministers of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Islamabad as a landmark development, which would help strengthen bonds of unity, brotherhood, bilateral and economic cooperation among 57 member countries. Hosting of the 48th Foreign Ministers' council meeting of OIC at Islamabad was great honour for Pakistan. Participation of over 600 delegates discussed concrete and viable solutions to various problems being faced by the Muslims world.

The OIC during its 53 years' life had achieved significant achievements including establishment of special fund with assistance of UNRWA for assistance of refugees of Palestine, formation of OIC Contact Group on J&K, raising voices in support of oppressed Muslims at UN Security Council and adaptation of collective stand against Islamophobia.


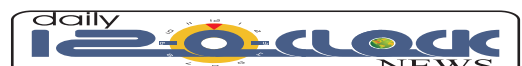
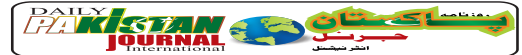
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# Supreme Court of Pakistan buries 'DOCTRINE OF NECESSITY'



DF Report

**T**he Supreme Court of Pakistan, on March 7, restored the National Assembly, declared the President's decision to dissolve it null and void, and said that the NA Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri's ruling to stop the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan was against the Constitution.

The five-member bench of the SC, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial, read out the short order and restored the National Assembly.

Ruling was issued by five-member bench of CJ Mr. Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Mr. Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal, Mr. Justice Munib Akhtar Mr. Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Mr. Justice Umar Ata Bandial.

"In consequence of the foregoing, it is declared that at all material times the Prime Minister was under the bar imposed by the Explanation to clause (1) of Article 58 of the Constitution and continues to remain so restricted. He could not, therefore, have at any time advised the President to dissolve the Assembly as contemplated by clause (1) of Article 58," said the order.

"In consequence of the foregoing, it is declared that the advice tendered by the Prime Minister on or about 03.04.2022 to the President to dissolve the Assembly was contrary to the Constitution and of no legal effect," said the order. The Supreme Court also "declared that

the Assembly was in existence at all times, and continues to remain and be so".

The top court has ordered National Assembly Speaker Asad Qasir to summon the session on Saturday (April 9) no later than 10am to vote on the no-confidence motion against the premier.

"...if the no-confidence motion against the prime minister succeeds, then the assembly will appoint the new prime minister," the top court's order said.

The apex court also stated that the speaker cannot prorogue the assembly and bring the session to an end if the no-trust motion fails or after a new Prime Minister is elected if a no-confidence motion is passed.

The court ruled that no member will be barred from casting their vote. It also stated that if the no-trust motion fails then the government will continue to carry out its affairs.

Earlier while hearing the suo-motu notice, CJP Umar Ata Bandial said they would announce the verdict of the case related to National Assembly Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri's ruling blocking the vote of no-confidence against Prime Minister Imran Khan after holding hearings for five-consecutive days.

Following the conclusion of the arguments by all the parties, the top court reserved its verdict which was announced tonight.

On April 3, Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial had taken a suo motu notice of the

constitutional crisis that erupted after Suri disallowed voting on the motion, deeming it "unconstitutional and foreign-funded" — a move that the Opposition said was a blatant violation of the Constitution.

After hearing the AGP's arguments, CJP Bandial remarked that it is clear that the ruling of National Assembly Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri was erroneous.

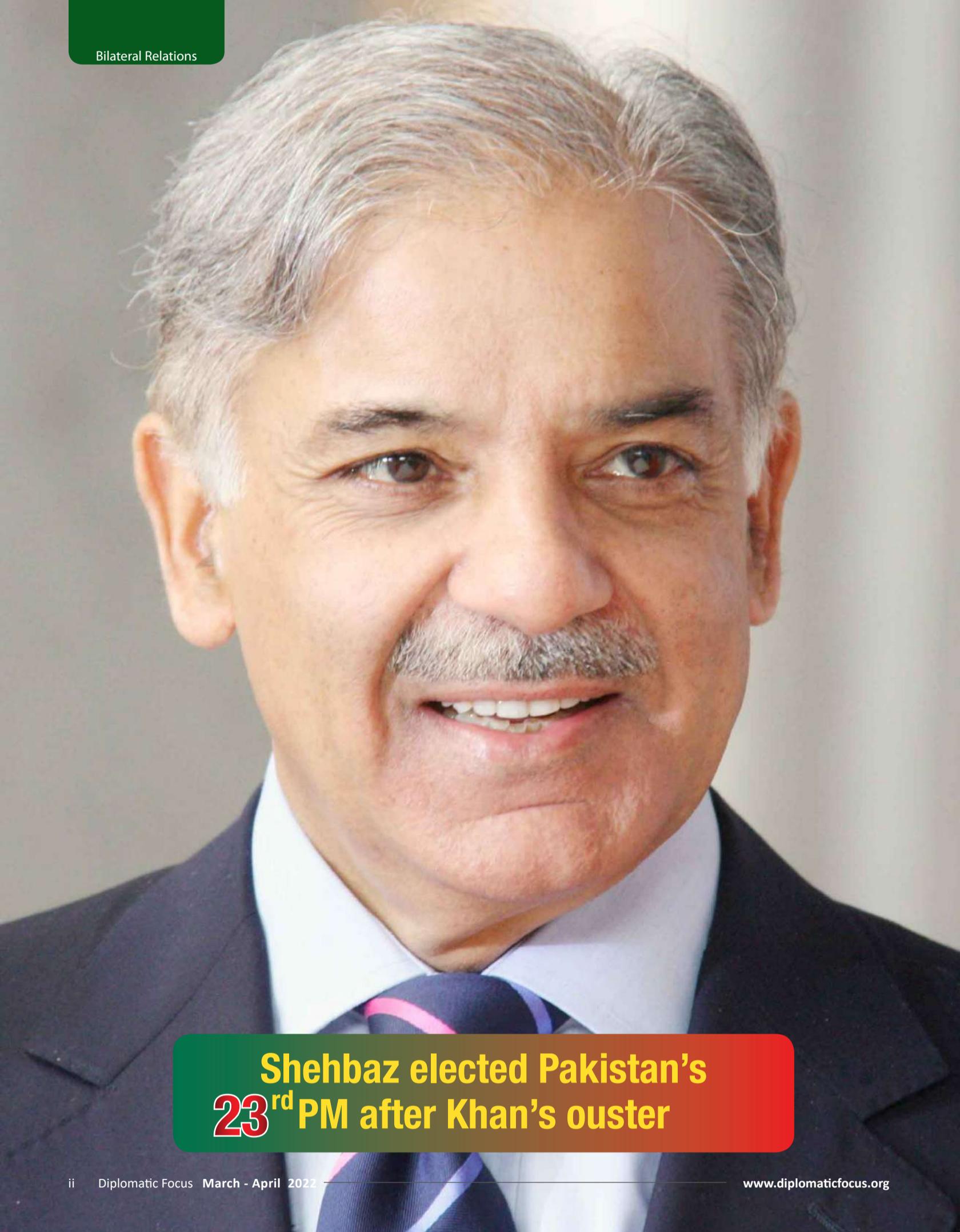
"The assembly could not be dissolved during the no-confidence motion," the CJP observed, adding that the dissolution of the assembly after tabling the resolution in the house was against the Constitution.

The AGP argued that the assembly could only be dissolved when the no-trust motion has been dispelled.

A clear precedent has been set by this verdict however, which should perhaps be followed when it comes to the provincial assembly as well.

The guidelines have been laid out very clearly by the Supreme Court and there should be no attempts to derail the process any further or to make a mockery of the constitution.

The hope is that the procedure is not disrupted any further, and the previous timeline is restored; the parliament, after electing a new Prime Minister, decides when elections will be held—in a year and half or earlier. Ensuring this will allow us to deal with the more urgent crisis at hand, which is the state of our economy.

A close-up portrait of Shehbaz Sharif, a middle-aged man with grey hair and a mustache, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a blue and pink striped tie. He is smiling slightly. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**Shehbaz elected Pakistan's  
23<sup>rd</sup> PM after Khan's ouster**

Following the ouster of PTI Chairman Imran Khan from the office of the Prime Minister, the Opposition's joint candidate Shehbaz Sharif was elected as the 23rd premier of Pakistan on April 11, 2022.

Shehbaz secured 174 votes as opposed to PTI's candidate Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who received no votes after his party decided to boycott the polling process.

The poll took place under the chairmanship of MNA Ayaz Sadiq, two days after the lower house of Parliament voted in favour of removing Imran Khan from office, following a nearly 14-hour standoff between the Opposition and Khan's ruling party that started on Saturday morning.

The session formally started after a brief delay with a recitation of the Holy Quran and naat, with NA Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri in the chair.

The session, however, was adjourned till 4pm April 16. Taking the floor, the newly elected Prime Minister Shehbaz thanked the Almighty Allah for his uncountable blessings.

He mentioned that Almighty Allah has protected the country which was also because of the hectic efforts of the leaders of the joint Opposition members. The premier mentioned that it was for the first time in the history of Pakistan that a prime minister was ousted through the no-confidence motion.

Terming the day as a "historic day", he mentioned that the happiness of the people can be seen through the economic indicators. Shehbaz mentioned that the rupee regained its value — which was trading at Rs190 per dollar and closed at Rs182 per dollar.

"Imran Khan was the person who said that when rupee gains Rs1 against the US dollar then the Prime Minister of the country is a corrupt person now he should see that the rupee has recovered around Rs8," he said.

He acknowledged the Supreme Court's "unanimous" verdict saying that the day when the apex court gave its judgment should be marked as a "historic day" in the history of Pakistan. The newly-elected Prime Minister said the Opposition was discussing the no-confidence motion days before Imran Khan's "concocted threat letter controversy".

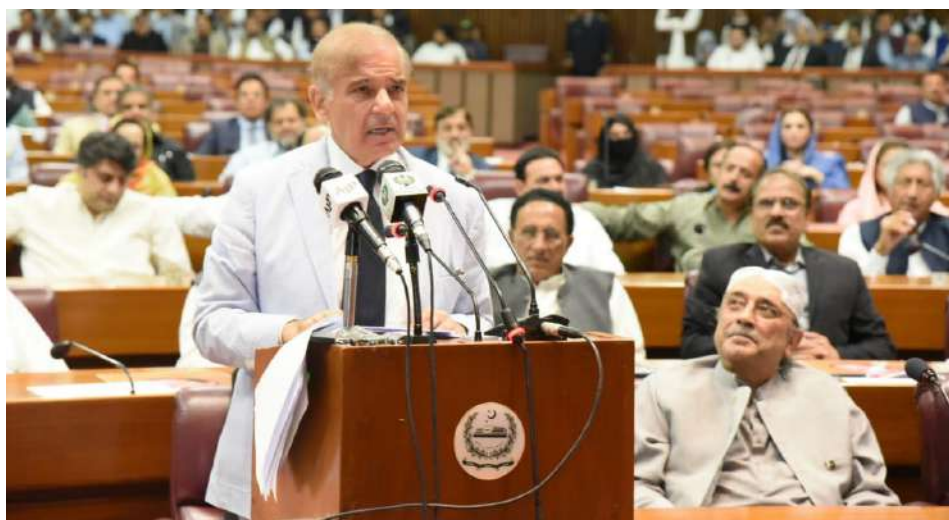
"They say that this letter came to them on March 7, but our decisions were made way before that, so, if [what the previous government claimed] is a lie, then the matter should be disclosed transparently before the public," he added.

Therefore, PM Shehbaz Sharif announced that the parliament's security committee would be given a briefing on the "threat letter" to the members of the committee in presence of the

armed forces personnel and bureaucrats — the director-general Inter-Services Intelligence, foreign secretary, and the ambassador who wrote it, who has now been transferred to Brussels.

"If there's an iota of evidence that we were backed by foreign conspirators [...] then with you Mr Speaker and God as my witness, I will not think for another second and resign from the office of the prime minister," PM Shehbaz Sharif said, vowing to hold an in-camera session of the security committee at the earliest.

The Prime Minister thanked his brother and ex-premier Nawaz Sharif for his support, while also lauding social media activists, press clubs,



media houses, and lawyers for backing the Opposition's struggle for democracy. Moving towards the topic of economy, the newly-elected prime minister said if Pakistan were to progress, then it needs to be self-sufficient on the financial front.

"...we will need to protect and respect the nation as neither was anyone a traitor nor are they traitors now," the Prime Minister said, noting if Pakistan's economy were to move forward, then, the government will have to use "dialogue" and not move towards a deadlock.

PM Shehbaz Sharif said hard work was required for Pakistan's progress as if only statements could move the country forward, then during PTI's tenure, we would have been among the leading nations.

"We will need to wash out the effects of the previous government by working together, otherwise, we will fail our economy is in a bad situation right now," the prime minister said. PM Shehbaz Sharif said the new government would take steps to make Pakistan an "investment heaven" for investors as he noted their capital would help the country move forward.

He announced that despite Punjab "being the elder brother" if all the other provinces remain behind in terms of development, then it is not

Pakistan's development, it was just a single province's development.

"...this servant of Pakistan vows to make sure that Pakistan will develop and not just Punjab," Shehbaz said. He said the government would reintroduce the Benazir Card and interlink it with the education sector in a bid to facilitate people whose children go to school.

"Our children should be equipped with great knowledge [...] we will reintroduce this programme with consultation," he said and lashed out at the PTI government for discontinuing it.

Criticising the PTI government over its foreign policy, he lamented that Pakistan's strategic

partners and friends had left it while it remained silent on the Kashmir issue. Underlining the importance of having good ties with China, he alleged that the previous government had attempted to weaken the friendship between Pakistan and China.

"But this friendship is for forever and ... I assure that we will make progress on the CPEC," he added, thanking Chinese President Xi Jinping.

He further underlined the significance of having good ties with Saudi Arabia, Turkey, European Union nations, the United Arab Emirates, Britain and Iran. He also said ties needed to be strengthened with US on the basis of equality and "we need to raise our voice for Afghanistan" where the situation was dire.

"We want peace in Afghanistan."

Shehbaz also stressed the need to get the EU GSP Plus Status. With regards to India, Shehbaz said while they wanted good relations with the neighbouring, it was conditional on the "just" resolution of Kashmir issue.

Shehbaz also expressed the resolve to raise voice for Palestinians.

Concluding his speech, he emphasised national unity, saying that a "nation is built through consensus".



## Saudi envoy distributes ration, dates

DF Report

**S**audi Ambassador to Pakistan H E Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki on Apr 6 distributed rations and dates among the deserving people.

He, on behalf of H H King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, also distributed the copies of holy Quran, translated into Urdu, Sindhi and Pashto languages.

He, reviewing the shipments, said the Saudi government dispatched a great quantity of groceries in various areas of Pakistan for the vulnerable segments of the society every year particularly in the holy month of Ramazan.

The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance, represented by the religious attache in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, inaugurated King Salman's iftar and date distribution programs, and the gift of the Qur'an from King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an in Madinah.

The programs aim to distribute 1,750 integrated Ramazan baskets to benefit 14,000 needy people, 12 tons of quality dates, and 24,000 copies of the Holy Qur'an and interpretations its teachings in Urdu, Sindhi and other languages.

Al-Malki said that these programs, which H H King Salman directed to be implemented during Ramazan in countries worldwide, have been



welcomed by Pakistan.

Al-Jadaei said the food baskets will be distributed to the neediest groups in coordination with official institutions and associations in Pakistan, noting that the mission will distribute them according to health protocols. It is pertinent to

mention here that Saudi Arabia has launched iftar programs in 34 countries this year.

The ministry has made all the necessary arrangements to reach all continents in coordination with Saudi embassies and the ministry's Islamic centers.

# Bill Gates thanks PM after 'encouraging' Pakistan visit



## DF Report

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates has thanked Prime Minister Imran Khan after his first-ever Pakistan visit during which he held meetings with health officials leading the national polio programme and COVID-19 strategy.

The American philanthropist paid a day-long visit to the country and discussed Pakistan's polio eradication campaign and other important issues with the prime minister.

In a social media message, Bill Gates stated that he was encouraged by the country's commitment to the eradication of the disease and optimistic that if everyone remains vigilant, we can end polio.

Bill Gates was also awarded Hilal-i-Pakistan by President Arif Alvi at a special investiture ceremony at the President House for his services to Pakistan.

In his meeting with the US tech leader whose Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is supporting the

polio programme, PM Imran Khan expressed Pakistan's commitment to eradicate polio.

The prime minister said that Afghanistan being the primary source of polio incidence in the country's two bordering provinces, required urgent international support to avert

**Despite COVID-19  
restrictions,  
Pakistan  
performed  
amazingly and  
continued with  
polio vaccinations,  
Bill Gates says**

humanitarian crisis including health emergency.

The prime minister told the meeting of the National Task Force for Polio Eradication here which was also attended, on his special invitation, by Bill Gates.

While welcoming Gates, the prime minister thanked his foundation for its continued support and partnership with Pakistan in polio eradication.

He underlined that the government was fully committed and determined towards polio eradication.

Bill Gates thanked the prime minister for inviting him and extending warm hospitality on his first-ever visit to Pakistan.

He highly appreciated the efforts of the leadership, health workers and parents for working tirelessly to ensure that polio never paralyzes a child again.

Bill Gates said that despite COVID-19 restrictions, Pakistan has performed amazingly and has continued with polio vaccinations.

# Islamabad Security Dialogue 2022



## Pakistan firm to resolve regional issues through partnership: Gen Bajwa

**Says, Pakistan doesn't believe in camp politics, citizens' security and prosperity on top priority**

By Mian Fazal Elahi

**P**akistan doesn't believe in camp politics, and determined to resolve regional issues through partnership and cooperation.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa

delivered his opening remarks at the second day of the Islamabad Security Dialogue 2022 on April 2 as Chief Guest.

General Bajwa said regional security and stability was the component of the country's National Security Policy, adding, and "Citizens' security and prosperity is our priority".

The Army Chief said, "Pakistan do not believe in camp politics and cannot promote its relationship with its partners at the cost of others.

"We want to expand our ties with China, US, and Russia without damaging its national

interests where Ukraine, Japan, Gulf States and other partners are equally important for the country's development and economic

prosperity", the COAS said.

While commenting on Pak-Russia crisis, he said Pakistan had serious concerns over Ukraine crisis. The unfortunate Russian invasion destroyed half of the Ukraine and killed many people, where both the countries should let the situation under their control to resolve the conflict, he added.

He underlined that the expansion of the Ukraine crisis would not serve any country and Pakistan was demanding ceasefire between Ukraine and Russian.

The Army Chief mentioned that the world was facing challenges of poverty, climate change, cyber intrusion and others, whereas Pakistan was a country located at the cross roads of global economic and political transitions.

Commenting on the country's landmark National Security Policy formulation, the COAS said the first ever National Security Policy

**"The int'l community's collective security rests in our ability to integrate our shared goals of global prosperity to an equitable international system resisting the external pressures."**

placed citizen security at its heart, where achieving this required peace at home and abroad. “Our commitment to defeat terrorism remains unwavering. The country sacrificed 90,000 lives in its war against terrorism and the Armed forces with national support achieved unprecedented accomplishments”,

“We had historically excellent relations with US. The good army we have today is largely built and trained by US. The best eqpt we have is US equipment. We still have deep cooperation with US and our Western friends. A month back American Air Force was here for a huge exercise with our Air Force.”

