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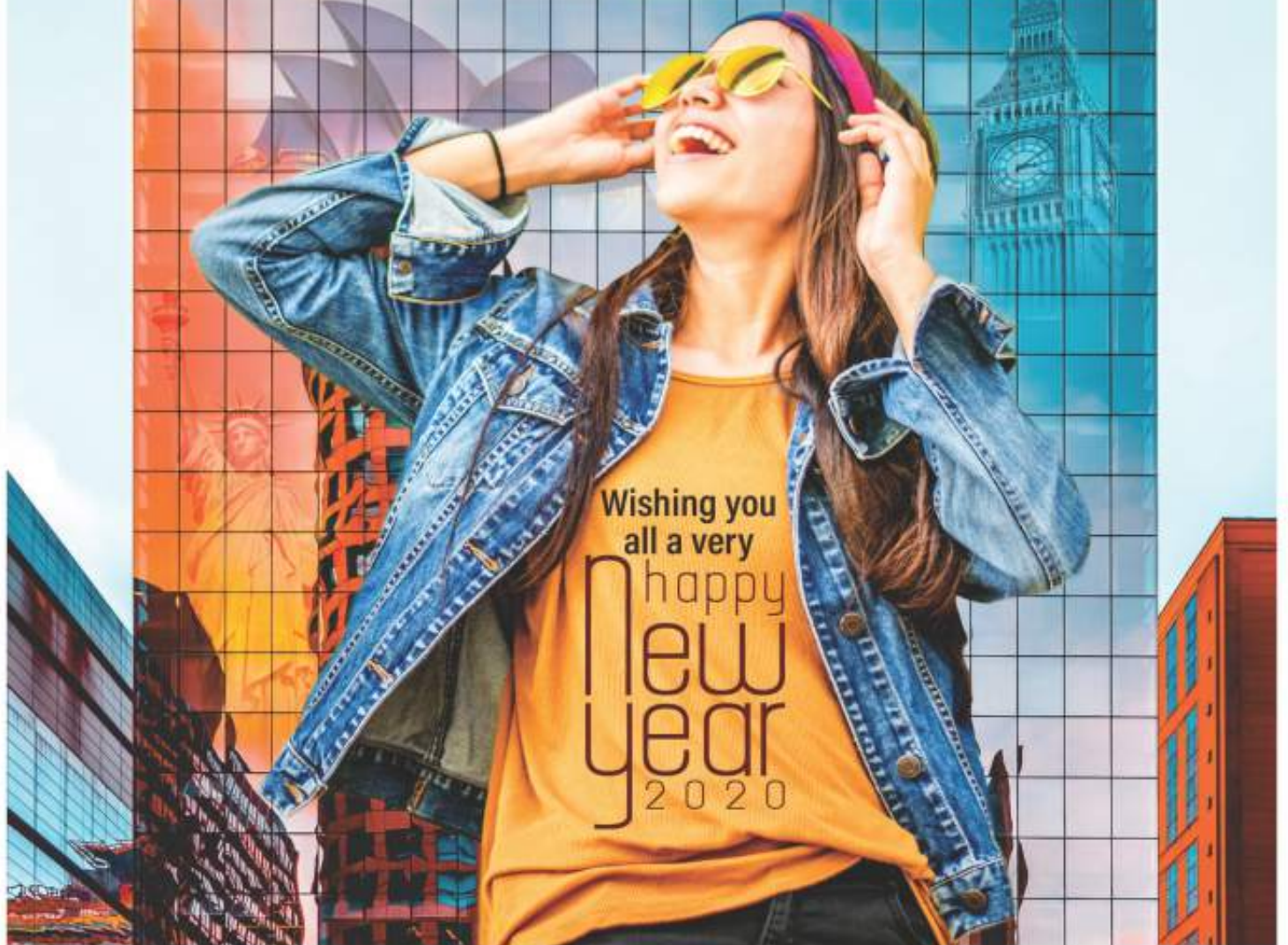


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





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Publisher: **Ansar Mahmood Bhatti**

Printers: 051-544 1786.Com

Price Rs. 450/- \$ 4

New Uzbekistan-New Opportunities



Uzbekistan is one of those countries that have made progress in all spheres by leaps and bounds. Development activities in this landlocked country got an added spur when President Shavkat Mirziyoyev took over after demise of Islam Karimov, the architect of modern Uzbekistan. Since then the country is constantly on the move. The Uzbek leadership is keen to not only improve infrastructural network in the country but to bring the less privileged class at par with those who have access to all modern facilities. The beauty of Uzbek system is that everybody has access to basic amenities of life. Education is free. Everybody gets

free healthcare facilities no matter he or she belongs to government or private sector. Even those who do not have a job can enjoy all such facilities.

In universities talented students are offered scholarships as well while those who do not have a place to live are provided with a decent accommodation by the government. For jobless people a dedicated institution is working round the clock that gathers data of all such people and then recommends them suitable jobs. The effectiveness of this system can be gauged from the fact that those Uzbek people who had left the country long ago in search of jobs abroad, are now rushing back as the govt has set for it target of providing jobs to all needy people within next few years.

The security situation in Uzbekistan is meticulous. It is because of fool proof security that foreigners come to this country without any hesitation and fear. During past few years number of tourist coming to Uzbekistan has multiplied, told the Deputy Chairman of the State Tourism Committee in an exclusive interview with DNA, CENTRELINE and daily Islamabad Post. He further told that the Uzbek government led by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has already taken plenty of measures to ensure security of tourists besides development and improvement of the touristic places.

Uzbek people are down to earth. Their hospitality is matchless. And that is perhaps the secret of progress of the country. As compared with Pakistan, Uzbekistan happens to be a very young country however during past twenty years or so the country has achieved many a milestone we in Pakistan can only dream of. For instance the bullet train connecting Tashkent with Samarkand and Bukhara is ostensibly a landmark project. Now with the fast train called Afrosiob, it takes only four hours to reach Bukhara from Tashkent. Samarkand is just in the middle of Tashkent and Bukhara so in only two hours visitors can reach this beautiful and historical city.

The Uzbek embassy in Islamabad sent a group of professionals as observers to Uzbekistan for monitoring the parliamentary and local government elections. Here too many lessons can be learnt from the Uzbek experience. The entire electoral drill was conducted in a peaceful and harmonious manner. The opposition parties got a level playing field and participated in the elections with full fervor and interest. For the first time live debates were telecast on national hook-up thus all five political parties had opportunity of reaching out to their electorates.

Summing up, Uzbekistan under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev is well on track of progress and prosperity. The way things are moving ahead in Uzbekistan, in next few years the country would surely emerge as a key player not only in the region but at global stage also. Pakistan and Uzbekistan have so many excuses to expand and deepen their cooperation. Since the direct flights have already started therefore distance barrier has become irrelevant thus providing peoples of both sides to commute freely. Both countries are rich in cultural and religious sites therefore this is yet another excuse that should bring both countries even closer.

Ambassador Furqat Sidikov and his staff also need applause as whatever is happening between the two countries is a result of their tireless efforts and toil.

ANSAR

Chief Editor's Profile: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti is a career journalist. He started off as District Correspondent of Daily *The Muslim* in 1988 from Gujrat. Later he moved to Islamabad and joined *Pakistan Observer* as Sub-Editor / Op-ed Writer, in 1993. In 1995 he again moved to The Muslim as Sub-Editor and he left The Muslim in 1997 to join *The Nation* as City Editor and Diplomatic Correspondent, where he remained till 2002. His association with *The News* spans over three years from 2002 to 2005 as Columnist. In 2005 Mr. Bhatti switched over to Khabrain Group as Columnist / Special Correspondent. In 2010 he was made Resident Editor of *The Post*, a sister publication of *daily Khabrain*. In 2010 he launched his own publication *Centreline*. He has authored two books on European Union. He has also served in *Pakistan Telecom Company (PTCL)* as Media Advisor/Director Communications. He Launched Diplomatic News Agency (DNA) in 2012.

Uzbekistan safest country to travel and invest

By Ansar Mahmood Bhatti



TASHKENT: Uzbekistan, ever since President Shaukat Shavkat Mirziyoyev has assumed charge of his office, is constantly on the move. The country is fast developing into hub of tourism activities. Besides, Uzbekistan leadership has sought to open up to the outer world with a view to inculcating deeper and stronger relations with various nations. Uzbekistan was once at the heart of the ancient Silk Road trade route connecting China with the Middle East and Rome. The country spent most of the past 200 years as part of the Russian Empire, and then of the Soviet Union, before emerging as an independent state when Soviet rule ended in 1991. Under President Islam Karimov, who ruled from 1989 until his death in 2016, Uzbekistan was reliant on exports of cotton, gas and gold to maintain its economy. President Karimov's successor, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has made efforts to follow legacy of Islam Karimov of building a prosperous and developed Uzbekistan. Islam Karimov,



With Senator Hidyat Ullah & MNA Yaqoob Sheikh



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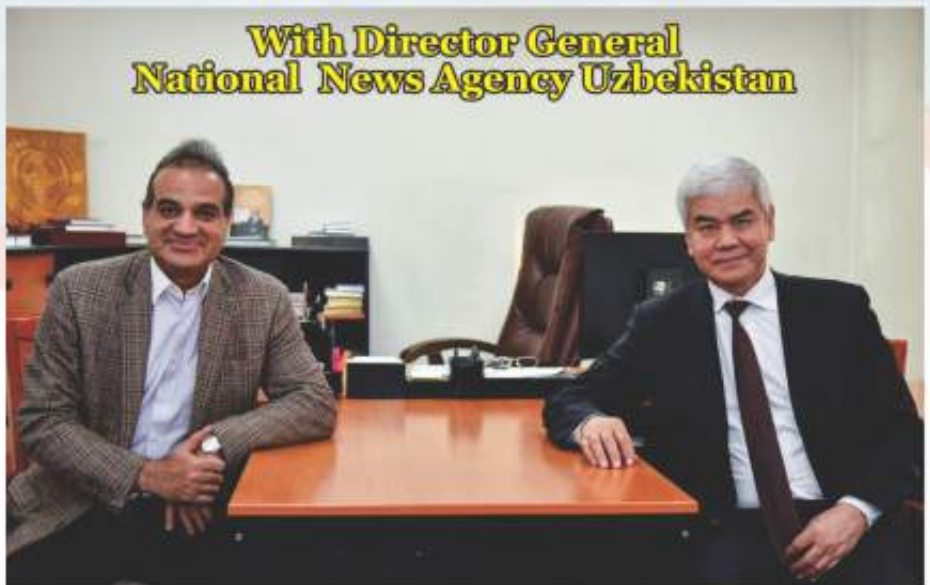
New Uzbekistan-New Opportunities

Uzbeks say, laid the foundation stone of a modern and enlightened Uzbekistan and President Shavkat is carrying forward that agenda successfully.

