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# CENTRELINE

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine



**FARZANA ZAHIR**

**People-to-people  
contacts key to  
deeper cooperation**



**Arab states keen  
to promote  
ties with Pak**

Page: 20



**Somalia-Pak  
relations  
strengthened**

Page: 10



**Serena Hotels  
host Nowruz  
event in style**

Page: 24



# Thank You



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**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. In April 2020 he launched Pakistan's first & only Diplomatic Newspaper Daily Islamabad *Post*.

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## EU Parliament's resolution and our response



The European Parliament on April, 29, 2021 adopted a resolution calling for a review of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP+) for Pakistan. The resolution was presented by Renew Europe, a liberal, pro-European political group of the European Parliament. It was adopted with a majority of 681 votes against six.

There is no doubt that GSP+ status has contributed greatly towards boosting the industrial sector of Pakistan. But the question that what triggered the European Parliament to vote against Pakistan needs some soul searching. The reason appears to be more of a political nature rather than the one mentioned in the resolution. Pakistan and European Union

have enjoyed excellent working relations mainly because EU regards Pakistan as an important regional player and country that used to cater to manpower needs of the majority of European countries in the past and even in present as well, though this subsistence has decreased to a great extent.

Keeping in view of the past practices, I don't think the EU would go to the extent of rescinding this status for Pakistan. As regards blasphemy laws, and rights of the minorities in Pakistan, the respective governments in collaboration with the security establishment of the country, have done a great deal to address these issues thoroughly and seriously and that is the reason that the frequency of such cases has been brought to minimal. Curbs on freedom of expression in Pakistan are not new phenomena. It was there even at the time when the EU approved the GSP+ status for Pakistan back in 2014. And probably so was the case with minorities rights and blasphemy laws etc.

Prima facie, the move seems to be politically motivated. As we know France being the leading EU country, has biggest number of seats in the European Parliament. Being the founding member, it enjoys colossal clout within and without the bloc. The recent happenings in Pakistan including demonstrations by the banned Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan against France and the French ambassador may have contributed towards adoption of the European Parliament resolution. The saner voices in Pakistan strongly believe that acts of TLP cannot be regarded as the acts of the whole country. Without going into details as to who was behind the TLP protests and who encouraged them to stage mass gatherings, the satisfying element is that the outfit has been sorted out with the clear intention that such happenings will not be allowed to do it again.

Pakistan and European Union are tied in strong bonds of relationship that is based on shared values and common objectives of peace, prosperity and development. The Pakistan-EU relationship has strengthened steadily over the years and is pursued through sound institutional mechanisms and dialogue processes therefore this relationship must not be allowed to derail or affected due to petty issues. The worst time in Pakistan-EU relations was perhaps the year 2002 when the EU election observer group headed by John Walls Cushman came up with a highly critical report about the general elections in Pakistan. That commission sought to pin-point a number of loopholes in the entire election drill and therefore had recommended a review of relations with Pakistan.

All such points that have been raised in the recent European Parliament resolution were there in the 2002 report as well. But as we witnessed how that report was literally discarded by the European Union itself and the EU bosses chose to continue working with the military dictator of the time. All said and done, Pakistan needs to look into points raised in the resolution earnestly. There are still issues that need to be addressed not because the outside world wants it so, but we have to do it for our own sake. People will start harvesting benefits of true democracy only when it is followed and implemented religiously. There is no doubt that credentials of democracy in vogue in our country are weak, which is probably the key reason for Pakistan's being lagging behind in social, developmental and all other sectors that relate to well being of the common folks.

And above all, the passing of the resolution has exposed futility of our missions especially present in the EU countries. It also speaks volumes for the inefficiency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which miserably failed in preempting the situation. It still can do something to mend fences. It has to engage proactively with the stakeholders in order to avoid any eventuality.

Ansar



**FARZANA ZAHIR**

# People-to-people contacts key to deeper cooperation

*High Commissioner of Maldives Farzana Zahir talks to Centreline magazine and Daily Islamabad POST. She talked about a variety of issues including bilateral relations. Here are excerpts from her interview.*

**ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI**



**First, let us welcome you in Pakistan and wish you the best of luck with your all upcoming endeavors. Relations between both countries are very warm. How would you describe these relations?**

Maldives and Pakistan have always shared a special bond of friendship and mutual solidarity. Being a regional partner, Maldives have always cherished close cooperation with Pakistan. We have always supported each other at multilateral forums and have worked closely bilaterally in different areas. We share common cultural and religious bonds that unite our people very closely together. The kind hospitality of Pakistani people towards Maldivians is testament of this closeness. There is continuous dialogue and exchange between the two countries. Maldives wants to see that friendship grow, and to build on the common ideals that we share, for mutual cooperation.