General Bajwa said.

“Pakistan has rendered sacrifices of 90,000 innocent lives in war on terror and will continue fighting terrorism till elimination of the last terrorist from its soil”, he said.

The COAS also shed light on the worst humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and said, “We are working with Afghan government and other neighbouring countries to prevent its soil use for terrorism against any other nation”. He added that the lack of financial flows and global sanctions were aggravating humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

“The western countries in the emergence of Ukraine’s humanitarian crisis should not forget the 40 million people facing the worst humanitarian catastrophe”, he added.

Pakistan, he said was providing assistance to Afghanistan to avert the looming humanitarian crisis and the world must incentivise Afghans for their behavioural change.

“Pakistan already hosts four million registered and non-registered refugees and the world must stop Afghanistan becoming the new epicenter of terrorism”, he added.

He urged the global community that the world

must not disrupt its ties with Afghanistan and should not ignore Afghanistan amid Ukraine crisis.

Commenting on the external security situation of the country, he said the situation along the line of control (LoC) remained peaceful and was satisfactory.

He further mentioned that the Indian cruise missile launched into Pakistan was a major concern as India did not make any communication prior to its launch.

“It has raised concerns over Indian ability to handle high end weapons. Pakistan has called for a complete probe into the situation.

India must hold investigation of the failed supersonic cruise missile launch and ensure that its weapons are safe”, he demanded.

He said Pakistan had played the role of a responsible state among the comity of nations and released the Indian pilot captured after shooting down his aircraft intruding the Pakistan airspace in 2019 while honoring the international laws and norms.

“Pakistan again played a responsible states role on the occasion of the failed supersonic projectile launch into Pakistan that jeopardised many civilian lives”, he said.

To a question about security cooperation with China, US and Western countries in the next decade.

The COAS said that “we had historically excellent relations with US. The good army we have today is largely built and trained by US. The best eqpt we have is US equipment.

We still have deep cooperation with US and our Western friends. A month back American Air Force was here for a huge exercise with our Air Force.

***“China of course is a very important neighbour and has helped us in many ways. Our military cooperation with China is growing because we are denied equipment from the West.”***

China of course is a very important neighbour and has helped us in many ways. Our military cooperation with China is growing because we are denied equipment from the West.

Many of the deals, which were concluded have been cancelled. So what do we do. I shall just give you an example: We bought T129 helicopters from Turkey, it’s a very good machine, the deal was signed, it’s a defensive weapon, it’s a gunship...

But the engine was of American origin so the Americans refused to give the third party certification. So what do we do? Either we wait or go somewhere else; either go to Russia or go to China.

We will prefer to maintain a balance. Similarly, we were looking for some submarines and the Germans were supposed to give the engines and everything was done.

When the submarines were ready, Germans refused to give us the engines. France has done the same of course under the Indian pressure because India is a big buyer. So what do you do? It is your responsibility to

To maintain the balance. If you are tilted towards one side out rightly, we’ll find sources from where we can get weapons to save our self.

You need to carry out introspection, whether your policy is right or not. We have been your allies for a very long time, we were part of SEATO,

CENTO & Baghdad pact, we supported you in Vietnam, we supported you in Afghanistan, we helped you dismantle the erstwhile Soviet Union and the muck you created yesterday we are trying to clean that.

So we have paid a lot of cost. What are you doing about us. I must ask you the question. Are u maintaining a balanced approach or not. CPEC is a very important development. There was a problem in Pakistan that we had shortage of electricity, huge shortages.

Nobody was coming forward because there was lot of terrorism so Chinese stepped forward and they took the risk and they built these plants.

But it doesn’t mean that Pakistan is a no go area, if you feel that there is too much of a Chinese influence in Pakistan, the only way to counter is by bringing in the counter investment. Who stops you? We welcome any investment.

The Army Chief concluded that it was time for political leadership of the region to come up beyond their biases and emotional prejudices to resolve the issues including water crisis through dialogue.



## Kashmir, Palestine to Islamophobia

Galaxy of OIC leaders highlight Muslim world, regional issues at 48th Session of Organization

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The Muslim countries' flags fluttering along avenues, floodlit roads and trees, besides the red carpet rolled out in the Parliament House's foyers featured Islamabad hosting a galaxy of Muslim leaders for OIC-CFM moot, who highlighted a variety of issues, including Kashmir, Palestine and Islamophobia. The two-day 48th Session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Council of Foreign Ministers (OIC-CFM) was the second gathering of the Muslim world leaders hosted by Pakistan in the picturesque Islamabad, after an extraordinary session on Afghanistan in December last.

The delegates from across the Muslim world as well as non-member countries, including Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended the moot with a virtual presence of United Nations Secretary-General H.E Antonio Guterres. OIC Secretary-General H.E Hissein Brahim Taha, Saudi Foreign





Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, and Islamic Development Bank H E President Dr Muhammad Suleiman Al-Jasser were among the prominent guests.

Besides enjoying the serenity of Islamabad, the visiting dignitaries will also witness the thunderous aerobatics maneuvers of the fighter jets of the Pakistan Day Parade on March 23. Elaborate security arrangements were made for the high-profile event as Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said India was poised to fail the event just to avert Pakistan from highlighting the Kashmir issue.

However, contrary to the Indian desire, the Muslim world leaders, including Prime Minister Imran Khan, OIC Secretary-General, Saudi Foreign Minister and others, besides the Chinese Foreign Minister, in their respective addresses, called for resolution of the Kashmir and Palestine issues in accordance with the aspirations of the people as well as the United Nations resolutions.

The meeting of the OIC Contact Group on Kashmir, held after the opening session, also thoroughly discussed the Kashmir issue and called for the resolution as guaranteed by the international community. Prime Minister Imran Khan joined the gathering of the foreign ministers at the session, which started with the recitation of Quranic verses and the national





anthem. The summit also coincided with the 75th anniversary celebrations of Pakistan's independence.

H E Hassoumi Massoudou, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Niger and also the Chair of the 47th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers handed over the Chair of the 48th Session of the OIC-CFM to Pakistan represented by Foreign Minister Qureshi.

Foreign Minister Qureshi as well as other cabinet members received the visiting foreign ministers on their arrival at the Parliament House. Besides Kashmir and Palestine, the foreign ministers also discussed the developments in Afghanistan and its humanitarian consequences for the Afghan people, Islamophobia, the situation in Mali, the Sahel region, and Lake Chad, and the situation in Central Africa and the Republic of Guinea. They also discussed the developments in Yemen, Libya, Sudan, Somalia, Syria, and other regions.

In his keynote address, Prime Minister Imran Khan said a strong voice of the OIC as the representative body of 1.5 billion population was crucial to address the lingering issues of Kashmir and Palestine. We have failed both

the Palestinians and Kashmiris. I am sad that we have not been able to make an impact despite being the massive voice of 1.5 billion. I ask OIC that unless we have a united front, we keep having seen these abuses, he said, adding that altering the demography of a population by turning the majority Kashmiri Muslims into minority was a war crime under Geneva Convention.

On the Ukraine situation, he proposed to consider the ways where the OIC countries along with China could play their role in diffusing the rising conflict. He especially congratulated the OIC members over the landmark resolution passed in the United Nations for declaring March 15 as the Day to Combat Islamophobia.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said it was time for the Muslim Ummah to forge a collective response to the current turmoil inside its borders and the ongoing global transition. We must be a reliable partner in forging unity, justice, and development across the globe, but not anyone's accomplice in aggression or domination.

FM Qureshi regretted that even after 50 years of the OIC's establishment, the organization

was far from seeing justice for the Muslims in many parts of the world. The Muslims of Palestine and the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) are still reeling under abominable subjugation, he said.

OIC Secretary-General H E Houssein Ibrahim Taha said the Indian government's unilateral acts of August 5, 2019 to change the status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir were in violation of the UNSC resolutions.

He termed the establishment of Afghanistan Humanitarian Trust Fund on the margin of the OIC-CFM session another effort by the member states for the financial and humanitarian support to the Afghan people. He also welcomed the recent adoption of the UN resolution by designating March 15 of each year as a day to fight against Islamophobia.

The secretary general further said that fighting terrorism was an absolute priority of the OIC and called for capacity building of the Muslim youth in the fields of latest science and technological fields and modern education. He also lauded Pakistan for its strong commitment to the charter of the OIC and its contributions for the unity and solidarity of the Muslim Ummah. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China was ready to build partnerships with the Islamic world for the promotion of multilateralism and democracy in international relations as well as for unity and cooperation.

China is ready to build four partnerships with Islamic countries. We should be partners of unity and cooperation. We need to be partners in development and revitalization. We need to be safe and stable partners. He said China would continue to stand firmly on the side of the Palestinian people. China would respect the choice made by the Afghan people, and support Afghanistan in achieving an inclusive government and steady governance. On the Kashmir issue, we have once again heard the call of many Islamic friends. China shares the same aspiration, he remarked.





# UK investors urged to benefit from Pakistan's business-friendly environment

DF Report

President Dr Arif Alvi on March 25 invited foreign investors to benefit from the business-friendly environment of Pakistan. In a meeting with a delegation of businessmen from the United Kingdom, he said Pakistan was an attractive destination for foreign investors in terms of the incentives offered by the government.

President Alvi said Pakistan and the UK enjoyed good economic and trade ties and called upon the businessmen of the two countries to explore the potential in diverse fields.

He mentioned that the government had established Special Economic and Technology Zones Authority to encourage foreign investors.

Moreover, Number of Pakistani food and drinks companies participated in International Food & Drinks exhibition in London; wide range of food products.

The expo was UK's leading event for food and drink companies and professionals, held from 21 to 23 March, said release issued here by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan. In collaboration with TDAP, Pakistan High Commission in London set up Pakistan Pavilion

with the brand name 'Emerging Pakistan'.

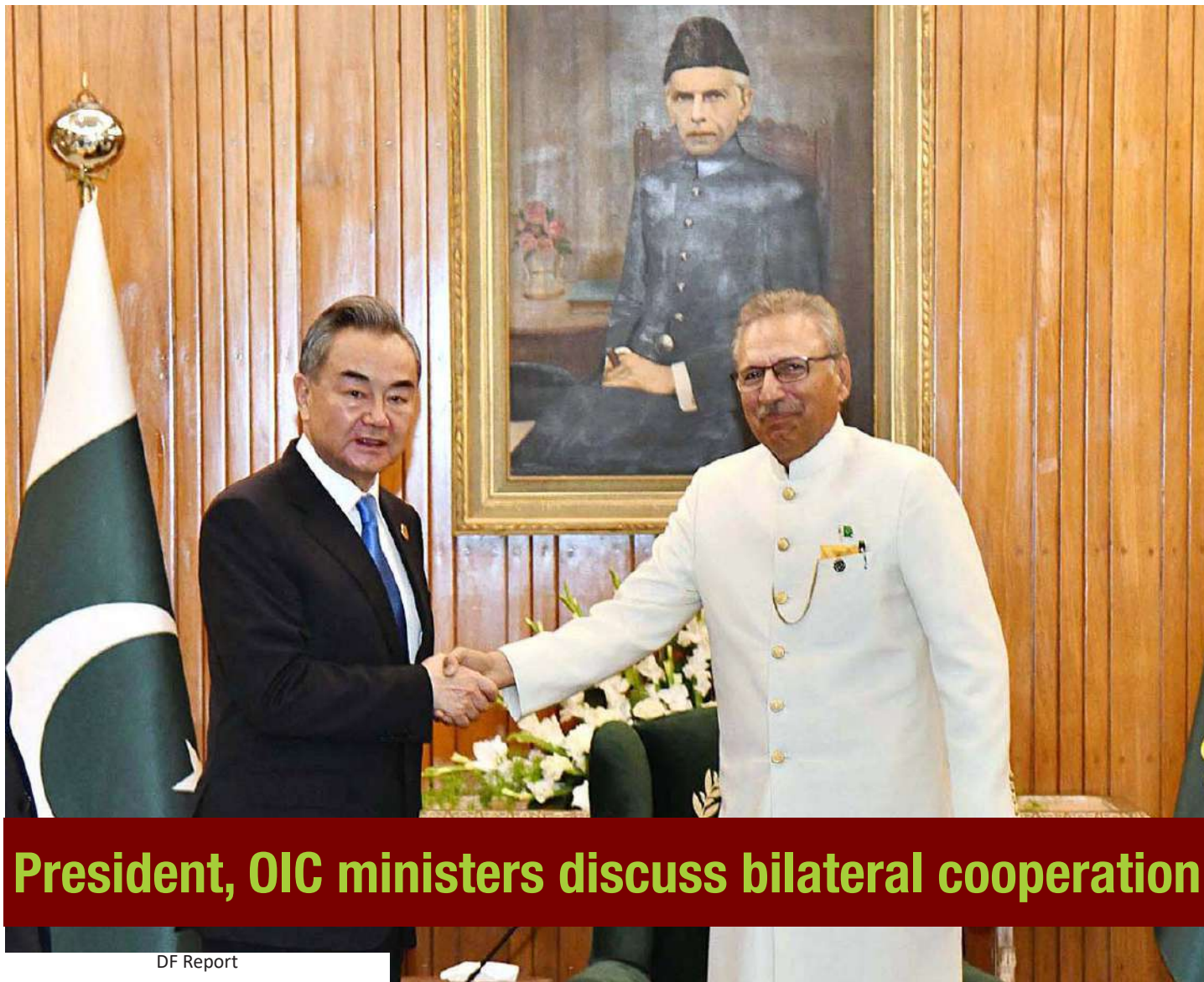
Five leading food and beverages companies from Pakistan were selected for the exhibition. They included M/s Iftikhar Ahmed & Co, M/s Bismillah Sehla Processing, M/s GNS Pakistan, M/s Karmanwala, M/s Mehran Foods. Pakistani companies displayed a diverse range of products including rice, spices, pickle, sauces, paste, dessert mix, fresh and pitted dates, and by-products of dates.

The event provided a good opportunity to the exhibitors to showcase their products.

Trade and Economic Wing of the Pakistan High Commission in London facilitated the Pakistani exporters by arranging their B2B meetings with the potential buyers from across the retail, wholesale, distribution, import and export, and food service sectors. The event generated a good number business leads and future contracts for the participating exhibitors.

The event helped in highlighting the potential of the Pakistani food and drinks sector at the international level.





## President, OIC ministers discuss bilateral cooperation

DF Report

State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq Dr Fuad Hussein, Foreign Minister of Egypt Sameh Hassan Shoukry, and Foreign Minister of Palestine Riyad al-Maliki, made separate calls on President Dr Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr here on March 22 and exchanged views on bilateral cooperation.

While welcoming the Chinese Foreign Minister, the President said that relations between the two countries were deep-rooted and were progressing with every passing year. He stated that Pakistan and China were “All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners” and Pakistan would continue to adhere to the “One China” policy by firmly supporting China on all of its core issues, including Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong and South China Sea. He expressed his gratitude to China for supporting Pakistan on the Kashmir issue and FATF as well as providing J10CE aircrafts.

The President stated that both countries were making efforts to promote peace and stability



in Afghanistan and were working together for the prosperity of the region. He emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation in the areas of agriculture, automobiles and information technology. Wang Yi reiterated that China would support Pakistan and continue its cooperation for its economic and industrial development. He said that cooperation between the two countries was growing very well and the CPEC project would greatly help towards the sustainable development of Pakistan.

He also thanked President Dr Arif Alvi for his visit during the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, saying that it was a valuable support for the Chinese people. He further said that China was the most reliable partner and wanted to further strengthen strategic cooperation with Pakistan.

Talking to the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, the President highlighted that Pakistan and Iraq enjoyed close brotherly relations which needed to be further cemented for the mutual benefit of the two countries. Both sides emphasized the need for increasing high-level bilateral exchanges to further expand relations between the two countries.

In his meeting with the Palestinian Foreign Minister, the President said that Pakistan had consistently extended support to the Palestinian cause and wanted the resolution of the Palestine issue in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The meeting underscored the need for promoting unity among the Muslim countries to address the issues being faced by the Islamic world, particularly Islamophobia.

During his meeting with the Foreign Minister of Egypt, the President said that Pakistan considered Egypt as an important country in the region and was keen to promote economic, political and cultural ties with the brotherly country. Both sides underlined the need for increasing communication and strengthening cultural linkages between the two countries. The President remarked that Pakistan had shifted its focus from geo-strategic to geo-economics and wanted to promote trade and commercial relations with Egypt.

He also highlighted the Indian atrocities in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), saying that India was involved in genocide against the Muslims and the international community needed to stop India from committing these violations.

The President thanked the Foreign Ministers for their participation in the 48th Council of OIC Foreign Ministers Summit being held in Islamabad. Later, the President hosted a banquet in honour of the Foreign Ministers from OIC countries.





## Pakistan reiterates unequivocal support for rights of Palestine's just struggle

DF Report

Prime Minister Imran Khan on March 22 said that being a matter of great anguish for Pakistani people and Muslims all over the world, the Palestinian tragedy was at the heart of the turmoil in the Middle East.

The Prime Minister, in a meeting with Palestinian Foreign Minister Dr. Riyad al-Maliki reiterated Pakistan's unequivocal support for the rights of the Palestinian people and their just struggle.

The meeting took place here on the sidelines of the 48th session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Council of Foreign Ministers. The prime minister stressed the importance of fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian Foreign Minister underlined that the unresolved issues of the Muslim Ummah, such as Palestine and the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, were among the root causes of instability in the respective regions. He added that the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) were suffering grave atrocities and unabated repression for demanding their inalienable right to self-determination.

Foreign Minister Maliki expressed his gratitude for Pakistan's unwavering support and principled position on Palestine. Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Maliki also exchanged views on the excellent

bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Palestine as well as the collaboration between the two sides at regional and international forums including the OIC.



# PM, Bahrain's National Guard Commander discuss matters of mutual interest



DF Report

**N**ational Guard Commander of Bahrain General Shaikh Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa called on Prime Minister Imran Khan and discussed matters of mutual interest.

The National Guard Commander conveyed cordial greetings of the King, and the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain to Prime Minister Imran Khan. Highlighting the high esteem accorded to the Bahraini leadership by the government and people of Pakistan, the prime minister warmly reciprocated the sentiments.

Imran Khan reaffirmed Pakistan's long-standing fraternal ties with Bahrain, rooted deep in shared faith, values and cordiality. He lauded

the efforts on both sides to build an enhanced partnership and underscored the imperative of forging deeper and diverse economic, trade and investment cooperation.

Appreciating the successful measures by Bahrain against Covid-19, the prime minister thanked the Bahraini leadership for the care afforded to the Pakistani expatriates during the pandemic and urged further strengthening of the strong bond of friendship between the two countries. The National Guard Commander of Bahrain expressed his country's firm resolve to further expand cooperation with Pakistan in diverse fields. He expressed thanks for Pakistan's steadfast support and underlined that the two countries always stood by each other at difficult times.