This culturally rich and historically compelling country, along with the rest of central Asia, has been named the No. 1 travel region for the New Year due to its easy access and new visa-free travel ability. The Economist highlighted the country as well, naming it the most improved nation in 2019 due to significant government reforms that have accelerated over the past year. All of that, plus its untouched history and remarkable food, are making Uzbekistan an increasingly popular destination.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev initiated ambitious reforms to transform the country into an attractive destination for travelers. Reforms include a 30-day period of visa-free travel privileges for visitors from 65 countries; and a simplified electronic visa system for citizens of 77 countries, including the United States, was just introduced, according to export.gov, which is managed by the US Commerce Department.

Uzbek people on December 22, 2019



With Director General
National News Agency Uzbekistan

voted in the parliamentary and local government elections under the theme New Uzbekistan- New Elections. Over 800 international observers were invited to Uzbekistan to observe the election process. From Pakistan 15 observers took part in this exercise and observed the election process in various parts of the country. Pakistan was among a few countries from where more than 10 election observers were invited.

The international observers were all praise for arrangements made for the elections.

The international observers and head of OSCE Zulueta

Electoral Code was adopted. OSCE observers monitored how code norms work in practice. She noted that in general, the elections in each country are different from each other, but the principle of elections is the same – citizens choose candidates. Her remarks are ostensibly a manifestation of trust and confidence of the international community in the electoral process of Uzbekistan. The observers noted with satisfaction that the opposition parties were provided with a level playing field thus making it possible for them to field candidates of their own choosing and contest election in free and fair manner.

The election event also provided us with an opportunity of talking to people of various nationalities living and doing



Amir Taimur



Registan



said that since 2015, when she headed the OSCE observer mission in the presidential election, a lot has changed in Uzbekistan. The

business in Uzbekistan. We came across many Pakistanis successfully doing business in Uzbekistan while there is no dearth of businessmen who have already identified areas in which they would like to invest in the coming days. Conducive business environment; investors' friendly policies and flawless

New Uzbekistan-New Opportunities

security situation are few factors that lead to inflow of foreign investments and businessmen. Uzbekistan ranks top among such countries. A Pakistani businessman Rashid running a restaurant in Tashkent told that he has been in this country for last 20 years and has never faced any problems.

He said all cities of Uzbekistan are safe with almost zero crime rate therefore businessmen prefer to do business here. He was also appreciative of the polices of the incumbent president saying Uzbekistan under Shavkat Mirziyoyev offers a plethora of trade and business avenues especially to the outsiders. Rashid further told that the police system of Tashkent in particular and Uzbekistan in general is one of the best. People trust police and police try its best to live up to expectations of people.

Rashid told no one would dare to cast a glance at a lady packed with gold walking alone even at midnight. That is how the country has won confidence of the foreigners when it comes to security and friendly business environment.

Another hallmark of Uzbek society is their hospitality and affection especially for the outsiders. For Pakistani people they have a unique love which is difficult to narrate in words. Just tell them that you are from Pakistan and then start experiencing their great hospitality.

Uzbek cuisine can be characterized as flavorful and hearty with an array of rice dishes. Its most popular dish is the Uzbek pilau, the country's national dish which consists of a bed of rice slowly cooked with carrots, rice, onions and meat and dry fruits. Food bloggers are especially using this opportunity to

experiment with the unique flavors and spices used in Uzbek cuisines. There are big pilau centers in Tashkent



New Uzbekistan-New Opportunities

and elsewhere in the country offering mouthwatering dishes. The biggest Osh Pilau center is working in Tashkent for last 30 years. Because of its quality and delicious pilau it has become Central Asia's largest pilau center. However Pilau in Samarkand has its own taste. Served in a big clay pot, Samarkand Pilau is topped with vegetables, meat and garlic also. Uzbek Pilau is decorated with horse meat usually however guests who do not eat horse meat can ask the dish without it.

BULLET TRAIN

The Tashkent to Samarkand high-speed rail line is a 344-kilometre (214 mi) high-speed rail connection between Tashkent and Samarkand, the two largest Uzbek cities. The route passes through four provinces: Tashkent, Sirdaryo, Jizzakh and Samarqand in Uzbekistan. Trains operate seven days a week under the brand Afrosiyob. A 141 km long extension to Qarshi started operation on August 22, 2015, though at lower speed of 160 kph. An extension to Bukhara on the Talgo 250 ran for the first time on August 25, 2016 – marking the completion of a project to modernise the 256 km route from Samarkand. Travel from Tashkent to Bukhara, a distance 600 km, is covered in around 4 hours instead of 7 hours.

BUKHARA POTENTIAL

Bukhara is one of the oldest cities of Uzbekistan with a thousand years of history. Bukhara is a holy city of Muslim world. There are many mosques, shrines, madrasahs, with the latest one among them dating back to the XIX century, preserved there.

The historic center of Bukhara has been listed by UNESCO as one of the World Heritage Sites. You will need at least two days to do Bukhara main architectural sights.

Bukhara is a city-museum, with about 140 architectural monuments. The nation's fifth-largest city, it had a population of 247,644 as of 31 August 2016. People have inhabited the region around Bukhara for at least five millennia, and the city has existed for half that time. The mother tongue of the majority of people of Bukhara is Tajik. Located on the Silk Road, the city has long served as a center of trade, scholarship, culture, and religion. UNESCO has listed the historic center of Bukhara (which contains numerous mosques and madrasahs) as a World Heritage Site.

Bukhara has been one of the main centres of world civilisation from its early days in 6th century BCE. From the



With Director DUNYO News Agency



With Head of South Asia Desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs



With Director DUNYO News Agency

6th century CE, Turkic speakers gradually moved in.

Its architecture and archaeological sites form one of the pillars of Central Asian history and art. The region of Bukhara was a part of the Persian Empire for a long time. The origin of many of its current inhabitants goes back to the period of Aryan immigration into the region.

Char Minor (alternatively spelled Chor Minor, and also alternatively known as the Madrasah of Khalif Niyaz-kul) is a building tucked away in a lane northeast of the Lyabi Hauz complex.

The structure was built by Khalif Niyaz-kul, a wealthy Bukharan of Turkmen origin in the 19th century under the rule of the Janid dynasty.[22] The four-

towered structure is sometimes mistaken for a gate to the madras that once existed behind the structure; however, the Char-Minar is actually a complex of buildings with two functions, ritual and shelter.

Here recognition of role of Uzbek embassy in Islamabad spearheaded by Ambassador Furqat Sidikov also needs to be highlighted because it all has happened with their active support. During past few years both countries have come close to each other.

The ambassador and his staff took keen interest in taking bilateral relations to new heights. Opening of direct air link between Pakistan and Uzbekistan ostensibly contributed towards further deepening of this relationship.

New Uzbekistan-New Opportunities

Uzbek citizens in Pakistan cast their votes



ISLAMABAD, (DNA) Uzbek nationals living in Pakistan cast their votes in parliamentary and local govt elections at polling stations established at the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Islamabad.

Ambassador of Uzbekistan Furqat Sidikov and other embassy staff also cast their votes.

The polling started from 8 a.m and voting process began with the participation of citizens of Uzbek republic permanently residing in Pakistan.

In the 22nd polling station, created at the Embassy, active participation of citizens of Uzbekistan in exercise of their constitutional rights has been shown.

In particular, citizens showed great interest in the voting process itself and the programs of 5 candidates from 5 political parties of Uzbekistan.

As a sign of the exercise of their constitutional

rights, the citizens of Uzbekistan were provided with symbolic badges specially prepared by the Embassy with the inscription "New Uzbekistan - new elections". This badge was handed over to each voting participant, as well as to members of their family. Especially for citizens of Uzbekistan, the embassy organized a festive pilaf, including other dishes of national cuisine (samsa, manti, shurpa, sweets). The Uzbek citizens appreciated the arrangements made by the Embassy for them.

They said they felt indebted to the Embassy staff and officials for proving them with an opportunity of exercising their fundamental right of voting.

The citizens who visited the Embassy to vote with their children, a modern playground was organized with various outdoor objects of entertainment, which was greatly liked especially by the children.

DNA





Tana de Zulueta: A lot has changed in Uzbekistan

Tashkent, Uzbekistan (DNA) – A lot has changed in Uzbekistan. This assessment was given by the transformations in Uzbekistan by the head of the OSCE / ODIHR Mission, Cayetana De Zulueta Owtram, during a visit to the 882th polling station in Tashkent on 22 December. Tana de Zulueta noted that the OSCE / ODIHR Mission, which arrived in Uzbekistan on 25 November, works throughout the country and works closely with the Central Election Commission.

“We were granted full access and all the conditions for our work were created. For the first time in Uzbekistan, over 300 observers from both the ODIHR and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, representing 37 countries participating in the Organization, observe the elections. In previous years, there were limits, but now this is not. This is good for the country and allows Uzbekistan to gain even more experience in ensuring transparency of elections,” the head of the OSCE / ODIHR Mission said.

Zulueta said that since 2015, when she headed the OSCE observer mission in the presidential election, a lot has changed in Uzbekistan. The Electoral Code was adopted. Today, OSCE observers monitor how code norms work in practice.

She noted that in general, the elections in each country are different from each other, but the principle of elections is the same – citizens choose candidates.

The Head of the OSCE / ODIHR Mission emphasized that the Organization’s observers do not interfere in the election process, they only observe the voting and, if they see any violations of the law, they are included in the final report. At the same time, she informed that preliminary results of the observation will be presented at a press conference, which is

scheduled for 23 December with the participation of the OSCE PA President G. Tsereteli.

“I also want to note that we will be present in Uzbekistan until 29 December. We will monitor the course of events after the election and monitor the moments that may affect something. Our final report will be published next year,” T. de Zulueta added.

Moreover, T. de Zulueta with great satisfaction told the media that she was honored to meet with President S. Mirziyoyev and personally see how important the election of the country’s parliament is for him and the people of Uzbekistan.

It should be noted that on 13 December an interim report from the OSCE / ODIHR Mission was published covering the period from 25 November to 10 December. It recognizes marked progress in improving the electoral law and electoral practice, states the efforts of the government to modernize the public and public administration system. On the whole, a positive assessment was given to the preparations for this important political event.

We remind you that during the 2019 parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan, the OSCE is represented for the first time by all key structures – the full-fledged ODIHR Mission, the Parliamentary Assembly and the ODIHR leadership represented by its director I. Gisladotir.

The decision to send two full-fledged missions (ODIHR and PA) to observe parliamentary elections by experts is seen as evidence of the OSCE’s recognition of the democratic reforms implemented in Uzbekistan, as well as the high interest of the international community in the electoral process as an important event in further strengthening the role and increasing the seat of parliament in managing the affairs of society and the state.

Uzbekistan's Parliamentary Elections 2019 – from the Eyes of an International Observer

By Lieutenant Colonel Khalid TaimurAkram, (Retd)



Recently, Parliamentary elections were held in Uzbekistan on December 22. These elections provided an opportunity

to Uzbekistan to propel the nation forward on the path of democratic transition and initiate the realization of the nation's great potential. A total of 825 observers, as well as representatives of nine international organizations comprising 41 countries including Pakistan, and China, observed the electoral process in all regions of the country.