This year especially, will mark 55 years of formal diplomatic relations between Maldives and Pakistan. It is a joyous occasion that will mark a milestone of cooperation between our two countries. **Apart from political and economic relations, cultural and educational relations also**

**contribute greatly towards cementing of people to people contacts. If you could share with us your vision in this regard?**

Enhancing people to people contact is key for more cooperation. Many Maldivians have preferred to pursue studies in Pakistan, especially in the area of Medicine. Pakistan has established a good reputation and produced a great number of high-class doctors and health care professionals that it can be proud of. The common values of our people and warm hospitality of the people of Pakistan is another factor that makes Maldivians happy to pursue their studies here.

There is expanded scope for greater level of bilateral cooperation in the education sector. The cultural and religious parallels provide opportunity to collaborate on areas such as literature and tourism. Maldivians have also had a fondness to Urdu language and poetry which can be revived. I also see opportunity for cooperation in the unique and vastly different geographical makeup of both our countries. The new generation of youth are driven to explore beyond their own borders. Having a good network of

established institutions can enhance this opportunity for the young generation for creativity and limitless ventures.

**Tourism is yet another sector where both countries can benefit from each other's experience. Do you agree?**

Indeed. Tourism is our biggest industry and we have gone through many transformations, adapting to new markets, while also ensuring sustainability. The Maldives would like to see more Pakistani tourists on our beaches and I'm sure they would enjoy the hospitality that the Maldives offers.

As Pakistan ventures into promoting tourism and welcoming more tourists to the country, there is a lot we can offer from our experience in the area.

Pakistan is a beautiful country with a vibrant culture and amazing landscape. I still have a lot to explore about Pakistan. But what I have seen and experienced so far keeps me intrigued. Increasingly many tourists are looking for experiences and adventure. Opening up, should also come hand in hand with sustainable eco-friendly practices to ensure that the unique environment and culture is sustained for the benefit

of future generations. South Asia region as a whole can also learn from others. Inter-connectivity within South Asia currently limits us from exploring the full potential of what the countries in the region can offer and benefit from.

**If you could share with us the key factors that led to fast development of Maldives?**

We have a very young population, similar to that of Pakistan. Our biggest achievement lies in providing universal education to all, for free. Ensuring that the young population is ready to contribute to the national economy is important. We had our challenges in the past, and continuously face the challenges of adapting our education system to meet the demands of today. Free quality education means that everyone in our society can benefit, and a working class can emerge.

We were also lucky to have started our biggest industries tourism and fisheries, in a sustainable manner. Our fisheries are based on the eco-friendliest method of fishing, which is pole and line. Catching fish one by one may sound difficult. But not to the skilled Maldivian fisherman who would catch thousands every day. Because of their







hard work, we can ensure that our fragile marine environment is preserved and healthy. Similarly, our tourism industry is also based on sustainable practices. While our tourism industry has developed tremendously, preserving and maintaining the natural environment has been the key. Strict, yet simple and easy to follow laws were put in place to protect the natural environment around the time tourism started to emerge as a major industry. This is quite natural as approximately 99 percent of our territory is ocean. Our lives and livelihoods are intricately linked to the wellbeing of the ocean, coral reefs, and marine life. Having that balance of economic activity with sustainable practices is an important aspect of our development and to keep us in that upward trajectory.

**Maldives recently left Commonwealth but joined again. Can you share with us some background information about this move?**

The decision to leave was a highly debated matter, but a decision that was taken in 2016 by the Government at that time. In 2008, the Maldives adopted a new Constitution, with its first comprehensive bill of rights, a full separation of powers and provisions for independent and accountable State bodies. In 2008, Maldives also had its first multi-party election to elect a President. This prompted unprecedented changes that we had never experienced in our history with several oversight institutions and freedoms. As a young democracy, we had our challenges, and we had a strong partnership with the Commonwealth in facing the challenges of democratization. The conversation we had with the Commonwealth, in that process, had its own dynamics too, and the decision to leave the organization was one result of that dynamic. That decision does not in any way diminish the relevance and importance of the Commonwealth to our country or our people. The decision to reinstate the

relationship so quickly is testament to that. Maldives rejoined the Commonwealth on 1 February 2020. This was one of the first decisions of the current Government of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, that was communicated to the Commonwealth Secretary General in December 2018, shortly after he took office in November 2018. The family of Commonwealth nations is important for the Maldives. The close network and fruitful relationships with the Commonwealth of nations has been crucial to the Maldives in its journey. Be it the democratic journey, education, combating climate change, trade and investment and other cultural exchanges. Building relationships with the 2.4 billion Commonwealth citizens have always served as well. We believe that Commonwealth's foundational values of the promotion of democracy, human rights, good governance, multilateralism and world peace remain relevant to us. Especially, as a

young democracy and as a small island nation.