He congratulated the prime minister on the designation of March 15 as International Day to Combat Islamophobia by the United Nations (UN) as a result of a landmark resolution introduced by Pakistan, on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The Prime Minister said he looked forward to welcoming the King as well as the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain in Pakistan at the earliest convenience.

Pakistan and Bahrain enjoy traditionally close and fraternal ties. Bilateral relations with Bahrain have been following an upward trajectory since Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain in December 2019, on the invitation of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

## PM desires further expansion of Pak-Azerbaijan brotherly ties

DF Report

**P**rim Minister Imran Khan on March 21 noting the strong and robust defence ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, and expressed the desire to further expand the brotherly relations with special focus on bilateral trade, tourism and people-to-people contacts. The Prime Minister was talking to Minister of Defence of the Republic Azerbaijan Colonel General Zakir Hasanov who called on him, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The Prime Minister lauded Azerbaijan's contribution in the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation), especially as an active member of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir. He also congratulated the leadership and people of Azerbaijan on liberation of their occupied territories, and appreciated Azerbaijan's efforts in pursuing the objective of peace and prosperity in the South Caucasus.

Minister of Defence Hasanov conveyed the greetings from the Azeri president to the prime minister. He informed that a contingent of Azerbaijan armed forces would participate in the National Day Parade of Pakistan on 23rd March.





## Wang Yi, Imran Khan agree to enhance trade ties

DF Report

Prime Minister Imran Khan in a meeting with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on March 22 said the ongoing second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would reinforce Pakistan's efforts for economic development with enhanced cooperation in areas such as industrial development, agriculture, and information technology.

In a meeting with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of 48th Session of Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Conference, the Prime Minister welcomed Chinese investors to benefit from attractive opportunities in Pakistan. The Prime Minister warmly welcomed

State Councilor Wang Yi to Pakistan and conveyed his heartfelt condolences on the loss of precious lives in a crash of China Eastern flight yesterday.

The State Councilor conveyed the most cordial greetings of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang, and reaffirmed the centrality of Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. The prime minister and the state councilor discussed the current trajectory of bilateral ties and the evolving regional and international scenario. The prime minister fondly recalled his recent visit to China for the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics and his meetings with the Chinese leadership. The two sides discussed the situation in Ukraine and reiterated the

imperative need for an immediate cessation of hostilities and continued efforts for a solution through sustained dialogue and diplomacy. Prime Minister Imran Khan briefed on India's egregious human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and its irresponsible behaviour that was an impediment to regional peace and security.

He also apprised about the so-called accidental firing of a missile from India into Pakistan's territory, underlined Pakistan's call for a joint probe, and stressed the need to ensure that it does not occur again. The prime minister also emphasized that Pakistan and China must continue deeper engagement to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan, and avert the humanitarian crisis there.

## Pakistan, China share common position on Ukraine crisis: Pak envoy to China

DF Report

Pakistan and China have been very closely coordinating on the Ukraine crisis and share a common position on the issue, calling for the de-escalation of the conflict and dialogue between the relevant parties, said Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque. Haque's comment came after Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on a press conference during his visit to Islamabad alone with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi that China and Pakistan should strengthen coordination on international and regional issues such as Afghanistan and Ukraine. The special participation of Wang in the OIC meeting demonstrated the ironclad



friendship between China and Pakistan, as the two countries not only have strong ties, but also closely collaborate on international issues, he said in an exclusive interview with the Global Times. The two countries have been "very closely coordinating" on the Ukraine crisis and share a common position on the issue, the ambassador said. "Both countries positions are common. We are worried. We have called for the de-escalation and cessation of this conflict, and called for dialogue between the parties, Ukraine and Russia, to resolve this issue," he said. "This is a time for mature diplomacy. Let diplomacy be at work. We should not be finger pointing each other. It is time for solidarity and collective work," said Haque. He mentioned that Pakistan and

China are also closely coordinating at the UN forum, calling for the respect of UN principles, respect for sovereignty, and territorial integrity for all nations. Pakistan and China have a very unique relationship and strong bilateral ties, both striving for peace, development and prosperity of the entire region, said the ambassador. At the Pakistan Day Parade on March 23, Chinese-built J-10CE fighter jets also made an appearance with a first-ever flypast, which shows the importance of the defense ties between the two countries, said Haque in a speech at an event celebrating the National Day in Beijing. But he stressed that the defense collaboration between Pakistan and China is for peace and the stability of the region and not directed against any third country.

## PM for enhanced bilateral cooperation with Tajikistan in diverse fields

DF Report

Prime Minister Imran Khan on March 21 reiterated his desire to comprehensively upgrade bilateral cooperation with Tajikistan, including in the fields of economy, trade, energy, connectivity and investment.

He also elaborated Pakistan's enhanced engagement with Central Asia under the 'Vision Central Asia' policy and reiterated commitment for timely completion of CASA-1000 power project. The Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with Tajik Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Muhridin on the sidelines of 48th Session of



OIC-CFM, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. He also stressed the importance of early conclusion of transit trade agreement between the two countries to enhance trade and economic linkages.

He expressed satisfaction on growing bilateral cooperation in all spheres of mutual interest. The prime minister underscored Pakistan's consistent support for the efforts for sustainable peace and provision of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. Emphasizing the importance of lasting peace and stability in the country for regional prosperity, the prime minister underscored

the key role of neighbouring countries in this respect.

He also stressed that a peaceful, stable, prosperous and connected Afghanistan was in everyone's interest. The Prime Minister felicitated the Tajik foreign minister on the 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan.

He also recalled his official visit to Dushanbe in September 2021 and expressed satisfaction on the implementation of the decisions taken during the visit.

## PM for intensified trade, connectivity cooperation between Pakistan, Kazakhstan



DF Report

Prime Minister Imran Khan while recalling Pakistan's vision Central Asia policy, underscored the need to intensify cooperation in enhancing trade and connectivity between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. The Prime Minister said this in a meeting with Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tileuberdi, here on the sidelines of the 48th Session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Council

of Foreign Ministers. During the meeting, they discussed the bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues. Views were exchanged on various regional and international issues, including Afghanistan. The Prime Minister recalled his meeting with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in September 2021. Foreign Minister Tileuberdi briefed the prime minister on the developments in Kazakhstan and its

bilateral cooperation with Pakistan. The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to continue enhancing cooperation between the two countries in all areas of mutual interest, including at regional and international forums like the United Nations, OIC, Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Economic Cooperation Organization. He also looked forward to the visit of President Tokayev to Pakistan later this year.



## Nation celebrates Pakistan Day pledging to ensure strong defence, prosperity

By Sajid Ali Zaidi

**T**he nation celebrated 82nd Pakistan Day on Wednesday with a resounding commitment to ensure progress, prosperity and a strong defence of the country. The day was observed to commemorate the passage of historic Lahore Resolution on 23rd March in 1940, under which Muslims of the sub-continent set the agenda of a separate homeland for themselves.

The day dawned with thirty-one-gun salute in the federal capital and twenty-one-gun salute in provincial capitals whereas the change of guards' ceremony was also observed at the Quaid's Mausoleum and Mazar-e-Iqbal in Karachi and Lahore respectively. The

spectacular and colorful Pakistan Day Military parade was held at Parade Avenue in Islamabad with three wings of the armed forces displaying their professionalism and military prowess.

Nation celebrates Pakistan Day pledging to ensure strong defence, prosperity

The National Day Joint Services Parade commenced with blood warming tunes of the Military Bands after a special salute paid to the national flag and the President's review of the Parade which was led by the parade commander Brigadier Arsalan Tariq Ali after requesting permission from the President.

The impressive ceremony kicked off with the fly past of fighter jets of Pakistan Air Force and

Pakistan Navy led by Air Chief Zaheer Ahmad Babar presenting salute to the chief guest President Dr Arif Alvi.

Formations of fighter jets including J-10C, F-16, Mirage and P-3C participated in the fly past. Contingents of Pakistan Army, Navy, Pakistan Air Force, Special Services Groups, Frontier Corps, Rangers, Islamabad police marched past the dais presenting salute to the chief guest.

This year's annual event attained great significance as the foreign ministers of the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi were special guests of the Pakistan Day parade witnessed the joint services parade, where Pakistan showcased its military prowess.





Nation celebrates Pakistan Day pledging to ensure strong defence, prosperity

Prime Minister Imran Khan said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the incumbent government were committed to carry forward Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision for a just society and a sovereign welfare state.

Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed In his special message said the dream of the founders of Pakistan for an Islamic and welfare state would certainly materialize.

Minister for Information Chaudhry Fawad Hussain in a message said the secret of Pakistan's development and stability was democracy as democratic norms and traditions promoted tolerance, harmony and tolerance in a society.

Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Farrukh Habib congratulated the entire nation on Pakistan Day in a tweet and said March 23, 1940 was a day of making the Muslims emotionally prepared for the realization of their dream.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Farman conferred Presidential Awards to eight legendary personalities of the province in a distinguished awards ceremony on the occasion of 'Pakistan Day' held at the Governor House Peshawar.

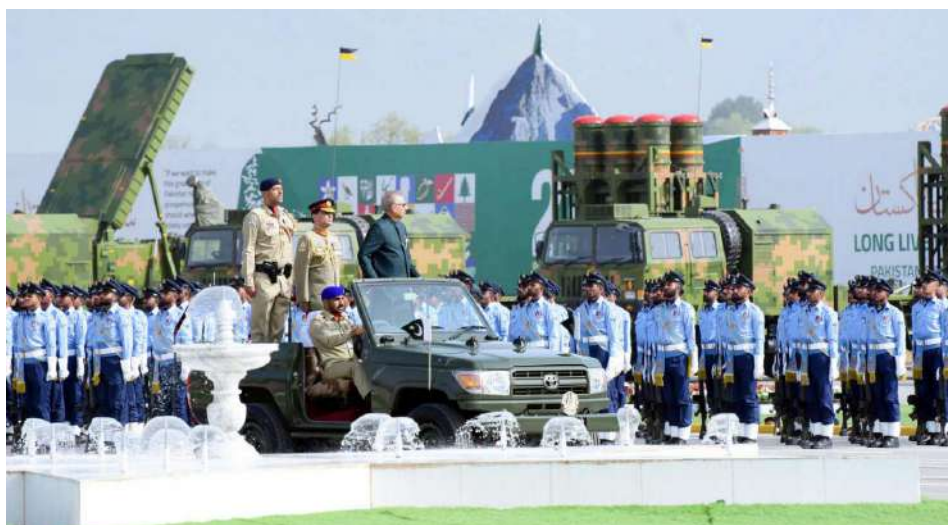
Governor Balochistan Syed Zahoor Ahmed Agha conferred Presidential and Excellence Awards on various personalities for their outstanding performance and best services during a ceremony held at Governor House Quetta.

Governor Sindh Imran Ismail and Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah along with provincial ministers paid homage to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan.

Nation celebrates Pakistan Day pledging to ensure strong defence, prosperity

Governor Sindh and Chief Minister laid floral wreath and offered Fateh besides, they recorded their impressions in the visitors' book at Mazar-e-Quaid.

Punjab Governor Chaudhary Mohammad



Sarwar Wednesday conferred civil awards to 12 personalities from different walks of life on Pakistan Day. Addressing the ceremony held at Governor House, he congratulated the nation on Pakistan Day and said the whole nation salutes the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the protection of the country's borders and for peace.

Like other parts of the country, Pakistan Day was also celebrated in Gilgit Baltistan with traditional fervor.

After the Parade review, Pride of Pakistan distinguished personalities who were specially invited at the Parade were paid homage for their meritorious services to the nation including Dr Amjad Saqib who laid the foundation of first

interest free microfinance Akhuwat Foundation, Malik Adnan, who protected Sri Lankan citizen with courage during a terrorist attack, Parveen Bibi who was a female rickshaw driver and started free female driving training,

Zarghoona Manzoor, the first female SHO of Balochistan and widow of DSP Munawar Tareen who had embraced martyrdom in a terrorist attack, Dr Mimpal Singh who established ICU unit for infants, Maria Shamoon, first AC from minority community of Balochistan and Senator Krishna Kumari Kohli, the proud daughter of Tharparkar who chaired the Senate session on February 5, 2022 that passed resolution on Kashmir, and Saima Saleem, the first blind female CSP officer.

# PM, Saudi FM review mutual relations

DF Report

**F**oreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud called on Prime Minister Imran Khan on March 22 and discussed matters of mutual interest.

The Prime Minister conveyed cordial greetings for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He underscored the special significance of the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relationship, which was based on close fraternal ties, historic links, and support at the grass-roots level. Recalling his visit to Saudi Arabia in October 2021, the prime minister took stock of the latest developments



and stressed the importance of exploring new avenues of cooperation to further deepen bilateral relations in diverse fields.

The Prime Minister commended the leadership role of the Kingdom to advance the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) into a vital platform for the Islamic world's causes. Recalling the issues faced by the Islamic world, the prime minister stressed the need for enhanced cooperation for addressing the myriad of challenges confronting the Ummah.

Highlighting the contemporary challenge of Islamophobia affecting the Muslims around the world, the prime minister underscored

the importance of collective action by the OIC member states for dealing with this pernicious phenomenon.

Views were also exchanged on various regional and international issues. The situation in Afghanistan and the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) came under discussion.

The Prime Minister thanked the Saudi FM for the Kingdom's steadfast support for the just cause of Jammu and Kashmir. Prince Farhan congratulated the prime minister on the successful holding of the 48th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Islamabad.

## PM lauds Pak-Nigerian growing cooperation in defence, counter-terrorism

DF Report

**P**rim Minister Imran Khan in a meeting with Nigeria's Defence Minister Major General (r) Bashir Salihi Magashi lauded the growing cooperation between the two countries in defence, security and counter-terrorism. Underlining common history, culture and values, Prime Minister Imran Khan appreciated the strong positive trajectory of bilateral relations. Lauding the Nigerian economy on assuming the top position in Africa since March, the prime minister called for further deepening of bilateral trade and business ties.

Highlighting Pakistan's long-standing services and contributions to promoting peace in Africa under the auspices of UN Peacekeeping Operations, the prime minister shared his vision of 'Engage Africa' policy, which aimed at expanding diplomatic footprint and advancing trade and investment partnerships.

The Prime Minister lauded the unanimous adoption of landmark resolution by the UNGA on declaring March 15 as the 'International

Day to Combat Islamophobia.' The Prime Minister stated that this recognition by the General Assembly would help combat the contemporary challenges of racism, discrimination, and violence against Muslims, and promote interfaith harmony. The Prime Minister recalled his earlier telephonic conversation with President Muhammadu Buhari and expressed the hope to welcome him to Pakistan at the earliest opportunity. Furthermore, National Security Adviser (NSA) Dr Moeed Yusuf welcomed the five-member

delegation headed by Minister for Defence of Nigeria Major General Bashir (R) Salihi Magashi who paid a call on to the NSA and stressed the importance of enhancing trade and economic relationship between the two countries. The NSA welcomed Minister for Defence of Nigeria Major General (R) Bashir Salihi Magashi on his maiden official visit in Pakistan. Dr . Yusuf said, "Pakistan and Nigeria have positive relationship and both the countries tend to support each other at all international forums be it OIC, UN or D8.



# Diplomatic Focus Thru Lens



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Palestine H E Riyad Al-Maliki, and Pakistani FM Sha Mahmood Qureshi on the sidelines of the 48th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on March 23.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State and Chairman Board of Investment M Azfar Ahsan with Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan H.E. Furqat Sidiqov in Tashkent on March 23.



LAHORE: President of LCCI Mian Noman presenting shield to Vice President ADB Shixin Chen.



LAHORE: Chief of the South African Navy Vice Admiral Mosuwa Samuel Hlongwane during a call on with Commandant PN War Collage Rear Admiral Shifaat Ali Khan on March 22.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin ul Haque witnessing contract signing ceremony between PSEB and HUAWEI.



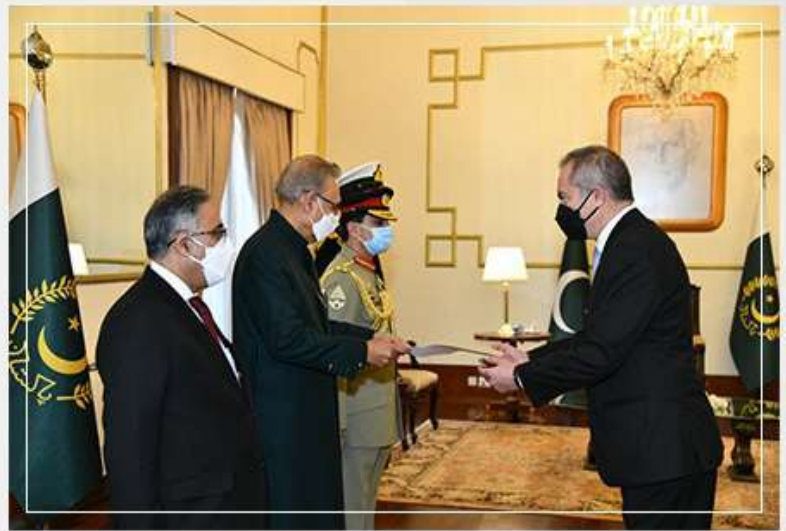
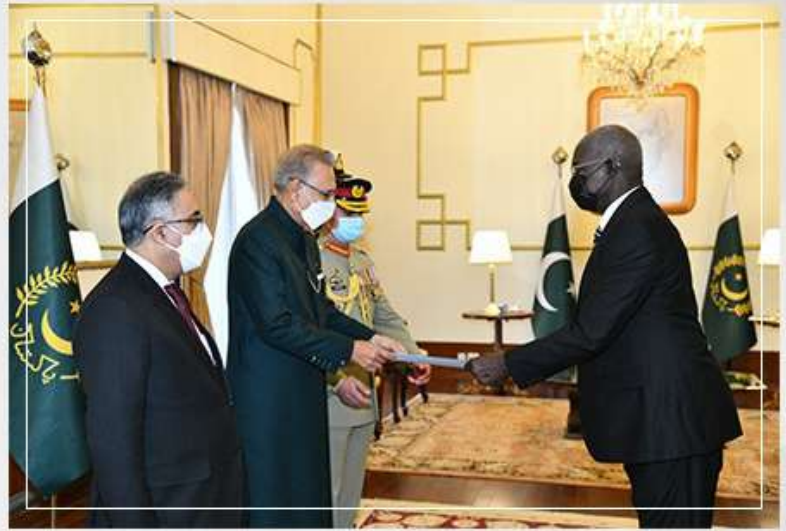
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan and President Islamic Development Bank (ISDB) witnessing signing of finance agreement worth USD 180 million for Mohmand Dam Hydropower project.



ISLAMABAD: FM Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi exchanging views with Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud on March 22.



ISLAMABAD: FM Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a meeting with Foreign Minister of Republic of the Gambia on March 22.