All the International experts praised the renewal process in Uzbekistan, recognized the comprehensive nature of the implemented "Action Strategy", which covers all the spheres of state and the society. It was noted that Uzbekistan showed a strong political will by starting a new stage of decisive and deep reforms and transformations.

Being an international observer, I have analyzed the current results of reforms in improving administrative management, which have focused on the interests of people. Particular attention was paid to the measures for strengthening the rule of law in the activities of law enforcement agencies, which in their work give priority to democratic progress and enlightenment.

I visited 20 different polling stations in the vicinity of Tashkent and found the staff to be highly professional, highly energetic and hospitable towards the voters, as they also arranged food for the citizens who came to cast their vote.

Five political parties contested in

these parliamentary elections of Uzbekistan in which each participating political party covered a wider spectrum of manifesto including social justice, rule of the law, women empowerment, job creation, anti-corruption, economic prosperity, stability and sustainability, agricultural revolution and further politicization and democratization. Each party freely run its election campaign before the polls and tried to attract the voters especially youth in the democratic battle of political supremacy through the dominance of ballots.

Mirza-Ulugbek Abdusalomov, Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Uzbekistan (UCEC) had announced the Electoral Code for the parliamentary elections 2019. UCEC entirely and equally supported every contesting political party to run its electoral campaign by ensuring the elements for free, fair and transparent polls, considering it as the significant pillar for the strategic transformation of Uzbek nation.

Although, the various political groups had diverse political targets at the same time all shared one aspect of true patriotism. Uzbekistan has proved that it is truly a democratic country despite having its own unique and functional democratic system for centuries which is still relevant to the

people's desire.

In Uzbekistan suffrage is universal for individuals 18 years of age and older. All aspects of elections, particularly registration by parties and candidates, are controlled by the government's Central Election Commission. An election is legally valid if more than 50 percent of eligible voters participate and a candidate receives more than 50 percent of the votes. The Republic of Uzbekistan is a democratic country where ballots dominate over concentration of power. It is the only country in the world which has its own "Magna Carta" (the Great Charter of the Liberties) and "Social Contract" from centuries because it has very rich civilization, culture, heritage and traditions which are all based on rule of the law i.e. democracy.

In my opinion, these were the elections, which had never happened in the history of Uzbekistan in terms of quality, general organizational preparation for the process and attitude of the media. I think this is a big step for Uzbekistan.

In fact, this atmosphere will further create the prospects of development. These elections have created a space for openness, transparency, and healthy criticism for the betterment of the country's democratic structure. Of course, there are still many elections ahead, but



New Uzbekistan-New Opportunities

these elections will leave their mark on history as the elections that formed a constructive dialogue between people and the political parties. The elections were held in an open and transparent atmosphere. In addition, these elections were in the spotlight. Citizens expressed their views on elections and parties. This means that the citizens have a growing sense of involvement in this electoral process. More than 71% of voters have participated and cast their votes in the elections which is a strong step towards the democratic transition and transformation of Uzbekistan. The active participation of observers, the coverage of mass media, the positive remarks by the international community have further strengthened the reformed process of Uzbekistan's elections. Another significant aspect of these elections is that there is an increase in the socio-political activity of Uzbek people and an increase in legal awareness. The polling staff was highly trained and they knew all the procedures regarding the polls. The polling staff actively guided the citizens regarding the procedure of balloting.

The elections were also held under the new financing system, in accordance with the Electoral Code. The observation mission from a joint undertaking of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) also concluded that the recent changes to election legislation have brought Uzbekistan more closer to the international standards to which all OSCE countries have committed. Electoral preparations were efficient and accompanied by an intensive voter information campaign. Election Day was calm as the introduction of a Unified Electronic centralized "VoterList" and its implementation in practice is a significant step forward. The parliament has been given additional competences in recent years that could potentially make a significant change to the balance of governmental power as in Uzbekistan for the first time, more than 20.5 million voters registered.

While these elections were clearly more open than in the past as recent reforms have created more space for citizens to air their grievances publicly, as tolerance of criticism of



the state administration has grown. The degree of freedom of expression in the media has also improved, and some people now feel able to post views online through blogs and social networks. Independent voices are growing in number and strength, and there is a new sense of freedom.

Moreover, democracy functions in all its true spirits in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Democracy stands for the rights of people which are fully enacted throughout the country. Democracy is "for the people, by the people and of the people" which has already been institutionalized so many years ago in Uzbekistan.

The government of Uzbekistan has

been rigorously working on the motto of H.E. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev "New Uzbekistan, new elections" which shows his untiring efforts to establish a vibrant society, articulated political system and a befitting economic system based on "good governance" for achieving desired goals of socio-economic prosperity in the country.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has pursued a diversified but integrated national policy to transform Uzbekistan's decision-making processes, invigorate civil society, encourage healthy and productive political competition, address human rights and develop a civic culture consistent with the country's status as a modernizing, forward-looking regional power in Eurasia with a steadily increasing majority of citizens under the age of 30.

The elections were based on the principle of openness, constructiveness and equal opportunities for all parties. Moreover, we can say that democratic reforms in Uzbekistan are on the path to natural development and prosperity. Hence, this process has laid a solid foundation for the emergence of a new politically aware generation.



The Writer is Executive Director CGSS & International Observer for Uzbekistan Elections

Uzbekistan and Pakistan have huge economic potential: Furqat Sidiqov

DNA REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Uzbekistan and Pakistan have a big economic potential that can open wide range of opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation. Our partnership relations tied up with deep historical, religious and cultural bounds. In this regard, President of Uzbekistan H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev pays great attention for the development bilateral relations with Pakistan, in including trade and economic, investment and other areas.

These views were expressed by Ambassador of Uzbekistan Furqat Sidiqov during an interview.

He said it is necessary point out that in 2017 Uzbekistan resumed direct flights from Tashkent to Lahore and from Lahore to Tashkent. Annually 12 thousand passengers of Pakistan use this direction. It served as an only bridge connecting Pakistan with Central Asian countries.

This year, economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan reached highest levels. Uzbek side is keen to continue to develop in 2020 bilateral relations in order to achieve more effective results for the sake of benefits of the two Brotherly nations. More than 170 Pakistani companies visited Uzbekistan in order to hold negotiations on the matters of export and import of wide range of goods and to realize joint investment projects.

As a result of this, in 2018-2019, trade turnover between Uzbekistan and Pakistan raised for three times and amounted around 100 million US Dollars.

Uzbekistan became as one of the main trade-economical partners of Pakistan in Central Asia.

In collaboration with CGSS in Islamabad and Karachi were established Uzbekistan-Pakistan Business Council offices. In Lahore operates Uzbek-Pak Trade and

Cultural Center. Those bodies are playing significant role in the development of bilateral economic and cultural cooperation.

At the same time by the initiative of Uzbekistan's President we started to develop in the country so called Ziarat

By opening their companies in Uzbekistan, Pakistani textile companies will get direct access to highest quality Uzbek cotton, employees with high literacy and free export regime to the countries of Central Asia and Commonwealth of independent states that comprises 300 million populations.

Tourism for foreign pilgrims. This direction of tourism took its development in very rapid manner. Created the most favorable conditions for tourists.

In general, we opened doors for religious tourism. As you know

Uzbekistan is the land of great Islamic scholars and thinkers like Al-Khorazmiy, Al-Beruniy, Imom Al-Bukhariy, Bahouddin Naqshbandiy, Al-Motrudiy, At-Termiziy and others. Pilgrims from all over the world are visiting their graves in order to make Ziarat and give them respect.

In this context I would like to point out that people of Pakistan are keen to make Ziarat to Uzbekistan. Ancient and precious cities like Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Termez, Kokand and Namangan always attracting Pakistani tourists.

More than 7 thousand Pakistani tourists visited Uzbekistan last year for Ziarat and we are ready to develop our cooperation in this direction this year also. The idea of Ziyarat tourism relations development between our countries was warmly welcomed by the President and Prime Ministry of Pakistan. As you know, investment is the driver of economy. New technologies, advanced experience and highly qualified specialists come with investments into all sectors of Uzbekistan, business is rapidly developing.

In order to create the most favorable conditions for attracting foreign investments, in Uzbekistan have been created more than 20 free economic zones.

Free economic zones participants are exempted from payment of land tax, profit tax, property tax, customs payments for equipments, raw materials and components, imported for their own production needs.

We are offering to Pakistani companies to realize joint investment projects in Uzbekistan in the fields of textile, leather, agriculture, chemical, construction and other areas.

• By opening their companies in Uzbekistan, Pakistani textile companies will get direct access to highest quality Uzbek cotton,

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employees with high literacy and free export regime to the countries of Central Asia and Commonwealth of independent states that comprises 300 million populations.

At the same time Uzbekistan is ready to invest to Pakistani economy especially in agriculture sector. We express our readiness to establish a factory for assembling modern and unique agricultural machineries and other technologies like cotton picking tractors, sugarcane mowers, cultivators and others. This can help to fully modernize agricultural sector of Pakistan that can increase its productivity for 5 times. Moreover, Uzbekistan can invest to Pakistan's cotton cultivating sector. We can provide super nova technologies, know-how as well as cotton seeds with high resistance to all deceases and pesticides. At the end, I should stress that our countries have wide opportunities to further enhance economical cooperation for the sake



of prosperity, well being and happiness of our Brotherly nations. Accessibility remains a key subject in establishing people to people relations thus recognizing this flight

route from Tashkent-Lahore-Tashkent was resumed in April of 2017. Both states also look forward to initiate new routes from Islamabad and Karachi as well.

OSCE/ODIHR Mission Statement On Elections in Uzbekistan

On December 23, 2019, the Mission of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE / ODIHR) published on the official website the Statement of preliminary findings and conclusions from the monitoring results of parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan from November 25 to December 23 this year. It is noted in the statement that the elections were conducted in the context of comprehensive reforms, initiated by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in 2017. The reform strategy, which is being implemented in stages, aims to transform Uzbekistan's economic, social and political life. It is underlined that the elections, held under the slogan "New Uzbekistan – New Elections", has termed an irreversible modernisation and democratisation process. The transformation of economic, social and political life is, by definition of the head of Uzbekistan, irreversible.

OSCE recognizes that the recently adopted Election Code incorporates several previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations and brings the legal framework closer in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards.

Positive assessment is given to a great effort of the Central Election Commission (CEC) to prepare the parliamentary elections in an improved manner. Ascertained abundance of the CEC the procedure for conducting elections. It is noted improving access for persons with disabilities, training thousands of polling officials and conducting an intensive voter information campaign. It is welcomed the granting the right to vote citizens sentenced to a term of imprisonment for less serious crimes.

