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10 Loyalty to Pakistan, commitment to constitutional role foremost priority of Armed Forces: COAS

Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir has said loyalty to Pakistan and commitment to the constitutional role is the foremost priority of the Armed Forces of Pakistan. Addressing the Passing-out parade of 147th PMA Long Course in Kakul, he said armed forces of Pakistan have the will and capability to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the motherland.

18 King Charles III crowned

Charles was hidden from view for the most dramatic part of the service at London's Westminster Abbey. Behind a three-sided screen, the Dean of Westminster poured holy oil from the Ampulla, a gold eagle-shaped flask, on to the Coronation Spoon, and then the Archbishop of Canterbury anointed Charles on his head, breast and hands, according to the Church of England's liturgy.

22 PM Shehbaz meets King Charles III

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif represented Pakistan at the coronation ceremony of King Charles III. The coronation is the first occasion in 70 years that a British monarch has been anointed. Earlier, his mother, the late Queen Elizabeth II had ascended the throne in 1953.

32 4th round of Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue

As the invitation of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang of the People's Republic of China undertook his first official visit to Pakistan from 5 to 6 May 2023. On 6 May 2023, the two Foreign Ministers co-chaired the 4th round of the Foreign Minister-level Pakistan-China Strategic Dialogue in Islamabad.

54 Envoys Present credentials to President Alvi

The newly appointed envoys of Malaysia, Portugal, Kosovo, Lithuania and Ecuador presented their credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi, at a ceremony, held here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

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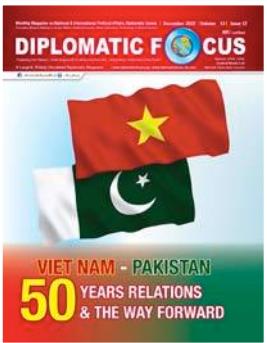
February 2023



January 2023



December 2022



October - November 2022



Our previous issues



Mian Fazal Elahi

In these fraught times, every gesture, every move, and every word is being closely scrutinized. It seems that the country is now poised for an ugly showdown in the days and weeks to come. The leaders, both political and institutional, who are involved in this tug-of-war, seem to be determined to escalate the situation rather than stepping back. Mr. Khan's insistence on pointing fingers even after securing bail from the Islamabad High Court does not bode well.

The phrase, 'The gloves are off' seems to be a tired cliché at this point. It's time to realize that we are nearing a point of no return. It is crucial to defuse the tensions prevailing in the country immediately. The country cannot bear the stress much longer.

In the present circumstances, free and fair elections, conducted to the satisfaction of all parties, still remain the best option. All parties must reconsider their stance and work towards creating a peaceful environment. It is time to put the country above personal interests and work towards stability and progress.

The political leadership, particularly the PTI, must refrain from involving institutions like the armed forces in politics. Making unfounded and baseless accusations against the armed forces would inadvertently serve the interests of our adversaries.

We urge the leaders, both political and institutional, to act with wisdom and foresight. The stakes are too high, and the consequences of any misstep could be disastrous. Let's hope that we never reach the 'daggers drawn' stage and work towards a peaceful resolution of the ongoing crisis.

The articles, columns, Opinions are published in Magazine in good faith. However, the contents of these writings may not necessarily match the views of the Editor/Publisher/Organization.

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Loyalty to Pakistan, commitment to constitutional role foremost priority of Armed Forces: COAS

By Monitoring/Radio Pakistan

Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir has said loyalty to Pakistan and commitment to the constitutional role is the foremost priority of the Armed Forces of Pakistan.

Addressing the Passing-out parade of 147th PMA Long Course in Kakul, he said armed forces of Pakistan have the will and capability to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the motherland.

He said to us, nothing is more sacred than the safety and security of our people and no duty is more binding than the defence of our motherland.

The COAS once again announced it clearly that our efforts for peace should never be taken as a sign of weakness.

He assured the people of Pakistan that we would never hesitate in rendering any and every sacrifice necessary for the defence of our sacred motherland.

Syed Asim Munir said there is a dire need to

identify the exposed and hidden enemies. He said in this regard, there must be a difference between reality and deception.

He said our enemies are hell-bent upon driving a wedge between its people and Armed Forces. He said we will ensure that the bond between Armed Forces and People of Pakistan is preserved and further solidified.

Talking about the efforts taken by Pakistan for peace in Afghanistan, the army chief said stability, security and peace in Afghanistan remain fundamental to our security.

The Army Chief said we will continue to provide political, moral and diplomatic support to our Kashmiri brothers.

He said Pakistan firmly stands with its Kashmiri brethren in their historic struggle for basic human rights and their legitimate quest for the right to self-determination.

The Army Chief stressed that the international community must realize that without a just and peaceful resolution to the Kashmir issue, regional peace will forever remain elusive.

Passing-out parade of cadets of 147th PMA Long Course held at PMA

Passing Out parade of cadets of 147th PMA Long Course was held at Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul.

According to ISPR, cadets from 13th Mujahid Course, 66th Integrated Course, 6th Basic Military Training Course and 21st Lady Cadet Course also passed out.

Cadets from Palestine, Bahrain, Iraq, Qatar and Sri Lanka were also among those passed out.

Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir, who was the chief guest on the occasion, reviewed the parade and gave awards to distinguished cadets.

Academy Senior Under Officer Abdullah Bin Tariq was awarded the Sword of Honour whereas Battalion Senior Under Officer Ali Amir received President's Gold medal.

The Army Chief congratulated the passing-out cadets and their parents on the successful completion of their training.





Yasmeen Lari, 'starchitect' turned social engineer, wins one of architecture's most coveted prizes

Yasmeen Lari, widely recognized as Pakistan's first female architect, has become the first woman since Zaha Hadid to win the prestigious Royal Gold Medal, awarded by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

Lari, described by RIBA as "a revolutionary force in Pakistan," was recognized for her socially conscious work, creating accessible, environmentally friendly homes for the country's most marginalized people — those living below the poverty line and in communities displaced by natural disasters and the impact of climate change.

The Royal Gold Medal is awarded to a person (or group of people) who has had "significant influence on the advancement of architecture" and, RIBA says, "acknowledges Yasmeen Lari's work championing zero-carbon self-build concepts for displaced populations."

The award is personally approved by the British monarch and this year's is the first to be signed off by King Charles III.

"I was so surprised to hear this news and of course totally delighted! I never imagined that as I focus on my country's most marginalized people — venturing down uncharted vagabond pathways — I could still be considered for the highest of honors in the architectural profession," Lari said in a statement. "There are innumerable opportunities to implement principles of circular economy, de-growth, transition design, eco-urbanism, and what we call Barefoot Social Architecture (BASA) to achieve climate resilience, sustainability and eco justice in the world."

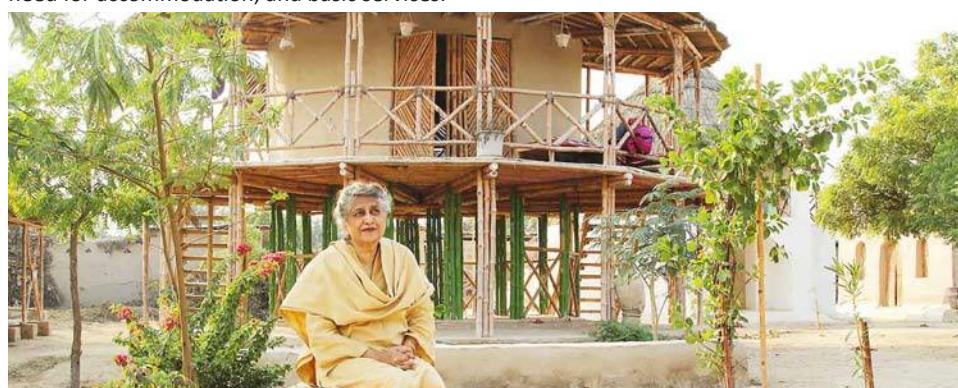
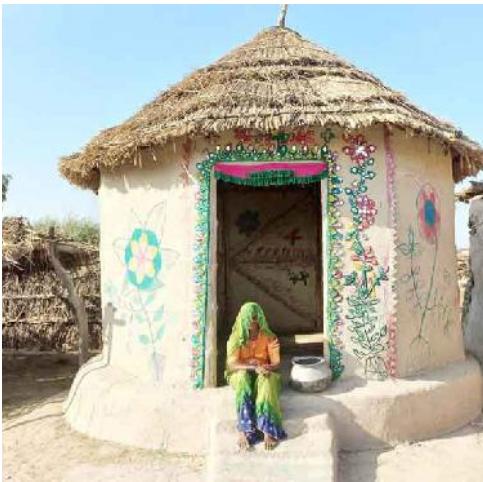
Born in Pakistan in 1941, Lari studied at Oxford Brookes University before returning to Pakistan in 1964 where she overcame "considerable challenges" to establish Lari Associates, her own architecture firm, creating glitzy buildings for major government, business, and financial institutions. But she developed a deepening sense of guilt over the amount of concrete and

steel used, and has said she has been "atoning" ever since, now working to a mantra of "low cost, zero carbon, zero waste."

In 1980, Lari co-founded the Karachi-based Heritage Foundation of Pakistan with her husband, Suhail Zaheer Lari, pioneering the design of self-build sustainable shelters and housing. She also designed the self-build Chulah Cookstove, a lower emission and safer alternative to the traditional stove. Over 80,000 are now in use.

Since her 'retirement' in 2000, Lari has focused solely on humanitarian work, which has garnered international recognition; she told The Guardian in 2020 that, "It's not only the right of the elite to have good design." In the aftermath of last year's devastating floods in Pakistan, hundreds of Lari's prefabricated bamboo shelters, which can be erected by team of six or seven people in just a matter of hours, were created for those in need from locally-sourced materials, and at a cost of just 25,000 Pakistani rupees (\$108) each. The efforts are ongoing.

RIBA President Simon Allford said, "Lari's mission during her 'second' career has empowered the people of Pakistan through architecture, engaging users in design and production. She has shown us how architecture changes lives for the better... She has reacted imaginatively and creatively making affordable projects that address the real and often urgent need for accommodation, and basic services."



Hina Rabbani Khar reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to strengthen Pakistan-Iran fraternal ties in all areas of mutual interest

By Monitoring

In her meeting with the Iranian foreign minister, Hina Rabbani Khar reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to strengthen Pakistan-Iran fraternal ties in all areas of mutual interest, particularly trade and economy, energy, security and regional connectivity.

The two ministers agreed that there was vast scope in bilateral trade and economic cooperation and agreed to identify the new sectors through various institutional mechanisms.

They expressed satisfaction over completion of Polan-Gabd/Gwadar electricity transmission line that will cater to the energy needs of the border region of the two countries.

The Minister of State underscored the



importance of expedited operationalization of border markets to uplift the socio-economic well-being of people of the border region.

The Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-

Abdollahian and the Minister of State reaffirmed commitment to remain closely engaged on matters of regional and global significance including Afghanistan.



Hina Rabbani Khar discusses bilateral ties with Acting FM of Uzbekistan in Samarkand

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar on Thursday held a meeting with the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Saidov Baxtiyor Odilovich on the sidelines of the 4th Meeting of the Neighbouring Countries of Afghanistan in Samarkand.

The two ministers exchanged views on the friendly relations between Uzbekistan and Pakistan across all domains, especially connectivity, trade and investment and people to people contacts.

The two sides discussed progress on the Trans-Afghan Railways project among Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan and agreed that its timely completion would enhance regional connectivity.

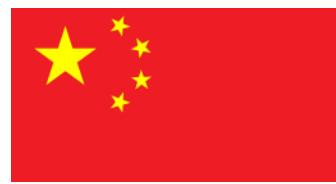
Both sides expressed satisfaction at the current trajectory of bilateral exchanges in the economic, trade and investment domains.

Early Operationalization of Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Pakistan and Uzbekistan was also discussed with a view to further enhancing bilateral trade.





Pakistan Army is a staunch defender of ironclad friendship, says China



By Mian Fazal Elahi, Agency

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir was warmly welcomed by China's top diplomat Wang Yi, Director of Foreign Affairs Commission Office of CPC Central Committee.

"Pakistani military is a staunch defender of the ironclad friendship between China and Pakistan," said Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee adding that China commends successive Pakistani administration and all political parties for firmly pursuing friendly policies toward China.

General Syed Asim Munir said Pakistan will always stand with China through thick and thin no matter how the international situation changes, and the Pakistani Army firmly supports the further development of Pakistan-China relations.

"It gives me immense pleasure that after the pandemic, I am the 1st Army Chief of friendly



countries to visit China" COAS said.

General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), also said that "after taking over the

Command of the Pakistan Army it was my cherished desire to visit China before I visit any other country" COAS.

Pakistan and China Emphasize Collective Efforts for Regional Peace, Prosperity, and Development

By Monitoring

Pakistan and China have reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing bilateral cooperation in various fields for the mutual benefit of the two countries. The need for collective efforts to promote peace, prosperity, and development in the region was emphasized by both sides during a meeting between Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and a three-member delegation of the Chinese Embassy, including Charge de' Affaires Ms. Pang Chunxue, Ms. Bao Zhong, Political Counselor, and Ms. Dong Wenli, Third Secretary.

The meeting also underlined the importance of enhancing cooperation in all fields, including Information Technology.

During the meeting, Chairman Senate Sanjrani congratulated President Xi Jinping, the Chinese government, and the people on his re-election as President for the third consecutive term. He also praised China's efforts to establish peace in the region, noting that China played a key role in bringing together Saudi Arabia and Iran, which is commendable.

Sanjrani highlighted that both countries have stood by each other in all kinds of situations



and supported each other on every platform. He also acknowledged China's investment in Pakistan, which has provided new employment opportunities for the youth, and noted that with the completion of CPEC, the entire region will develop and open new avenues for further investment.