# New Envoys presented credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The newly appointed non-resident envoys of New Zealand, Mexico, Ghana, and Uganda, presented their credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi at a ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Later, the High Commissioners-designate of New Zealand, Mr Michael Wehi Mailletonga Walsh, and Uganda, Mr Muhammad Tezikuba Kisambira, and the Ambassadors-designate of the United Mexican States, Mr Guillermo Alejandro Puente Ordorica and Ghana, Mr Eric Owusa-Boateng, made separate calls on the President. Talking to the envoys, the President said that Pakistan

was a very important country having over 220 million population and enormous potential for trade and investment. He highlighted the need for further expanding and deepening economic and trade ties with New Zealand, Mexico, Ghana, and Uganda. The President said that Pakistan wanted to further enhance trade and connectivity between different regions of the world by utilizing its potential as the hub of regional trade and connectivity. He also asked the envoys to encourage the businessmen of their countries to take advantage of the business-friendly environment and invest in Pakistan. Congratulating the envoys on their appointments, the President expressed the

hope that they would make efforts to further broaden bilateral relations with Pakistan in different fields. He added that Pakistan attached great importance to the development of its agriculture sector, including the livestock and dairy sectors, and wanted to exchange expertise in these fields for mutual benefit. He underscored the need to promote people-to-people contacts to further boost bilateral ties with friendly states. The President expressed satisfaction over the existing level of cooperation with the friendly countries and wished the envoys success for their future endeavours.

# Chief of the Turkish General Staff, President Alvi stress need for enhanced trade, defence cooperation

DF Report

**P**akistan and Turkey on March 24 underlined the need for enhanced cooperation in trade, culture and defence, besides reiterating the resolve to support each other at regional and international fora.

The bilateral ties were discussed in a meeting between President Dr Arif Alvi and the visiting Chief of the Turkish General Staff General Yasar Guler here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul also attended the meeting.

Welcoming the Chief of the Turkish General Staff, the president said Pakistan and Turkey



enjoyed deep-rooted relations, which needed to be further broadened for the mutual benefit of two countries. He emphasised the need for increasing cooperation in the fields of trade, information technology (IT), and defence.

The President reiterated that Pakistan would continue to support Turkey on Cyprus issue. He also highlighted the ongoing human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by India and its involvement in the genocide of Muslims.

President Alvi thanked Turkey for supporting Pakistan, particularly its stance on the Kashmir dispute. Discussing the Afghan situation, the meeting emphasised that peace in Afghanistan

was very important as it would bring prosperity to its people as well as promote regional trade and connectivity.

Congratulating the President on successfully holding the Pakistan Day parade, General Yasar Guler said Turkey would continue to support Pakistan at every platform. He underlined the need for further strengthening friendly relations between the two countries, and expressed the hope that the new generations of the two countries would take forward the bilateral ties to new levels.

He also appreciated Pakistan's efforts in supporting Afghanistan at difficult times.



## Pakistan sends relief items for people of Ukraine

DF Report

**F**oreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on March 15 while sending of relief items for people of Ukraine said that Pakistan desired the success of ongoing talks between Russia and Ukraine leading to the ceasefire between the two countries. The foreign minister, talking to media after handing over a

consignment of relief items for the people of Ukraine, said that Pakistan always wanted the peaceful resolution of the issues as war was not a solution to the problems. Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood and Chairman of National Disaster Management Authority Lt. General Akhtar Nawaz accompanied the Foreign Minister as he handed over the relief items to the Ukrainian Ambassador at Nur Khan Airbase.

Being sent through two C-130 aircraft, the humanitarian assistance consisted of the medicines, foods, blankets and other items of human needs.

The Ukrainian Ambassador thanked Foreign Minister Qureshi and the Pakistan's leadership for sending the humanitarian assistance for the Ukrainian people in the hour of need.

## PM for further strengthening Pak-Austria cooperation

DF Report

Prime Minister Imran Khan on March 17, said Pakistan desired to add further substance to its excellent bilateral cooperation with Austria across the broad range -- including trade, investment, higher education, IT, tourism, climate change, and so on. He emphasized that Pakistan highly valued its long-standing and cordial relations with Austria. The Prime Minister was talking to Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria, Alexander Schallenberg, who called on him. During the meeting, the focus was on bilateral relations, regional situation and international issues.

The Austrian Foreign Minister thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him and informed that he was accompanied by a big business delegation. He conveyed greetings of the Federal Chancellor of Austria. The Prime Minister recalled his recent phone conversation with Federal Chancellor Karl Nehammer and stated that he was looking forward to welcoming him to Pakistan at the earliest opportunity. He particularly thanked Austria for its collaboration in the establishment



of Pakistan-Austria Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology at Haripur and stated that Pakistan looked forward to establishing further such institutions, in cooperation with Austria, given the world class quality of Austria's institutions of higher learning particularly in engineering and technology.

The Prime Minister expressed Pakistan's serious concern at the conflict in Ukraine and stressed the imperative of finding a diplomatic solution. He underscored that Pakistan upholds the fundamental principles of the UN Charter. The Prime Minister recalled that he had from the outset emphasized that conflict does not resolve anything and that Pakistan was consistently pressing for continued efforts for a solution through dialogue and diplomacy. He further noted that he had been highlighting that conflict adversely impacts developing countries, which could now be seen in rising oil prices and food inflation. Recalling his recent phone conversation with President of the European Council Charles Michel, the Prime Minister said that countries like Pakistan could play a facilitating role towards a diplomatic solution. In the regional context, he emphasized that the world's attention must not shift

from Afghanistan and that urgent steps were needed to be taken to prevent humanitarian and economic crises in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister stressed the need for continued engagement of the international community to preserve the development gains made over the last two decades and to promote the shared goals of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

He urged the international community to take notice of serious human rights violations by India in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) which have increased since India's illegal and unilateral actions of August 5, 2019. The Prime Minister said that the world must impress upon India to comply with its international obligations to allow Kashmiris to exercise their right to self-determination as per international law and the relevant UNSC resolutions. He raised recent grave act of firing of an Indian missile into Pakistani territory, which has raised serious questions about India's security protocols and technical safeguards against accidental or unauthorized launch of missiles in a nuclearized environment. The Prime Minister urged the world community to play its due role in upholding the strategic

## Chinese FM meets COAS Gen Bajwa

DF Report

Wang Yi, State Counselor and Foreign Minister of China called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS). During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed.

Chinese Foreign Minister said that Pakistan-China relationship is based on convergence of views and mutual respect. Appreciating professionalism of Pakistan Army, Foreign Minister said that world should acknowledge Pakistan's efforts towards regional peace and stability. He appreciated security provided to CPEC and said that China believes in inclusive prosperity. Referring to OIC's 48th Council of Foreign Ministers session, COAS termed it a historic development for addressing the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and bringing international community to a shared

vision and joint strategy to find solution to emerging challenges in the region vital for peace and stability. COAS also thanked Foreign Minister for his visit and continued Chinese support to Pakistan. The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's role regional stability

and pledged to play his role for further improvements in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels. He specially appreciated Pakistan's efforts for hosting the OIC's 48th Council of Foreign Ministers.



# Pakistan, Austria FMs hold talks on bilateral ties

DF Report

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi received Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria, Alexander Schallenberg, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and held wide ranging delegation level talks. Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria, Alexander Schallenberg was on an official visit to Pakistan from March 16-19, on the invitation of the Foreign Minister. He was accompanied by a business delegation. During the talks, the two sides reviewed Pakistan-Austria bilateral cooperation in various sectors including trade and investment, higher education, renewable energy, tourism, science and technology etc.

The Foreign Minister hoped that the two sides could work together to increase high level exchanges as well as parliamentary interactions. The Foreign Minister appreciated Austrian government's support for Pakistan-Austria Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology in Haripur and said 'We needed to establish more such projects in Pakistan.' The Foreign Minister said that Austrian companies were familiar with Pakistan and could serve as a model for other companies to take advantage of Pakistan's business friendly environment. In addition to bilateral relations, the two sides also exchanged views on the regional situation including Afghanistan, Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and Ukraine. The Foreign Minister presented Pakistan's perspective on Afghanistan stressing that the most pressing issues in Afghanistan were humanitarian and economic crises, which needed to be



addressed urgently. The Foreign Minister added Pakistan urged the international community for constructive engagement to ensure continued progress towards the shared goals of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan. He said the situation in Ukraine remained concerning as conflict does not serve anyone. The Foreign Minister shared Pakistan's stance on Ukraine, emphasizing cessation of hostilities, sustained dialogue and astute diplomacy for a diplomatic solution.

Pakistan remained committed to the fundamental principles of the UN Charter: self-determination of peoples, non-use or threat of use of force, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and pacific settlement of disputes. The Foreign Minister hoped that talks between Russia and Ukraine could yield a positive outcome. The Foreign Minister said that Pakistan was immensely thankful to neighboring European countries for support extended in evacuation of Pakistani nationals from Ukraine. Foreign Minister Qureshi

informed his Austrian counterpart that as a gesture of solidarity, the government of Pakistan had sent relief assistance to the people of Ukraine to mitigate their suffering in these difficult times. Foreign Minister Qureshi briefed Foreign Minister Schallenberg about serious human rights violations in IIOJK which demanded attention of the international community in holding India accountable for the human rights crimes being committed in the occupied territory. The foreign minister further apprised the Austrian Foreign Minister of the so-called 'accidental' firing of a missile from India into Pakistani territory adding that the explanation provided by India, was unconvincing and raised several questions.

The Foreign Minister hoped that the international community would take serious notice of this incident of grave nature in a nuclearized environment and play its due role in upholding strategic stability in the region. The two Foreign Ministers agreed to remain in contact.

## Chinese Charge d'Affaires thanks COAS for safe, secure environment to CPEC projects

DF Report

Chinese Charge d'Affaires to Pakistan Pang Chunxue on March 9 called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa here at GHQ and thanked the Army Chief for special measures taken for provision of safe and secure environment to CPEC projects in Pakistan and efforts towards regional stability.



During the meeting, the matters of mutual interest, defence collaboration, progress on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and regional security were discussed in detail, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release.

The COAS said that Pakistan valued China's role in global and regional affairs and looked

forward to enhance its bilateral relationship. He reiterated that all regional countries need to work collectively for enduring peace and stability. The visiting dignitary also expressed satisfaction over progress on CPEC and ensured to play her role for further improvement in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels.



# PM Khan thanks China for providing modern J-10 C fighter jets

DF Report

**C**hina-made modern fighter aircraft J-10C has formally been inducted into the Pakistan Air force.

On the special invitation of the Air Chief, Prime Minister Imran Khan attended the induction ceremony of the modern fighter jet into the PAF.

China will deliver a total of 25 J-10C fighter jets to Pakistan in a major boost to the country's military capabilities to defend airspace, according to a foreign media report.

The first batch of the combat aircraft, after being tested in Chengdu, has arrived in Pakistan a few days back.

Addressing the induction ceremony of J-10C into PAF, PM Imran said that no one could cast an evil eye on Pakistan

Expressing his full confidence in the armed





JC-10 is a fully integrated weapon, avionic and combat system and its induction into PAF would further strengthen its professional capabilities



forces, PM Imran said that the nation is confident that if anyone makes an aggressive move against Pakistan, it would be retaliated by the armed forces with full force.

Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister congratulated the nation on the historic occasion of the induction of JC-10 aircraft. He also thanked China to deliver the fighter jets to Pakistan in a short period of eight months.

Pakistan is heading in the right direction towards development and prosperity, he added.

Earlier, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu said the PAF is prepared and skilled to deter any aggression of the enemy.

"JC-10 is a fully integrated weapon, avionic and combat system and its induction into PAF would further strengthen its professional capabilities,"

he added.

The air chief said that the occasion is a testimony to the will of Chinese leadership and support for Pakistan.

PM Imran Khan along with the three services chiefs inspected the JC-10 aircraft and sat in the cockpit where he was given a briefing about the fighter plane.





## Pakistan, Uzbekistan vow to further strengthen relations

By Mian Fazal Elahi

President Dr Arif Alvi held a bilateral meeting with the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev at Awan-e-Sadar in Islamabad. The two leaders exchanged views on a wide range of issues of bilateral interest and important regional and international matters. The President expressed satisfaction on the upward trajectory of bilateral ties and reiterated the desire to promote multifaceted cooperation in all spheres, including political, trade, economic, defence, security, connectivity, education and cultural exchanges. He elaborated Pakistan's efforts for enhanced engagement with Central Asia within the framework of the "Vision Central Asia" policy. President Alvi highlighted prospects of regional integration and connectivity to Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries through Pakistan's seaports. He said that Trans-Afghan Railway would be one such project to establish consolidated land connectivity. He also underscored the importance of air connectivity for boosting tourism and people-to-people exchanges. Both the Presidents agreed to enhance cooperation between the youth and promote science and technology linkages between the two countries. The President emphasized that peace and stability in Afghanistan was vital to reap the dividends of land connectivity. He said that a peaceful Afghanistan would contribute to the economic progress and prosperity of the region and beyond. President Alvi lauded the signing of

the Joint Declaration on Next Steps in Strategic Partnership between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and MoUs/Agreements multiple areas. He said the signing of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) would open new avenues of enhancing bilateral trade. The two leaders noted progress on collaboration in education, culture, security and defence and reiterated commitment to continue pursuing common goals of economic development at all levels. The two Presidents

The state visit of President Mirziyoyev marked historic commemoration of the 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. During the visit, the leaders reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations including cooperation in political, trade and economic, connectivity, education, culture, security and defence domains.

also discussed key regional and global issues of mutual interest and apprised his President Mirziyoyev on the situation in Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoy historic fraternal relations, marked by

mutual respect and rooted in common culture and similar traditions.

The meeting was followed by a luncheon hosted in the honour of President Mirziyoyev.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Thursday that Islamabad and Tashkent are working to repair the 500-year old ties that the South Asia region had with Uzbekistan.

"This region has had relations with Uzbekistan for 500 years. These ties had ended 150 years ago and we will repair them," said PM Imran in a joint press conference with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

The press conference was held after the two sides signed nine MoUs and agreements.

The premier, while welcoming the Uzbek president, said that trade between the two countries had increased by 50% within a year.

PM Imran said that Tashkent and Islamabad are jointly developing a film on Mughal emperor Zaheeruddin Babar.

On his one-on-one meeting with the Uzbek leader, the PM briefed the visiting official on the Kashmir issue, adding that Islamabad and Tashkent have a shared stance on Islamophobia.

The premier also said that both the countries are looking to expand ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan via Afghanistan.

On the other hand, the Uzbek president thanked the Pakistani leadership and people

for their hospitality.

"I was eagerly waiting to visit Pakistan but it was delayed due to the coronavirus," said the Uzbek president. He added that both the countries are working to revive the "cultural links".

In his talks with PM Imran, the Uzbek leader said that their discussions on "various issues" was constructive.

PM Imran and President Mirziyoyev also signed a joint declaration on the "next steps in the strategic partnership" between the two countries.

The declaration issued by the PM office said that the leaders of the two countries held comprehensive consultations and considered all aspects of bilateral relations, paying special attention to the development of cooperation in the trade and economic sphere, science and technology, culture, education, security and defence, and regional connectivity.

"Emphasising the centuries-old historical, religious, cultural and scientific ties between the two peoples and based on previously reached agreements, the parties agreed to further deepen and expand strategic partnership in all areas and in this context, decided to conclude a treaty on strategic partnership," said the statement.

Both the leaders also exchanged views on issues of global and regional importance they also reaffirmed their commitment to closely interact on common positions and to continue the practice of mutual support at international and regional forums on all issues of mutual interest.

According to the statement, President Mirziyoyev shared his vision on the "New



Uzbekistan" strategy with PM Imran. While the Pakistani premier shared his "outlined his vision of 'Naya Pakistan' that is centred on social justice and economic security".

"The two leaders agreed to expand cooperation between the parliamentary bodies, exchange visits of the leaders of the Senate and the National Assembly of Pakistan and the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan and hold meetings between the established inter-parliamentary groups of friendship and

cooperation," said the statement.

The statement said that the two leaders also "agreed on the need to fast track measures to further expand the connectivity agenda and economic integration".

"The Leaders reaffirmed the important role of the Termez-Mazar-e-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway project for the future of the region. It was agreed to evolve a joint "road map," which includes measures to develop a feasibility study for the project and start construction work on





both sides. They acknowledged that the Trans-Afghan Railway project is the most economical and shortest route connecting Central Asia with Pakistan's ports of Karachi, Gwadar and Qasim," said the statement.

The leaders have also agreed to "facilitate tourism and business linkages between the two countries" and launch regular flights from Tashkent-Lahore and Islamabad-Tashkent.

The statement also said that Uzbekistan has assured "its full support for Pakistan's candidacy for non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council for 2025-2026".

Meanwhile, President Mirziyoyev has invited PM Imran to pay an official visit to Uzbekistan at a convenient time.

Other agreements signed between the two countries included "agreement on Cooperation in the field Television and Radio Broadcasting between the National Television and Radio Company of Uzbekistan and the Pakistan Television Corporation". An MoU was also signed between Uzbekistan's Ministry of Tourism and Sport and Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony to promote pilgrimage tourism.

An MoU was also signed on Cooperation in the Environment and Climate Change. While two countries also signed a "Preferential Trade Agreement".

"The Action Plan of practical measures (Roadmap) to further develop cooperation between Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Uzbekistan in the fields of Security" was also signed.

An MoU between Pakistan's Ministry of Railways

and Uzbekistan's Ministry of Transport was also signed. Other two MoUs were signed on cooperation between Khokimiyat of Tashkent City and the Administration of Islamabad City, and an MoU on cooperation between Surkhandarya Region of Uzbekistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province was also signed.

Ahead of his one-on-one meeting with Prime Minister Imran, the Uzbek president was given a red-carpet welcome. The visiting official was also given a guard of honour by the contingents of the three services.

**At the invitation of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the President of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, payed a State Visit to Pakistan. The President accompanied by a high-level delegation, comprised the Foreign Minister, other members of the Cabinet, senior government officials, and business and media personnel. This was the first visit of President Mirziyoyev to Pakistan since assuming office in 2016.**

After receiving the guard of honour, the Uzbek president and the PM introduced their respective delegations to each other before proceeding for a one-on-one meeting. The

visiting dignitary also planted a sapling on the lawn of the PM Office. Earlier, Prime Minister Imran Khan had received Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev upon his arrival in Islamabad as he arrived in the country for a two-day visit.

Number of agreements and MoUs were signed by the two sides. An MoU was signed between Uzbekistan's Ministry of Tourism and Sport and Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony to promote pilgrimage tourism. Another MoU was inked between the two states in the field of environment and climate change.

Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Uzbekistan in July 2021. The two leaders also met recently in Beijing on the sidelines of Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony on 5 February 2022.

Pakistan and Uzbekistan are linked through common faith, shared history and cultural affinities. The two countries have been closely collaborating at regional and international fora, especially at the UN, OIC, ECO and SCO.

The historic visit marked the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The two countries enjoy historic fraternal relations, marked by mutual respect and rooted in a common faith, shared history and cultural affinities.

The Pakistan-Uzbekistan relationship has witnessed an upward trajectory over the past few years. Pakistan and Uzbekistan have been closely collaborating at regional and international fora especially at the United Nations, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Economic Cooperation Organisation, and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.