The introduction of the new centralized voter register, the Single Electronic Voter List (SEVL), is evaluated as a significant achievement, which was designed to both lessen the possibility for multiple entries for the same person and to better ensure the universality of the vote.

For the first time since 1999, the ODIHR report notes the openness and transparency of elections. The election campaign was held under conditions characterized by the highest respect and authority. The media widely covered the election. Moreover, the OSCE praises what is evidence that civil and political circles openly come forward with political proposals and criticism of the authorities. The campaign took place in an environment characterized by increased

assertion of and tolerance by the authorities for freedom of expression, though legal restrictions on this and other fundamental freedoms persisted.

An important novelty, as noted in the statement, is that frequent live debates took place, most of which was broadcast live. The media had more opportunities to cover the elections. Bloggers are seen as the most important source of independent commentary, and their influence is increasing. It is noted that OSCE observers did not record any discriminatory practice or commentary on minorities during the campaign.

For the first time, it is also recognized that the Election Code establishes a reasonable framework that provides legal means of responding to violations of electoral law and the obligation of parties to publish reports on the spending of funds in the election campaign on their website and in the media within a month.

It is emphasized that in total, the CEC accredited 820 international observers and 135 international journalists for whom was created equal and unhindered access to the electoral process.

OSCE document also lists a number of other positive transformations in state and public administration system, electoral practice.

Uzbekistan expects more tourists from Pakistan: Davrullo Fakhriiddin

By Ansar Mahmood Bhatti



ISLAMABAD, (DNA) Davrullo Fakhriiddin, Deputy Chairman of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Tourism Development has said Uzbekistan accords great importance to its relations with Pakistan adding being one of the largest countries in the region, we expected big flow of tourists from Pakistan.

He said Uzbekistan has seen huge influx of tourists from across the globe during past few years mainly because of excellent facilities provided to the tourists and liberalization of visa regime.

The Deputy Chairman expressed these views in an exclusive interview with DNA news agency, CENTRELINE magazine and daily

The Deputy Chairman (Deputy Minister), further said ever since opening the doors for tourists they had got huge response even beyond their expectations. They were actually not ready for such a huge response therefore they had to work on war footing to improve and expand infrastructure to accommodate more and more tourists.

ISLAMABAD POST. The interview took place in Tashkent.

Shukhrat Isakulov Head of Statistics department and Feruz Dodiev Deputy Head of International Affairs and Protocol Department were also present on the occasion.

The Uzbek tourism committee acts as a tourism ministry and its Chairman and Deputy Chairman's status is equal to minister and deputy minister respectively. Both of them are appointed by the President of Uzbekistan.

The deputy chairman said huge tourism potential exists between Uzbekistan and Pakistan but unfortunately we have not yet explored this potential fully. He nevertheless hoped that the recently

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launched direct flight between Pakistan and Uzbekistan will surely increase flow of Pakistani tourists to Uzbekistan.

While talking about religious tourism he said his country was consistently implementing comprehensive measures to develop the tourism industry as one of the strategic sectors of the national economy, which ensures the accelerated development of the regions, increasing the income and quality of life of the population, as well as improving the investment attractiveness.

Mr. Fakhridin added, both Uzbekistan and Pakistan being the Muslim countries possess plenty of religious sites therefore both have every reason to expand and intensify their cooperation in religious tourism.

He said Uzbekistan had got international recognition as one of the largest centers of Ziyarah tourism in the Islamic World. In Uzbekistan there are more than 7,000 priceless memorial monuments of historical material heritage – the main centers and destinations for the tourism in Uzbekistan. A huge role is played by rich national traditions and values, emanating from the pre-Islamic period of civilization, thanks to which such priceless material objects were created.

He said President Shavkat Mirziyoyev initiated ambitious reforms to transform the country into an attractive destination for travelers. Reforms include a 30-day period of visa-free travel privileges for visitors from 65 countries; and a simplified electronic visa system for citizens of 77 countries, including the United States, was just introduced, according to export.gov, which is managed by the US Commerce Department.

'In 2017 we had more than 2.6 million tourists while in 2018 the number rose to 5.4 million visitors which means we almost doubled the tourism flow. It was due to visa liberalizations and other measures. The E-visa system is very comprehensive and easy to follow. The electronic visas are granted in just two days'.

The Deputy Chairman (Deputy

Minster), further said ever since opening the doors for tourists they had got huge response even beyond their expectations. They were actually not ready for such a huge response therefore they had to work on war footing to improve and expand infrastructure to accommodate more and more tourists.

He said Uzbekistan offers huge incentives to those investing in the hospitality industry. People investing in hotel industry are offered cash back facility. While further elaborating this facility the deputy chairman said for instance somebody building a hotel of 50 or more than 50 rooms is compensated @ USD 4.5 thousand per room. The compensation is paid immediately after the completion of the project. He however made it clear that this

facility is available only for next three years.

To a question about security of the tourist Davrakov Fakhridin said Uzbekistan is a safe country and due attention is paid towards flawless security of the visitors.

He said we did something unique in Uzbekistan by establishing tourism police and appointed a separate deputy tourism minister who is in charge with the security and development of the tourism sector.

"The tourism police comprise very well educated men and women who are quite familiar with the touristic practices. They are efficient, responsible and cordial. Just recently a family lost its valuables in Samrkand. The family reported it to tourist police and within no time the family got its belongings back".DNA



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Investment Climate In The Republic Of Uzbekistan: Current State, Challenges And Solutions

By Kh. Meliev

As you know, a favorable investment climate is a prerequisite for ensuring a stable high development of the economy, attracting investments in regions and industries, and enhancing entrepreneurial activity. It contributes to the influx of foreign direct investment in important industrial and social projects, expands the possibilities for innovation, and improves the quality of socio-economic development.

Over the years of independence, Uzbekistan has gone through a difficult stage of restructuring the entire economy, accompanied by certain difficulties in terms of developing a suitable concept and mechanisms for its implementation.

In particular, it must be admitted that for a long time certain issues remained unresolved in the field of doing business (including currency conversion, free repatriation of profits, attracting international financial institutions, etc.), and this, in turn, seriously affected the investment attractiveness of the country.

In the first half of 2019, the volume of utilized foreign investments grew by 4.3 times compared to the same period in 2018 and amounted to \$ 5.6 billion.

By the end of 2019, the development of foreign direct investment in the amount of at least \$ 7 billion is expected. For comparison, this figure in 2018 amounted to \$ 2.8 billion.

In addition, over two years, the number of enterprises with foreign investment doubled - the figure is more than 10 thousand. The share of investments in the GDP of Uzbekistan for the first time amounted to 38%.

According to the results of January-March 2019, Uzbekistan conducted trade relations with more than 150 countries of the world. Over the past year, total turnover increased by 37%. The main trading partners of the Republic are countries such as China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Korea and Turkey.

As a result, Uzbekistan was ranked 69th among 190 countries in the Doing Business 2020 ranking and entered the

top 20 reformer countries in terms of creating the most favorable conditions for doing business. For comparison, we note that in 2012, the country in this rating occupied only 166 place. Uzbekistan has also resumed active negotiations on accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Joining the WTO will provide an opportunity, for Uzbek entrepreneurs, to raise the prospects for increasing scientific and technological progress in the sectors through the acquisition and purchase of efficient and reliable imported equipment. In addition, upon entry into

In the first half of 2019, the volume of utilized foreign investments grew by 4.3 times compared to the same period in 2018 and amounted to \$ 5.6 billion. By the end of 2019, the development of foreign direct investment in the amount of at least \$ 7 billion is expected.

the WTO, domestic exporters will gain easier access to foreign markets.

Uzbekistan's potential is based on solid macroeconomic fundamentals - it is a country with a strong domestic market, relatively young and cheap labor, rich natural resources, a relatively diversified economy and a rapidly developing infrastructure.

In general, Uzbekistan has the advantage of macroeconomic stability, which, combined with ongoing reforms, opens up opportunities in various sectors of the economy, be it financial

services, construction or tourism.

NECESSARY INSTITUTIONS CREATED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

To effectively ensure the rights and legitimate interests of business entities in the country, appropriate structures have been created, whose task, among other things, is to consolidate efforts in the field of entrepreneurship development.

In particular:

- The Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade is the state body of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dealing with export issues, attracting foreign investment and other aspects of the economy and international trade

- Receptions of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan for consideration of appeals of entrepreneurs - ensure the quality and efficiency of the organization of work with appeals of entrepreneurs;

- Foreign Investment Promotion Agency under the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade - participation in the implementation of the state investment policy to attract foreign investors and creating favorable conditions for the work of foreign businessmen who want to invest in Uzbekistan.

- The Commissioner under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of business entities - provides guarantees for the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of business entities;

- Agency for the Development of Small Business and Entrepreneurship - implements a unified state policy aimed at the development of entrepreneurship.

- The Council of Foreign Investors under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan - the main task of the Council of Foreign Investors is to directly participate in creating a favorable investment climate and effective mechanisms to stimulate domestic and foreign entrepreneurs to

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invest in priority sectors of the economy, as well as to the regions of the country, with the aim of organizing high-tech industries to produce competitive export oriented products.

In turn, the Ministry of Justice is also carrying out consistent work in this direction.

In particular, according to the results of the analysis of law enforcement practice, relevant proposals are developed to eliminate systemic problems that hamper the development of entrepreneurship, as well as aimed at improving the business environment as a whole.

For example, it is expected to introduce a system for assessing the level of entrepreneurship development in the regions of the Republic, which will allow timely identification and elimination of problems that impede the development of entrepreneurship and attracting local investments.

Work is underway to radically improve the licensing system and licensing procedures (proposals will be made to eliminate bureaucratic barriers in obtaining licenses and permits, reduce the number of licenses and permits, and also reduce the time for issuing them).

CHALLENGES IN THE WAY OF EFFECTIVELY ATTRACTING INVESTMENTS AND THEIR SOLUTION

Along with the achieved results, there are also areas requiring appropriate adjustments.

As you know, in advanced foreign countries (USA, England, etc.), the bulk of the financing of the economy comes from equity funds, bonds, and only the smaller one consists of a form of bank financing.

In Uzbekistan, banking sector assets are 130 times higher than the shares of free float.

In particular, today the volume of securities in free circulation is only 0.5% of the country's GDP, the market capitalization of securities at the end of 2017 amounted to 5.9% of GDP.

These are very modest figures, which, on the other hand, show huge potential for growth.

Based on this, in order to develop this direction, in early 2019, the Agency for the Development of the Capital Market was created.

No less important is the course taken to reduce state participation in the economy and the privatization of state assets. In 2020, the Management and Privatization Strategy of state-owned enterprises will be adopted, which

provides for the criteria for maintaining state ownership of enterprises and their transformation into efficient enterprises that can compete in the domestic and foreign markets. By 2023, Uzbekistan plans to privatize at least 20 large state-owned companies.

At the same time, one of the main conditions for attracting investments is the provision of guarantees of property rights.