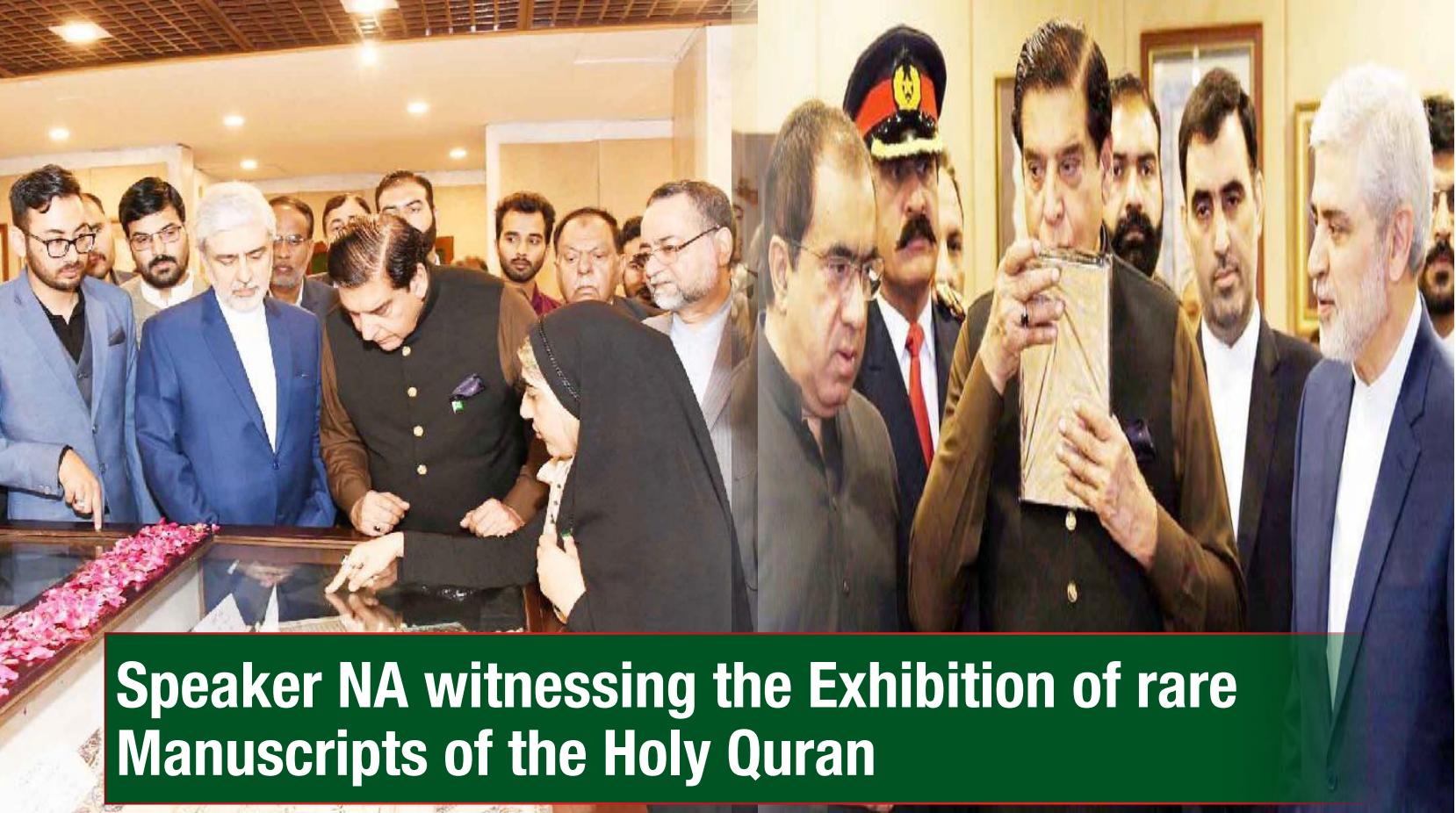
The Chairman reiterated that Pakistan is committed to the timely completion of the CPEC project, which has enormous potential to contribute to the socio-economic development of Pakistan.

Ms. Pang expressed her country's desire to further strengthen bilateral cooperation with Pakistan, noting that Pakistan is China's closest

friend. She added that her country would share its experiences with Pakistan, which would help in its social and economic prosperity.

The Chairman underlined that the "All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership" between the two countries would take the bilateral relationship to new heights, and both time-tested friends had always stood by each other through thick and thin.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of the commitment to further strengthen and deepen the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and China in various fields, which would contribute to regional peace, stability, and development.



Speaker NA witnessing the Exhibition of rare Manuscripts of the Holy Quran

By Mian Fazal Elahi

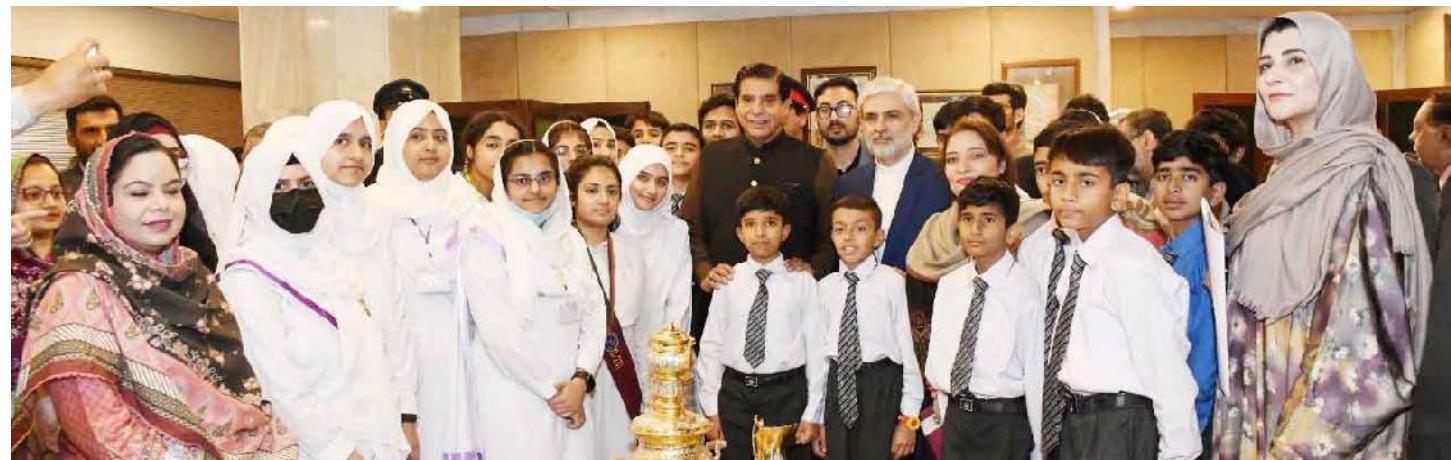
Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf inaugurated 3-day exhibition of rare manuscripts of the Holy Quran, at the Parliament House. The exhibition is a joint effort by National Assembly & Iranian Embassy & its Cultural Consulate. It is being organized in continuation of Golden Jubilee of Constitution 1973 of Pakistan. Hon. Members of the Advisory Committee to oversee the Constitution related activities, Parliamentarians, Ambassadors, Govt. Officials and general public were also present on the occasion. The exhibition features a collection of rare manuscripts of the Holy Quran, which are considered to be some of the oldest (6th century) and most valuable in the world.

While speaking on the occasion, Raja Parvez Ashraf said that he wanted to inaugurate this exhibition on 27th Ramadan, which is the



day for the first revelation of the Quran. Our beloved Pakistan also got its independence on the 27th Ramadan, so it is a blessed day for us being Muslim and being Pakistani. Holy Quran

is the most revered and complete Constitution Book. Pakistan's Constitution conforms with the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Quran and sunna, he added.





Women diplomats lauded for serving country with professionalism

On International Women's Day, the Foreign Office held an event to recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions of women diplomats from Pakistan and around the world. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar and other female diplomats joined the event to pay tribute to the professionalism and dedication of their colleagues.

Khar praised the women diplomats of Pakistan for their remarkable contributions to the progress of the country and encouraged young diplomats to focus on learning experiences.

The event also recognized the excellent professional performance of women in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Foreign Office spokesperson and Director Asia Pacific Mumtaz Zahra Baloch congratulated

the women diplomats for their achievements, and a video tribute showcased Pakistani women in diplomacy reaching new heights and representing their country with panache.

A panel discussion among the women diplomats highlighted the significant role played by them for their countries. Those who participated in the discussion included High Commissioner of Maldives in Pakistan Farzana Zahir, Austria's ambassador Andrea Wicke, European Union ambassador in Pakistan Dr Riina Kiyonka, Charge d'Affaires of China Pang Chunxue and Philippines Charge d'Affaires Maria Agnes.

Speaking to APP, Secretary Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid said women comprised 45 percent of her ministry, who were showing exemplary professional excellence in their respective

areas. She said the country's 51 per cent women population could be turned into a valuable workforce if provided equal opportunities.

She said while celebrating the Women's Day, the moment also needed a word of acknowledgement for men for extending support and helping the women shine and thrive in their fields.

Earlier, the Foreign Office spokesperson and Director Asia Pacific Mumtaz Zahra Baloch in her welcome address felicitated the women diplomats who contributed to their countries with zeal and zest.

A video tribute to Pakistani women in diplomacy was presented for reaching new heights and representing the country at international stage with panache.



President calls for increasing cooperation with Iran and Romania



By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

President Dr Arif Alvi has called for increasing cooperation with Iran and Romania in all areas of mutual interest. He expressed these views while talking to the outgoing Ambassadors of Iran and Romania, who separately called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Talking to the outgoing Ambassador of Iran, Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini, the President said that Pakistan greatly valued its fraternal relations with Iran as both brotherly countries shared historic linkages and cultural affinities, besides having commonalities of views on issues of regional and international significance.

He emphasized the need for increasing economic cooperation and expanding the trade volume for the mutual benefits of the two countries.

He also highlighted the atrocities being committed by the Indian security forces against Muslims in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and other parts of India, saying Muslims were being isolated and persecuted in India and the Muslim World needed to take notice of the Indian brutalities against Muslims.

The President thanked the Iranian government for its support and stance on the Kashmir issue. While appreciating the landmark initiative taken by Iran and Saudi Arabia to normalise diplomatic relations, the President said that normalization of relations between the two countries would lead to peace and stability in the Middle East.

The meeting also underscored the need for



promoting counter-terrorism cooperation to eliminate the menace of terrorism. Ambassador Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini underlined the need for enhancing economic, cultural and political cooperation between the two countries.

He said that both countries had great potential to further expand economic cooperation. He informed that both sides had agreed to construct six border markets that would boost bilateral trade.

He apprised the President on the ongoing electricity transmission projects that would benefit the people of Balochistan. The President appreciated the contribution of the outgoing Ambassador for promoting bilateral cooperation between the two brotherly countries. In his meeting with Ambassador of

Romania to Pakistan, Mr. Nicolae GOIA, the President said that Romania was an important country in the Eastern Europe and Pakistan desired to deepen its relationship with Romania in the fields of trade and economy.

He thanked the Romanian government for its support to Pakistan in granting and continuation of GSP plus status. Both sides underscored the need for improving economic relations and undertaking regular exchanges and interactions at the highest levels to further cement bilateral ties.

The Ambassador conveyed gratitude of the President of Romania for the support provided by Pakistan in evacuation of the Romanian nationals from Afghanistan during August/September, 2021.

PM appreciates UAE's role in combating climate change



By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

Ambassador of United Arab Emirates to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad.

The Ambassador delivered an invitation to the Prime Minister from the UAE leadership inviting him to attend COP28, which is scheduled to be held in Dubai from 30 November to 12 December this year.

The Prime Minister thanked the UAE leadership for the invitation. He also expressed his gratitude for their support in relief efforts in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan last year.

The Prime Minister appreciated UAE's role in combating climate change and expressed the hope that UAE's stewardship of COP28 would yield meaningful outcomes for countries like Pakistan, which are most vulnerable to climate change.

Recalling his successful visit to UAE in January this year, the Prime Minister emphasised that it is the common resolve of the leadership of both countries to translate the fraternal bonds into mutually rewarding economic ties.

The Prime Minister also said the UAE is home to 1.7 million Pakistanis, contributing to the progress, prosperity and economic development of the two brotherly countries.

FM, Saudi ambassador discuss Pak-KSA bilateral ties

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki exchanged views on the bilateral ties between the two countries.

During a meeting, the foreign minister observed that restoration of bilateral ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran were significant for the regional peace, a press release said.

He reiterated that Pakistan accorded high priority to its bilateral ties with Saudi Arabia.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto also expressed his good wishes for the Saudi leadership and expressed gratitude for always supporting Pakistan in every difficult situation.





King Charles III crowned The historic event

Charles was hidden from view for the most dramatic part of the service at London's Westminster Abbey. Behind a three-sided screen, the Dean of Westminster poured holy oil from the Ampulla, a gold eagle-shaped flask, on to the Coronation Spoon, and then the Archbishop of Canterbury anointed Charles on his head, breast and hands, according to the Church of England's liturgy.

The 12th-century, silver-gilt spoon is the oldest object used in coronations. In the background, the Choir of Westminster Abbey sang the anthemic "Zadok the Priest" by George Frideric Handel, which was composed for the coronation of King George II in 1727 and performed at every British coronation since. Once he re-emerged, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby placed St. Edward's Crown upon Charles III's head. It was the only time Charles will ever wear St. Edward's Crown, which is reserved for the coronation of a new monarch; the crown was made for the new King's namesake, Charles II, in 1661.

After crowning Charles, Welby shouted: "God Save the King." Those in attendance repeated the words. Soon after, Camilla was also crowned. Like her husband, she was anointed with holy oil by the Archbishop of Canterbury – this time in full view of the audience – before having Queen Mary's Crown placed on her head. Courtesy to CNN



At the moment the Queen died, the throne passed immediately and without ceremony to the heir, Charles, the former Prince of Wales.

He becomes a monarch at the age of 73. But there are a number of practical - and traditional - steps which he must go through to be crowned King. Charles was born at Buckingham Palace on 14 November 1948. He was 4 years old when his mother was crowned as Queen Elizabeth II.

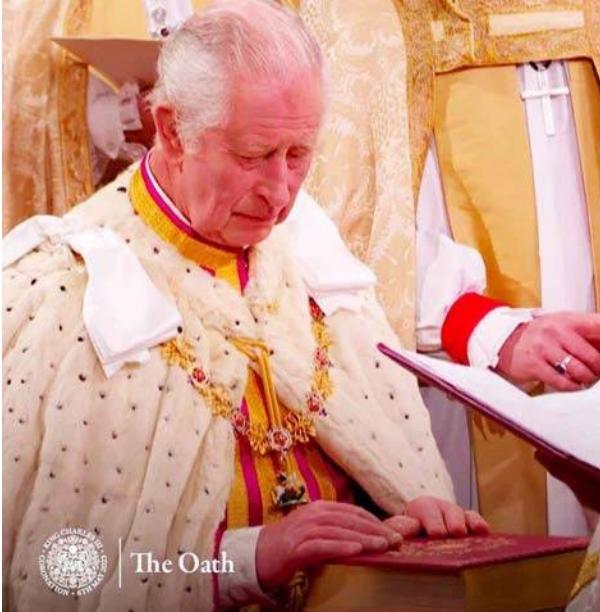
Instead of being tutored at the palace, his education was in school. He attended Hill House in West London, Cheam Preparatory School in Berkshire and Gordonstoun in Eastern Scotland. In 1969, at the age of 20, he was

invested by the Queen as Prince of Wales at Caerfarnon Castle. Before the investiture, the then prince learnt Welsh at University College of Wales in Aberystwyth.