**Please share with us your vision and roadmap to further promote and strengthen relations with Pakistan.**

My aim is to expand the people to people relationship. Be it through culture, education, food, language or tourism and trade. Building greater understanding and bridging a close relationship will help flourish our relations. More strategically, Maldives has always sought to strengthen the relationship with its South Asian neighbours. As a regional partner, there is a natural partnership that we will always value and support as a priority.

**Please share with our readers some about your previous postings and what motivated you to join the Foreign Service?**

I joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1996, as junior officer at the Department of External Resources. My work exposed me to negotiations that took place between Maldives and other countries as well as other organizations such as the United Nations. This motivated me to learn more about international relations. When I had the opportunity, I pursued further education in development studies, before I returned back to the Foreign Ministry again. Foreign Service



becomes the first line of defense for every nation. It gives opportunity and platforms to protect the interests of our people and forge partnerships that serve humanity. My first overseas posting was in Malaysia, from 2009 to 2012 as a Counsellor at the Maldives High Commission. Later, I also got the

opportunity to be part of the Maldives delegation to the United Nations at the 70th and 71st Sessions. My last posting was at the Maldives Mission to the United Nations in New York, where I served as the Deputy Permanent Representative, from January 2017 until July 2020.

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# Somalia, Pakistan relations strengthened: Khadija Almakzoumi

Ansar M Bhatti



**ISLAMABAD:** Ambassador of Somalia to Pakistan Khadija Mohamed Almakzoumi has said relations between the two countries are growing with the each passing day. She said educational links between the two countries have been strengthened further.

She expressed these views while giving an exclusive interview to Islamabad POST.

Ambassador Khadija, who is in Pakistan for last four years, has contributed significantly towards cementing of bilateral relations.

She also talked about the COVID situation in her country adding the situation had deteriorated in past few months mainly because of influx of tourists. She said there was no COVID in Somalia in the beginning but suddenly cases have risen.

She said her government was taking all possible steps to overcome the situation. To a question about Pakistan's Look Africa policy the ambassador said, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan has done well by organizing a conference of the country's envoys in the African Continent with a view to deliberating on issues relating to enhanced cooperation with them.

The move is timely in the sense other countries of the world especially the United States and China are focusing more on Africa as its economies are considered as 'lions on the move'. African continent is a rising market of 1.26 billion people; it is rich in mineral resources and is an exporter of energy resources. Pakistan has a lot of goodwill in the region as the country always championed the cause of the African countries at UN and remained in the forefront of peacekeeping missions in Africa.

In this backdrop, it is unfortunate that Pak-Africa trade is negligible and the country has diplomatic presence in a few countries alone – thirteen missions to cover 54



countries (the rest are managed through concurrent accreditation).

Apart from Africa being a huge potential market for Pakistani goods, the country's geo-strategic location and connectivity offers opportunity for African goods to reach Central Asia and South Asia.

'As Somali Ambassador to Pakistan, I consider my role is to facilitate the contacts between the players in the economic field, to get them to know each other better and also to interconnect in a better way'.

She further said, in 1969, Pakistan and Somalia were among the founding members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Somalia's relations with Pakistan remained strong in the following years and through the ensuing civil war period, when the Pakistani military contributed to a UN peacekeeping operation in southern Somalia.

She stressed to further intensify trade and economic relations between the two countries adding she had already interacted with various chambers of commerce and industry in Pakistan with a view to exploring more and more avenues of cooperation.





# GREECE TODAY, AFTER A COURSE OF 200 YEARS

*The future is decided today - shaped by the actions of all of us in the present. We all need to be present tomorrow. Only words are not enough for that. Progress requires both effort and manner. He wants the body and the mind to work. The challenges of the future are already here*

**ATHENS:** The object of the axis is to highlight the dynamic elements of today's Greek society through the creativity and actions of groups, individuals, organizations, local government organizations, universities, research centers, cultural organizations, etc. At the same time, the maximum promotion of modern Greece will be sought, abroad, with presence in international exhibitions and international organizations, under the general umbrella: "1821-2021: This is modern Greece".