However, recently there have been some problematic issues related to ensuring guarantees of property rights.

In particular, cases of violation of the rights of owners during the seizure and demolition of real estate.

In recent years, the country has been actively working to improve the architectural appearance of cities,

For comparison, this figure in 2018 amounted to \$ 2.8 billion. In addition, over two years, the number of enterprises with foreign investment doubled - the figure is more than 10 thousand.

The share of investments in the GDP of Uzbekistan for the first time amounted to 38%.

improve the living conditions of the population and implement investment projects. These works in some cases were accompanied by the seizure and demolition of real estate, often dilapidated, in disrepair, and also not meeting the requirements of urban planning.

Unfortunately, this process was not always carried out by local authorities in accordance with the requirements of the law, which required the adoption of urgent measures to unconditionally ensure the rights of owners.

Along with this, until recently, there were still bureaucratic barriers and red tape in the allocation of land.

In addition, there were cases of initiation of issues of revision and cancellation of the results of

privatization, which negatively affected the confidence of entrepreneurs in ensuring ownership.

The course taken on the policy of openness, direct dialogue with the public, including with entrepreneurs and investors, made it possible to timely identify problematic issues, as well as take effective measures to address them.

In particular, in order to address the above issues, appropriate decisions were taken by the President and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Thus, in recent years, intensive reforms have been carried out under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev, including those aimed at ensuring a favorable investment climate.

At the same time, meetings held with entrepreneurs and investors showed a lack of awareness of the local civil servants on the nature and content of the reforms.

It should be noted that the effectiveness of reforms is determined not by the number of legislative acts adopted, but by the full provision for their implementation.

Based on this, in early November 2019, the legal monitoring system was introduced, aimed at ensuring 100 percent and uniform implementation of legislative acts.

CONCLUSION

Thus, despite the positive results achieved, it seems necessary to continue focused work to improve the investment climate in the country.

First of all, such issues as ensuring reliable protection of the rights and legitimate interests of entrepreneurs, including foreign investors, further strengthening the protection of private property, stimulating the development of competition in the investment market, developing the capital market, improving law enforcement practice, etc. need to be further developed.

The solution of these issues will undoubtedly open up new opportunities for the wide promotion of the investment potential and the republic's opportunities abroad, as well as positively affect the positions of the Republic of Uzbekistan in such international ratings as the Index of Economic Freedom, the Rule of Law Index, the Corruption Perception Index, where our results so far remain modest.

Kh. Meliev is the Executive Officer Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Tashkent Osh Pilaf Center: a must visit place for pullao lovers

BY A M BHATTI

TASHKENT: The Pakistani delegation that arrived in Tashkent to observe the upcoming parliamentary and local govt elections, was given a warm welcome upon arrival at the Tashkent International Airport. A dedicated guide for each participant and a translator made things easier.

At the airport each one of us was handed over to a guide and translator. Upon seeing me Mr. Laziz and volunteer Durдона immediately rushed to me and escorted me to our hotel. It was my second trip to Uzbekistan however first with the Uzbek Air. It was an excellent experience of flying with Uzbek Air. It took us around two hours to reach Tashkent from Lahore.

Durдона a student of local university, was very fluent in English and remained with us most of the time during the entire program. She conducted all meetings in a very professional manner.

The hosts wanted to offer me traditional Uzbek delicacy PILAF and therefore took me to the largest pilaf center in the Central Asia named Osh markaz. Upon inquiry, I was told that about 4,000 pilaf lovers visit the place every day.

Established almost 30 years ago this Pilaf center has now become a must visit place for especially the foreigners despite the fact that a large number of locals are also seen hovering over the place in order to get a seat as the place was so crowded and people even have to wait in queues for their turn.

The hallmark of the place is that the cooking process is done live and the



Coming back to Pilaf Center, Tashkent visit will remain incomplete without a visit of this center. It can easily be located as it is situation in juxtaposition of Central Asia's tallest telecom tower.

visitors can see how the pilaf is made. There is huge Owens in which pilaf for thousands of people can be cooked. This restaurant had two big Owens and two medium sized Owens which means it can cater to needs of more than four thousand customers on daily basis. The restaurant located in the heart of the Capital, operates from 8 am till 10 pm.

Pilaf is prepared with rice and includes raisins; chick peas and meat. Uzbek Pilaf is usually made with beef, however Pilaf with lamb and horse meat is also equally popular. Pakistanis do not eat horse meat therefore we had to ask them to bring Pilaf without horse meat. If you do not tell them, then the dish is normally topped with a piece of horse meat. Horse meat can easily be identified because it looks different from lamb or beef. Horse meat is by and large of dark brown color with some traces of white color.

Friday afternoon Tashkent was jolted with earthquake, though not with acute intensity as was the case in Pakistan where an earthquake of 6.5 jolted many parts of Pakistan. There is no time difference between Pakistan and Uzbekistan therefore earthquake tremors were felt in both countries at the same time.

Coming back to Pilaf Center, Tashkent visit will remain incomplete without a visit of this center. It can easily be located as it is situation in juxtaposition of Central Asia's tallest telecom tower.

It may also be mentioned here that all Uzbek cities have special Pilaf delicacies. Samarkand offers equally delicious Pilaf.



Consul General of Iceland Saad Mahmood participates in 8th Consular Conference in Iceland



Mr and Mrs Saad Mahmood Honorary Consul General of Iceland, Islamabad Pakistan with the President of Iceland, Judni Th. Johannesson and the First Lady, Canadian born Eliza Jean Reid during the 8th Consular Conference, September 2019.

Mr Saad Mahmood Honorary Consul General of Iceland, Islamabad Pakistan, participated in the two-day conference organized by the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs in

Iceland for the honorary consuls of Iceland. This is the 8th conference of its kind that is held every five years. 213 individuals in 90 countries around the world serve as honorary

consuls to Iceland. They are not paid for the position and work closely with the Ministry and the Icelandic embassies to promote and protect Icelandic interests.

Production of electric cars to start in Fergana region in October 2022

Target list of investment projects for the development of industry, services and agricultural products processing in Margilan and Kokand cities of Fergana region in 2020-2022 has been announced.

According to the document, the organization of production of electric cars by "Shaffof omadli sanoat" LLC is set for October 1, 2022.

The production capacity of the plant is 2,000 electric cars a year. The total project cost is \$40 million, including \$24 million of foreign direct investment. Reportedly, the plant will create 300 jobs.

It should be recalled that in mid-September this year, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited the "Kokand" FEZ and familiarized himself with the activities of the "Shaffof omadli sanoat" JV.



Exploring the grandeur of Bali

By AB Khan



It was indeed a long flight of minimum 10 plus hours no matter whichever airlines one takes from Pakistan to Bali, Indonesia. However without exaggeration, the agony of the long journey evaporated like vapors at the touch down at airport Denpasar, the provincial capital of Bali. If you are occupying a window seat, you are in luck. The island gives a breathtaking aerial view from little window and teases the anxiety level to a higher notch as the pilot announces descend. Relaxing quiet beaches, innovating cuisine, great surf, lush green paddy fields and adventurous wildlife, was all this party of eight was looking forward to while planning an eight day vacation in Bali.

Asked as which is the good season for a visit to the island, one fellow Balinese passenger on the plane answered, "both seasons" explaining further that the island has wet season and a dry season as there is no summer or winter thus limiting the choice.

Digging into the geography of the country, it comprises of over 15000 islands but Bali, hands down, stands tall and is usually the favourite pick when a decision needs to be made.

Our itinerary included 3 days in Nusa-Dua which is about 30 to 40 minutes drive depending on the traffic from the Denpasar Airport, followed by 2 days in Ubud and last 3 days in Seminyak instead of Kuta which is more popular and happening town. The island makes you fall in love at the first sight and leaves an imprint of impermeable memories. Post trip. People say that Bali is now spoiled and for years the search has been on for a "new Bali". The tourism ministry in Jakarta has been working herciously to open new tourism vistas and very soon will be announcing ten new Bali resorts.



Uncrowned surfs, mist-shrouded rainforests, paddy fields, coconut groves and fleets of colorful fishing boats fill up the Bali mosaic.

The island makes room for everyone, be it a nature lover, animal's conservation activists, a foodie, health freak or a business tycoon searching for a spot on the planet earth to unwind without his or her laptop and I phone, Bali offers unexpected surprises.

Nusa means island and Dua means two because there are two islands in the bay of Bali. The place is a bit secluded from the usual buzzing activities, beaches less crowded making it most suitable for honeymooners and a small family of vacationers to enjoy in serenity. Nusa Dua is a world within its own world. Water sports in the likes of Para-gliding or Parasailing, sea walking, surfing espedades are all within throw away distance. A sea food dinner on a one hour driver in Jimbaran and a trip to Uluwatu Temple to witness traditional Balinese dance called Kecak is a must do while staying in Nusa Dua.

The western end of Bali is covered by more



than 200 square miles of uninhabited jungle, home to endemic ebony leaf monkeys, deer, giant monitor lizards, hornbills, civets and flying foxes. The Bali National park is the most accessible part of this wilderness and offers wildlife-watching opportunities and by default if you are into Safari's this a treasure trove for you.

Arriving at our destination in Ubud, the view from the hotel located in the middle of rainforest and terraced rice paddy fields was breathtaking. Having said that, Ubud is not the kind of place where one needs a long list of things to do. The most tempting however are the Yoga classes being organized at every local hotel, visit to monkey forest, Tegenungan waterfall and of course rice field walks. There is a lot of soul searching and mediating in Ubud and one bumps into many Australians and Europeans with long stays in the town for Yoga expeditions. Our hotel was the in the middle of rice fields and this is as close as one get to the natural habitat.

Driving on a 12 seater that costs around 100 US dollars, we reached Menjangan



Island, named after the deer that roam its beaches. This is Bali's most spectacular diving and snorkeling venue and is the ideal place to escape the over-crowded reefs off the east coast. The steep drop off here is a great place to watch an entire universe of marine life that frequently includes turtles, rays, eels, sharks, dolphins and, occasionally, whale sharks.

In order to up the ante, our last stop Seminyak, a beach resort as we wanted the holidays to end on a high note. Luxury Villas, tantalizing Spas, high-end shopping malls and chic restaurants offering a wide array of cuisines, pretty much covered the Seminyak up-scale canvas for us. This town was definitely cut above the rest. Pregnant with slick bar and cafes running along the coastline where you can dig in your feet in the white sand or wet your toes in the sea water, Seminyak's nightlife provides a heaven for party mongers. To enjoy a spectacular view of the beach with a pinacolada in hand, visit Potato Head Beach club, sit in one of the cabanas near their infinitely pool and marvel at the site of the sunset. Coffee addicts should not miss on the cup of coffee at Revolver, another café on the top of must visit lists.