He married Lady Diana Spencer on 29 July 1981 at St. Paul's Cathedral in London. From that marriage they had two sons: Prince William, born on 21 June 1982; and Prince Harry, born on 15 September 1984.

Their marriage was dissolved on 28 August 1996, although The Princess of Wales continued to live at Kensington Palace and to carry out her public work. Lady Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris on 31 August 1997. On 9 April 2005, he married the Queen Consort Camilla in a civil ceremony at the





Guildhall, Windsor.

He will be known as King Charles III.

That was the first decision of the new king's reign. He could have chosen from any of his four names - Charles Philip Arthur George. He is not the only one who faces a change of title. Prince William and his wife Catherine are now titled Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and Cambridge, and the king has conferred on them the title of Prince and Princess of Wales.

There is also a new title for Charles' wife, Camilla, who becomes the Queen Consort - consort is the term used for the spouse of the monarch. Charles was officially proclaimed King on the Saturday following the Queen's death. This event took place at St James's Palace in London, in front of a ceremonial body known as the Accession Council. This was made up of members of the Privy Council - a group of senior MPs, past and present, and peers - as well as some senior civil servants, Commonwealth high commissioners, and the Lord Mayor of London. The Accession Council has two parts and King Charles was only present for the second. Around 200 privy counsellors attended the ceremony - the same number who attended the last Accession Council in 1952.

In the first part of the meeting, the death of Queen Elizabeth was announced by the Lord "God Save the King".



President of the Privy Council (currently Penny Mordaunt MP), and the proclamation was read aloud. It included a series of prayers and pledges, commending the previous monarch and pledging support for the new one. The proclamation was then signed by a number of senior figures including the prime minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Lord Chancellor. It was read aloud from a balcony above Friary Court in St James's Palace and for the first time since 1952,

the national anthem was played with the words "God Save the King".



King Charles attended the second meeting of the Accession Council, along with the Privy Council. This was not a "swearing in" at the start of a British monarch's reign, in the style of some other heads of state, such as the president of the US.

Instead the King made a declaration to uphold the constitutional government and - in line with a tradition dating from the early 18th Century - he



made an oath to preserve the Church of Scotland. After this the Accession Council concluded. The proclamation announcing Charles as the King was later read out in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. The symbolic high point of the accession will be the Coronation, when Charles is formally crowned. Because of the preparation needed, the Coronation is not likely to happen very soon after Charles's accession - Queen Elizabeth succeeded to the throne in February 1952, but was not crowned until June 1953.

For the past 900 years the coronation has been held in Westminster Abbey - William the Conqueror was the first monarch to be crowned there, and Charles will be the 40th. It is an Anglican religious service, carried out by the Archbishop of Canterbury. At the climax of the ceremony, he will place St Edward's Crown on Charles's head - a solid gold crown, dating from 1661.

This is the centrepiece of the Crown Jewels at the Tower of London, and is only worn by the monarch at the moment of coronation itself (not least because it weighs a hefty 2.23kg - almost 5lbs).

Unlike royal weddings, the coronation is a state occasion - the government pays for it, and ultimately decides the guest list.

Courtesy to BBC

Head of the Commonwealth

Charles has become head of the Commonwealth, an association of 56 independent countries and 2.5 billion people. For 14 of these countries, as well as the UK, the King is head of state.

These countries, known as the Commonwealth realms, are: Australia, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Belize, Canada, Grenada, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea, St Christopher and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu.





PM Shehbaz meets King Charles III

By Mian Asadullah, Monitoring

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif represented Pakistan at the coronation ceremony of King Charles III. The coronation is the first occasion in 70 years that a British monarch has been anointed. Earlier, his mother, the late Queen Elizabeth II had ascended the throne in 1953.

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif representing Pakistan, conveyed best wishes on behalf of the government and the people of Pakistan to the King. Prime Minister attended a gathering of Commonwealth leaders at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. Speaking at the event, the Prime Minister noted that the accession of the new King, who is also head of the Commonwealth, opened new vistas and fresh avenues for the multilateral forum and was an opportune moment to infuse the organisation with even greater energy and sense of purpose.

He underscored the significance of Pakistan-Commonwealth partnership, particularly on youth empowerment and youth engagement. On the sidelines, he interacted with a number of global and Commonwealth leaders including UK's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Secretary General Commonwealth Patricia Scotland.

Pakistan and the UK enjoy a deep and enduring friendship grounded in historic affinities and abiding people to people linkages. The Prime Minister's participation at the coronation underscores the enduring and multifaceted ties that continue to exist between the two friendly countries, inter alia through the Royal family's longstanding and affectionate association with Pakistan and its people.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets President of Brazil H.E Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, on the sidelines of Coronation of King Charles III



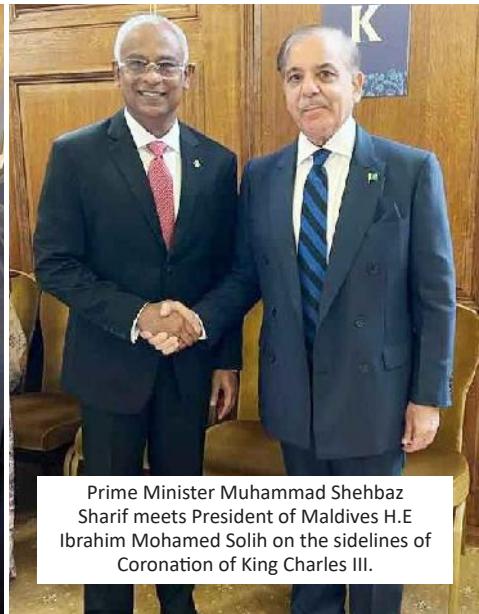
Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets President of Malta H.E George William Vella on the sidelines of Coronation of King Charles III.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets President of Republic of Zambia H.E Hakainde Hichilema on the sidelines of Coronation of King Charles III.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif interacted with Prime Minister of Britain Mr. Rishi Sunak on the sidelines of the meeting of other leaders of Commonwealth countries



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets President of Maldives H.E Ibrahim Mohamed Solih on the sidelines of Coronation of King Charles III.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets President of Republic of Mauritius H.E Prithvirajsing Roopun on the sidelines of Coronation of King Charles III.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Secretary General of Commonwealth, Patricia Scotland on the sidelines of Coronation of King Charles III



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets President of Sri Lanka H.E Ranil Wickremesinghe and Minister of State UK, Rt. Hon Andrew Mitchell

PM Shehbaz, Scottish first minister agree to strengthen bilateral ties in diverse areas

By Mian Asadullah

First Minister of Scotland, Humza Yousaf called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in London.

Felicitating the First Minister on his election to this important position, the Prime Minister observed that Mr. Yousaf's election underscored the important and positive contribution of the British Pakistani community to the progress and development of Scotland and across the UK. He wished him success in the discharge of his responsibilities. The two leaders agreed to further strengthen historic ties between Pakistan and Scotland, including in the domains of trade, investment, education, water management, wind & solar technology and people to people links. The two sides agreed to work collaboratively to promote joint ventures in education,

skills development and renewables. They also explored ways to leverage the Scottish Pakistani entrepreneurs to promote investment in Pakistan. They also agreed to work collaboratively to address the challenge of climate change. In this regard Pakistan suggested holding an Investment Conference in Scotland and separately arrange a road show to showcase Pakistan's renewable energy potential in Scotland.

The Prime Minister further thanked the Scottish government for its generous contribution to floods relief last year.

The Prime Minister extended a cordial invitation to Mr. Yousaf to visit Pakistan, which he happily accepted. Mr. Yousaf leads the Scottish National Party, and was elected in March by the Scottish Parliament to head the Scottish government. He is the first British national of Pakistani heritage to hold the coveted position.





Pak hosted 5th China-Pakistan-Afghanistan Trilateral FMs Dialogue

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Agency

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari of Pakistan, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang of China and the Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi of Afghanistan held the 5th China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue in Islamabad, Pakistan on 6th May 2023.

Stressing that a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan serves the common interest of the region, the Foreign Ministers underscored the critical importance of trilateral cooperation in promoting this objective.

The three sides resolved to further deepen and expand their cooperation in the security, development and political domains based on the principles of mutual respect, equal-footed consultation and mutual benefit.

The three sides underscored the need to tackle security challenges posing a serious threat to regional and global security, and directly impacting the stability and economic prosperity of the entire region.

The three sides agreed to coordinate and cooperate on security, organized crimes, drugs smuggling etc. and called on the international community to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and provide necessary supplies, equipment and technical assistance in this regard to the relevant countries.

The three sides stressed on the need of not allowing any individual, group or party, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement

refrain from intervening into internal affairs of Afghanistan, and to promote Afghan peace, stability and reconstruction.

Underscoring the imperative to generate economic activity within Afghanistan, the Ministers stressed the importance of exploring realistic pathways towards the revival of the Afghan economy.

To this end, the Ministers agreed to consider further supporting the reconstruction of Afghanistan and exploring trilateral investment possibilities aimed at industrialization and job creation.

Expressing solidarity with the people of Afghanistan, the three sides stressed the importance of sustained and urgent humanitarian support to the people of Afghanistan including the imperative to bridge funding gaps for humanitarian operations.

The Ministers underlined that humanitarian support to the people of Afghanistan must remain delinked from any political considerations.

The three sides reaffirmed their resolve to fully harness Afghanistan's potential as a hub for regional connectivity.

Reaffirming their commitment to further the trilateral cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and to jointly extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan.

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mutual benefit.***

(ETIM) etc., to use their territories to harm and threaten regional security and interests, or conduct terrorist actions and activities.

All three sides underscored the need to



Stressed that the importance of existing projects including CASA-1000, TAPI, Trans-Afghan Railways etc. would enhance regional connectivity as well as ensure economic uplift and prosperity for the peoples of this region.

The three sides emphasized to push forward the “hard connectivity” in infrastructure and “soft connectivity” in norms and standards, further explore the facilitating measures for the movement of people and trade activities between the three countries.

The three sides agreed to enhance transit trade through Gwadar Port.

Expressing satisfaction at the existing trilateral cooperation, the three sides agreed to carry out exchange and training programs and to strengthen people-to-people exchanges by conducting the trilateral programs in line with the List of China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Practical Cooperation Projects, adopted by Foreign Ministers in this dialogue.

The three sides reaffirmed to continue cooperation in areas of mutual interest like economic development, capacity building, and improving livelihoods.

The Ministers agreed to strengthen cooperation in the fields such as agriculture, trade, energy, capacity building, border management etc.

The Ministers called upon the international

community to engage constructively with the Afghan side.

In this regard, they acknowledged the efforts made under the aegis of various mechanisms and formats, including in particular, the Neighbouring Countries of Afghanistan, to

The three sides agreed to enhance transit trade through Gwadar Port.

promote dialogue and constructive engagement with the Interim Afghan Government.

The three sides also urged the international community to assist Afghanistan in countering narcotics effectively and develop alternative crops to enhance its capacity for independent and sustainable development.

The three sides urged the relevant countries lift their unilateral sanctions against Afghanistan and return the assets overseas for the benefit of the Afghan people, and create opportunities for economic development and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Taking note of the Afghan Interim Government's repeated assurances to respect and protect women's rights and interests, the three sides called on the international community to support the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, and help Afghanistan to improve governance and strengthen the capacity building, so as to effectively protect the basic rights and interests of all segments of the Afghan society, including women and children.

The Ministers expressed appreciation to the neighbouring countries, in particular, Pakistan, for the generous hospitality in hosting millions of Afghan refugees, and called on the international community to provide necessary support and assistance to these countries and Afghanistan for the dignified return and reintegration of refugees into the Afghan society.

The three sides resolved to continue with the trilateral cooperation mechanism, including the Director-General Level Practical Cooperation Dialogue, and forge closer-good neighborly relations and partnership.

China and Afghanistan thanked Pakistan for the successful organization of the 5th China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue and its warm hospitality.

Bilawal, Muttaqi agree to enhance counter-terror coordination

By Saeed Yousafzai

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari hosted the Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Amir Khan Muttaqi, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The two sides held a candid and in-depth exchange on key issues of mutual concern, including peace and security, as well as trade and connectivity.

The Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their desire to pursue continuous and practical engagement.

On peace and security, the Foreign Ministers emphasized the need for enhanced coordination to counter terrorism and deepening bilateral cooperation.

Regarding bilateral and transit trade, the two



sides stressed the importance of removing impediments to trade in order to advance the goal of enhanced regional economic integration and connectivity.

The Foreign Minister of Pakistan also hosted a luncheon in honour of the visiting Afghan delegation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Acting Afghan Foreign Minister, and the Acting Afghan Minister for Commerce and Industry, is on a visit to Pakistan from

05-08 May 2023 accompanied with high-level delegations. Besides holding bilateral meetings, the Acting Afghan Foreign Minister also participated in the 5th China-Pakistan-Afghanistan Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Dialogue, with the participation of the Chinese Foreign Minister, where the three sides agreed to advance political engagement, counterterrorism cooperation and enhance trade, investments and connectivity under the trilateral framework.



The restoration of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia is of utmost importance for the peace in the region: FM Bilawal

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Agency

Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, had a farewell meeting with Iran's ambassador, Syed Mohammad Ali Hussaini, in Pakistan. During the meeting, held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad, the two sides exchanged views on the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran in all fields. Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Iran in all areas. The Foreign Minister stated that the restoration of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia is of utmost importance for the peace in the region. During his tenure as Foreign Minister, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari appreciated the services of Syed Mohammad Ali Hussaini regarding Pakistan-Iran relations.



Pakistani, Iranian FMs meet in Tashkent

Iran-Pakistan joint border market will open soon, FM says



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said that Iran-Pakistan joint Border market is going to open soon.

Earlier today, Amirabdollahian and his Pakistani counterpart Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held talks on the sidelines of the 26th Meeting of the Council of Ministers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

"Met with Mr. Bhutto on the sidelines of the ECO Foreign Ministers' Council meeting," Amirabdollahian wrote on his Twitter account.

He added, "Seeing eye to eye on trade, transit, tourism, and regional/international cooperation." Iran-Pakistan joint Border market is going to open soon, Amirabdollahian further noted.

He underlined that "Afghanistan remains a mutual concern". The two foreign ministers of the neighboring countries discussed bilateral cooperation, as well as regional and international developments.