# PIA starts two flights to Baku, Azerbaijan from Lahore, Karachi

DF Report

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) commenced its flight operations to Baku, Azerbaijan from two major cities of Pakistan that are Lahore and Karachi. The inaugural flights departed from the two cities on March 16. Official ceremonies were held on the occasion of the launch of direct flights at Lahore Airport in Pakistan and Heydar Aliyev International Airport of Azerbaijan.

The ceremony in Lahore was attended by Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan H. E. Khazar Farhadov, and CEO of PIA Air Marshal Arshad Malik, Secretary Aviation Division Shoukat Ali. They said the launch of the direct flights will contribute to the further deepening of relations between the two brotherly countries, especially ties in economy and tourism.

According to details, PIA will operate one flight per week from Lahore and Karachi to Baku. Both flights operated with full loads. The airline management under the guidance and leadership of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) PIA, Air Marshal Arshad Malik is fulfilling the vision of Prime Minister of Pakistan to foster and promote brotherly ties with Central Asian Countries and also keeping in view the demand of passengers to increase revenue and to facilitate passengers, has initiated flights to Baku, one of the emerging tourists destinations



that offer ease of Visa facility, having friendly and welcoming people with same religion and lots of historic sites to visit both in Pakistan and Azerbaijan. Air Marshal Arshad Malik welcomed the Passengers of the first flight from Lahore. He met with the passengers and exchanged views with them. The passengers thanked CEO PIA Air Marshal Arshad Malik and the airline's management for initiating direct non-stop flights to Baku. Sharing his views on the occasion, he said that the flights to Baku will not only facilitate in trade between the two countries but also promote tourism and further build upon brotherly relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

CEO PIA thanked the passengers for making PIA their preferred choice for travel. He said that the airline's network expansion is under

way more flights will be added to the airline's network including non-stop flights to Australia. Ambassador for Azerbaijan H. E. Khazar Farhdove also traveled on the inaugural flight from Lahore to Baku, while at Baku airport officials of Civil Aviation authorities and Senior Government officials welcomed the passengers of first flights. The passengers of PIA's flight to Baku from Karachi were welcomed and seen off by PIA senior officials.

Pakistani Ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee said the direct flights would contribute to growing ties in all directions between Azerbaijan and Pakistan and also help increase the number of direct flights as a result of future cooperation between the two countries' airline companies, he also congratulated the people of both countries on this occasion.

## PM stresses upon promotion of unity, solidarity among Muslim countries

Discusses mutual interest issues with Egyptian FM

DF Report

Prime Minister Imran Khan emphasized the importance of promoting unity and solidarity among Islamic countries with a focus on the achievement of prosperity and sustainable development through increased cooperation.

The Prime Minister was talking to Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt Sameh Hassan Shoukry, who called on him on March 21. Foreign Minister Shoukry was visiting Pakistan for bilateral engagements and participation in the 48th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), held in Islamabad on March 22-23. The Prime Minister discussed various issues of mutual interest with the Egyptian Foreign Minister, and noted the



historic and deep-rooted fraternal ties between Pakistan and Egypt. He also exchanged views with Foreign Minister Shoukry on different regional and global issues as well as the matters of the Islamic Ummah.

He highlighted the egregious human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and the threat posed to regional security by India's irresponsible actions. The Prime Minister lauded the unanimous adoption of landmark resolution by the United Nations General Assembly on declaring March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

The recognition by the General Assembly would help combat the contemporary challenges of racism, discrimination and violence against the Muslims, and promote interfaith harmony,

he added. The Prime Minister emphasized the need to advance the cause of justice for the Muslims worldwide, including through the platform of OIC.

Expressing satisfaction at the close cooperation between the two brotherly countries, he stressed the importance of building upon the solid foundation to further expand the bilateral political relationship into economic and commercial domains. The Prime Minister fondly recalled his meetings and interactions with President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, underscoring the convergence of views between Pakistan and Egypt on a wide range of regional and international issues.

He added that there was a great scope and potential for enhancing mutually beneficial engagement between the two countries.

## Qureshi meets Tajik counterpart; assures early completion of CASA-1000 project

DF Report

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi on March 21 held a bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Sirodjiddin Muhridinovich wherein he reiterated Pakistan's commitment to early completion of flagship project of CASA-1000.

During the meeting, held on the sidelines of 48th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, the Foreign Minister emphasized to promote trade and economic linkages with Tajikistan. The two Ministers expressed satisfaction at the steadily growing bilateral ties and exchanged views on further expanding the partnership.

Qureshi apprised his Tajik counterpart about Pakistan's Vision Central Asia policy that focused on enhanced and result-oriented engagements with Central Asian countries, including Tajikistan. They also discussed the

fast-evolving regional situation, especially Afghanistan and committed to work together for the establishment of sustainable peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The two sides noted the excellent cooperation between the two countries at international and regional forums, including in the UN, OIC, SCO & ECO. The Tajik side appreciated Pakistan's contributions to OIC.





# Wang reaffirms partnership with Muslim world, cooperation for multilateralism

DF Report

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on March 21 said that China was attending the 48th meeting of OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers for developing a partnership with Muslim world besides promoting unity and cooperation for the multilateralism.

The Chinese Foreign Minister, after his bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, told media that the CFM's theme of 'Building Partnerships for Unity, Justice, and Development' had great significance in the current scenario and was also the main purpose of Chinese participation.

In what Foreign Minister Qureshi called a very comprehensive and detailed meeting, the two foreign ministers discussed bilateral cooperation, regional situation as well as the international issues including Afghanistan and Ukraine.

FM Qureshi told media that it was for the first time that Chinese foreign minister would attend and address the CFM moot which manifested the strong partnership between Pakistan and China. Earlier, both the countries also signed documents for enhancing cooperation in the fields of higher education and agriculture at a ceremony also witnessed by the two foreign

ministers. Qureshi said they also discussed the extension of China Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan in what the Chinese FM assured for a review considering the changed situation in the war-torn country.

While discussing trade and investment cooperation, Qureshi said, China expressed the desire for the export of Pakistani rice and wheat in order to enhance country's exports. The two foreign ministers discussed the counter-terrorism cooperation and a coordinated approach to deal with the terrorist outfits including ETIM and TTP.

Wang Yi spoke high of Pakistan's steps for security of Chinese nationals in Pakistan also lauded the strict action against those involved in Dasu terrorist attack which had killed the Chinese nationals. Foreign Minister Qureshi

thanked China for supporting Pakistan in Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and told media that Chinese FM had assured the country for its constant support till its removal from the Grey List. He also thanked China for giving a rollover of \$2 billion to the State Bank of Pakistan to support Pakistan's economy and also mentioned his upcoming visit to China within few days which he said showed the limit of interaction cooperation and understanding.

Wang Yi, who was on his first visit to Pakistan after COVID-19 pandemic, said China would expand its support to Pakistan in poverty reduction, modernizing agriculture sector for a sustainable development. He called for a closer multilateral cooperation on regional and international issues including Afghanistan and Ukraine.





## Nigerian Defence Minister, COAS discuss bilateral cooperation, regional security

DF Report

**M**inister of Defence Nigeria Major General (R) Bashir Salihi Magashi, on March 16, called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa at

GHQ Rawalpindi and lauded Pakistan's role in regional stability.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and bilateral cooperation were discussed, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) media release. The Army Chief

said, "Pakistan views Nigeria as a key country in African continent and we appreciate Nigeria's role towards regional peace". The visiting dignitary ensured to play his role for further improvement in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels.

## Pakistan highly values its relation with Nigeria, says Pervez Khattak

DF Report

**F**ederal Minister for Defence Pervez Khattak during a meeting with the Minister for Defence of Nigeria Major General (R) Bashir Salihi Magashi said that Pakistan highly valued its relations with Nigeria and hope to see them flourish in times to come. He highlighted Pakistan's vision for Africa to develop strong, close and cooperative relations by enhancing trade, investment and defence cooperation and to establish Joint Ventures and public-private partnership.

He expressed that Pakistan has a very rich experience in counter terrorism efforts, therefore exchange of senior officers,

military delegation would be beneficial for both the states. He also highly appreciated Nigerian Air force regular participation in the IDEAS and hoped that it would continue in the future. The visiting delegation led by Nigerian Minister Major General (R) Bashir Salihi Magashi thanked the government of Pakistan for their warm welcome and good wishes. He said that the Nigerian government and its People would be happy to see the bilateral defence cooperation going from strength to strength. The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's role in regional stability and ensured to play his role for further improvement in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels.





## Nigerian Defence Minister, Bahrain's Commander National Guard call on Air Chief

DF Report

Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu on March 18 held separate meetings with the Defence Minister of Nigeria, and Commander of the National Guard of Bahrain and discussed matters of professional and mutual interest. Minister for Defence of Nigeria Major General (R) Bashir Salihi Magashi commended the professionalism of PAF and acknowledged its developing indigenous capacity in the aviation industry.

The Air Chief said Pakistan and Nigeria had longstanding religious, cultural and historical bonds which were manifested through strong ties between the Air Forces of the two countries. He also thanked the Nigerian government and military leadership for their trust in JF-17 Thunder fighter jets.

In a separate meeting, Commander of the National Guard of Bahrain General Shaikh Mohamed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa also called on Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. The CAS said Pakistan valued its strong diplomatic, economic and defence relations with the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's role in regional stability. He also acknowledged professionalism of Pakistan Air Force. He assured to play his role for further improvement in diplomatic and military cooperation with

Pakistan at all levels.

Measures to further enhance professional cooperation between the two brotherly countries were also discussed during the meetings.



# UN declares March 15 International Day to combat islamophobia



By M.Saeed Yousafzai

**T**he UN General Assembly has adopted by consensus a resolution declaring March 15 as International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

The resolution was introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). It marks the day when a gunman entered two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing 51 worshippers and wounding 40 others in the terror attack.

The resolution asks all countries, U.N. bodies, international and regional organizations, civil society, private sector and faith-based organizations “to organize and support various high-visibility events aimed at effectively increasing awareness of all levels about curbing Islamophobia,” and to observe the new International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

Formally introducing the resolution, Pakistan’s UN envoy Munir Akram said anti-Muslim hatred has become a “reality” that is “proliferating in several parts of the world.”

“Such acts of discrimination, hostility and violence towards Muslims — individuals and communities — constitute grave violations of their human rights, and violate their freedom of religion and belief,” Akram said in the General Assembly Hall.

“It is particularly alarming these days, for it has emerged as a new form of racism characterised by xenophobia, negative profiling and stereotyping of Muslims,” he added.

Akram said: “The gender aspect of Islamophobia is also gaining prominence, with girls and women being targeted due to mode of their dress and the general notion that Muslim women are oppressed and thus must be liberated.”

“Next challenge is to ensure implementation of this landmark resolution,” Pakistan’s PM Imran Khan said, adding “our voice against the rising tide of Islamophobia has been heard.”

The resolution recognises “with deep concern” what it said is an “overall rise in instances of discrimination, intolerance and

violence, regardless of the actors, directed against members of many religious and other communities.”

It maintains terrorism “cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilisation or ethnic group,” and calls for “strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue on the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels.”

“Even in our immediate neighbourhood, this discrimination is rising to unprecedented levels,” Pakistan’s National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf said.

Yusuf was referring to India where a local court on Tuesday upheld the right-wing BJP government’s ban on hijab in schools and colleges, concluding hijab “is not a part of essential religious practice.”

“The recent hijab controversy under the tutelage of an intolerant Indian government and attacks on places of worship of Muslim and other minorities in India is concerning for the entire region,” he said



# FM Qureshi, Egyptian FM discuss bilateral ties, global issues

DF Report

**F**oreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Sameh Hassan Shoukry on March 20 held in-depth consultations, exchanging views and perspectives on a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues.

Both sides expressed satisfaction at the excellent state of bilateral relations and close cooperation at various regional and multilateral fora. Foreign Minister Shoukry was in Pakistan for bilateral engagements and participation in the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) held in Islamabad on March 22-23.

Underscoring Pakistan's shared bonds of common faith, cultural affinity and historically warm ties with Egypt, the Foreign Minister reaffirmed the desire to further deepen the multi-dimensional relationship between the two countries.

The two Foreign Ministers agreed to enhance high-level exchanges and to strengthen institutional engagement for adding further momentum to close collaboration on all issues of mutual interest. The Foreign Minister also stressed the need to foster closer inter-Parliamentary cooperation as part of enhanced people-to-people exchanges between the two brotherly countries.

Foreign Minister Qureshi highlighted the potential for increased cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, defence, tourism, agriculture and higher education. Both Foreign Ministers concurred on the need to explore opportunities for such bilateral cooperation.

The Foreign Minister apprised his counterpart of the ongoing human rights violations and illegal demographic changes in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). He also briefed Foreign Minister Shoukry on the recent so-called accidental firing of a missile by India into Pakistan's territory.

He stressed that, in addition to highlighting disturbing questions about the multiple shortcomings and technical lapses of serious nature in India's management of strategic weapons, the lack of communication and explanation from India's side was a source of serious concern. Noting that the incident was consistent with India's irresponsible conduct and needed to be addressed by the international community, the Foreign Minister underscored Pakistan's demand for a joint probe into the incident.

The two Foreign Ministers had a detailed exchange on the developments relating to Afghanistan. Foreign Minister Qureshi emphasized the need for urgent measures to avert humanitarian and economic crises in Afghanistan. He drew attention to the improvement in the security situation and

stressed the importance of constructive engagement by the international community to help promote the objectives of durable peace and stability of Afghanistan as well as prosperity of the Afghan people.

The two Foreign Ministers shared perspectives on the situation in Ukraine. Foreign Minister Qureshi highlighted Pakistan's principled position and consistent calls for a peaceful settlement through dialogue and diplomacy.

He stressed the inviolability of the principles of the UN Charter. The two Foreign Ministers also exchanged views on the economic impact on the world at large and the unintended consequences for the developing countries arising from the ongoing conflict, particularly in the shape of rising oil and food commodity prices.

In the context of the 27th Conference of Parties (CoP) of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, scheduled to be held in Sharm-el-Sheikh, Egypt, later this year, the two Foreign Ministers discussed priority actions for tackling Climate Change particularly the need for channeling enhanced climate finance for developing countries. Foreign Minister Qureshi assured Pakistan's support to the Egyptian Presidency of CoP-27 for a successful Conference. The two Foreign Ministers agreed to remain engaged for further strengthening the cordial relationship between Pakistan and Egypt.



# Foreign Secretary, UN Assistant SG discuss regional issues

DF Report

**F**oreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood met Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Department of Political and Peace-building Affairs and Peace Operations, Ambassador Khaled Khairi and discussed matters related to regional situation.

The Foreign Secretary briefed the Assistant Secretary-General on the recent incident of firing of a missile by India into Pakistan's territory. He stressed that it was a serious violation of Pakistan's airspace and reflective of India's disregard for aviation safety as well as regional peace and stability.

He emphasized that while Pakistan continued to act with restraint and responsibility, this incident was consistent with India's irresponsible conduct and needed to be addressed by the international community. He recalled that the Foreign Minister of Pakistan

had addressed a letter to the President of UN Security Council and the UN Secretary General, inter alia, calling for a joint probe into the incident to establish the facts.

The Foreign Secretary highlighted the grave violations of human rights and illegal demographic changes in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). He stressed the importance of a just settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

The Foreign Secretary and Assistant Secretary General exchanged views on matters concerning Afghanistan. They agreed on the urgent need for provision of adequate humanitarian and emergency assistance to the Afghan people; the revival of the Afghan economy and financial system; and the long-term reconstruction of Afghanistan with the active involvement of the United Nations.

The Foreign Secretary appreciated the UN's important contributions in this regard. On the situation in Ukraine, the Foreign Secretary shared Pakistan's perspective on the ongoing conflict, its adverse economic impact on developing countries, and Pakistan's consistent calls for cessation of hostilities and a solution through dialogue and diplomacy.

Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood and ASG Khairi discussed cooperation between Pakistan and the UN, especially in the area of peacekeeping. The ASG lauded Pakistan's contributions to UN peacekeeping over the years as one of the largest troop contributors.

Assistant Secretary-General Khairi is in Pakistan as the representative of the UN Secretary-General at the 48th Session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperations Council of Foreign Ministers held in Islamabad on March 22-23, coinciding with 75th anniversary celebrations of Pakistan's Independence.

# Japanese Ambassador, Punjab Governor discuss bilateral ties

DF Report

Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan Wada Mitsuhiro called on Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar and discussed various issues including bilateral ties in trade and investment sectors between the two countries during a meeting at the Governor's House. Governor Punjab congratulated the Japanese Ambassador on the completion of 70 years of Pak-Japan diplomatic relations. He reiterated his commitment to expanding bilateral cooperation with Japan in the fields of economic, trade, development and investment. He said that Pakistan gives great importance to bilateral relations with Japan based on mutual trust and understanding adding that Pakistan believes in better and friendly relations with the world. Governor Punjab said the Pakistan government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan has played its due role for peace in the whole region including Afghanistan and also made immense sacrifices to eradicate terrorism. Sarwar said Pakistan stands for peace in the region adding that the world must play its role to get the Kashmir issue resolved in accordance with the UN resolutions and winning lasting peace in Afghanistan. Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan Wada Mitsuhiro lauded the steps taken by



Prime Minister Imran Khan for further strengthening relations with Pakistan and for strong leadership in supporting peace and stability in the region and the world. The Japanese diplomat said matters between the two sides on the exchange of manpower from Pakistan to Japan under the Technical Intern Training Program and Special Skilled Manpower Program are moving forward with success and we will stand by Pakistan in every difficult time. Moreover, a special education and self-support training center for the persons with disabilities (PWDs), funded by the Government of Japan, was inaugurated in Lahore on Friday. The Japanese Government provided a grant of \$74,173 (Rs 13 million) to the Milestone (a society for the special persons) for implementing

the project, said a news release. At the inauguration ceremony, Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Wada Mitsuhiro congratulated the organization for completing the project in a professional way. He appreciated its staff members who worked wholeheartedly as a team for encouraging persons with disabilities to be independent and take an active part in community.

President of Milestone Muhammad Shafiq Ur Rehman thanked the people of Japan for the well-equipped facility and expressed the hope that the training programmes conducted at the self-support training center would contribute more to promoting independence and employability of the persons with disabilities.