There is choice between bean blends and the place is not short on character, as it is styled to resemble a saloon from the Wild West. While in Seminyak, you cannot miss Pura Petitenget which is one of the most important sea temples in Bali. For cocktails Ku De Ta was our stop. A large beach front bar overlooking the oceans, the bartenders over here perform magic as they mix the cockatiels which are simply lip smacking. Enough food for thought before all packed up within 30 kilos limitation of the airlines and back to our home where the heart is.



Is an in-house change imminent in March ?

By Naveed Miraj

As key court developments and political developments in the coming weeks unfold the question whether the Khan government can survive over the next few months is asked with interest in the diplomatic circles of Islamabad.

PTI government has moved a review petition in the Supreme Court on the November 28th verdict in the matter of extension in tenure of the Chief of Army Staff. The stand-off between higher judiciary and the military establishment went into a high gear last month when the Supreme Court asked the government to come up with a legislation to ensure that cabinet and the President have the power to grant an extension in service to the Chief of the Army Staff. The verdict made some detailed a legal reasoning and bound the government to answer some very critical question on the appointment of the COAS, its terms and conditions and how an extension will be granted. While opinion on whether any legislation that responds to the points raised in the verdict will be an Act of Parliament or it will require an amendment, in any case the government was bound to engage with the opposition. Khan government has tried to take the easy route and tried to handle the matter through a review petition. This could go either way for the government and the COAS.

The verdict in General Musharraf treason case opened another front when the former military dictator was handed down a death sentence by a special court. This is unprecedented and has attracted quite a strong response from the military.

Things were so serious that General Bajwa had to rush to PM Khan on his return from Geneva and meet him to express what the military states to be

'rage and disappointment' in the rank and file. Judge Waqar's 'controversial' lines were surely directed at provoking a response and response it did invoke. The government has now the delicate task managing balancing act between the bench and military establishment. Sensing that any mishandling could lead to repeat of 2007 events where legal community and the establishment fought it out on the streets and in the courts

Chaudhry's of Gujrat (PML (Q) are again making maneuvers that are likely to result into an in house change in March next year. These sources ask to watch Chaudhry Pervaiz Illahi and are predicting that his resignation as speaker Punjab Assembly will set the ball rolling.

rooms. The government stepped back from its earlier stance of moving a judicial reference against Justice Waqar Seth.

Meanwhile one source close to PML (N) said that MNS has asked his party's leadership not speak much on either the extension or the Musharraf verdict as things are taking their own course and PML (N) does not need to intervene. He has told them though that no extension will be supported and also that things will not reach a stage where

extension legislation will be required. He has also reportedly said that the party should be ready for elections in the year 2020.

PPP has openly supported Musharraf verdict and is trying to gain some traction in Punjab by mobilizing its base which though weak still is showing some life. It put up a big show in Rawalpindi on November 27.

In the meanwhile, those who closely watch the developments in Islamabad claim that Chaudhry's of Gujrat (PML (Q) are again making maneuvers that are likely to result into an in house change in March next year. These sources ask to watch Chaudhry Pervaiz Illahi and are predicting that his resignation as speaker Punjab Assembly will set the ball rolling. How will different parties play out this phase will be interesting to watch.

Inside Khan government many cabinet members have been questioning Khan's strategy of just wanting to fix the opposition leadership and focusing too much on media instead of core governance issues. Shiekh Rashid who is the lone MNA of his own party and ally of Khan reportedly was very vocal in a recent cabinet meeting and criticized the economic strategy of the government. Some other cabinet members also voiced their concerns. Sheikh Rasheed even went to the extent of offering his resignation by saying that he did not want to continue.

The weak coalition constructed by PTI has many internal strains and any small coalition partner weaved away from the coalition can bring the government down.

The writer is a senior journalist based in Islamabad.

Senator Enver Baig hosts Christmas dinner for diplomats and Pakistani friends







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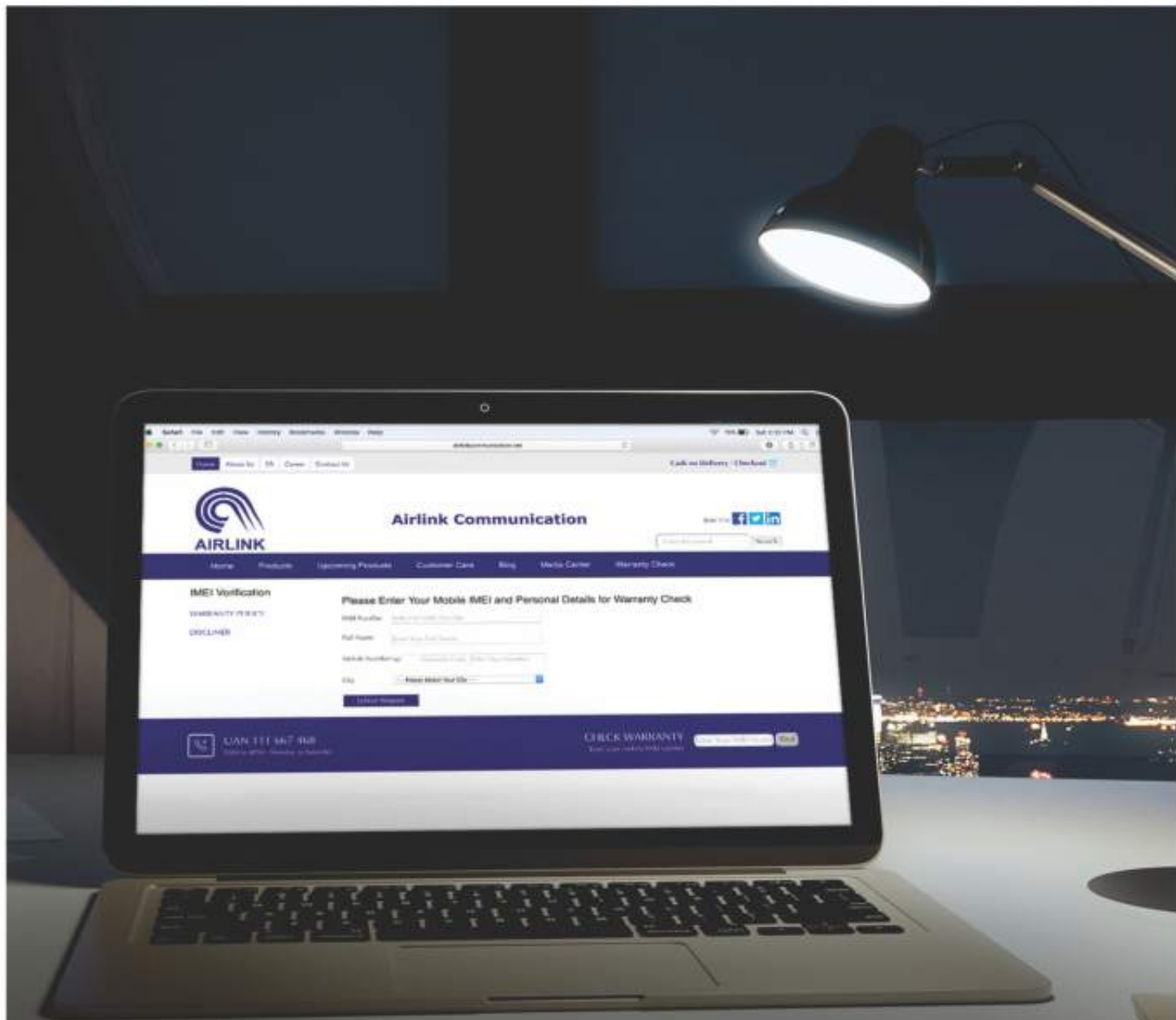
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Shakil Express hosts New Year Brunch



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Azerbaijan keen to enhance educational links with Pakistan: envoy

ISLAMABAD, (DNA) – Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada has said his country attached great importance to relations with Pakistan adding promoting educational links with Pakistan is also one of our prime goals.

The ambassador expressed these views while speaking during a seminar titled Education Policy of Hydar Aliyev and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, held at National Library of Pakistan.

The ambassador further said, Hydar Aliyev Foundation school was built in Muzaffarabad, Kashmir besides providing materials to Muzaffarabad school regularly.

Azerbaijan Study Center has also been established in the National Library while Nizami Corner has been established in National Book Foundation, the ambassador told.

Ambassador Alizada said the Foundation was also providing assistance and support to different schools, including schools for special persons.

Besides, the Foundation also offered Scholarships and Fellowship programs, for different projects for the youth of Pakistan.

Talking about the national leader Ambassador Alizada said, National leaders devoted their whole life to prosperity and well-being of our nations and they hold a special place in the history of our countries

He said one of the main pillars of their policy for the progress of our societies and countries was the development of education and the correct assessment of its importance.

'Heydar Aliyev paid great attention to the development of science and education and took important steps aimed at developing the scientific and education system of the country based on advanced principles. The education reforms carried out by him in our country since gaining independence had global nature and covered all its



aspects and are continued by present leadership of country as well.' Hundreds of schools have been built in the country under Heydar Aliyev Foundation's "New school for a renewing Azerbaijan" and "Support for Education" projects, the ambassador said. He said literacy ration in Azerbaijan was 99%. Azerbaijan is listed among the countries with compulsory elementary and secondary education.

'We continue also our cooperation on education with international organization and with many friendly countries by providing different opportunities for foreigners on education in Azerbaijan and supporting projects related on education in various countries in order to achieve all Sustainable Development Goals for education", the ambassador concluded.=DNA



National Day of Kingdom of Bahrain celebrated



IKRAM MOHAMMAD IBRAHIM

PROTON car plant to further boost Malaysia-Pakistan relations

ISLAMABAD, Ikram Mohammad Ibrahim High Commissioner of Malaysia has said

from the 21st until the 23rd of March this year – on the occasion of Pakistan Day. He made these remarks while speaking

on the margins of the Belt and Road Initiative Summit last April), and most



Malaysia and Pakistan have been enjoying cordial and brotherly relationship since our independence in 1957. He said this relationship has grown from strength to strength, particularly during the past one year period – beginning with the official visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan to Putrajaya on 20th and 21st of November 2018; followed by the official visit by the Prime Minister of Malaysia to Islamabad

during a ceremony held to hand over Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad's gift of PROTON X70 car to Prime Minister of Pakistan. Abdul Razak Dawood Adviser to the Prime Minister for Commerce, Textile, Industry, and Production and Investment received the car. The high commissioner further said our leaders met twice in Beijing (albeit briefly

PM Khan pays half amount to use car gifted by Malaysian PM

By Naveed Miraj

ISLAMABAD, (DNA) - Prime Minister Imran Khan has acquired for his personal use after paying government of Pkaistan Rupees 3 million a car presented to him on behalf of the Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Muhammad.

A Proton X70 automobile was delivered by the Malaysian High Commissioner in Pakistan to Minister for Commerce Razzak Dawood for Prime Minister of Pakistan. The standard procedure is for all gifts received by government functionaries to be deposited with Tosha khana, Once the gifts are deposited they can keep them for themselves after paying the half the value of the assessed value of the item.