"Erasing a piece from the past is like erasing a corresponding piece from the future." George Seferis

Many times we hear the phrase around us: "this country is not saved". Fortunately for all of us, our past denies this fatalistic and simplistic approach to the present. Many may end up in this aphorism under the pressure of the evils of the Greek state. But the bottom line is that we are here to move on.

This is probably how the dissatisfaction of the Greek soul is expressed. Because the people of this country have learned to look for open horizons. And when they do not find them on land, they look for them at sea. When reality does not offer them, they look for them in the imagination. In intellectual and scientific creation.

What is certain is that when a stranger hears this phrase he is surprised. Because Greece has progressed. And many find it difficult to understand how. Now we can all take the next step together. Studying our course today, let us chart new paths.

The chronology you see is absolutely indicative. Every citizen can add his own event and his own Greek. To create his own station in history. To make his own assessment of facts and persons. To propose his own action for the future...

## 2021 AS A WINDOW FOR THE GREECE OF THE FUTURE

This will include actions that will focus on the country's prospects for the future

and will highlight how we imagine and want Greece in the coming years. The various actions will be reported either inside the country or abroad, and their form will vary: scientific conferences, cultural events, professional and trade exhibitions, but also actions that will leave a legacy for the future, such as environmental interventions, development infrastructure etc.

The future is decided today - shaped by the actions of all of us in the present. We all need to be present tomorrow. Only words are not enough for that. Progress requires both effort and manner. He wants the body and the mind to work. The challenges of the future are already here...

## GREEKS LEAVING THEIR IMPRESSION IN THE WORLD



**ORLANDOS: THE GUARDIAN  
ANGELS OF ANCIENT  
MONUMENTS**



**MARIA CALLAS**

"Greeks who have left their mark on the world for the last 200 years".

The object of the axis is to promote the life and work of Greeks who left their mark both in Greece and abroad.

We Greeks may be few, the ancient spirit may dominate the image of the country abroad, but the truth is that there have been hundreds of Greeks who have left their mark on the world since the founding of the modern Greek state. Greek men and women excelled in the arts and letters, won Nobel and Oscars, solved puzzles, saved countless lives with their discoveries, won worldwide recognition and respect...

The chronology you see is absolutely indicative. Every citizen can add his own event and his own Greek. To create his own station in History. To make his own assessment of facts and persons. To suggest his own action for the future. We will address the protagonists

themselves. For the history of the labor movement, the development of cities and infrastructure, the industrialization of the country and so on.

## In 1821 IN GREECE AND THE WORLD

"The Revolution of 1821 as a statutory element of Greek History, but also as a piece of world history."

The object of the axis is the better understanding of the Revolution of 1821, the emergence of its world importance, its relation with the other revolutions that took place in the same period, how it affected the rest of the world but also how it was influenced by it.

**THE NATIONAL ANTHEM**  
The Association of Greek Sign Language

Teachers participate in the celebrations for the 200th anniversary of the Revolution with a substantial action.

After many months of work, in which besides the teachers of sign language, linguists, philologists, theologians, etc. contributed, our National Anthem was performed in the Greek sign language

# GREECE CELEBRATING TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF EXISTENCE

*Andreas Papastavrou Ambassador of Greece  
Issues a special message on the occasion*



**Andreas Papastavrou  
Ambassador of Greece**

**ISLAMABAD:** Andreas Papastavrou Ambassador of Greece to the Islamic republic of Pakistan has issued a special message on the occasion of National Day of Greece. Here is the text of his message.

"It is a privilege to serve as Ambassador of Greece to Pakistan. In this context, it is also a unique honour to address this message of celebration to the people of this friendly country, marking the Bicentenary of the start of the National Struggle for the Independence of Greece.

The history of Greece spans millennia and has known countless moments of glory. The National Struggle for Independence is one of those moments, which we are profoundly proud of. The enormous sacrifices of our forefathers have paved the way for the creation of a democratic state, inspired by the noblest ideals of humanity, in dignity and respect for all.

Having sailed in the stormy seas of the 19th and 20th centuries and having contributed more than her share to the creation of a free world, Greece is now celebrating two hundred years of her existence, as a vibrant, modern State. She is facing courageously the challenges of our times and endeavouring for a bright future.

Let us all rejoice with the people of Greece on this day of celebration and let us work side by side, for a bright future is our common quest'.