## Kazakhstan's envoy for enhancing ties with Pakistan

DF Report

Ambassador of Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin called on the Federal Minister of National Food Security Syed Fakhar Imam in his office on 18th March. Fakhar welcomed the Ambassador of Kazakhstan and said that Pakistan looks forward to taking the relationship with Kazakhstan to the next level. Imam said that the current trade between Kazakhstan and Pakistan is the most Pakistan has with any Central Asian country however, it is far below its true potential. Fakhar expressed that Pakistan and Kazakhstan should take advantage of the opportunity at hand and ensure maximum cooperation. He said that the bilateral cooperation between the two countries can be of immense benefit to Pakistan and Kazakhstan. Both dignitaries discussed the MoU signed between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of National Food Security and Research on the cooperation in the field of agriculture. Fakhar stressed cooperation in the field of livestock breeding and plant cultivation, agricultural products trade, quarantine and plant protection, veterinary medicine and agricultural research. Fakhar said that Pakistan has excess rice and potato which can be exported to Kazakhstan. H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin showed keen interest in importing rice from Pakistan and stated that Kazakhstan already imports rice from Russia and so it would be beneficial for them to directly import from Pakistan. Both dignitaries agreed to conduct an online meeting in April of this year between the officials of Ministry



of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of National Food Security and Research to further enhance cooperation. H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin briefed the minister that Kazakhstan is hosting a trade summit only for Pakistan in Atakent Expo Centre, Almaty, Kazakhstan in May of this year to allow Pakistani companies an opportunity to show case their products to the Kazakhstan business community. He informed the Minister that over 60 Pakistani companies will attend from various sectors such as agricultural machinery, agricultural products sports goods, surgical instruments, handicrafts, confectionary. He said that he was extremely excited to enhance bilateral ties with Pakistan. H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin informed the minister that during the 10th session of Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Pakistan which occurred in November, 2021, both governments agreed to increase turnover of agriculture products between the two countries. Fakhar Imam said that collaboration in scientific

research can be a cornerstone in increasing trade potential of the two countries. H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin said that Cotton Research Institute of Multan and Kazakh Research Institute of Cotton Growing can work together for exchange of cotton germplasm, training of scientists, joint breeding programs and to promote joint publications and seminars which was welcomed by the federal minister. Fakhar said that Pakistan faces a number of challenges but with the right policy interventions under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, agriculture sector can be transformed. He said that Pakistani agriculture has been tottering along the traditional agricultural techniques and it is time that we start to look ahead to the future in terms of modernization. Fakhar Imam praised the current government's efforts and said that in the last 70 years the main set back to research was insufficient funds. This is the first time in the history of Pakistan that under Prime Minister Initiative Program billions of Rupees have been invested in agricultural research which has led to record production of wheat, maize and rice last year.



## FM Qureshi visits Dubai Expo 2020 site



DF Report

Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi visited the Dubai Expo 2020 site as well as the Pakistani and other countries' pavilions.

Qureshi was accompanied by Pakistan's Ambassador to the UAE Afzal Mahmood, Consul General Ahmed Amjad Ali and other senior embassy officials.

During the visit, Qureshi met Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and other senior UAE officials.

The Pakistani foreign minister held consultations on all areas of bilateral cooperation including collaboration in trade and investment, job opportunities for Pakistani workforce and the welfare of Pakistani diaspora. He also discussed regional and global issues of mutual interest.



The UAE is home to the second largest Pakistani community abroad.

The foreign minister stated that the presence of Pakistani pavilion at the Expo is a manifestation of decades-long friendship between Pakistan and UAE.

"I am happy that millions of Pakistanis living in UAE are playing a constructive role in the development of the UAE. Pakistan's participation in the Expo 2020 is reflection of our growing bilateral economic ties," he said.

According to news reports, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi lauded the Emirati leadership for its role against terrorism and cooperation with Pakistan. He said that Pakistan and UAE had shared strong ties and are looking forward to developing a stronger relationship in the future. In addition, Pakistan Foreign Minister said "we are strategic partners



and will remain strategic partners through every cooperation process."

The foreign minister paid rich tribute to the UAE leadership for hosting a successful Expo despite the challenges in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

"I'm impressed to see the first Expo in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia. All credit goes to the UAE leadership for hosting such a huge show with a success," Qureshi said.

Qureshi invited foreign ministers of Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for Islamabad Summit next month to discuss important issues such as Palestine, Kashmir, Islamophobia and climate change, among others.

"I have invited the UAE foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan to attend the OIC Islamabad Summit on March 22 and 23.

# Pakistan celebrates National Day at Expo 2020 Dubai

DF Report

Pakistan celebrated its National Day 23 March at Expo 2020 Dubai with showcasing of its young musical talent, alongside a focus on strong bilateral ties, trade and economy.

Najeeb Mohammed Al-Ali, Executive Director, Expo 2020 Dubai Commissioner General Office, welcomed Afzaal Mahmood, Ambassador of Pakistan to the UAE and Commissioner General, Pakistan Pavilion. Najeeb Mohammed Al-Ali said: the Pakistan Pavilion ignites meaningful conversations about the country's unrevealed treasures by creatively featuring its ancient history, ethno-religious diversity and rich hospitality, while also highlighting potential opportunities across various sectors, such as tourism, trade and investments.

Relations between the UAE and Pakistan are deep-rooted and long-standing, having grown exponentially since their establishment. As such, we aim to further develop our thriving partnership and explore opportunities for enhanced cooperation in fields of joint interest, such as FDI attraction, infrastructure, manufacturing, for the benefit and well-being of our people. Ambassador Afzaal said: Pakistan is a gateway for the Middle East, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Western China. With over 5,000 years of history and 8,000-metre-high mountain ranges, it is the cradle of civilisation and the roof of the world. The Government of Pakistan has decided to leverage Pakistan's location for connectivity, communication and trade facilitation, with Gwadar Seaport and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor likely to turn Pakistan into a melting pot for economic activity within our region.

We are proud of our 50 years of diplomatic relations with the UAE, home to 1.6 million Pakistanis who are not only contributing to the development of both the countries, but are also an effective bridge for the nations.

After the speeches and a flag-raising ceremony, a performance by young pop stars Asim Azhar and Aima Baig at Al Wasl Plaza took the audience on a mesmerising musical journey. The duo, accompanied by talented instrumentalists Leo Twins, sang a medley of popular patriotic songs, with the Pakistani diaspora in attendance singing and clapping along. Celebrations continued in the evening with The Land of Colours concert at the Jubilee Stage, with an impressive line-up of young talent, including Asim Azhar, Baig, Leo Twins, Bayaan and Hasan Raheem.

The Pakistan Pavilion, located in the Opportunity



District, showcases the country's story of civilisation, riveting geographic wonders and panoramic landscapes through immersive screens, inviting visitors to journey through the land of hidden treasures and cultural diversity. National and Honour Days at Expo 2020 Dubai were moments to celebrate each of Expo's 200-plus International participants, shining a light on their culture and achievements and showcasing their pavilions and programming. Running until 31 March 2022, Expo 2020 invited visitors from across the planet to join the making of a new world in a six-month celebration of human creativity, innovation, progress and culture.



## FM Qureshi, EU Ambassador to enhance bilateral relations

DF Report

**F**oreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi and European Union Ambassador to Pakistan H E Androulla Kaminara on Mar 27 discussed the bilateral relations between Pakistan and the EU and other issues of mutual interest.

During a meeting, the Foreign Minister said Pakistan attached high importance to its bilateral multifaceted ties with the EU. He reiterated that under its economic priorities, Pakistan was committed to early implementation of the next-phase joint projects under a strategic partnership with the EU.

Qureshi also appreciated the role of EU ambassador in strengthening the bilateral ties between Pakistan and the EU.



DF Report

**A**mbassador of Azerbaijan in Pakistan Khazar Farhadov on March 27 called on Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar at Governor's House and discussed with him promotion of bilateral relations, issues of mutual interest, Kashmir and Afghanistan.

The Governor shared with the ambassador the steps taken by Pakistan for peace and eradication of terrorism in country and the region at large. He also spoke about the current situation in Kashmir and Afghanistan. He said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan have a long-standing religious, cultural and historical

relationship which was a sign of strong ties between the two countries.

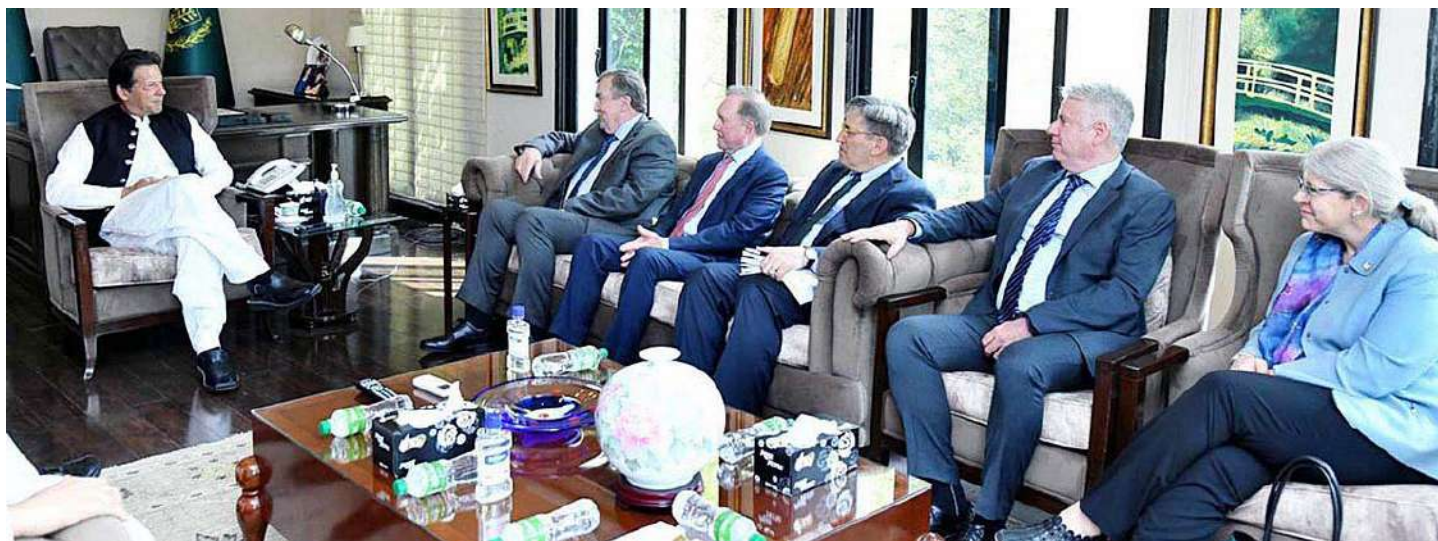
Governor Sarwar said that there were vast opportunities for bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade, commerce, and energy between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, adding that the development of high-level relations between the two countries was a welcoming sign. He said under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the present government was striving for maintaining peace in the region.

We urge the world to play its role in elimination of atrocities in Kashmir and Palestine and for establishment of peace, he said.

A strong and stable Afghanistan was also necessary for peace for which the world must play its part in economic development and providing basic amenities to the people, he said.

Ambassador Khazar Farhadov said that relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan have always been exemplary and the two countries stand by each other in difficult times. The role of Pakistan in establishing peace and eradicating terrorism was praiseworthy, he added.

Azerbaijan would continue to play its role alongside Pakistan in connecting Central Asian states through Afghanistan, he added.



## Pakistan signs new agreement on Reko Diq project

DF Report

Prime Minister Imran Khan witnessed the signing ceremony between the Government of Pakistan, the Government of Balochistan and Barrick Gold Corporation of Canada after successfully resolving the longstanding dispute with Tethyan Copper Company (TCC) concerning the development of copper and gold mines in Chagai, popularly known as the Reko Diq dispute.

A new agreement was signed by representatives of the Federal and Balochistan Governments with a delegation of Barrick Gold, led by Chief Executive Dr. Mark Bristow. As per the terms of the new agreement, the Reko Diq project shall be revived and developed by Barrick gold in partnership with Pakistani entities.

The new project company shall be owned 50 percent by Barrick Gold. The remaining 50 percent shareholding shall be owned by Pakistan, divided equally between Federal Government and the provincial government of Balochistan. Federal Government's 25 percent shareholding shall be divided equally amongst three state-owned-entities (SOEs) of the Federal Government, namely Oil and Gas Development Corporation Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) and Government Holdings Pakistan Limited (GHPL). Balochistan's share shall be held by a company wholly owned and controlled by the Government of Balochistan.

As part of the Prime Minister's vision for Balochistan, the Government of Balochistan's share of capital and operating expenses for the project shall be borne by the Federal Government. In other words, the Government of Balochistan shall not incur any expenses in development of the mines and its share of expenses shall be borne by the Federal Government. In developing the project, nearly

USD 10 billion shall be invested in Balochistan, including USD one billion that shall be invested in social uplift projects such as roads, schools, hospitals and creation of technical training institute for mining. The investment shall create over 8000 new jobs. This project shall make Balochistan the largest recipient of foreign

international advisors. To ensure the deal was compliant with all the laws, the Government shall submit the matter before the parliament and the Supreme Court. While speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister stressed upon the emphasis his government placed on development of Balochistan and uplift of



direct investment in Pakistan and the Reko Diq project shall be one of the largest copper and gold mining projects in the world. To ensure optimal utilization of nation's mineral wealth the government was also considering setting up a smelter. The agreement was reached after several rounds of negotiations over the last three years. In August 2019, the Prime Minister had set up a committee to steer the negotiations with an aim for early development of the mines. In this effort, the Federal and Provincial Governments were assisted by

underdeveloped areas. He expressed hope that the investment would mark the beginning of large scale investments in Balochistan that should change the quality of lives of ordinary citizens in Balochistan. The Prime Minister appreciated the efforts of the negotiating team for a transparent and favourable agreement for the people of Balochistan.

Earlier, delegation of Barrick Gold Corporation called on the Prime Minister. Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Wendy Gilmour was also present.

## Saudi Arabia had always supported Pakistan: Interior Minister

By Mian Fazal Elahi

**A**mbassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki called on Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed and discussed mutual interest issues including Pak-Saudia bilateral relations.

During meeting, they reviewed progress on the affairs related to the last month visit of Saudi Interior Minister Prince Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Al Saud bin Naif to Pakistan, said a press release issued here. Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed was invited by his Saudi counterpart to



attend the defense exhibition.

International Defense Exhibition will be held from March 6-9 in the Saudi capital, Riyadh. Interior Minister said that he was thankful to the Saudi Interior Minister on his invitation to attend the Defense Exhibition, adding that he would try his best to attend the opening ceremony of the Defense Conference.

Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid said that the visit of Saudi Interior Minister to Pakistan was very fruitful, adding that this had given a new impetus to Pak-Saudi bilateral relations.

He said that relations between the Interior Ministries of both brotherly countries would further strengthen in the coming days.

He said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are two brotherly countries and Saudi Arabia had always supported Pakistan.

Interior Minister said that government was taking steps to promote tourism and trade between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He said that people of Saudi Arabia had very good feelings for Pakistan.

## Pakistan, Iraq call for enhanced liaison for visa facilitation

By Mian Fazal Elahi

**P**akistan and Iraq have stressed the need for enhanced liaison between the two countries for visa facilitation and security co-operation.

This understanding came during the meeting between Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad and Ambassador of Iraq Hamid Abbas Lafta in Islamabad.

Pakistan-Iraq bilateral ties and issues of mutual interest came under discussion during the meeting, said a statement.

Provision of facilities for tourists especially 'Ziareen' were also discussed in the meeting.

They stressed the need for enhanced liaison between the interior ministries of both countries for visa facilitation and security co-operation.

The ambassador said there was need of hour to further promote and strengthen the Pak-Iraq relations which were based on historic, brotherhood and mutual trust, he added.

Sheikh Rasheed said Pakistan condemned



terrorist acts around the world, including in Iraq. Pakistan itself remained victim of terrorism and sacrificed lives of 80,000 people including personnel of law and enforcing agencies in war

against terrorism, he added.

He said Pakistan would enhance travel facilities to the intending 'Ziareen' to Iraq.

## Kazakhstani Ambassador calls on Sheikh Rasheed



DF Report

**A**mbassador of Kazakhstan H. E. Yerzhan Kistafin called on Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on March 9. Issues of mutual interests including Pak-Kazakhstan bilateral relations came under discussion during the meeting, said a statement.

They also discussed promotion of tourism and trade between the two countries. Both

the sides agreed to enhance liaison between the interior ministries for visa facilitation and security cooperation.

Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed stressed the need to further enhance cooperation between the two countries on security and other issues. Pakistan and Kazakhstan have great cultural ties, he added. He also called for strengthening people to

people contacts between the countries. Visa facilities would be provided to promote tourism between Pakistan and Kazakhstan, he added.

The Ambassador said Pak-Kazakhstan relations were based on brotherhood. Scope of bilateral trade between Pakistan and Kazakhstan was very wide, he added. He said they were organizing 'One Country Trade Execution' in May which would help enhance trade.

## Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq pays a courtesy call upon His Excellency Pakistani Minister of Interior

By Mian Fazal Elahi

**H**.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad, paid a courtesy call upon His Excellency Shaikh Rashid Ahmed, Minister of Interior of Pakistan. Both sides discussed a number of issues of common interest, foremost of which are coordination and cooperation in the field of internal security, strategic planning and modern forensic evidence, in addition to the exchange of experiences of both institutions.

The ways of cooperation in organizing the mechanism for the groups to visit the holy shrines, and working to ensure their return to their home country back after the end of the visit period have also been discussed.

As well as the necessity of a meeting between officials of the security services in the Ministry of Interior for the purpose of consultation in opening channels of cooperation in the field of security and combating terrorism, working to establish specialized training workshops, and signing memorandum of understanding in this regard. The two sides agreed to maintain

communication and follow-up on issues related to the security aspect, which would achieve mutual interest. This meeting was attended by

the Iraqi Military Attaché Brigadier General/ Masood Salih, and the Attaché/ Mr. Ahfad Qasim.



# Ambassadors of Iraq, Algeria review mutual issues



DF Report

**H**.E. Ambassador Hamid Abbas Laftahas received H E Dr. Ibrahim Romani, the new Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to Pakistan on March 2 at

the Iraqi embassy. After exchanging words of welcome and courtesy, the two sides reviewed, during the meeting, the most important events in the Pakistani arena, in addition to the nature of diplomatic relations between the accredited missions in Islamabad and ways to

strengthen them and restore their activity after the period of apathy they were exposed to due to the Corona pandemic crisis. Both sides also discussed the Russian-Ukrainian crisis and Pakistan's position on it and its impact on the regional and international levels.



## Delegation of Nagar Chamber of Commerce & Industry of GB calls on Iraq's Ambassador

DF Report

**H**.E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, the Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad received the President of Nagar Chamber of Commerce and Industry and a number of members of the Chamber accompanying him at the embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Islamabad.

During the meeting, ways of enhancing cooperation between the two countries in the field of trade and industry were discussed through establishing commercial

and investment businesses in Iraq.

The delegation expressed strong desire to visit Iraq as soon as possible to explore investment opportunities and study the Iraqi commercial arena to provide their best and for the benefit of both countries.

For his part, Ambassador Lafta pointed out that Iraq possesses a fertile land for investment and successful business, and welcomed all Pakistani initiatives in the field of enhancing and strengthening relations between the two countries at all levels.