The car that is Malaysian brand and soon to be available in Pakistan through local assembling was assessed at Rupees 6 million and PM Khan paid half the value of the car and purchased it according to the rules and regulations.

This is the first gift that Prime Minister has kept for himself. All other gifts he has received during foreign visits have been deposited with the Tosha Khana. =DNA

recently in New York (on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly Session last September).

"And as the Malaysian High Commissioner, I was very pleased that Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Malaysia — from 19th until 21st December – to participate in the Kuala Lumpur Summit to be chaired by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad – a most fitting way indeed to end a most productive and beautiful year, insofar as Malaysia-Pakistan relationship is concerned".

On the trade front, the high commissioner said Bilateral Joint Ministerial Committee





on Trade and Investment has been established which will have its inaugural session in Islamabad or Kuala Lumpur next year.

Secondly we are focussing on increase in the exchange of visits by our business delegations; and thirdly, increase in two-way trade is also on our agenda.

"For the January-October 2019 period, our trade figure stood at USD1.1 billion – our exports to Pakistan amounted to USD90 million, while our imports from Pakistan amounted to USD20 million. I am hopeful that our bilateral trade performance this year will surpass last year's figure, which stood at USD1.5 billion".

While talking about cooperation at the social front and people-to-people contact he said two key achievements this year included visits by officials from four Malaysian universities to further explore cooperation in higher education with their Pakistani counterparts; and commencement of the twice weekly Islamabad/Kuala Lumpur/Islamabad six-hour direct flights by PIA in mid-October, to supplement the five-times weekly Kuala Lumpur/Lahore/Kuala Lumpur five-hour direct flights by Malindo Air that started in 2016.

"While Malaysia is thinking of buying more from Pakistan, we also want to export more to Pakistan. In this regard, I need to promote one Malaysian product in Pakistan. So, I would like to give a Proton car to the Prime Minister of Pakistan who is a friend and very supportive of Malaysia. But, I have other reasons for this (that is) I hope that we can work together in producing that product"

A few hours later, during his interview with PTV World that same evening of 22nd March, my Prime Minister said, and again I quote,

"In order to industrialise, we must have engineering capability. If you manufacture a car, you learn a lot about manufacturing, about engineering. So, we can have new engineering-related businesses. When we build a car, we need about 4,000 parts – all

of which are produced using different materials and different ways of producing. If you can master the manufacturing of motor car, you will learn a lot about engineering, about manufacturing and that will contribute towards the industrialisation of your country. So, we are bringing in our national car (Proton), and because of the need for us to learn how to produce a car, we can (subsequently) produce other manufactured products as well"

Those meetings have produced value added, tangible results which include, among others, four key achievements on the political and diplomatic front:

- Firstly, increase in the exchange of high level visits;
- Secondly, the commitment to reconvene the Bilateral Joint Coordination Meeting, at the level of Foreign Minister, in Islamabad next year;
- Thirdly, the establishment of the Bilateral Political Consultations mechanism, at the level of Foreign Secretary – which had its inaugural annual session in Islamabad last February; and
- Fourthly, the entry into force of the Partial Visa Abolition – for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders.

The three key concepts that can be extracted from those remarks by my Prime Minister are:

- Enduring brotherly relationship between developing Muslim countries;
- Pursuing a value-added, win-win partnership, in accordance with the spirit of South-South Cooperation; and
- Sharing and acquiring technical and technological capabilities, including through technology transfer.

Insofar as the Malaysia-Pakistan trade and economic relations are concerned, those three concepts I just mentioned serve as the governing pillars of our policies and approaches.

Those concepts have indeed taken tangible shape – in the form of the joint venture that we see today between Malaysia's Proton Holdings and Pakistan's Al-Haj

Automotive. As the Malaysian High Commissioner, I highly commend and applaud this mutually beneficial partnership.

Back to Proton. Its saga began in 1983 – the brainchild of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad almost four decades ago to fulfil his vision and desire to see Malaysia possessing the engineering and manufacturing capabilities in our pursuit towards industrialisation. Since 1983, Malaysia remains the only developing Muslim country that produces its own national car – Proton, which stands for Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional, or National Automobile Enterprise.

I consider our event here this morning as not merely to mark the presentation and handing over of the Proton X70 – a gift from my Prime Minister to his Pakistani counterpart, which in itself is undoubtedly a significant undertaking. It is not just a brotherly gift from one leader to another. It is more than that!

This event signifies the beginning of a productive Malaysia-Pakistan heavy industry joint venture in fulfilling our Strategic Partnership agenda – a long-term vision that was set by our leaders.

We are certainly very pleased that Malaysia and Pakistan, two brotherly Muslim nations, have now entered into a bright-prospect partnership in the automobile industry. Malaysia stands ready to assist Pakistan in acquiring the necessary capabilities and technology.

Al-Haj Automotive, in close collaboration with Proton, has commenced last month the construction of a new assembly plant near Karachi. By the First Half of 2021, we will see locally-assembled Proton vehicles on Pakistani roads, insya' Allah.

For now, I hope Prime Minister Imran Khan will enjoy his brand new Proton X70 – a beautiful, state-of-the-art machine. I am certain that he will be impressed with this SUV, and will give his seal of approval that it is just as good, if not better, than those SUVs from other developed countries.

Malaysia-Pakistan dostizindabad!



High Commissioner of Sri Lanka Noordeen Shaheed hosts dinner for Sri Lankan cricket team



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Cultural performances; martial arts show add color to Thai reception

ISLAMABAD, (DNA) – Cultural performances and martial arts show added color to Thai national day reception as Thai artists had travelled all the way from Bangkok to be part of national day festivities.

Thai food festival kicked started at a local hotel also provided real feast to those who have a taste for mouth-watering Thai food.

Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry said relations with Thailand are constantly on the move adding both countries have been cooperating with each other on various foras.

The minister expressed these words while speaking on the occasion of National Day of Thailand. A large number of guests hailing from various walks of life attended the reception.



Thai girls attired in traditional dresses presented a mesmerizing performance. Traditional Thai cuisines also remained center of attraction of guests. Thai martial arts performance was yet another

hallmark of the event. The federal minister further said Pakistan, Thailand relationship would continue to thrive even in the days to come. He said bilateral relations between

Pakistan and Thailand were on positive trajectory. Thailand, he said, is an important country in the region therefore both countries need to benefit from each other. He said



the government of PM Imran Khan is serious in strengthening relations with the ASEAN countries.

Earlier Ambassador of Thailand Pornpop Uampidhaya said Thailand and Pakistan

established their relations back in 1951 therefore our bilateral relations are as old as Pakistan.

He said both countries have been cooperating with each other in many fields

adding there are many Pakistani who are living in Thailand.

The ambassador hoped relations between the two countries will strengthen further in the days to come. =DNA

Serena concludes Season 3 of Photography Competition

ISLAMABAD, (DNA) -The third season of Serena Hotels Photography Competition 2019 concluded in Islamabad Serena Hotel. Almost 400 submissions came from far flung areas of Pakistan with the theme this year being, People and Culture of Pakistan.

Irfan Ali from Kurram District KPK and Dileep Parnar from Nagarparkar were chosen as winner and runner-up respectively after a rigorous jury session with renowned photographers, Wajahat Malik and Syed Mehdi Bukhari, along with Serena Hotels management.

Mehdi Bukhari said, "The submissions this time were mind boggling, as there were so many good photos to choose from. The contestants were from far flung areas of Pakistan this time, including Balochistan, Interior Sindh and Gilgit Baltistan. The winner however was Irfan Ali from Kurram District KPK whose work speaks for itself.



He was able to capture the stories of people, while keeping his lights, technique and angles in check. The runner-up was Dileep Parnar from Nagarparkar who really highlighted the unique beauty of his area and people through beautiful photographs".

The work will also be promoted through well-known print/digital platforms. In addition, a gift voucher will be awarded for 02 nights stay (full board) at a designated Serena Hotel's property.

Irfan Ali said, "I belong to district Kurram, which was recently merged in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. I was tagged in the Facebook competition by a friend and thought to give it a try.

The runner up was Dileep Parnar who hails from a small city in Tharparkar District, at the foot of the Karoonjhar Hills called Nagarparkar. He said, "I started photography with my mobile phone back in 2015. I come from a very underprivileged and undiscovered area, however it is scenic and very beautiful. I have been capturing the beauty of my city through my photos and hope to promote it in mainstream media as a tourist destination in the future".

The Discover Pakistan Competition and coffee table book showcases the immense beauty of the country and gives young photographers the space to showcase their skill, creativity and awareness of the uniqueness of Pakistan. =DNA



Huge scope exists to expand Kazakhstan-Pakistan ties: ambassador

ISLAMABAD— Ambassador of Kazakhstan Akan Rakhmetullin has said though a lot has been achieved in Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations, there is still plenty of opportunities to expand our mutually beneficial ties, particularly in trade and economic cooperation, cultural, education and tourist exchange.

“I will be trying my best to bring our partnership to the new qualitative level”. The ambassador made these remarks while speaking on the occasion of Independence Day of Republic of Kazakhstan.

Muhammed Mian Soomro, Federal Minister for Privatization was the chief guest. While a large number of guest hailing from various walks of life attended the reception.



Kazakhstan were largely inspired by



The ambassador further said Kazakhstan highly values good relationship with Pakistan and those greater benefits, which it may bring us in the near future.

He said Kazakhstan was an integral part of Central Asia – a region connected with centuries-old links with South Asia. This is what defines our foreign policy towards brotherly Pakistan. And we are grateful and proud that Pakistan was among the first countries that recognized our Independence.

“Soon after we had established our diplomatic relations, Kazakhstan opened its Embassy here in Islamabad in 1994, to which I became a part as a young attaché. And now I am back after twenty five years as an ambassador – proud and honoured”. The ambassador said achievements of

political wisdom and energy of the First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, who also played a vital role in establishing cordial relationship between Kazakhstan and Pakistan incepted from first visit to Islamabad in 1992. (Planted a tree – grew from little tree into strong, solid and beautiful tree – a symbol of how our friendship has develop).

He said this year his country had reached major milestones and seen peaceful power transition.

The founding father, First President of Kazakhstan Yelbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev relinquished his powers after devoting 27 years of service to building a modern Kazakhstan. Just a few days ago, Kazakhstan celebrated the Day of the First President.



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- Targeting remote areas for flourishing of the country

Pakistanis' hearts throb with Palestinian people, says minister



ISLAMABAD, (DNA) Federal Minister for Aviation Ghulam Sarwar has said hearts of all Pakistanis throb with their Palestinian brothers and sisters adding Pakistan strongly condemns Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and persecution of innocent people. The minister expressed these views while speaking as chief guest on the occasion of Day of Solidarity with Palestinian people and 31st anniversary of declaration of

Palestinian state. Federal Ministers, Deputy Speaker of National Assembly, Senators, and members of civil society and diplomatic corps attended the reception hosted by Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei. Minister Ghulam Sarwar further said Pakistan and Palestinian Authority have a very close and political relationship. He said that Pakistan firmly remains committed to 'Two State Solution' of the Palestine. The minister said there are many

Pakistanis in Palestine seeking education in various universities and institutions across the country such as Karachi, Lahore, Hyderabad, Quetta and Multan. Settled families on the other hand, are primarily based in Islamabad and Karachi, he added. He said relations between two countries are from cordial to excellent and growing with the each passing day. He assured that Pakistan will continue supporting the cause of Palestine through thick and thin.