Ambassador of Pakistan to Hungary , Asif Hussain Memon, concurrently accredited to Montenegro , presented his Credentials in Podgorica to President of Montenegro H.E. Milo Djukanovic.





Pakistan & Korea Strengthen Ties



14th Korean Speech Contest at NUML

By M. Saeed Yousafzai

The 14th Korean Speech Contest was held at the National University of Modern Languages on 4th May, 2023.

The 14th Korean Speech Contest has been held after a period of four years since the 13th Korean Speech Contest held in the year 2019 because of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The 14th was jointly organized by the Department of Korean Language & Culture Islamabad and the Islamabad King Sejong Institute (IKSI).

The 14th Korean Speech Contest was attended by the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Suh Sangpyo, the Director General NUML, Brig. Syed Nadir Ali, the Director, Islamabad King Sejong Institute, Dr. Atif Faraz, the Head of the Department of Korean Language and Culture Mr. Ahtisham Hussain, representatives from different Korean companies, the faculty and a large number of students.

After listening to the speeches made by the students, H.E. Mr. Suh Sangpyo appreciated the skills of all the students and mentioned that they spoke Korean language very well.

His Excellency acknowledged and appreciated the cooperative ties between NUML and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea while also appreciating the numerous efforts made by NUML in promoting Korean language in Pakistan.

While giving his remarks H.E. also laid emphasis on how the learning of Korean language and events like the Korean language contest have played a key-role in enhancing and strengthening the bilateral ties between Pakistan and the Republic of Korea. H.E. shared that he is quite optimistic with regards to the further enhancement of the bilateral ties between both countries.

The Director General NUML, Brig. Syed Nadir Ali wished good luck to all the Korean speaking Pakistani students and he also mentioned that the skill of speaking Korean language will help these Pakistani students score rewarding jobs in the Korean companies.

His Excellency acknowledged and appreciated the cooperative ties between NUML and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea.



By Maleeha Lodhi

The outlook for Pakistan-India relations remains troubled. The prolonged diplomatic impasse persists, characterised by new irritants that have added to long-standing disagreements and disputes. When India, host of this year's G20 summit, announced holding a G20 tourism working group meeting in Srinagar in occupied Kashmir, it provoked a sharp response from Islamabad.

A foreign ministry statement denounced the move, calling it "irresponsible" and describing it as designed "to perpetuate its illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir in disregard of UN Security Council resolutions". It also objected to Delhi's scheduling of two other meetings of a consultative youth affairs forum (Y20) in Leh and Srinagar. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference urged Muslim countries and China not to attend meetings in the disputed region.

Pakistan's response was predictable in view of India's aim to use these meetings to secure legitimacy for its actions by conveying a sense of normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir, which it illegally annexed and absorbed into the Indian union in August 2019.

India's sweeping restrictions, military siege and human rights violations have continued to make the situation there dire. Delhi has also carried out legal, demographic, and electoral changes in the past two years to disempower Kashmiri Muslims. Pakistan's protests have not deterred the BJP government from pressing ahead.

Formal dialogue and the peace process between the two neighbours were suspended by India long before its 2019 action. But relations plunged to a new low after August 2019. Pakistan responded to Delhi's Kashmir action by halting trade, recalling its high commissioner and downgrading diplomatic ties.

However, back-channel communication between them led in February 2021 to re-commitment by both sides to observe a

ceasefire on the Line of Control in accordance with a 2003 understanding. From the dangerous confrontation during the Balakot crisis of February 2019, the two countries stepped back from the brink to agree on the LoC truce.

The ceasefire has since mostly held. But expectations that this thaw would pave the way for a formal dialogue did not materialise. The diplomatic deadlock persists with strongly worded statements exchanged with regularity.

Other than holding the G20 presidency this year, India is also chair of the eight-member Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and will host its annual summit in June. In that capacity it was obliged to invite Pakistan to the foreign ministers' meeting in Goa scheduled for May 4-5.

Although Islamabad has yet to take a decision on whether to attend, it has rarely shied away from participating in multilateral forums even when held in India. As for attending the heads of government summit in June, that might depend on whether Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin attend.

The more consequential development for Pakistan-India relations in recent months has been over the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960. For six decades, this has survived wars, confrontations and tensions between the two countries. But questions have now arisen over the fate of the treaty that governs the sharing and management of trans-border rivers.

On Jan 25, 2023, India notified Pakistan through the Indus Commission of its intention to modify the Indus Waters Treaty. This reflected a hardening of India's position and an effort to take advantage of Pakistan's preoccupation with its domestic political turmoil and economic crisis.

Pakistan has long disputed the construction of the 330 megawatt Kishanganga hydroelectric project on the Jhelum river and plans to construct the 850 MW Ratle Hydroelectric Project on the Chenab river in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

This dispute has figured for decades in bilateral talks and meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission. Because a resolution proved elusive, in 2016 Pakistan approached the World Bank, which brokered the treaty and is also a signatory, to appoint an ad hoc Court of Arbitration to deal with the dispute, a provision under the treaty.

While India completed the Kishanganga project in 2018, the bank took six years to activate the court as well as a neutral expert, sought

by India. Both dispute settlement methods are sanctioned by the treaty. Two days before the first court hearing at the Hague on Jan 27, which India boycotted, Delhi served notice on Islamabad that it would unilaterally amend the treaty citing Pakistan's "intransigence in handling disputes".

This indicated Delhi's effort to avoid any court process and intent to bar third-party intervention in disputes by the proposed treaty modification. It asked Islamabad to respond in 30 days to its 'notice'.

Pakistan rejected India's call for negotiations on amending the treaty's dispute mechanism and accused Delhi of trying to divert attention from arbitration proceedings at the Hague.

But in early April, Pakistan responded to India's 'notice for modification' through a letter from the Commissioner for Indus Waters. This has not been made public. But officials say the letter seeks clarification on the 'notice', offers to listen to Delhi's concerns and insists the treaty cannot be unilaterally amended.

This dispute over an issue of vital importance for water-stressed Pakistan has further vitiated the atmosphere. Even cricket has not escaped bilateral tensions. In September, it is Pakistan's turn to host the Asia Cup, under the Asia Cricket Council. The ACC president is Indian cricket board's Jay Shah (son of BJP Home Minister Amit Shah). Without consulting the host country, Pakistan, Shah unilaterally announced a schedule for the tournament in January. When PCB chairman Najam Sethi protested at a board meeting in February, Shah conveyed India's refusal to play in Pakistan.

Sethi said that by the same reciprocal criteria it would be impossible for Pakistan to later play in the World Cup in India. He offered a hybrid option with matches involving India played in a neutral venue and the rest in Pakistan, a formula that could later be applied to the World Cup. The matter is still unresolved.

Pakistan-India relations remain clouded in uncertainty. While working-level diplomatic engagement continues sporadically on practical issues, chances of any melting of the ice are remote. The prospect is for the two countries to continue in an uneasy state of no war, no peace. The near-term goal should be to manage tensions and prevent them from spinning out of control. But still lacking is any framework for the management of tensions.

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

Troubled ties



Quadrilateral Group on Afghanistan meets in Uzbekistan

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The second quadrilateral meeting of Iran, Russia, China and Pakistan on Afghanistan was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on the side-lines of the fourth meeting of Afghanistan's neighbouring countries. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Sergey Lavrov, Qin Gang and Hina Rabbani Khar took part in the meeting and discussed the current situation in Afghanistan. The first quadrilateral meeting was held on September 16, 2022 on the sidelines of the Shanghai Summit in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan.

In that meeting, the foreign ministers of four countries supported the formation of an inclusive government with the participation of all ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Leading Pakistani side, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar underscored the importance for a coordinated regional approach to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan.

She said there is a great untapped potential for



connectivity that can harness unprecedented new opportunities for the region.

The Minister of State also underscored the

importance of practical and constructive engagement with the Interim Afghan Government.

Hina, Qin Gang reaffirm Pak-China all-weather strategic cooperation

Pakistan and China yesterday reaffirmed Pakistan-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar held a meeting with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on the sidelines of the 4th Meeting of the Neighbouring Countries of Afghanistan in Samarkand. "During the meeting, they reaffirmed Pak-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and their commitment to peace and stability in Afghanistan," an official statement said.



Pakistan and Turkmenistan reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and expressed satisfaction

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar held a meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan Vefa Hajiyev on the sidelines of the 4th Meeting of the Neighbouring Countries of Afghanistan in Samarkand. In meeting, the two dignitaries reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and expressed their satisfaction over the level of engagement.

They also discussed measures to enhance connectivity, trade and investment, energy cooperation and people-to-people contacts. They also reiterated their commitment towards the importance and early implementation TAPI Gas Pipeline Project.



Pakistan and Tajikistan reiterate commitment to enhancing cooperation in various fields



Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar held a meeting with Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhriddin on the sidelines of the

fourth meeting of the Neighbouring Countries on Afghanistan in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

The two ministers exchanged views on bilateral and international issues of mutual concern

and reaffirmed their commitment to further deepen bilateral relations, especially trade and economic ties after signing of Transit Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Tajikistan.

Pakistan, Russia to work closely for promoting shared objective of peaceful Afghanistan

Pakistan and Russia have agreed on importance of continued close consultation to promote the shared objective of a peaceful, stable, sovereign and prosperous Afghanistan. The understanding was reached during meeting between Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, on the sidelines of 4th Neighbouring Countries of Afghanistan meeting in Samarkand. They exchanged views on entire spectrum of bilateral, regional and global issues. They agreed on importance of high-level exchanges for furthering bilateral cooperation in trade and investment, energy, and food security for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

The two sides also reviewed progress on various economic initiatives under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.



Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to the Republic of Tajikistan Muhammad Saeed Sarwar assumed duties at the Embassy of Pakistan in Dushanbe on 24 April, 2023





4th round of Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue

Pakistan & China reaffirmed their firm resolve to further strengthen their time-tested & All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership

By Mian Fazal Elahi, Agency

As the invitation of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang of the People's Republic of China undertook his first official visit to Pakistan from 5 to 6 May 2023.

On 6 May 2023, the two Foreign Ministers co-chaired the 4th round of the Foreign Minister-level Pakistan-China Strategic Dialogue in Islamabad.

During the dialogue, the entire range of bilateral relations and cooperation, including in political, strategic, economic, defense security, education and cultural domains was reviewed. Regional and global issues of mutual interest were also discussed.

The Foreign Minister of Pakistan congratulated the Chinese leadership on the successful holding of the 'Two Sessions'.

He wished China's people and the new leadership greater success in building a strong, prosperous and modern socialist country. He also expressed his resolve to work together with State Councilor Qin Gang to further fortify the Pakistan-China relationship.

Recalling the consensus reached between the leadership of the two countries during the visit of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to Beijing in November 2022,



the two sides agreed to further strengthen Pakistan-China strategic relations amidst profound regional and international changes. The Foreign Ministers expressed satisfaction at the growing momentum in high-level exchanges between Pakistan and China while reaffirming the need for convening important bilateral sectoral engagements.

The two Foreign Ministers underlined that Pakistan-China friendship was a historic reality and conscious choice of the two nations. As 'All-Weather Strategic

Cooperative Partners', Pakistan and China enjoy complete mutual trust, and their iron-clad friendship enjoys complete consensus in both countries.

Both sides agreed on continuing their enduring support on issues concerning each other's core national interests. Reaffirming Pakistan's special place in China's neighbourhood diplomacy, the Chinese side reiterated its firm support for Pakistan's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as its unity, stability, and

economic prosperity. The Pakistani side reiterated its commitment to the “One China” policy as well as its firm support to China on all core issues of its national interest, including Taiwan, Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong and South China Sea.

Welcoming the completion of a decade of CPEC in 2023, the two sides hailed CPEC as a shining example of Belt and Road cooperation which has accelerated socio-economic development, job creation and improvement of people’s livelihoods in Pakistan. Reaffirming their commitment to high-quality development of CPEC, both sides noted with satisfaction the steady progress of CPEC projects. The two sides reiterated the key significance of ML-1 project under the CPEC framework and agreed to advance its earliest implementation. They also agreed to actively advance the Karachi Circular Railway alongside key areas of cooperation including, *inter alia*, agriculture, science and technology, IT, and renewable energy.

The two sides reviewed the progress of various projects at Gwadar, including the Friendship Hospital and New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA). Both sides reiterated their resolve to develop Gwadar as a high-quality port and a hub for regional trade and connectivity.

Acknowledging industrialization as highly conducive to long-term sustainable economic growth and development, they also agreed to work together in the guidance of the Framework Agreement on Industrial Cooperation to actively advance industrial cooperation. Both sides reiterated that CPEC is an open and inclusive platform for win-win cooperation and invited third parties to maximize benefits from CPEC.

The Pakistani side expressed gratitude to the Chinese side for its economic and financial support, and its generous assistance package for post-floods reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The two sides reiterated their firm resolve to counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Acknowledging the endeavours and sacrifices made by Pakistan in fight against terrorism and extremism, the Chinese side appreciated the measures taken by Pakistan to ensure enhanced security of Chinese projects, personnel and institutions in Pakistan, as well as the steps taken to apprehend and bring to justice the perpetrators targeting Chinese nationals in Dasu, Karachi and other attacks. The two sides agreed to further build on the cooperation in security and counter-terrorism domains.

Reviewing their cooperation on regional



and international issues at multilateral forums such as the United Nations and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the two sides agreed to further deepen their coordination and cooperation to safeguard mutual interests. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and support for multilateralism, free trade and win-win cooperation.

The Pakistani side supports the Global Development Initiative and Global Security Initiative put forward by the Chinese side. The two sides are ready to advance cooperation on the GDI and GSI bilaterally and in multilateral fora. The Pakistani side welcomed the Global Civilization Initiative proposed by the Chinese side.

Both sides underscored the importance of maintaining peace and stability in South Asia, and the need for resolution of all outstanding disputes. The Pakistani side briefed the Chinese side on the latest developments of the situation in Jammu & Kashmir. The Chinese side reiterated that the Kashmir dispute was left over from history and should be properly and peacefully resolved in accordance with the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements. Both sides opposed any unilateral actions that further complicate

the already volatile situation.

Stressing that peace and stability in Afghanistan is vital for socio-economic development, connectivity and prosperity in the region, both sides called on all stakeholders to work together for a peaceful, stable, prosperous and united Afghanistan, which would firmly combat terrorism and live in harmony with its neighbours. The two sides underscored the need for the international community to provide continued assistance and support to Afghanistan including through unfreezing of Afghanistan's overseas financial assets. The two sides agreed to continue their humanitarian and economic assistance for the Afghan people and enhance development cooperation in Afghanistan, including through extension of CPEC to Afghanistan.