## Pak Embassy in Iraq displays Pakistani products



DF Report

**E**mbassy of Pakistan in Iraq organized first ever three-day exhibition in Baghdad in which about 84 leading Pakistani companies and more than two hundred businessmen participated and displayed Pakistani products. According to the press release, the opening ceremony of 'Pakistan single country exhibition' was inaugurated by Ayad Allawi, former Iraqi prime minister and Adnan Dirjal, Iraqi Minister for Youth and Sports. The Deputy Secretary General, Council of Ministers, official from Iraqi Ministry Of Foreign Affairs, trade, President Iraqi Federation of Chambers

of Commerce along with large number of Iraqi businessmen, ambassadors and diplomatic community attended the opening ceremony. The exhibitors are from different cities of Pakistan covering more than 20 sectors of Pakistani products including rice, sports, textile, food and grain, cosmetics, logistics, pharmaceutical, fans and surgical instruments etc. The exhibition will pave the way for Pakistani businessmen to explore Iraqi market and increase trade between two countries. The Embassy has also arranged B2B meetings for Pakistani businessmen and meetings with different chambers of Iraq.

## Kyrgyz Ambassador, CEO of Pelican Mall Malik Zulfiqar discuss trade ties



DF Report

**A**mbassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Mr. Ulanbek Totuiaev met with CEO of “Pelican Mall” Mr. Malik Zulfiqar on April 1, 2022, as part of a working visit to Bahawalpur. Malik Zulfiqar was one of the main sponsors of the 5th National Mas-wrestling under the auspices

of the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan in Pakistan.

During the meeting, the sides discussed further joint steps to develop sports and year-round tourism in the two countries.

H.E. Mr. Ulanbek Totuiaev informed, and Mr. Malik Zulfiqar discussed tourism opportunities in Kyrgyzstan and the measures taken by the country's leadership to popularize national sports and folk games as part of promoting the

country's tourism potential. The Ambassador highly appreciated the partnership of Pelican Mall with the Swiss International Hotel & Resorts chain and the construction of a new high-class hotel in Bahawalpur, which will create conditions for attracting foreign athletes and tourists to the region, including from the Kyrgyz Republic. Both dignities were agreed on the development of joint tourism programs and projects.

## Bulgaria wants to boost trade ties with Pakistan

DF Report

**A**mbassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan H E Irena Gancheva on March 30 invited a trade delegation from Pakistan to visit Bulgaria to explore business avenues.

During her visit to the Federation House, the Ambassador said Pakistani business delegation representing different sectors would prove helpful for enhancement of bilateral trade and investment, encouraging joint ventures and crafting mutually-beneficial chamber-to-chamber linkages between FPCCI and Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).

H E Irena Gancheva offered to expedite the visa processing for Pakistan business community's representatives to create an enabling environment for them to forge business-to-business and people-to-people relationships.

She said Bulgaria offered the cheapest skilled workforce in the EU and also enjoyed the shortest distance with Pakistan in the European

Union. Therefore, she said, Bulgaria could serve as a gateway to Europe for Pakistan.

The Ambassador also called upon the Pakistani exporters to fully capitalize on the tariff exemptions offered by the GSP Plus status and export textile products to Bulgaria.

Many regulations had been relaxed by the Government of Bulgaria over the year, which was historically in place making Bulgaria a business-friendly country, she added.

President, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Irfan Iqbal Shaikh welcomed the invitation and assured that a trade delegation, led by him would soon visit Bulgaria.

He expressed his profound optimism that the delegation would open the doors for a new era of Pakistan-Bulgaria economic relations and unleash the true trade potential between the two countries.



## Kyrgyz Minister of Foreign Affairs call on COAS to discuss defence ties

DF Report

**O**n the sidelines of the 48th session of the Foreign Ministers Council of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Mr. Ruslan Kazakbaev had a bilateral meeting with the Chief of the Army staff of the Pakistan Army, General Qamar Javed Bajwa on March 22, 2022.

During the meeting, the both leaders discussed



issues of military-technical cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, with particular emphasis on the need to combine efforts in order to counter modern challenges and threats, such as terrorism, extremism and its other manifestations.

Focus of the Kyrgyz Republic on the development of regional cooperation, H.E. Mr. Ruslan Kazakbaev underlined the importance of intensifying cooperation between the Kyrgyz

Republic and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in terms of the exchange of experience between representatives of the law enforcement agencies of the two countries and the sending of Kyrgyz military personnel to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for training in the Pakistani military academies.

COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa expressed readiness for further effective cooperation with the Kyrgyz side in order to ensure peace and stability in the region.

## FM Qureshi, Kyrgyz Foreign Minister review multilateral cooperation

DF Report

**F**oreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Foreign Minister of Kyrgyz Republic Ruslan Kazakbaev on March 23 reviewed the state of bilateral relations and multilateral cooperation, including matters relating to trade and investment, defence and security as well as connectivity agenda. The two foreign ministers noted with satisfaction the progress made on the CASA-1000 project and expressed commitment for its timely completion, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. The two foreign ministers met on the sidelines of the 48th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. The two sides also agreed to enhance people-to-people contacts and cooperation in the education sector.

Issues related to the welfare of Pakistani students and expatriate community were discussed. The importance of regular interaction and dialogue under existing mechanisms and exchange of high-level visits to generate further momentum in the relationship was underlined. The two sides affirmed their commitment to remain constructively and meaningfully engaged to further reinforce Pakistan-Kyrgyz bilateral relations.



# Kyrgyz FM, Chairman Senate agree to enhance bilateral relations

DF Report

**M**inister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Mr. Ruslan Kazakbaev held a bilateral meeting with Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan Sadiq Sanjrani, at the sidelines of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad.

During the meeting, the parties exchanged views on current issues of the Kyrgyz-Pakistan inter-parliamentary cooperation.

H.E. Mr. Sadiq Sanjrani while highlighting friendly and close ties between the parliaments of the two countries, expressed gratitude to the Kyrgyz side for the support provided to Pakistan within the organizations such as the International Parliamentary Union and Asian Parliamentary Assembly.

With a view to deepening and expanding inter-parliamentary cooperation, the Head of the Senate of Pakistan invited H.E. Mr. Talant Mamytov, Chairman of Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic, to pay a visit to Pakistan in the near future.

H.E. Mr. Ruslan Kazakbaev emphasized the



interest of the Kyrgyz side in strengthening Kyrgyz-Pakistani relations in all areas of cooperation, and also briefed the Pakistani side on the political changes that had taken in Kyrgyzstan recently.

Noting the importance of intensifying trade and economic relations between the countries, the parties discussed the possibilities of using the Gwadar seaport for the export of Kyrgyz products to world markets, as well as the transit

capacity of Kyrgyzstan for the supply of Pakistan goods to the market of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Following the meeting the parties agreed to continue the political dialogue, provide mutual support in both bilateral and multilateral formats, as well as actively cooperate in order to develop the entire spectrum of Kyrgyz-Pakistani cooperation.

## *Kyrgyz Foreign Minister H.E. Ruslan Kazakbaev visits LCCI*

DF Report

**T**he Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Mr. Ruslan Kazakbaev, as part of his participation in the 48th session of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, visited Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on March 24, 2022.

He held a number of meetings with representatives of business circles, as well as negotiations with the President, vice-presidents and members of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

H.E. Mr. Ruslan Kazakbaev informed the Pakistani side about the wide investment and business opportunities of the Kyrgyz Republic. In particular, it was noted that in the last 2 years Kyrgyzstan has received a large number of Pakistani tourists arriving in the country on charter flights.

The leadership of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Lahore was also informed about the priority areas for investment in the Kyrgyz Republic, the E-visa system, as well as about



the measures taken by the country's leadership to protect foreign investors, and, in particular, that, on the personal initiative of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Mr. Sadyr Japarov created a national agency for attracting and protecting investments.

H.E. Mr. Ruslan Kazakbaev drew the attention of the members of the chamber on the huge potential for the business communities of the two countries in various fields, including energy, textile, pharmaceutical industries and

education.

Following the meeting, the both sides agreed to cooperate in further expansion of bilateral trade, economic and investment cooperation. The Pakistani side confirmed its readiness to establish and expand direct business contacts between the business circles of the two countries, and also expressed special gratitude to Minister H.E. Mr. Ruslan Kazakbaev for visiting the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry as part of his visit to Pakistan.



## A project of Roots Millennium

# Italian Ambassador inaugurates Future World School and College in Islamabad

### DF Report

Italian envoy Andreas Ferrarese and his spouse Madame Albana inaugurated Future World School and College at Sector H-11/4, Islamabad on March 11.

Founder and CEO Dr. Chaudhry Faisal Mushtaq TI, Executive Director Anna Faisal, Directors and Principal Future World School and College Ms. Muneeze Muzaffar were present at this auspicious occasion. The chief guest Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese unveiled the inaugural plaque.

The Millennium Education, Pakistan is spreading widely nationwide with consistency and academic excellence under the dynamic leadership of Founder and CEO Dr. Chaudhry Faisal Mushtaq TI.

The Flagship Future World School and College at H-11/4 Islamabad is a state-of-the-art purpose-built campus having numerous facilities inside it for students and teachers. It is equipped with latest technology and world class academic setup to achieve the heights of success in academics and extracurricular activities.

Andreas Ferrarese along with his wife was given a tour of the campus by the Founder



and CEO Dr. Chaudhry Faisal Mushtaq and administration, they showed him around the largest private tertiary purpose-built institution in H-11/4 Islamabad, wherein he was shown various departments, classrooms and other facilities including the library, gym, student lounge, laboratories, cafeteria, and world class auditorium. Later, the guests were also given an introduction to Future World Campus aims and ambitions and then a virtual tour of the institution.

Future World School and College, H-11/4 Islamabad is dedicated to Pakistan and Italy Friendship, and it symbolises Pakistan-Italy Education and Knowledge Corridor. Through this campus, the passion and commitment of all school going learners, families, teachers, and communities who have devoted their lives to the noble cause of teaching and learning in both countries, and pledged to make Pakistan's Literacy Landscape an enduring success in support of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals SDGs 2030.

Principal of Future World School and College H-11/4 Campus Ms. Muneeze Muzaffar in her introductory speech expressed that the purpose of this intellectual exercise is to foster teamwork, encourage work force, engage the youth of Pakistan in the most well-organised scholastic event amidst global crises, and is recognised worldwide.

The speech and inauguration were followed by the opening ceremony of Future World Model United Nations 2022. The opening ceremony was marked by some breathtaking performances by the Millennials which included a flag-parade with national anthem of both the countries, artistic performances that exhibited a mix of various elements such as cultural diversity, intellectual mind-set and delegates from schools across the country who get to win a memorable experience.

Italian Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese in his speech expressed his pleasure in witnessing the event and stressed that education is the best investment for the future of the country. Moreover, he spoke on the fact that Italy and Pakistan maintain extensive bilateral, friendly and economic cooperation since decades and that there is a lot of potential and opportunities for the two countries to further cement their relations.

In his welcome speech, Founder and CEO Dr. Faisal Mushtaq thanked the distinguished guests for gracing the occasion while reflecting on The Millennium Education mission and commitment to bring quality education and to developing the right set of skills, attitudes, knowledge and values within Millennials so that they can confidently meet the global challenges of the 21st century. Students at Future World School and College H-11/4 Campus, Islamabad,

understand that in the near future the focus of dynamics of the world will shift from specialised knowledge to a more holistic development of the individual and that the world needs leaders that can resolve local and global issues through peaceful negotiations. With the establishment of Future World School and College at H-11/4

Islamabad, The Millennium Education has created a unique hub of research, service learning, internship, that infuses experiential and intercultural learning and personally enriching experiences to its students' portfolios and making them become Millennials that give back to their country.



## Japan's envoy hosts reception to celebrate Emperor's 62nd birth anniversary

To celebrate the 62nd Birthday of Emperor Naruhito, the Ambassador of Japan WADA Mitsuhiro and his wife hosted a reception here on March 29. The reception was attended by the Ministers including Syed Fakhar Imam, Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Farrukh Habib, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Parliamentarians, senior government officials,

members of the diplomatic community and other dignitaries from the public and private sector, said a news release.

Ambassador WADA together with the distinguished guests cut a cake to mark the Emperor's Birthday. Since his accession to the throne on 1st May 2019 as the 126th Emperor of Japan, the Emperor Naruhito stands as the

symbol of Japan and the unity of the people. As this year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Pakistan, the Ambassador said our relationship will be strengthened together with all the Pakistani friends including long-time friends. The Embassy underscores sincere efforts from both sides in order to further strengthen this friendship.





## Pakistan signs two agreements with Saudi Fund

By Mian Fazal Elahi

**A**mbassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Malkiy witnessed the signing ceremony held in Islamabad. Director General for Asia Saud Ayid R. Alshammari represented the SFD in the signing ceremony. This amount which was due to be paid during the testing period from May 2020 to December 2021 will now be repaid over a period of six years starting from this year in semi-annual instalments.

Due to the support extended by the Saudi Fund for Development along with other bilateral creditor countries, the G-20 DSSI has provided the fiscal space which was necessary to deal with the urgent health and socioeconomic needs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The total amount of debt that has been suspended and rescheduled under the DSSI framework, covering the period from May 2020 to December 2021, is 3,688 million dollars.

Pakistan has already concluded and signed 80

agreements with 21 bilateral creditors for the rescheduling of its debts under the G-20 DSSI framework, amounting to rescheduling of 2,088 million dollars.

The signing of agreements with the Saudi Fund for Development brings the total rescheduled amount to 2,934 million dollars while negotiations for the remaining 754 million dollars are underway. The agreements for this amount are expected to be signed with respective bilateral development partners within the current fiscal year.

## Uzbek Deputy Secretary of Security Council calls on Dr Moeed

DF Report

**D**eputy Secretary of the Security Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan Babur Usmanov called on National Security Adviser Dr Moeed Yusuf here and discussed issues of mutual interest, including bilateral relations and the prevailing regional and global



situation.

Both the dignitaries discussed the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and stressed the importance of peace and stability in Afghanistan, said a news release. During the meeting, the two sides stressed on the

importance of regional ties and economic development of the entire region.

Deputy Secretary of the Security Council Babur Usmanov is part of the Uzbek delegation led by the President of Uzbekistan, which arrived in Islamabad

# Japan announces a US\$ 3.45 million grant project to support effective border control, migration management in Pakistan



DF Report

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad held a signing ceremony of Exchange of Notes for a USD 3.45 million grant project aimed at strengthening the operational capacities of border management authorities to contribute towards comprehensive migration management in Pakistan. The event – held at the IOM Office in Islamabad – was attended by H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Ms. Sarah Benazir, Section Officer – Migration Management Cell, Ministry of Interior of Pakistan, Mr. Qazi Saleem Ahmed Khan, Director HR & HA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and Ms. Mio Sato, IOM Chief of Mission in Pakistan.

As a remittance-dependent economy and a country hosting some 3 million Afghans, migration continues to play a key role in Pakistan's development and constitutes a key priority for the Government in the forthcoming period, which is committed to strengthening overall migration management, as evidenced through various programmes and policies.

The support of the Government of Japan will enable IOM to contribute to the Government of Pakistan's efforts to facilitate safe, orderly

and regular migration, through implementation of efficient and effective border and migration management practices. Under the project, IOM will provide specialized and tailored capacity building support to immigration and border officials on effective management of borders, supplemented by the provision of document verification technology, and infrastructure and IT equipment at key points of entry. Efforts will also include training on identification, screening, and referral of victims of trafficking and vulnerable smuggled migrants.

"Migration is a multi-faceted issue in Pakistan, presenting a number of challenges and opportunities. It is only through holistic approaches that meaningful progress will be made towards comprehensive migration management in the country, efforts towards which IOM remains committed" said Mio Sato, IOM Chief of Mission in Pakistan. "I would like to express my thanks to the Government of Japan for its steadfast support for IOM's efforts in Pakistan, as well as the Ministry of Interior of Pakistan, with which we have enjoyed close cooperation for a number of years."

"The Government of Japan is ready to support Pakistan in promoting peace and security through this project in partnership with IOM.

We view a safe and secure environment as a fundamental requirement for anyone to enjoy prosperity and peace. Improving migration management and protection is key to achieving such outcomes, and we look forward to this collaborative effort with MoI and IOM." said H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan.

"IOM is a critical partner to the Government of Pakistan within migration management efforts, and we appreciate the support provided at both the operational and policy levels, as well as the close coordination during both design and implementation of programming" said Ms. Sarah Benazir, Section Officer – Migration Management Cell, MoI. "The Ministry of Interior is committed to and looks forward to close cooperation with IOM during implementation."

IOM has operated in Pakistan since 1981 and has worked closely with the Government to ensure humane and orderly movement of people by devising practical solutions to shifting migration dynamics; protecting, assisting and supporting vulnerable migrant population; promoting international cooperation on migration issues; and serving as a key source of advice on migration policy, research, data and practice.

## South African HC stresses direct trade with Pakistan



DF Report

**H**igh Commissioner of South Africa H E Mthuthuzeli Madikiza on March 30 called for direct trade linkages between Pakistan and South Africa, instead of via Europe.

He was speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry. LCCI President Mian Nauman Kabir presented the address of welcome while Honorary Consul General of South Africa Syed Shahid Ali and LCCI Vice President Haris Ateeq also spoke. The high commissioner said that South African products to Pakistan and Pakistani products to South Africa were reaching through European countries. Both the countries should take measures to ensure direct trade.

He said that exchange of trade delegations could play a pivotal role in increasing the two-way trade. He said that the private sectors of two countries should take lead to strengthen mutual trade and economic ties. LCCI President Mian Nauman Kabir said that South Africa was famous for its incredible diversity, stunning landscapes, and rich culture. Geographically, it is one of the most diverse countries in African continent, comprising territory that ranges from the rolling, fertile plains of the Highveld and the wide-open savannah of Mpumalanga to the Kalahari Desert and the peaks of the Drakensberg Mountains.

“We have great reverence for the former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, who referred South Africa as the Rainbow Nation, because of its racial diversity,” he added.

Mian Nauman Kabir said that South Africa had the largest economy in Africa after Nigeria. It is the only African country that is part of the G-20. Unlike most other African economies which still rely heavily on mining and agriculture, the South African economy is fairly diversified. The LCCI president said that both Pakistan and South Africa enjoy long lasting cordial relations

with each other based on mutual respect and integrity but these relations are not truly reflected in bilateral trade volume. The balance of trade has traditionally been in favour of South Africa. Mian Nauman Kabir said that as per the statistics by State Bank of Pakistan, the two way trade was around 1 billion dollars in 2020-21 as compared to 972 million dollars in 2019-20 after a little increase in both imports and exports.

Pakistan's imports from South Africa increased from 812 million dollars in 2019-20 to 888 million dollars in 2020-21 while our exports to South Africa also registered a small increase from 161 million dollars in 2019-20 to 182 million dollars during 2020-21. We expect better trade figures this financial year as during the first eight months of the current financial year i.e. July 2021 to Feb 2022, our exports to South Africa stood at 131 million dollars as compared to 118 million dollars during the same period of previous financial year, the LCCI President added.

Mian Nauman Kabir added that Pakistan's main exports to South Africa include precious metal, iron & steel, photographic & medical equipment, machinery, footwear, vegetables, chemicals, raw hides & leather, plastics & rubber etc. While our imports from South Africa include machinery, foodstuffs, vegetables, live animals, textiles, stone & glasses, vehicles, aircraft & vessels, chemicals, toys & sport apparel etc. He mentioned that Pakistan is known for rice, surgical instruments and sports goods around the globe.