Earlier Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei thanked the guests for attending the reception in large numbers.

He also read out message of President of State of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas in which the President said time has come for the emancipation of the Palestinian people and their freedom from this injustice, oppression and occupation.

UNGA granted the State of Palestine observer State status in the United

Nations in 2012. The Palestine President had appreciated that legal and moral stance, and thanked the world community for principled position in support of our collective, just demands to end the Israeli occupation of the land of the State of Palestine and to actualize its full and complete independence on the 4 June 1967 borders, along with a just and lasting solution to the question of the Palestine refugees, whose plight has been tragically prolonged, in

conformity with the relevant UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, which affirmed the two-State solution: the State of Palestine and the State of Israel.

The guest enjoyed traditional Palestinian cuisines. Traditional Arab dances also remained hallmark of the event. Guest took keen interest in various handcrafts displayed on the occasion depicting various facets of Palestinian life style and culture.=DNA



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Ayubia



Ayubia National Park was established in 1984 in an east corner of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. In 1998 it was expanded from its original size of 1,684 hectares (4,161 acres)[6] or 16.84 km² (6.50 sq mi) to 3,312 hectares (8,184 acres). Since then it has been managed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department. The purpose of establishing it was to conserve the temperate forests. Originally, the park stood at an area of 857 acres (3.47 km²), but in 1998 it was expanded to cover an area of 1,685 acres (6.82 km²).

The total population of Ayubia and surrounding villages as per a 1996 census is 18,097 people living in 2,311 households.

The climate of the park is cool in the summers, but harsh in the winters. While it remains only placidly hot in May and June, the cold sets in when the monsoons come to lash in late July and early August. In the winters cold increases in severity gradually until the west winds bring rains, which

eventually turn into snow. The park remains snow-capped through the later part of winters.

It is protected area of 3,312 hectares (8,184 acres). The area supports temperate coniferous forest and temperate broadleaf and mixed forest ecoregion habitats, with an average

elevation of 8,000 feet (2,400 m) above the sea level.

Ayubia National Park is surrounded by seven major villages and three small towns: Thandiani, Nathiagali and Khanspur.

The park has been developed as a resort complex from a combination of four mini resorts of Khaira Gali, Changla Gali, Khanspur and Ghora Dhaka in Galyat. It is managed by the Wildlife and Parks Department of Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



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Spanish duo presents spell-binding performances

ISLAMABAD, (DNA) – The Spanish artists travelled all the way from Spain to perform in a music show Duo Cassado Piano and Cello connect, arranged by the Spanish embassy in Pakistan.

Ambassador of Spain Manuel Duran in his opening remarks gave an introduction of the artists. He highlighted various aspects of life of the two celebrities who have excelled in their field within a short span of time.

The ambassador said another reason of holding the event was to recognize and augment sustained world efforts to fight against global warming.

Dúo Cassadó started their artistic endeavour in the year 2000, since then they have been presented with numerous plaudits and have had praise heaped upon them from the public as well as critics alike.

Damián Martínez Marco, considered one of the best cellists of his generation, was recognized and recommended by Mstislav Rostropovich. They were also recommended by Alicia de Larrocha as the most brilliant duo, represents of the spanish chamber music.

Marta & Damian have performed in some of the most prestigious auditoriums all over the world from Europe to the Middle East, from America to Africa, and have managed to form a duo that has combined a talented cellist exuding warmth and finesse and a pianist of refined sensibility.

Damián Martínez Marco started to make a name for himself at a very early age, hence his recommendation by Mstislav Rostropovich to the Queen Sofia. He has won numerous international accolades, and is widely known for his "expressive sensibility" and "ornate tone".

Marta Moll de Alba is widely considered as one of the finest pianists of her generation.

Through her fledgling career she has already been able to garner much praise as well as picking up several awards along the way in Barcelona, Porto and Mannheim.

In 2006 the "Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País" bestowed upon her the "Premio Gran Canaria" award. Under the tutelage of Alicia de Larrocha, Leontina Margulis, Cecilio Tiele, Margarita Guerra and Tibor Szász she was allowed to discover her own artistic vision and expression.

In their remarks the musicians said that "artists should have a keen interest in all forms of music whether be it theatre, cinema, music or paintings. That is the definition of a true artist".

A large number of audiences hailing from various walks of life attended the concert and praised mesmerizing performances of the duo. -DNA



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Indonesian govt keen to expand trade ties with Pakistan: ambassador



ISLAMABAD, (DNA) –Ambassador of Indonesia Iwan S Amri has said the Indonesian government was keen to expand business relations with Pakistan adding purpose of this interest is to encourage business interests of its partners.

The ambassador expressed these views while speaking on the occasion of a ceremony held to hand over Primaduta award to Pakistani leading business group.

The Indonesian government gave this award to Waheed Group of Companies for their outstanding performance and building linkages between the two countries.

Ambassador Amri further said “we understand that bilateral trade trend is not up to expectations due to domestic economic pressures and overall global recession but this award shows that two sides will continue to play their constructive role in spite of temporary hurdles.

He said the Primaduta award was a special award presented by the Indonesian government annually to the international buyers of Indonesian products in recognition of their contribution for playing an important role in boosting their country's trade with Indonesia.

The ambassador said, this year Waheed Group from Pakistan received the Primaduta award in the Indonesian Trade Expo.

“This is well known group in Indonesia as one of the largest and loyal customers of Indonesian palm oil products on regular basis”, he added.

The ambassador later handed over award to Pakistani business group. A large number of businessmen attended the reception.

Mayor of Islamabad Sheikh Anser Aziz attended the event as chief guest and distributed other awards also.=DNA



Collective efforts needed to make SAARC a vibrant body: Ambassador Saleem



DNA

ISLAMABAD, (DNA)-Ambassador of Maldives Ahmed Saleem has said SAARC was the manifestation of the collective will of our Member States to promote regional cooperation and integration in order to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life.

He said as a former Secretary-General of SAARC, he was delighted that the SAARC process was moving steadily in spite of mounting challenges and difficulties.

"I am given to understand that this year alone, many important activities have taken place including five ministerial level meetings. That includes the SAARC Education Ministers' Meeting in my country of the Maldives".

Ambassador Salim expressed these words on the occasion of SAARC Charter Day function held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on Monday.

Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood, was the chief guest while all ambassadors and high commissioners of SAARC countries attended the function.

He said undoubtedly, despite many challenges, the importance of this organization, has in fact grown by every passing year. During the past 34 years, SAARC has made a difficult journey during which there has been economic growth social development and cultural advancement.

In spite of it, the overall development of SAARC and our region remain much below the levels of expectations and we have not been able to exploit the huge potential that remains unexploited. It is up to us alone to make the association more effective in order to keep it relevant to the present context.

He said he was hopeful that SAARC can still achieve its desired goals and objectives but only if all members hold same degree of commitment and display mutual respect towards each other and are determined to work together in a responsible atmosphere of friendship and cooperation.

As we mark another year since its establishment, we need to remind

and focus on how, as a region, we can improve the lives of our peoples through sustainable development.

In order to do that, what we need among ourselves now, more than anything else, is respect and confidence among ourselves and a serious effort to settle whatever differences we have among ourselves, for our own good and that of SAARC.

If political problems that have existed in the region for so long can be resolved amicably and peacefully, we could be the most prosperous in the world given the huge potential in the region, the ambassador added.

"While all these important activities are taking place in SAARC, we must hold our breath and wait to find out when the next Summit will take place. We all know that holding of SAARC Summit, which is the highest body of SAARC, provides renewed impetus to the SAARC process".

Last Summit was held in Nepal in November 2014, five years ago. Sadly, this has been the longest period SAARC has gone without a Summit.

The 19th Summit was to be held here in Islamabad in November 2016, but was unfortunately, postponed. It is hoped consensus among the Member States will be evolved soon to hold the Summit as early as possible.

Our resolve to regional cooperation remains undeterred in spite of some setbacks that we continue to face every now then.

ourselves of the noble principles of the Association and redouble our efforts to strengthen our resolve

"SAARC is the best thing to have happened in this region. I sincerely believe SAARC is the only vehicle that can promote not only economic cooperation but also maintain peace and harmony in the region".

The ambassador appreciated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for having given him this opportunity to speak at this important function in commemoration of the 35th anniversary of SAARC. =DNA

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- The manufacturer must have at least five (05) years design / manufacturing experience of similar goods / equipment with the same or higher rating and capacity and three (03) years successful continuous operational experience of such goods / equipment
- Eligible Bidders may obtain further information, inspect and acquire the Bidding Documents from the Office of undersigned.
- A complete set of bidding documents may be obtained by interested bidders from the office of the undersigned w.e.f 31st December, 2019 on submission of a written application at the address given below and upon payment in cash of a non-refundable fee of Rs.5000/- as cost of tender document on any working day during office hours or may be sent by courier service if requested by the bidder for an additional fee of Rs.1000/- . No liability will be accepted for loss or late delivery, in case the document is to be sent by courier service.
- The Bid must be accompanied by a separate Bid Security in the amount 3% of quoted bid price in the financial proposal in favour of Chief Engineer (Development) IESCO Islamabad and valid for 28 days beyond the bid validity in the form of Bank Guarantee/Demand Draft. The bid shall be valid 150 days from date of opening.
- Bids must be delivered to Chief Engineer (Dev) IESCO Street No 40, Sector G-7/4, Islamabad at or before 1030 Hour, on 29th January, 2020 and Technical Proposal will be opened at 1100 Hours on the same date in the presence of participants or their authorized representative (bearing authority letters) who choose to attend IESCO Head Office Conference Room G-7/4 Street No. 40, Islamabad, while Financial Bid shall remain unopened in the custody of undersigned. Financial Bid shall be opened of those bidder(s) who will be declared technically responsive. Financial Bid of technical Non-responsive bidder(s) shall be returned un-opened.
- The foreign bidder may also participate in this tender in the form of JV with Local FBR registered Pakistani firm but the quoted price shall be in denomination of PKR as there is no foreign exchange involved in this tender on Duty Delivery Paid (DDP) basis including Taxes & duties excluding GST.
- Electronic bids will not be acceptable.
- IESCO reserves the right to accept or reject the bid as per PPRA Rule-33 (1).

PD0 3485/19

چیف انجینئر (ڈویلپمنٹ) اشتہار نمبر 47

آئی سکو ہیز آف ایس، سٹریٹ نمبر 40، اسلام آباد۔

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