Both Pakistan and China reaffirmed their firm resolve to further strengthen their time-tested and All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership through continued close consultations at leadership level, enhanced practical cooperation and robust implementation of the CPEC projects.

State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin thanked Foreign Minister Bilawal on the warmth and hospitality extended to him and his entire delegation.





Samarkand hosted the 4th Ministerial Meeting of the Neighboring Countries of Afghanistan under the chairmanship of Uzbekistan

Foreign ministers from China, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan discuss Afghanistan's future in constructive talks

By Saeed Yousafzai

The Fourth Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan's Neighboring States was held on April 13, 2023 in Samarkand, the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The foreign ministers and senior officials of China, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan attended the meeting.

In a frank and pragmatic atmosphere of mutual understanding, the Parties held a comprehensive, deep and constructive discussion of the current situation in Afghanistan, the prospects for its development, and stated the following:

The Parties reaffirmed the commitment to the development of Afghanistan as a peaceful, united, sovereign and independent state, free from the threats of terrorism and drug trafficking.

The Parties noted the importance of building an inclusive and broad-based governance system in Afghanistan that reflects the interests of all segments of Afghan society.

The Parties noted that the terrorism-related security situation in Afghanistan was still severe and reaffirmed their commitment to



enhance cooperation on counter-terrorism and security among neighboring countries and to develop a united front against terrorism.

The Parties pointed out that all terrorist groups, namely the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaeda, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the

Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Jundallah, Jaish al-Adl, Jamaat Ansarullah, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and other terrorist organizations based in Afghanistan continue to pose a serious threat to regional and global security.

The Parties stressed the importance of combating the drug threat and called for



support for the development of drug crop substitution programs, as well as for combating drug production and trafficking.

The Parties emphasized the necessity for the international community to maintain dialogue and communication with Afghanistan and called for further measures to improve the living conditions of the people and expressed confidence that the Afghan authorities will respect fundamental human rights, including the rights of all ethnic groups, women and children, and will provide every citizen of Afghanistan with equal rights to participate in the socio-political, economic and cultural life of the country.

The parties noted the relevance of coordinating regional and international efforts to ensure security and stability in the region, emphasizing the positive contribution of existing regional forums, including the Tashkent International Conference "Afghanistan: Security and Economic Development" and the Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan.

The Parties expressed their deep concern about the humanitarian situation and the poor economic situation in the country, declaring their readiness to continue providing humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and providing support for the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The Parties noted the key role of the United Nations in providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, calling on the international community to intensify emergency humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

The Parties reaffirmed the importance of

countering attempts to politicize the provision of humanitarian assistance needed by the people of Afghanistan and stressed that

The Parties emphasized that assistance to Kabul in restoring the national economy will allow creating decent living conditions for the population and reducing the flow of migration abroad.

The Parties noted the fundamental significance of major international energy, transport, communication, infrastructure and other projects implemented by neighboring countries for socio-economic development of Afghanistan and its active integration into the world economy.

The Parties took note of the initiative of Uzbekistan to create an International Negotiation Group under the auspices of the UN and Tajikistan's initiative on creating a "security belt" around Afghanistan, and look forward to receiving comprehensive concept notes from the initiators.

Urged the countries mainly responsible for the current predicament in Afghanistan to earnestly fulfill commitments on the economic recovery and future development of Afghanistan.

The parties reaffirmed the launch of three working group meetings namely political and diplomatic, economic and humanitarian, security and stability at an early date.

The Parties expressed gratitude and appreciation to Uzbekistan for holding the Fourth Meeting of Foreign Ministers at a high organizational level, and supported the proposal to hold the Fifth Meeting of Foreign Ministers in Ashgabat in 2024, or at an earlier date, if needed.

The Parties emphasized the necessity for the international community to maintain dialogue and communication with Afghanistan and called for further measures to improve the living conditions of the people and expressed confidence that the Afghan authorities will respect fundamental human rights, including the rights of all ethnic groups, women and children, and will provide every citizen of Afghanistan with equal rights to participate in the socio-political, economic and cultural life of the country.

the distribution and use of humanitarian assistance should serve for the benefit of the ordinary Afghan people.

Pakistani Minister paid rich tribute to the leadership of the two countries

for providing strategic guidance to the development of CPEC

By Monitoring

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiative, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal held a meeting with Mr. Li Chunlin, Vice Chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) in Beijing on Wednesday.

He was accompanied by SAPM on Finance Mr. Tariq Bajwa, Ambassador Moin ul Haque and senior Embassy officials.

During the meeting, the Minister paid rich tribute to the leadership of the two countries for providing strategic guidance to the development of CPEC, which is a flag-ship project of BRI.

He highlighted that CPEC had not only been central to Pakistan's economic growth, it had also contributed to regional connectivity and development.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to smooth and high-quality development of the next phase of CPEC with a greater focus on the development of industrial parks and Special Economic Zones.

Vice Chairman Li noted that during the recent visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China, leadership of the two countries reached important consensus to advance CPEC development and NDRC was working hard to implement the leadership's direction.

Minister said that 2023 marked the Decade of CPEC and the strong partnership between Planning Division and NDRC.

Recalling the signing of CPEC Framework Agreement in Beijing on 5th July 2013 in the presence of leadership of the two countries, the Minister informed that the Government of Pakistan was planning to hold special events to mark this milestone and invited Chinese leadership to attend.

In this respect, he also extended invitation to Chairman NDRC to visit Pakistan and as well as hold a special session of CPEC Joint Coordination Committee on this occasion.

The Minister also sought strong support of NDRC and other relevant Chinese government institutions to advance implementation of the ML-1, KRC and key energy projects in line with the leadership consensus.

The two sides expressed satisfaction on the



completion of some key projects at Gwadar Port and agreed to continue the momentum for making it a hub of international trade and

helping Pakistan achieve energy security and informed the Vice Chairman about the steps taken by the Government of Pakistan to facilitate their projects.

Vice Chairman, Mr. Li Chunlin appreciated the contributions of Minister for the advancement of CPEC and his support to NDRC over the years and assured him of NDRC's long term commitment to the common objective of high quality CPEC development.

Noting that the 11th JCC meeting had paved the way for fast track implementation of CPEC projects, the two sides agreed to start preparing for the 12th JCC and to hold technical Joint Working Group meetings on a regular basis every two months to ensure closer coordination.

On Minister's proposal, the two sides reached consensus to set up Expert Groups on enhancing Pakistan's export potential and development of Special Economic Zones and industrial parks on the basis of the Chinese experience.

Minister also requested Vice Chairman's support and guidance in the development of high-tech industries based on his own experience of working in Shaanxi province.

**Ahsan Iqbal reaffirmed
Pakistan's strong
commitment to smooth
and high-quality
development of the
next phase of CPEC
with a greater focus
on the development
of industrial parks
and Special Economic
Zones.**

regional connectivity.

The Minister remarked that Pakistan greatly valued contributions of the Chinese IPPs in

Khunjerab border reopening to boost economic and trade ties between Pakistan and China

By Monitoring

Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives expressed deep satisfaction and pleasure at the reopening of the Khunjerab border, which is the highest paved international border crossing in the world, connecting Pakistan and China:

"He termed the reopening of the Khunjerab border a significant development for both Pakistan and China and went on to say that it will mark a new era of cooperation and connectivity between our two countries. The Khunjerab border is not just a symbol of the historical and cultural ties between our nations, but it also presents a unique opportunity to promote economic, trade, and tourism activities between our countries and beyond.

With the reopening of the border after a gap of three years, increased trade volumes,



more investment opportunities, and improved people-to-people contacts will usher in new era of regional connectivity and higher prosperity for the masses of both nations. We are committed to taking all necessary steps to ensure the smooth flow of goods and people across the border, while also maintaining stringent security measures to

ensure safety.

I am confident that the reopening of the Khunjerab border will contribute significantly to the trade and economic activities and strengthen our ties of friendship and cooperation for years to come".



Friendship and strategic partnership with China enjoyed broad political support in Pakistan: Ahsan Iqbal

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal had a meeting with Mr. Liu Jianchao, Minister of International Department of Communist Party of China (IDCPC) in Beijing today.

The Planning Minister admired CPC's role in China's peaceful rise and economic development. Extending warm felicitations on the successful conclusion of the annual "Two Sessions", the Planning Minister paid tribute to vision of President Xi for launching initiatives like Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Security Initiative (GSI) and Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) which were contributing in creating a peaceful and harmonious world.

The Planning Minister said that friendship and

strategic partnership with China enjoyed broad political support in Pakistan. He acknowledged IDCPC's role in promoting better understanding and deepening relations between two countries, and specifically appreciated Minister IDCPC's personal contributions in cementing bilateral ties as a true friend of Pakistan.

Hailing CPEC as the "shining example" of BRI cooperation, Minister IDCPC appreciated the Planning Minister's role in nurturing and developing CPEC in his current and earlier tenures. Both reaffirmed CPEC's importance as the flagship project of BRI, and decided to add further impetus to CPEC cooperation along with marking the completion of one decade as an important milestone.

Recalling the successful visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Beijing in November 2022,

the two sides agreed to work out modalities of IDCPC's support for capacity-building through special training of Pakistani young political leaders and professionals in China and experience sharing on CPC's governance model for rural development, youth empowerment, poverty alleviation, economic growth, use of technology, enhancement of exports and industrialization.

The Planning Minister also extended an invitation to Minister IDCPC to visit Pakistan to continue the discussions and cooperation for deepening bilateral ties.

Mr Liu Jianchao appreciated the contribution of Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal towards making CPEC a success and emphasized that iron brother relationship with Pakistan is unparalleled.

Farewell reception held in honor of Ambassador Syed Mohammad Ali Hussaini, the Iranian ambassador in Pakistan who is completing his tenure.

The reception was attended by various diplomatic, political, social, and media personalities. Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Defence, also attended the event as a special guest.





H.E. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad to receive Order of the Rising Sun for contribution to Japan-Pakistan friendship

The Government of Japan has announced the 2023 Spring Conferment of Decorations and H.E. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad, former Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Japan, will be decorated with "the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star", in recognition of his contribution to strengthen bilateral relations and promoting friendship between Japan and Pakistan.

H.E. Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad had served as a diplomat in Japan four times, for more than 16 years

and had held almost every post from young diplomat to the Ambassador in Japan. He has also acquired a broad knowledge of Japanese language, culture and history, which led to his significant contribution to the enhancement of our relations in many fields.

In addition to the regular diplomatic activities, he has done a great contribution to Japanese people. During his tenure as Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Pakistan in Tokyo, the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred on

March 11, 2011.

After the earthquake, he reached out to the Pakistani community in Tokyo and visited the affected areas with them every weekend to serve Pakistani food and distribute relief supplies. Many Japanese people were moved by the dedication from him and Pakistani people, and his presence with the disaster victims was highly praised by the Pakistani and Japanese media.

South Korea defers Pakistan's loan worth \$19.91m

In a sign of relief, the Republic of Korea deferred Pakistan's loan worth \$19.911 million, under the G-20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) framework.

The cash-strapped country inked a Debt Service Suspension Agreement with Korea. This amount, initially had to be repaid between July and December 2021, will now be repaid over a period of six years (including a one-year grace period) in semi-annual instalments, said a statement issued by the Economic Affairs Division (EAD).

Due to the support extended by the development partners of Pakistan, the G-20 DSSI has provided the fiscal space which was necessary to deal with the urgent health and economic needs of the country.

The total amount of debt, that is to be suspended under the DSSI framework, covering the period of repayment from May 2020 to December 2021, stands at \$3,686 million.

Pakistan has already concluded and signed 104 agreements with 21 bilateral creditors for the deferment of its debt repayments under the G-20 DSSI, amounting to \$3,633 million.

The signing of the above-mentioned agreement brings this total to \$3,653 million. Negotiations for the remaining agreements to be signed under the G-20 DSSI are ongoing.

The lingering differences between the IMF and Pakistan are heading towards an "unbreakable deadlock" whereby Pakistani authorities claim that the confirmation of \$4 billion financing was shared with the IMF even with its full details and break-up but the Fund was playing "politics" by not moving towards striking an agreement despite passing six months period.

The ninth review was due in November 2022 but the two sides have not yet reached consensus.

The patience of Pakistani high-ups is running out as they argue before the IMF officials that Islamabad should be treated as a member of the Washington-based creditor, not a beggar.

The Pakistani authorities are hopeful that the current account deficit would remain surplus



for April 2023 when the numbers would come out in the next few days.

The financing gap of \$4 billion was fulfilled by getting confirmation as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia conveyed to the IMF that they were ready to provide an additional \$2 billion in deposits and UAE \$1 billion.

The World Bank is committed to providing \$450 million RISE-II after fulfilment of four prior conditions and \$250 million by the AIIB.

Pakistan also received firm commitments for getting \$350 million out of total Geneva pledges for flood-affected areas.

Portugal Pakistan Discuss Cooperation in n Blue Economy, Work Force, Trade Agriculture

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The Third Round of Bilateral Political Consultations between Pakistan and Portugal was held in Lisbon on 13 April 2023. The Pakistan delegation was headed by Additional Foreign Secretary (Europe), Ambassador Muhammad Saleem while Director General for Foreign Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Rui Vinhas led the Portuguese side.

Agenda included discussion on a broad range of bilateral, regional and global issues of common interest including regional security, climate change and cooperation at the multilateral fora. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the current state of bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to further expand and diversify mutually beneficial cooperation. They agreed to enhance bilateral trade and investment, and collaboration in agriculture, water management, ICT, blue economy, green technologies and employment opportunities for Pakistani workforce. It was agreed to hold regular sessions of the Political Consultations with the next session to be held in Islamabad for which the Portuguese delegation will visit Pakistan on mutually agreed dates.



Kazakh Students Win NASA Space Settlement Contest

By Mian Fazal Elahi

The Aenoica scientific project, developed by Almaty school students Ramazan Amre and Symbat Barsagazy, won the NASA Space Settlement Contest.

The scientific project of the Nazarbayev



Intellectual Schools students became the best among 30,000 applications of young scientists. According to the tutor Raiymbek Abilbek, the project aims at fostering new technologies.

"We have created a space station to settle 300,000 people and ensure a life support system using quantum communications and

technologically advanced agriculture. I am thrilled that the project was successful," Abilbek said.

The NASA Space Settlement Contest is an annual design competition for 7-12 grade students, sponsored by the NASA Ames Research Center and National Space Society (NSS).



Saudi foreign minister meets Syria's Assad on first trip to Damascus since war

By Mian Fazal Elahi

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad met with Saudi Arabia's top diplomat in Damascus, state media reported, ending more than a decade of diplomatic deep-freeze between the two countries.