I would like to share with you that Pakistan has also made great advancement in pharmaceutical sector in the last couple of decades. In these areas, the share of Pakistan in imports of South Africa is negligible. The LCCI President said that in 2020-21, the value of rice imported by South Africa was 505 million dollars and Pakistan's share was merely 9.7

million dollars which dipped from 13.8 million dollars during 2019-20. In same period, the global pharmaceutical imports of South Africa were 3 billion dollars and Pakistan could only fetch the share of 5.7 million dollars.

Pakistan has a great potential of increasing its exports to South Africa not only in these sectors but many others. He said that private sector of Pakistan needs support of High Commissioner to explore South African market to boost our exports in these sectors. It would certainly help us in closing the much wider gap of trade deficit and ultimately in enhancing the bilateral trade volume. He informed the High Commissioner that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce has always emphasized on strengthening the trade and investment bonds with non-traditional markets and African region generally while South Africa particularly is on our top priority. We certainly want to diversify our export basket especially in the context to South Africa.

Mian Nauman Kabir said that the continent of Africa offers a huge market to Pakistani businessmen for enhancing trade and investment. South Africa being the most modern and leading country of Africa can become trading hub for Pakistan. It can be made possible with your cooperation and guidance. He said that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce is keen to cooperate and collaborate with your good office for enhancing the bilateral trade and investment connections with South Africa.

LCCI Vice President Haris Ateeq said that the barriers should be removed which are hampering the growth of two-way trade. He suggested that a Pakistan-Africa Business Forum should be formed. He said that single country exhibitions would also be planned. He said that the calendar of business activities and exhibitions in South Africa must be shared. Former LCCI Senior Vice President Amjad Ali Jawa, EC Members Jawad Elahi and Mian Atiqur-Rehman were also present.



## Envoy of Romania, Advisor to PM discuss mutual interest issues

DF Report

**H**.E. Mr. Nicolae Goia, Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan called on Advisor to PM on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Muhammad Ayub Afridi to discuss ways to boost legal migration of skilled and un-skilled workers. The Ambassador expressed his concerns regarding conditions of Overseas Pakistanis, especially that of unskilled labour, in Romania. He told the Advisor that he is confident of the quality of Pakistani workers

in Romania and their assimilation in the society. He was of the view that legal migration with further trainings to the workers would boost relationship between both countries. The Advisor, in response, urged close coordination between relevant officials of both the countries regarding data sharing of migrant workers in order to ensure protection of migrant workers before and after departure to Romania. Open visa should be discouraged in order to promote safe, legal and orderly migration to curb illegal

channels of migration.

The Ambassador assured that his government and the embassy is ready to welcome more workers from Pakistan under the country's policy of taking non-EU migrants. Mr. Muhammad Ayub Afridi, Advisor to PM on OP&HRD thanked the Ambassador of Romania for his gesture and assured him of continued coordination and enhanced cooperation for export of Pakistani workers to Romania.

## Austrian Minister, WAPDA Chairman discuss mega projects in water, hydropower sectors



DF Report

**A**ustrian Foreign Minister H E Mag Alexander Schallenberg, Austrian Ambassador to Pakistan H E Nicolaus Keller and a high-level business delegation visited WAPDA House to explore ways and means for partnering in the construction of mega projects in water and hydropower sectors. This was the maiden visit of such a high-profile dignitary from a European country to WAPDA House along with a large delegation comprising senior officials of leading firms hailing from Austria. Austrian Ambassador, in his conversation with WAPDA Chairman Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain (Retd), declared it their "flagship visit". The Chairman briefed the delegation of WAPDA's mandate, its development portfolio, financial strength and expertise to successfully implement mega projects. Giving a rundown of under-construction projects, he said that WAPDA is

implementing as many as 10 projects of more than US\$26 billion under the vision "Decade of Dams" to be completed from 2022 to 2028-29 in a phased manner, adding 11.7 million acre-feet of water to the existing water storage capacity and 11,369 megawatts (MW) to the installed generating capacity of clean, green and low-cost hydel electricity. WAPDA projects, Diamer Basha Dam in particular, have tremendous business opportunities. The Austrian firms, like other foreign and local companies, may benefit from these opportunities by participating in international competitive processes for the purpose, he further said. Referring to the successful launch of debut Green Euro Bond in London Stock Exchange last year by WAPDA on the back of its robust capital structure and strong balance sheet, the chairman said that WAPDA has devised an innovative financing strategy with no or meagre reliance on the national exchequer to construct its projects, particularly Diamer Basha Dam, Mohmand

Dam and Dasu Hydropower Project.

This reflects strong ties of WAPDA with prestigious financial institutions from across the globe, particularly in the US, Europe and Asia including China and the Middle East, he added. The Austrian Foreign Minister appreciated WAPDA for its contribution towards the development of a sustainable and low-carbon economy of Pakistan, adding that he is pleased to know about WAPDA's portfolio of development projects. He expressed the hope that Austrian firms will make use of the opportunities embedded in these projects and become partners of WAPDA in mutual progress. Speaking on the occasion, the Austrian Ambassador said that he is confident that this visit will help enhance ties between WAPDA and Austrian firms. The visiting high-ups of the Austrian firms briefed about the portfolios of their companies and showed keen interest in WAPDA projects.

## Azerbaijani Defence Minister meets COAS, lauds Pak efforts for hosting OIC moot

DF Report

**M**inister of Defence of Azerbaijan Colonel General Zakir Hasanov on March 22 called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa at the GHQ and appreciated Pakistan's efforts for hosting the OIC's 48th Council of Foreign Ministers.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and bilateral cooperation in various fields were discussed, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release.

COAS said that Pakistan valued its relations with Azerbaijan, rooted in religious affinity, common values, geo-strategic significance, potential for mutually beneficial and enhanced economic and defence cooperation. Both reiterated the desire to further enhance bilateral relations including efforts for peace and security in the region. Referring to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) 48th Council of Foreign Ministers session, the COAS



termed it a historic development for addressing the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and bringing international community to a shared vision and joint strategy to find solution to emerging challenges in the region vital for

peace and stability.

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's role in regional stability and pledged to play his role for further improvements in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels.

## Pakistan's sustainable transport future lies in EVs; eco-friendly technology: British HC

DF Report

**B**ritish High commissioner Dr. Christian Turner visited the MG JW Automobile Pakistan facility and said, the future of sustainable transport lies in eco-friendly electric vehicles and the MG automobile manufacturers will be reducing carbon emissions with electric automobiles for cleaner and greener Pakistan.

The visit was a festive and exciting event where the High Commissioner interacted with the company's leadership, visited the state-of-the-art MG assembly plant, and got to test drive the all-electric Marvel R and HS PHEV, said a news release.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Turner said, It is a wonderful showcase of the British Automotive Brand in Pakistan. The future is electric and MG will be cutting down carbon emissions with electric vehicles for cleaner and greener Pakistan.

In March 2021, the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Nong Rong had also visited the setup and had similar sentiments after his visit. MG Motor Pakistan has delivered more than 10,000 vehicles, launched 7 state of the art dealerships with MG Care Centers and introduced world-class latest models in Pakistan, setting the tone for the whole industry.

MG vehicles are one of the most advanced, equipped and safe



vehicles on Pakistani roads and are considered a standard in their respective categories. MG with its British legacy has always been a brand of ingenuity and innovation. The brand entered the Pakistani market under the flag of SAIC Motor International, primarily launching in the luxury category. The first HS CKD variant line-off was held on 28th May, 2021 and after successful testing and trials, is ready to launch locally assembled,

world-class vehicles in the country.

MG envisions a cleaner and technologically advanced future for Pakistan. The dream is to make Pakistan a part of the global supply chain and soon be able to export Pakistan made MG vehicles across the globe.

As the company is ready to start local production and very soon, vehicles 'Made in Pakistan', will be dominating the roads worldwide.

# Need stressed for promoting Pak-Italy bilateral trade



DF Report

A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry led by Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President called on H E Andreas Ferrarese, Ambassador of Italy in his office on April 2. They discussed with him the prospects for further improving bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries.

Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President and Sheikh Amir Waheed former President ICCI were also present in the meeting. Addressing the delegation, Ambassador of Italy said that his country wanted to further strengthen trade and economic relations with Pakistan to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

He said Pakistan could achieve multiple benefits for its economy by developing close cooperation with Italy. He said that more awareness in the Italian business community about Pakistan would help in enhancing trade relations.

He said that Pakistan should focus on value addition of its products and Italy can help it with its advanced technology in various fields



including marble and tourism.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President ICCI said that the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Italy was not reflective of their true potential and urged both the countries to focus on developing strong business linkages between their private sectors to increase bilateral trade volume.

He said that technological cooperation of Italy with Pakistan in textiles, construction, marble, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, processed food, dairy, livestock and other sectors would enable our country to upgrade its industrial capacity and produce value added products for exports



promotion.

He said that Pakistan has huge reserves of marble and granite and Italian technology would help it to produce value-added marble products and boost their exports.

He said that Pakistan was offering incentives to foreign investors and Italian companies should take benefit of these opportunities by exploring JVs and investment in Pakistan.

Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI and Sheikh Amir Waheed former President ICCI also shared many useful proposals to further improve bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Italy.

# Women international film festival held



## Week-long Women International Film Festival (WIFF) took place in March 2022, at the Islamabad Foreign Women Association (IFWA).

Syed Sajid Ali Zaidi

Ambassador of Austria to Pakistan H. E. Nicolaus Keller in his concluding remarks commended the efforts of women through film and its founder & curator, Madeeha Raza.

The Austrian Ambassador thanked the festival Director and team and spoke about the significance of such cross-cultural activities. He expressed his desire to collaborate with the festival on a bigger scale in the near future.

In addition to the opening remarks, Fly Away Home – an Austrian feature film was screened. The film follows a 9-year-old girl and her family struggle without a home or money as the Russian military moves in to occupy their section of Vienna at the end of World War II.

Lastly, the WIFF team thanked the partners who made this year's edition possible. For the future, the dream for WIFF is travel to more cities, partner with more organizations, and spread the message of WIFF far and wide.

The film festival ran from March 8th to 13th, with intercity screenings in Faisalabad and Peshawar, and public screenings that successfully took place on the 11th and 12th March at the PNCA Islamabad.

This year the festival screened 13 films made by women from all over the world, including two films by Pakistani filmmakers, namely Mrs. Khan by Mariam Majid and Teddy 2.0 by Fatima

Butt. Besides these films, the festival will also feature films received from Australia, Egypt, Estonia, France, India, Iran, Mexico, and Russia, along with two feature length films – It is Not Over Yet in collaboration with the Royal Danish Embassy, and Fly Away Home

This year, the project was supported by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Embassy of France in Pakistan, and the British Council. Women Through Film, the curating entity for WIFF, is a Pakistan based initiative trying to encourage and facilitate young girls and women to use self-expression, storytelling, and fiction through filmmaking to raise their voice and create social change.

It is an initiative to celebrate the success stories, struggles, and achievements of inspiring women from all walks of life.



# Italian event to encourage women entrepreneurs

The Italian Embassy hosted an event of various brands run by women for promoting women's economic self-reliance and empowerment. The event was held in connection with the international women's day to provide an opportunity for women entrepreneurs to flourish and contribute to the journey of women's economic empowerment.

On the occasion wife of Italy's Ambassador to Pakistan H E Andreas Ferrarese, Mrs. Albana Planeja expressed that today is International Women's Day, which reaffirms our commitment to the economic, social and political rights of women around the world. She held that

equality and diversity are an important aspect for the society's growth. Women are emerging in business and they need to move forward together to advance their business, she added. She highlighted that the role of women is very important in family and society and women have a very important role in strengthening the family.

At the ceremony, Mrs. Albana Planeja urged women to come forward and play their full role in all fields of business, politics and development. She said that Pakistani women should now focus on e-commerce and online businesses as there are huge business

opportunities in it. She said Pakistan was an emerging e-commerce market and had the potential to excel in the international market and also emerge as a global player in the coming years. At the event different products of famous brands were displayed, while a large number of diplomats, wives of ambassadors, and media representatives were present.



# 118th MP Bhandara Memorial Polo Cup held

Chairman Murree Brewery Company Isphanyar Bhandara says that sports help in developing the mental and physical abilities of the youth. This builds their character along with improving patience and courage in their personalities, because self-confidence in a person can play an important role in the country's development. He added that the

players are assets of the nation and play an important role in promoting sports for the formation of a healthy society.

He expressed his views while talking to reporters after distributing prizes in the successful team at the 118th MP Bhandara Memorial Polo Cup Final in Rawalpindi. Six teams that participated in the pilot event were: In the final FC KPK Team

scored 9 goals to beat PAF team by 5 goals. Ambassador of Czech Republic H.E. Tomas Swetanka was the Chief Guest of this event.

He appreciated the efforts of the Murree Brewery team for the promotion sports event went on to say that the inaugural M.P. Bhandara Memorial Polo tournament was held in 1904.



## Mian Fazal Elahi CEO/Editor & Publisher of Diplomatic Focus hosts reception in the honor of Kyrgyzstan's FM

**M**ian Fazal Elahi CEO/Editor and Publisher of Diplomatic Focus held a reception in the honor of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyzstan Republic H E Ruslan Kazakbaev at the embassy on 23rd of March 2022. The Minister was on an official

visit to Pakistan to participate in OIC's 48th Council of Foreign Ministers.

Ambassador of the Kyrgyzstan Republic, embassy officials and other diplomats were present in the ceremony. The visiting dignitary

appreciated Pakistan's role regional stability and pledged to play his role for further improvements in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels. He specially appreciated Pakistan's efforts for hosting the OIC's 48th Council of Foreign Ministers.



# Mehfil-e-Sukhan held at Islamabad Serena Hotel

A Mehfil-e-Sukhan, a much missed traditional celebration of the art of poetry and recitation, was the highlight of the weekend at the Islamabad Serena Hotel. CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani welcomed the guests and highlighted the key features. The event marked the beginning of a slew of activities to commemorate the 20th

anniversary of the hotel and was attended by a large number of dignitaries, including President Dr Arif Alvi and Begum Samina Alvi.

The stars of the evening were renowned poets from across the country including Anwar Masood, Iftikhar Arif, Kishwar Naheed, Khurshid Rizvi, Amjad Islam Amjad, Anwar Shaoor, Dr

Pirzada Qasim, Yasmeen Hameed, Akhtar Usman, Abbas Tabish, Shaukat Fehmi, Nasira Zuberi, Wasi Shah, Ambreen Hasib Ambar, Fazil Jamili, Rahman Hafeez, Atfab Abrak, Ashfaq Nasir, Faisal Hashmi and Farjad Mehdi. After many years, Islamabad society had the opportunity to enjoy master poets, men and women, young and old, at a single gathering.



## 51st Independence Day of Bangladesh celebrated at Marriott Hotel

**5** 1st Anniversary of the Independence Day of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was celebrated in federal capital Islamabad on 28th March at Marriott Hotel, Islamabad. High Commissioner of Bangladesh H E Md Rahul Alam Siddique and Mrs Shamshad

Ara Khanam welcomed the honorable guests on the occasion.

The guest of honor was Federal Minister for food Security, Research Syed Fakhar Imam, while Ahsan Iqbal MNA and diplomats; officers

from the armed forces of the diplomatic corps also attended the ceremony. Talking to guests, the High Commissioner spoke of his country's progress, the fastest growing economy, development, and bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh.





# Nepal's Army Day celebrated

The Embassy of Nepal in Pakistan celebrated Nepal Army Day with great enthusiasm in Islamabad. H E Tapas Adhikari, the Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan hosted the event, whereas Nepal embassy Military Attaché Colonel Amrit Kaji Gurung was also part of the festivities. Pakistan's Foreign Military Cooperation Director, Major General Majid Jahangir graced the event as chief guest. Other dignitaries from Pakistan Armed

Forces also attended the event. A cake-cutting ceremony was also held at the embassy to commemorate the day. Traditionally, Nepal Army Day coincides with Maha Shivratri.

In this context, the Army of Nepal held a special function as well in Kathmandu. Nepal Army has been observing the Maha Shivratri as the Army Day since 1991. The President of Nepal H E Bidya Devi Bhandari laid a wreath at the Army

memorial as part of the celebration. Nepal and Pakistan officially established diplomatic ties on 20 March 1960. In 2019, both countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Along these lines, Nepal established a residential Embassy in Islamabad in 1962 followed by an Honorary Nepali Consulate General in Karachi in 1975. The two partners enjoy cordial diplomatic relations.





## Serena Hotel celebrates Nowruz to mark 20th anniversary

The Serena Hotels held the 'Nowruz' and spring festival to mark the 20th anniversary of Islamabad Serena Hotel. The event included cultural performances from across Pakistan, live music, displays of traditional artefacts, and a number of entertainment activities. 'Nowruz', which means 'New Day', is an ancient celebration of spring dating back to around 3000 years; and is celebrated by 300 million people belonging to different faiths and ethnicity across the world.

The 'Nowruz' celebrating countries particularly Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan participated in the celebrations by displaying their cultural heritage and offered their traditional cuisine. The festival was attended by the members of Diplomatic Corps, Government, Armed Forces, International Agencies, Corporate Sector, Media, and a large number of

guests from all walks of life. The hotel's lush green lawns were exquisitely decorated with colourful fabrics and reed huts.

A large array of lavish Pakistani, Continental, Asian and Middle Eastern cuisines were served, where speciality Chefs showcased their skills while serving the guests. The mouth-watering desserts attracted the guests to experience Serena's delicacies along with a variety of beverages. An amusement corner was dedicated for kids with exciting activities including Camel & Horse Riding, Jumping Castles, Trampolines, Puppet Shows and Street Magic.

Cotton Candy, Ice-cream, and Juice Stations were an additional treat for the children, making the festival a truly memorable family day under the blue skies. Michel Galopin, General Manager at the Islamabad Serena Hotel, on the occasion said: "It has been a great pleasure to welcome you for the

20th Anniversary of Islamabad Serena Hotel, and the celebration of 'Nowruz'. I would like to thank all the guests for making this festival a huge success."

Aziz Boolani, the CEO of Serena Hotels, said: "The two-decade journey would not have been possible without the support of our hardworking and dedicated Associates. He offered a big thank you to the valued Guests, Government Functionaries, Local Administration, Law Enforcement Agencies and Media for their support over these past 20 years." Ambassador of Switzerland Benedict de Cerjat, said: "I am very glad to join for the 20 years celebration of Islamabad Serena Hotel.

I am truly fascinated by the culture and history of Pakistan specially the Indus Valley Civilization." Pakistan Air Force Group Captain Tahir Sultan said: "Serena Hotels, as usual, has outclassed itself.





## ASEAN Missions support children at Mashal Model School

On 10 March 2022, ASEAN Heads of Missions in Islamabad (Thailand, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, and Vietnam) visited Mashal Model

School to make a donation of school supplies, sport equipment as well as provided lunch to the children. This ASEAN Charity Activity is one of the activities aimed to promote people-to-

people ties between ASEAN and Pakistan. They were touched by the stories of teachers and children who determine to get education while supporting themselves and families.





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