"President Bashar al-Assad meets Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan," Syria's official news agency SANA reported.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Prince Faisal's visit falls within the framework of "the Kingdom's keenness and interest to reach a political solution to the Syrian crisis that ends all its repercussions and preserves Syria's unity, security, stability, and its Arab identity, and restores it to its Arab surroundings, in a way that achieves the good of its brotherly people."

The Saudi prince arrived in Damascus on the first visit to Syria's capital by a Saudi official since the start of the country's civil war in 2011.

The statement added that Prince Faisal was welcomed at the airport by Minister of Presidency Affairs Mansour Azzam.

The meeting discussed steps needed for a political solution to Syria's conflict that would preserve its Arab identity and return it to "its Arab surroundings," Saudi state media said.

Assad said the Kingdom's "open and realistic policies" benefited the region, Syria's state

news agency reported.

Assad has been politically isolated in the region since the conflict began, but a flurry of diplomatic activity has been underway in the past week as regional relations shift following a decision by Saudi Arabia and Damascus's ally Iran to resume ties.

The trip comes less than a week after Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad visited Saudi Arabia, also on the first such visit since the

conflict began.

Last week, diplomats from nine Arab countries met in the Saudi city of Jeddah to discuss ending Syria's long spell in the diplomatic wilderness and its possible return to the 22-member Arab League after Damascus was suspended in 2011.

The diplomats stressed the "importance of having an Arab leadership role in efforts to end the crisis" in Syria, according to a statement by the Saudi foreign ministry.



Sante Polo win Serena Challenge Polo Cup



SERENA HOTELS

Team Sante Polo clinched the Serena Challenge Polo Cup 2023, beating strong Beretta Asean in the final played at Islamabad Polo Club. The thrilling final match saw both the finalist teams – Beretta Asean and Sante Polo Team – matching fire-with-fire till the end Ahmed Ali Twana (2 goals) emerged as best player of the final. Maisam was declared the best emerging Player of the polo cup. First Lady Samina Arif Alvi was the chief guest at the closing ceremony of the event which was also attended by CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani, ambassadors, diplomats from different countries, government officials, corporate community and a large number of polo enthusiasts from all walks of life.



National Leader's 100th anniversary marked in Islamabad

The Embassy of Azerbaijan in Pakistan organized celebrations of the 100th Birth Anniversary of National Leader Heydar Aliyev in Islamabad. The reception, dignitaries from all walks of life participated and paid tribute to Heydar Aliyev. During the speeches, it was mentioned that Heydar Aliyev was a visionary leader, whose dedication and unwavering commitment to Azerbaijan

transformed Azerbaijan and shaped its destiny. Throughout his life, he demonstrated extraordinary leadership, wisdom, and a deep love for his people. His visionary policies laid the foundation for the modernization and development of Azerbaijan in various spheres, including politics, economy, culture, and diplomacy. It was emphasized that under Heydar Aliyev's guidance, Azerbaijan emerged from a

challenging period and embarked on a path of progress and prosperity. Federal Minister for Defence Production Muhammad Israr Tareen was the Chief Guest on the occasion. Besides a large number of parliamentarians, diplomats, religious scholars, members of academia, representatives of the MoFA, in service and retired army officers and civil society representatives attended the event.



Pakistani FM shows his mettle in hostile India



By Monitoring, Agency

Chairman of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers, Dr. S. Jaishankar, Excellencies, Foreign Ministers of SCO Member States, Secretary General of SCO, Director, Executive Committee of SCO-RATS, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, Assalam-o-alaikum, peace be with you, and Good Morning!

It is an honor for me to represent Pakistan today at the SCO-CFM. Pakistan considers the SCO a key regional platform comprising countries, which are bound together by longstanding historical, cultural, civilizational and geographical ties. There couldn't be a more powerful indication of the importance that Pakistan attaches to the SCO than my presence here in Goa for this CFM.

Pakistan strongly believes in and fully adheres to the principles of mutual trust, equality, respect for cultural diversity, and the pursuit of shared development enshrined in the original "Shanghai Spirit."

These principles are in perfect alignment with Pakistan's own vision of enhanced regional economic connectivity and win-win cooperation. We believe the SCO could be a key platform for taking this vision of Eurasian connectivity to the next level. Pakistan's location at the crossroads of South Asia and the Middle East makes it an ideal trade conduit for the whole region. Last year's Samarkand Declaration made a timely call for building efficient transport corridors and reliable supply chains in the region. Investing in our collective connectivity capacities is crucial to advancing our shared vision for an economically integrated region. In that spirit, Pakistan looks forward to hosting the "Conference on Transport Connectivity for Regional Prosperity" in September 2023.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor can



similarly be a force multiplier for regional connectivity. For too long, we have lamented the lack of connectivity between our economies – an impediment to regional trade and investment. CPEC does not only connect Pakistan to its neighbor China. CPEC offers all countries invested in the commonality of the future of this region to take the journey further and connect the dots towards full regional economic integration.

Excellencies, In a world facing geo-political flux, dividing the world between us and them – the SCO has emerged as a platform for promoting mutual understanding, security and development through constructive and mutually

beneficial cooperation.

SCO's increasing influence and relevance is confirmed by its growing appeal. With each passing year, more countries are joining the Organization either as Dialogue Partner or Observer or Full Member.

We congratulate brotherly Iran, which would soon become the newest member of the SCO family. We welcome the accession of Bahrain, Kuwait, Maldives, Myanmar and the United Arab Emirates as new Dialogue Partners. And look forward to welcoming Belarus as a full member in the near future.

Excellencies,

In a bitterly divided world, humanity faces the greatest challenges we have ever faced. We've survived the COVID pandemic with our economies shaken; peoples patience tested; and many questions arising about our readiness to face the next global crisis.

The climate crisis poses an existential threat to humanity. Poverty haunts all societies and noble attempts to meet this challenge still have a long way to go. Finally, the situation in Afghanistan poses grave challenges but also offers some opportunities.

The solution to our collective challenges should be collective action, not a divided reaction. While our problems may seem immense, I believe as a united human race we have the capacity to not only deal with the challenges but to learn lessons for our collective good, and build in the resilience that will equip us to address future challenges. We must isolate these issues from hyper-partisan geopolitics if we are to succeed. Our excuse cannot be we were too divided to put up a fight!

Excellencies,

Poverty still plagues this region. We can only overcome this challenge through common efforts and by learning from each other's experiences. China offers us hope, shows us how it can be done – lifting 800 million people out of poverty in less than 40 years. Pakistan is proud of the internationally acclaimed Benazir Income Support Program which has ushered in a silent revolution of poverty alleviation together with women's empowerment. Taking consistent strides on poverty eradication has been hampered by COVID and geo-political conflict. We need to set our priorities straight. To deliver to our people. To make poverty history.

Chest thumping about economic progress rings hollow when the largest number of poor people on the planet dwell within our collective borders. Given our experiences in this area, there is a very strong and compelling case for closer cooperation for poverty alleviation under SCO. The establishment of the Special Working Group on Poverty Alleviation proposed by Pakistan will be a step in that direction.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our planet can only be saved from the ravages of Climate Change if the international community works in unison. For Pakistan, this is today's problem. We recently faced the greatest climate catastrophe we have ever witnessed. I ask you to imagine what it would mean for your people if a disaster of this scale were to proportionally afflict your country. What would one third of India's land mass look like under water? How the people of China would be tested if 1 in 7 people were made climate refugees over night. This was a reality for my country, my people, just last year. We are rebuilding our lives at great cost and bracing for the inevitability of such a disaster striking again. I am proud of Pakistan's leadership through our chairmanship of G77 + China, which helped advocate for loss and damage to be included on the agenda of COP27. However, this is too little, too late, and much more needs to be done. Especially by developed countries. We must hold the developed world up to their commitment of providing US \$ 100 billion annually for climate finance. While Pakistan has emerged as an

important voice in the global discourse on Climate Change in the aftermath of that natural calamity, it is encouraging to see that the SCO is also attaching greater importance to this critical issue. The Joint Statement to be issued by the Council of Heads of States on fighting Climate Change rightly calls for deepening cooperation in the areas of environmental protection. Pakistan would propose the establishment of a Joint Working Group in SCO on Climate Change.

Excellencies,

The collective security of our peoples is our joint responsibility. Terrorism continues to threaten global security. Let's not get caught up in weaponising terrorism for diplomatic point scoring.

When I speak on this topic, I do so not only as the Foreign Minister of Pakistan whose people have suffered the most in terms of number of attacks and number of casualties. I also speak as the son whose mother was assassinated at the hands of terrorists. I feel the pain of this loss, empathize with victims across the world a way most can't. I and my country are





firmly committed to be part of regional and global efforts for eradicating this menace. This requires not only a comprehensive approach but also a collective approach. It demands we address the root causes as well as the threats posed by specific groups. It requires that we let this challenge unite us to fight it rather than divide us to become its victim. Our success requires us to isolate this issue from geo-political partisanship.

Practical, pragmatic solutions exist for us to put an end to this chapter once and for all. We must stop conflating non-state actors with state actors. Condemn all forms of terrorism including state sponsored terrorism. Given that many SCO members confront the menace of terrorism, often from the same terrorist groups, the SCO RATS needs to be further strengthened to effectively address the growing threats to peace and security in the SCO space.

Excellencies,

The situation in Afghanistan presents new challenges as well as opportunities. We continue to call the international community to meaningfully engage with the Interim Afghan Government to better understand and influence the course of events. After being the playground for great powers, time and time again, we owe it to the people of Afghanistan to not repeat the mistakes of the past. A united international community must continue to urge the Afghan authorities to adopt universally-accepted principles of political inclusivity, and respecting the rights of all Afghans, including girls' right to education. The international community should also help build their counter-terrorism capacity for the security of Afghanistan, the region and the world at large. It is alarming that terrorist groups within Afghanistan are cooperating amongst themselves more than we are as the international community. As the country that will be the first but not the last to suffer the consequences, Pakistan calls on the Interim Afghan Authorities to uphold their commitments on not allowing the use of Afghan soil for terrorism. It also calls on



the international community to work towards addressing these security concerns to unlock the true potential of not only Afghanistan but the region as a whole. A peaceful and stable Afghanistan is a key not only to regional integration and economic cooperation but also to global peace and stability. We believe the SCO Afghanistan Contact Group can play a role in coordinating practical cooperation with Afghanistan.

Excellencies,

The SCO was established to ensure security across Eurasia. The organization stands for strict observance of the UN principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and people's right to self-determination.

For its part, Pakistan remains committed to multilateralism and continues to play a leading role at all international forums, including the United Nations, for forging friendly relations among nations and supporting the peaceful settlement of longstanding international disputes.

I want to make a special mention of the commendable role China has recently played in bridging differences between Saudi Arabia and Iran – two countries that are also associated with the SCO. When great powers play the role of peace maker, we can unlock the potential of peace while paving the way for greater cooperation, regional integration and economic



opportunities for our peoples.

We must ensure respect for these universally recognized principles within the SCO. Unilateral and illegal measures by States in violation of international law and Security Council resolutions run counter to the SCO objectives. We need to be unambiguous in keeping our commitments and charting out a new future for our people. One that is not based on conflict preservation but on conflict resolution.

We must also resolutely resist the temptation to stoke prejudice and discrimination to derive our identity. It is imperative that willful provocations and incitement to hate, especially on religious grounds, are roundly condemned. It is our collective duty to fight against fascism and historical revisionism that is leading to violent ultra nationalism anywhere in the world. We must ensure that racism and xenophobic ideologies, have no place in today's world and fundamental human rights and freedoms are guaranteed to all.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Pakistan's unwavering support and commitment to the SCO's goals and objectives. The SCO represents more than 40 per cent of the world's population and almost a quarter of the world's GDP. In other words, the SCO represents the future. And it can be a glorious and prosperous future for all us – if only we can work together to seize it. Thank you.



Chinese FM Visits Pakistan Foreign Services Academy



By M. Saeed Yousafzai

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang and a Chinese delegation visited Pakistan Foreign Services Academy (FSA).

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Academy Officials received the Chinese envoy at the academy. Both the Ministries interacted with the young diplomats and shared their experiences in the field of diplomacy.

During the visit, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang also unveiled a plaque that marked the gift of the former Chinese embassy building to the Foreign Services Academy, Pakistan.

The historic building was gifted to Pakistan by the Chinese government as a gesture of goodwill and to further strengthen the bilateral relationship between the two nations. Both the experienced Foreign Service

officials from Pakistan and China provided insights into diplomacy to the young diplomats and briefed them about building and strengthening mutually beneficial relations between the nations.

Minister of State Khar, while addressing the young diplomats, said Pakistan takes pride in producing internationally recognized diplomats who have defended the country's national interests and contributed positively to the Pakistan-China relationship.

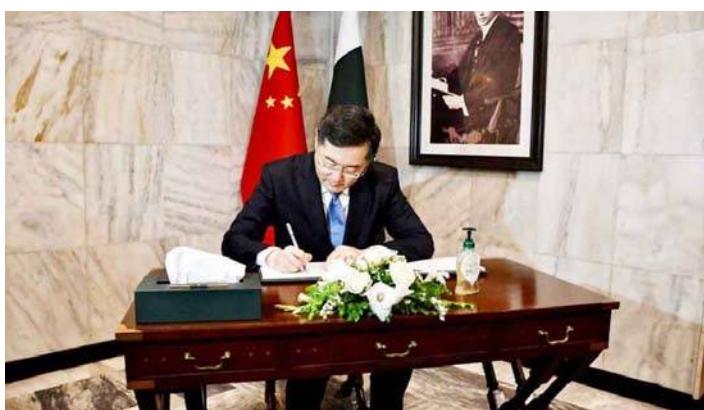
It is believed that the young diplomats who interacted with Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang during his visit to the Foreign Services Academy will follow in the footsteps of their predecessors and continue to strengthen the longstanding friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and China.

In a nutshell, the visit by the Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister to Pakistan's



Foreign Services Academy demonstrates the importance of training and preparing young diplomats for successful diplomacy.

It also highlights the strong commitment of both China and Pakistan to fostering strong and promising diplomatic ties.





Ethiopian Airlines marks new chapter in African-Pakistani relations with direct flights to Karachi

By Saeed Yousafzai

Ethiopian Airlines, the largest airline network in Africa, has resumed its direct flights to Karachi after a hiatus of 19 years.

The first flight after nearly two-decade-long break landed at the Jinnah International Airport with 110 passengers onboard this morning.

Passengers of the flight included senior Ethiopian diplomats, officials and a trade delegation, all of whom were given a grand, traditional welcome at the Old Terminal upon arrival. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and his delegation including provincial ministers Sharjeel Memon, Nasir Shah, Ikramullah Dharejo, and Murtaza Wahab received the Ethiopian delegation. The airline also announced the development on its Twitter account.

"Ethiopian Airlines is pleased to announce that it has commenced four times weekly direct flights to Karachi, Pakistan," the tweet read.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that Ethiopian Airlines has resumed its Karachi operation after a lapse of four decades which has opened new vistas of trade and commerce, investment, and tourism between Pakistan and African countries.

The chief minister received the three Ethiopian state ministers - for Foreign Affairs Mr. Mesganu Arga, for Technology Fozia Amin, and for Commerce Kassahun Gofe and their senior officers. The Ambassador of Ethiopia, Mr. Jemal Beker Abdulla was also present on the occasion.

The chief minister told the media that it was a great breakthrough that the Ethiopian airline started its commercial operation in Karachi on May 9. "This commercial operation of the



airline is bound to boost trade between the two countries, promote tourism and help to explore investment opportunities," he said and added this airline has opened the gate to African countries.

The State Minister of Ethiopia for Foreign

The initiative would be a game changer for Pakistan which would get direct access to the markets of entire Africa: Ethiopian ambassador to Pakistan, Jamal Beker Abdula

Affairs Mr. Mesganu Arga thanked the chief minister for personally inaugurating the airline operation and hoped this would open new avenues for mutual cooperation, and increase trade and commerce, and tourism. The chief minister cut the cake to formally inaugurate the airline operation and presented Ajrak and Sindhi caps to the visiting ministers.

Ethiopian Airlines plans to operate four weekly flights from Addis Ababa to Karachi. The Ethiopian Airlines is all set to connect the south Asian nations with the entire Africa starting its regular flight operations from Karachi to Addis Ababa on May 2, Ambassador Extraordinary



and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula said. Talking to media, he said maiden flight of the Ethiopian Airlines would leave Bole International Airport Addis Ababa on May 1 and land at the Jinnah International Airport, Karachi on May 2. It would operate four flights a week to further bolster diplomatic and economic ties between Ethiopia and Pakistan.

"This will be a major breakthrough in the bilateral relations of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," said the ambassador who believed that the initiative would be a game changer for Pakistan which would get direct access to the markets of entire Africa.

He said Ethiopian Airlines took pride in evolving into a true pan-African airline during the last decade with its incredible services, largest airline by revenue and profit and biggest airline by fleet operating at more than 130 international destinations.

"Since my arrival in this country as an ambassador, I put my entire focus on connecting the two big nations through establishment of institutional linkages and increased people-to-people and business-to-business contacts."

H.E. Jemal Beker said while highlighting concerted efforts of the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia which organized a successful trade delegation of Pakistani businessmen to Ethiopia.

He said 100-member trade delegation had visited Ethiopia a couple of weeks back which was instrumental in establishing institutional linkages between the two countries.

The historic trade delegation had not only resulted into signing of multiple memoranda of understanding, but also attracted massive Pakistani investment in Ethiopia.

The ambassador said start of flight operation of Ethiopian Airlines would not only increase business and trade activity between the two countries but also boost people-to-people ties.



Sindh CM and Ethiopian Ambassador agree to explore business opportunities



Ambassador of Ethiopia Jamal Beker Abdulla called on Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah in Karachi and discussed bilateral and trade relations.

It was agreed on the occasion that bilateral trade will be increased.

The Sindh Chief Minister while talking to the visiting ambassador said that there exist a lot of business opportunities in Pakistan and Africa.

The visiting ambassador informed the Chief Minister that Ethiopia imports medicines from Pakistan and a delegation of industrialists is reaching Sindh province.

Bangladesh independence and National Day celebrated

To celebrate the 52nd anniversary of the independence and National Day of Bangladesh, High Commissioner H.E.Mr.Md.Ruhul Alam Siddique & Mrs. Shamshad Ara Khanam hosted a reception here at a hotel in Islamabad. Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Senator Muhammad Talha Mehmood was the Chief Guest and Guest of honor. Federal Minister for Energy & Power Engr.Khurram Dastagir Khan, Convener, Parliamentary Friendship Group for Bangladesh in Senate of Pakistan, Senator Taj Haider, Chaudhry Mahmood Bashir Virk, Convener, Parliamentary Friendship Group for Bangladesh in National Assembly of Pakistan and Ms. Shazia Jannat Marri, Federal Minister for Benazir Income Support Programme and The Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan and Dean of Diplomatic Corps H.E. Mr. Atadjan Movlamov was also present on the occasion. The event was attended in large numbers by diplomats, officers from the armed forces of the diplomatic corps as well as Pakistan, Bangladeshis residing in the country and Pakistani from different walks of life.







New formats of cooperation in the international information environment

By Saeed Yousafzai

A round table was held at the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan on the topic "New formats of cooperation in the international information environment".

The event was attended by representatives of international and national media, private media, relevant ministries and state agencies of Turkmenistan, press attaches of diplomatic missions accredited in Turkmenistan, experts and specialists in the field of information and communication policy, as well as teachers and students of the Faculty of International Journalism of the Institute of International Relations.

In frames of an extensive agenda, various aspects and directions of international information activities were discussed.

Opening the round table, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Myahri Byashimova noted the important role played by the outlet in the modern media space. In this context, she stressed that the current format of interaction is a platform for discussing the importance of the mass-media in establishing links in the international information field, aimed to bridge positions.

It was stated that the Government of Turkmenistan sets priority tasks for the domestic media sphere. Today, there is a need for more active promotion in the global digital space of up-to-date and reliable information about Turkmenistan, news reports on the transformations and achievements taking place in the country, studying the best world experience, the



emergence of new formats and standards of broadcasting, print, and electronic press. Along with this, the expediency of further improvement and activation of the activities of private media in Turkmenistan was noted.

Particular attention was drawn to the initiatives of the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov regarding regional cooperation in the media space, announced at the 4th Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia.

In particular, was told about the illegal use of information technology, the implantation from the outside of ideas and attitudes that run counter to the historical traditions of the peoples of Central Asia, the basic values and

centuries-old foundations of their life.

In this regard, a proposal of the head of the state to make joint efforts so that Central Asia remains a zone of stability and trust, not subject to risks for peace and development, was commented

In this context, the idea of holding a Central Asian media forum dedicated to security issues with the participation of state news agencies, print media, and electronic media has been put forward.

The head of the OSCE Center in Ashgabat, Ambassador John MacGregor, during his speech noted that media development issues are high on the agenda of the Organization.

At the same time, this "round table" is a vivid example of constructive cooperation between the Government of Turkmenistan and the OSCE Center in Ashgabat in the field of media development. The initiative to hold the current forum in Ashgabat testifies to the growing role of Turkmenistan in promoting commitments within the OSCE and, thus, shows the desire to take an active position in the international media space.

The work of the "round table" continued in the framework of two sessions devoted to the issues of information sustainability in the 21st century and information policy in the context of the widespread development of social networks. During the sessions, with the active participation of OSCE international experts Marek Bekerman and Yakub Parusinski, an exchange of views took place on such topical issues of our time as the role of the state in creating a sustainable information space, aspects of media literacy in society, the development of information awareness among youth, issues of tackling misinformation and fake news, as well as the importance of education and continuous professional development of journalists in countering the above-mentioned challenges and problems in the media field.

Participants noted the important role of social networks and PR technologies in the modern digital information space, as well as issues of interaction between the state and



media communities. In this context, aspects of the effective use of social networks as an important tool for communication and cultural exchange were discussed.

At the end of the sessions, interactive communication was held in the "question-answer" format, during which a thorough and constructive exchange of views took place on issues and topics on the agenda of the forum. Great interest was shown in the educational process and creative work of the future generation of journalists studying at

the Institute of International Relations.

The participants of the "round table" noted the role and constructive activities of Turkmenistan in matters of close cooperation with all stakeholders in the region and beyond in the information and communication sphere.

The parties also viewed the exhibition of specialized foreign policy publications, deployed on the sidelines of the "round table".



Envoy presents credentials to President Alvi



By Mian Fazal Elahi

The newly appointed envoys of Malaysia, Portugal, Kosovo, Lithuania and Ecuador presented their credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi, at a ceremony, held here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The High Commissioner-designate of Malaysia, Mohammad Azhar Mazlan; Ambassador-designate of Portugal, Manuel Frederico Pinheiro da Silva; Non-Resident Ambassador-designate of Kosovo, Agon Vrenezi; Non-Resident Ambassador-designate of Lithuania, Ricardas Degutis, and Non-Resident Ambassador-designate of Ecuador, Pascual Del Cioppo Aragundi, presented their credentials and also made separate calls on President Alvi.

Welcoming the High Commissioner of Malaysia, the President said that Pakistan and Malaysia enjoyed good relations and Pakistan wanted to further strengthen bilateral relations with Malaysia in the areas of economy, trade, defence, education, tourism, science and technology.

He underscored the need for further expanding bilateral trade for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

He stated that Pakistan produced quality fruits, vegetables, dairy products, pharmaceuticals, sports and surgical goods, and access to Pakistani commodities in Malaysian and adjacent ASEAN markets could help meet Malaysia's requirements and enhance bilateral trade. He also thanked Malaysia for its consistent support to Pakistan at international fora on various issues.

During his meeting with the Ambassador of Portugal, the President said that Pakistan and Portugal had great scope of cooperation in the fields of trade, agriculture and investment.

He emphasised the need for greater interactions at the highest level to boost bilateral cooperation. He said that Pakistan was a large market with a population of over 220 million, and would like to invite Portuguese companies to invest in Pakistan in diverse fields.

He said that business delegations should be facilitated to explore areas of cooperation.

He expressed satisfaction over the formation of Parliamentary Friendship Groups between the two countries that would further boost bilateral ties.

During his meeting with the Ambassador of Kosovo, the President said that Pakistan was desirous of promoting closer cooperation with Kosovo in all areas of mutual interest.

He added that the expansion of economic relations with Kosovo remained an important priority for Pakistan.

He stated that Pakistan was an emerging market and offered numerous investment opportunities, adding that the establishment of linkages between the Chambers of Commerce of the two countries would be an important step in promoting bilateral trade and investments.

He also urged the need for an increased exchange of high-

level visits between the two countries.

Talking to the Ambassador of Lithuania, the President highlighted the need to develop a mechanism for the exchange of views on trade, commerce, and investment matters between the two countries to further increase mutual trade and cooperation.

He stated that Pakistan and Lithuania enjoyed cordial relations and Pakistan wanted to improve cooperation in all fields of mutual



interest for the benefit of the two countries.

Talking to the Ambassador of Ecuador, the President said that Pakistan and Ecuador enjoyed cordial bilateral relations, and Pakistan looked forward to enhancing political, economic, trade and cultural relations with Ecuador.

He stressed the need for developing institutional frameworks between the two countries to enhance bilateral relations.

Commissioning ceremony of advanced frigates for Pakistan Navy held at China

In an impressive ceremony held at Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard Shanghai, China; two newly built Type 054 A/P Frigates namely PNS TIPPU SULTAN and PNS SHAHJAHAN were commissioned in Pakistan Navy. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi graced the ceremony as Chief Guest and handed over the traditional Command Scrolls to the Commanding Officers of PN Ships.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief of the Naval Staff highlighted that commissioning of PNS TIPPU SULTAN and PNS SHAHJAHAN ushers a new chapter in Pak – China friendship that has matured and rests firmly on the pillars of trust, respect and mutual support. The same is manifested in our defence collaborations. Naval Chief added that with the active support of Peoples Republic of China, Pakistan Navy has undertaken substantial measures to strengthen its force structure and progressive capability enhancement.

The Chief Guest underscored that completion of Type 054 A/P Project is a major leap towards strengthening capabilities to respond to maritime threats and contribution to peace and stability in the region. Towards the end, the Admiral thanked and praised the concerted efforts made by all major stakeholders involved in development of the ships including BOMETEC, SASTIND, PLA (N), HZ Shipyard and CSTC for timely completion of the project despite pandemic challenges. The contract for four multi-role frigates (Type 054-A/P) for Pakistan Navy was signed between Pakistan and China in 2018. The first and



second ships PNS TUGHRIL and PNS TAIMUR joined PN fleet in 2022. The development of these state-of-the-art naval units for Pakistan Navy is hinged upon modern stealth design with capability to simultaneously engage in multiple naval operations to counter maritime threats. The 4000 tons frigates are technologically advanced and highly capable platforms having enormous surface to surface, land attack, surface to air and underwater firepower coupled with extensive surveillance potential.

These ships will provide deterrence and means for averting threats in our region while contributing towards protection of Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs). The ceremony was attended by high level Civil & Military dignitaries including Ambassador of Pakistan to China and officials of Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard.



A view of newly commissioned Type 054 A/P Frigate PNS TIPPU SULTAN built for Pakistan Navy at Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard Shanghai, China



A view of newly commissioned Type 054 A/P Frigate PNS SHAHJAHAN built for Pakistan Navy at Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard Shanghai, China



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi during commissioning ceremony of two newly built type 054 A/P Frigates (PNS TIPPU SULTAN & PNS SHAHJAHAN) handing over the traditional command scrolls to the Commanding Officers at Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard Shanghai, China

A Global Feast for a Good Cause: First Lady Inaugurates Charity Event with International Delicacies



First Lady Begum Samina Alvi inaugurated a charity event organized by the Islamabad Foreign Women Association (IFWA) at a local venue in Islamabad, Pakistan. The event showcased culinary delicacies from around the world, featuring traditional dishes from Nepal, Maldives, Japan, Czech Republic, Thailand, Indonesia, France, Argentina, and other countries.

The event was sponsored by Serena Hotels, embassies, and high commissions of different countries, and the proceeds collected from the tickets sold will go to various welfare and charity initiatives. Upon her arrival

at the event, Mrs Alvi was received by Irena Smetankova, President of the IFWA, and spouse of Czech Ambassador Tomas Smetankova.

The festival was attended by members of the diplomatic corps based in Islamabad, their families, and people from different walks of life.

Various ambassadors, including Ambassador Mohamed Karmoune of Morocco, introduced traditional dishes from their respective countries. For instance, Ambassador Karmoune presented Couscous, the traditional Moroccan dish, and Moroccan

tea to the visitors. Likewise, Ambassador Tapas Adhikari of Nepal and Adam Tugio of Indonesia offered visitors the mind-blowing Momo and Nasi Goreng.

After formally commencing the festival by cutting the ribbon, Mrs Samina Alvi went to the stalls and took a keen interest in the food being offered. The organizers thanked the first lady for her presence and stated that her patronage was a source of encouragement for them. Overall, the event provided an opportunity for people to experience a diverse range of international cuisines while contributing to a good cause.





Palestinian President urges UN to suspend Israel's membership

By M. Saeed Yousafzai

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has urged the United Nations to suspend Israel's membership in the world body unless it ends its aggression against Palestinians and implements UN resolutions establishing separate Israeli and Palestinian states as well as the return of Palestinian refugees.

Abbas spoke on Monday during the first official UN commemoration of the flight of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from what is now Israel amid the violence of the partition of Palestine 75 years ago.

More than 760,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled from their homes in 1948 when Israel was created, an event Palestinians call Nakba — or catastrophe — and marked each year on May 15.

In an hourlong emotion-filled speech, Abbas asked the world's nations why more than 1,000 resolutions adopted by UN bodies regarding the Palestinians had never been implemented.

He held up a letter from Israel's foreign minister, Moshe Sharett, after resolutions were adopted in 1947 and 1948 promising to implement them and said: "Either they do respect these obligations, or they stop becoming a member."

"We demand today officially, in accordance with international law and international resolutions, to make sure that Israel respects these resolutions or suspend Israel's membership of the UN," Abbas said in his speech.

Abbas accused Israel of having "never fulfilled its obligations and the prerequisites for its

**Palestinian President
Mahmoud Abbas
insists that Israel must
respect UN resolutions
on Palestine or cease
as a UN member.**

membership" of the United Nations.

The Palestinian president counted "around 1,000 resolutions" adopted by the UN General



Assembly, Security Council and Human Rights Council related to Israel. "To date, not one single resolution was implemented," he said.

Abbas added that Nakba "did not start in 1948 and it did not stop after that date".

"Israel, the occupying power, continues its occupation and its aggression against the Palestinian people and continues to deny this Nakba and rejects international resolutions regarding the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland," he said.

There are 5.9 million Palestinian refugees living in the occupied West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, according to the UN.

The UN is commemorating Nakba at its headquarters in New York City this year for the first time after a resolution was passed in November.

UN member states expressed support for the Palestinian people and their cause on social media.

U.S.-Funded National Women Police Conference Spotlights Gender Equality and Empowerment in Pakistan



By Mian Fazal Elahi, Monitoring

The National Women Police Conference, funded by the U.S. government and hosted by the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan, took place in Islamabad.

The conference, organized in collaboration with the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and the Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights (PCHR), brought together influential figures in the fields of policing and women's rights.

Under the theme of "Inspire, Empower, and Transform," participants engaged in constructive discussions aimed at advancing gender equality and empowering women.

U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome, in his address, stressed the crucial role of women in law enforcement and the importance of implementing innovative policies to ensure equal access to justice.

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by women in the field, Ambassador Blome commended the organizers and attendees for their unwavering commitment to promoting

women's rights and empowerment. He expressed his optimism that the conference would yield positive outcomes and tangible results.

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Tarar affirmed the Pakistani government's dedication to ensuring access to justice for all citizens, particularly emphasizing the safety and empowerment of women. Senator Tarar underscored the necessity for collaborative efforts among government agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to foster gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the country.

The National Women Police Conference 2023 is part of a broader initiative aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan.

The U.S. government, through the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, has been working closely with the Government of Pakistan and civil society partners to support initiatives that champion women's rights and enhance access to justice.

By providing an essential platform for discussion and the sharing of best practices, challenges, and opportunities, the conference plays a vital role in advancing women's inclusion in policing and ultimately improving access to justice for all citizens in Pakistan.

Federal Law Minister Senator Azam Nazeer



Türkiye:

2nd round of presidential election on May 28

In Türkiye, a second-round of the presidential election will be held on 28th of this month as no candidate won the required fifty percent votes in the first round of polls. The head of the Supreme Election Council said incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdogan took the lead in the first round with 49.51 percent of the votes while his rival Kemal Kilicdaroglu secured 44.88 percent of the votes. Voter turnout in yesterday elections was 88.92 percent while turnout from Turkish citizens abroad was 52.69 percent.



Army vows 'no restraint' against perpetrators of May 9 attacks

By Monitoring

Military commanders have resolved that restraint will no longer be exercised against perpetrators, spoilers and violators who attack military installations and setups under any circumstances.

The resolve was expressed at a Special Corps Commanders Conference held in Rawalpindi with Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir in the chair.

The forum was briefed that a well-coordinated arson plan involving desecration of Shuhada pictures, monuments, burning down of historical buildings and vandalism of military installations was executed to malign the institution and provoke it towards giving an impulsive reaction.

The conference condemned, in the strongest possible sense, these politically motivated and instigated incidents against military installations as well as public and private properties.

The Commanders also communicated the anguish and sentiments of the rank and file of the Army on these unfortunate and unacceptable incidents.

Based on the irrefutable evidence collected so far, Armed Forces are well aware of the planners, instigators, abettors and perpetrators

of these attacks and attempts to create distortions in this regard are absolutely futile.

The Forum expressed firm resolve that those involved in these heinous crimes against the military installations and personal as well as equipment will be brought to justice through trials under relevant laws of Pakistan including Pakistan Army Act and Official Secret Act.

Pakistan Army with the full support of people of Pakistan, will defeat all nefarious designs of the enemies of Pakistan.

The participants paid rich tribute to the Shuhada, who have laid their lives in defence of the motherland while fighting the menace of terrorism.

The forum acknowledged the successful Counter Terrorism and Intelligence Based Operations in the country by Security Forces, especially valiant response given by the troops

in the Muslim Bagh attack, and paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices made by the brave sons of the soil.

The participants also showed concern over externally sponsored and internally facilitated, orchestrated propaganda warfare, unleashed against the Army leadership, meant to create fissures between the armed forces and the people of Pakistan, and within rank and file of the forces.

The vicious propaganda of such inimical forces will be defeated with the support of people of Pakistan, who have always stood with the Armed Forces during all odds.

The conference stressed the need of strict implementation of relevant laws to penalize the violators of the social media rules and regulations.

It emphasized the need for national consensus amongst all stakeholders to address ongoing political instability at priority to restore public confidence, reinvigorate economic activity and strengthen democratic process.

The forum also resolved to support all such efforts to reach this much needed consensus.

It resolved that Pakistan Army with the full support of people of Pakistan, will defeat all nefarious designs of the enemies of Pakistan.

“10-Year Remembrance of Nelson Mandela” event marked in Islamabad

Embassy of South Africa marked an event “10-Year Remembrance of Nelson Mandela” in Islamabad. Syed Naveed Qamar graced the event as chief guest. The event was attended in large numbers by diplomats, members of the diplomatic corps as well as Pakistanis from different walks of life.



Ethiopian embassy inaugurated in Islamabad

Ambassador Misganu Arega, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, officially inaugurated the Embassy of Ethiopia amid the presence of Ambassadors and diplomatic community based in Islamabad. Ambassador Misganu Arega and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar cut the ribbon together to inaugurate the embassy.



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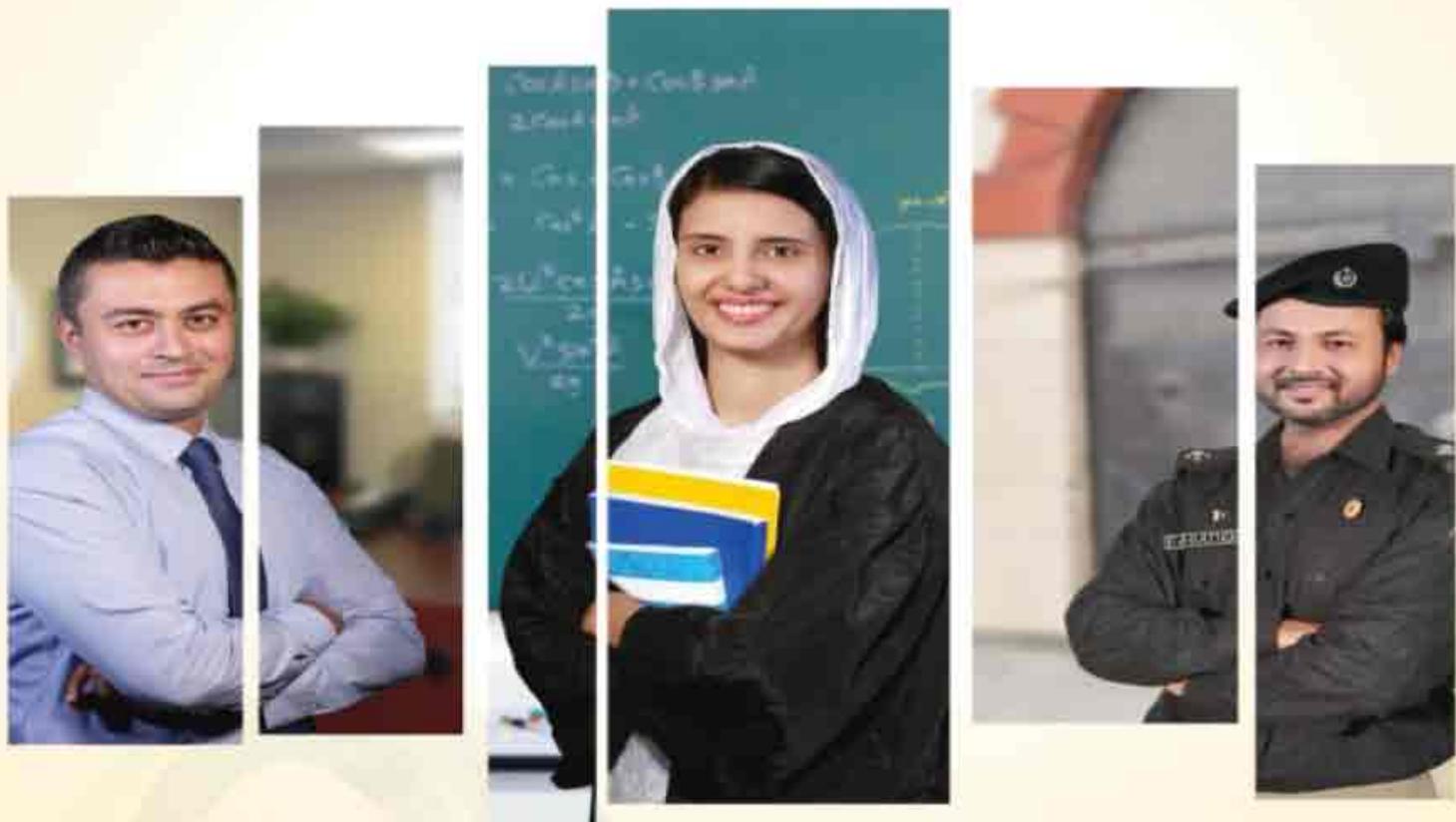


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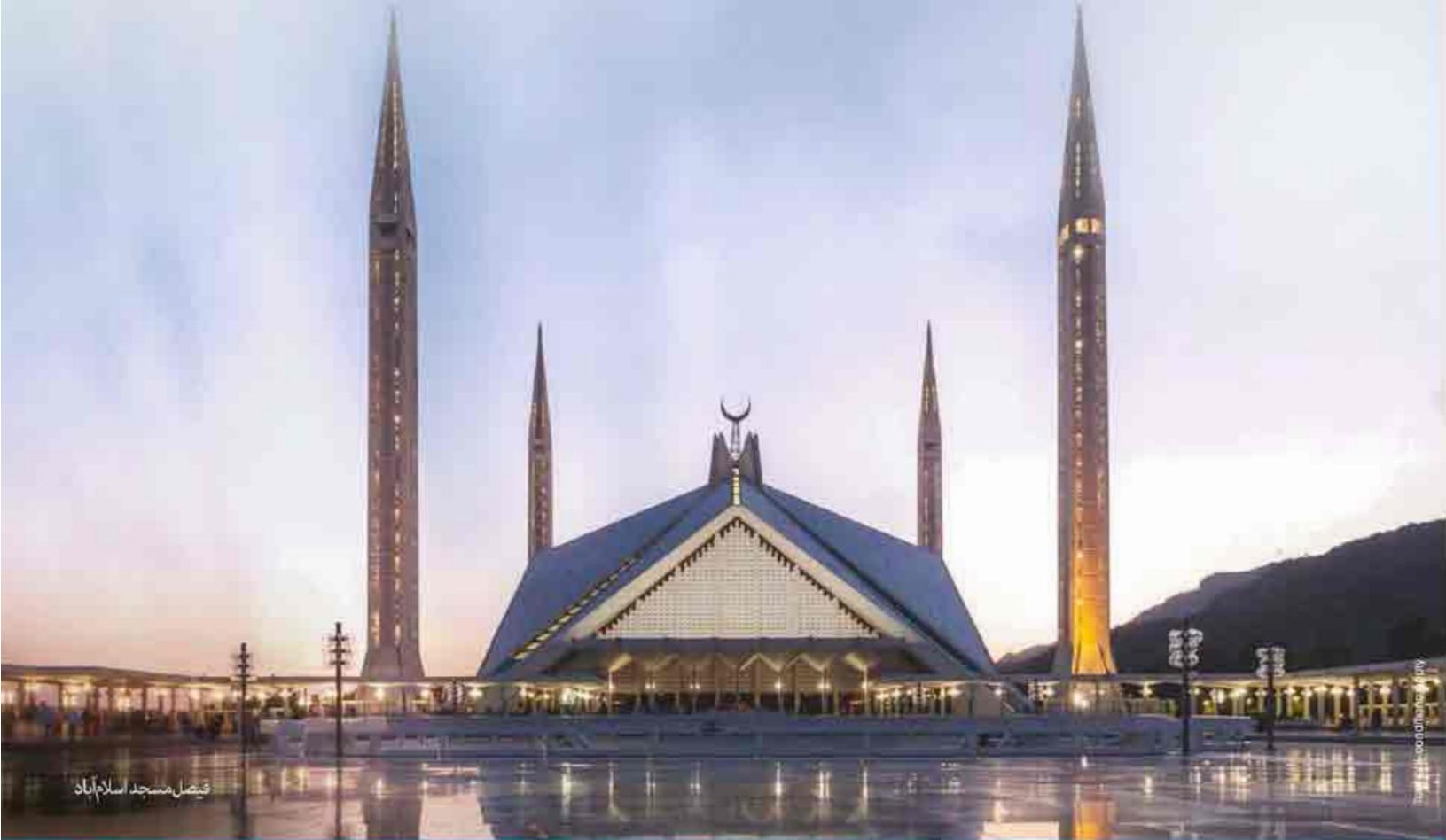
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