# 'Pakistan-Italy Friendship bridge' inaugurated for Chitral people

Ms Emanuela Benini, Director AICS, Pakistan, is immensely pleased that the infrastructure has been given the name 'Pak-Italy Friendship bridge'

## STAFF REPORT



CHITRAL, A suspension bridge was inaugurated in Khairabad District, Chitral to solve the problem of rural isolation that has been affecting the community especially during the time of heavy rainfall. Due to adverse conditions and limited mobility, residents were deprived of crucial socio-economic opportunities. The bridge has been constructed in partnership with Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) under the Programme for Poverty Reduction (PPR) by Italian Agency for Development Corporation ((AICS) Pakistan.

Khairabad is comprised of 5 sub-villages (Khaiabad Khas, Thok Jal, Dhaph, Junali, Camp) while there are 3 more connected villages of Kol, Wardhap and Wardhap Payeen. More than 450 households of Khairabad, Kol, Camp, Wardhap Payeen will directly benefit from this

development. Village Khairabad in Union Council Drosht 1 has close to 450 households however, after recent flash floods, the community's connection to main centers were cut off. With the construction of Jeepable bridge in the village, accessibility has been massively improved for the residents.

Ms Emanuela Benini, Director AICS, Pakistan, is immensely pleased that the infrastructure has been given the name 'Pak-Italy Friendship bridge'. She said, "AICS aspires to lay the stone for a strong developmental network in Pakistan and this bridge is the first step towards it. The bridge will enable the local community to have better access to health and educational facilities just like other communities in the district."

Mr Shams Badruddin, Group Head Infrastructure, PPAF, said "Such developmental projects would allow the local community to have easier access to

health and educational facilities in the District Chitral and this can lead to better socio economic conditions in the region." Deputy Commissioner Lower Chitral, Mr Hassan Abid appreciated the Italian government, PPAF and SRSP for supporting the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government in the development of the district. He said "Communication-related infrastructure plays the most critical role in the development of any area and thus, this newly built bridge could prove to radically transform the lives of the local residents."

Construction of the bridge was the top priority of the village organization in Khairabad. Even the nearest bridge was 4 kilometres away thus it was cumbersome for the villagers to access it. Through PPR's timely intervention of Rs 17.6 Millions, hundreds of people will now be able to commute with ease and strive towards a better life.

# Amplification in the Effectiveness of Soft Power



ZAHRA ALI

Pakistan being in the limelight on a global juncture now more than ever, it must be remembered that it hosts six UNESCO world heritage sites. More often the country's history is spotlighted around early Islam, Sufi, and Mughal artistic monuments while it is noteworthy that Pakistan has been a hospice to various smaller religious groups including Sikhs, Parsis, Zikris, Bahá'í, Buddhists and Kalasha; the largest and most prominent of which are Hindus, Christians and Ahmadis. Pakistan is a pluralistic society with myriad religious and ethno-linguistic identities.

The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees all citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law, adequate provision for the minorities to freely profess and practice their religions and develop their cultures. Pakistan has been a home to various Hindu temples and Buddhist relics pooled with rich natural landscapes. The opening of the recent Kartarpur corridor illustrates one such action where a visa-free initiative for the Sikh community was taken for cross-border pilgrimages, Pakistan demonstrating a pro-peace stance while the premier also enhanced tourism. From reciprocal presents of ancient rulers to today's Expos & symposiums, numerous forms of

culture have been used by state actors to demonstrate who they are, assert their claim in the global governance, shape national image and build long-lasting relations with people from other cultures & ethnicities. The green in the National flag of Pakistan symbolises the Muslim majority in Pakistan and the white stripe represents the various minority groups. Nonetheless, the white is as much Pakistan as the green. The notion of public diplomacy & cultural diplomacy lies at the heart of soft power. Cultural diplomacy is one such aspect of public diplomacy. Whilst a traditional diplomatic approach aids in understanding, notifying and influencing the people, cultural diplomacy is the exchange of values, systems and other aspects of culture with the intention to forging mutual thought and consideration with the aim to promote reconciliation by strengthening intercultural and interfaith harmony and enhance socio-cultural cooperation. Pakistan is a land of diverse multi-cultures, a

repository both rich in history and blessed with striking topographical benefits. It is a cradle of rich landscapes and welcoming people that have much to offer those that desire to learn about our nation.

The primordial historical sites and landmarks, and the splendor of our towering mountain ranges and gentle seas offer much to explore. Tourism is a key stride towards increasing the understanding of other cultures. The surge of international travel vloggers has amplified more than ever, to name a few; Eva Zu Beck from Poland, Rosie Gabrielle from Canada have placed emphasis on art, literature, food, intricate truck murals and dance which is also evident through our books, movies and documentaries.

Mark Weins from the United States & Trevor James from Canada, contributed towards promoting how vast and varied the street food culture is in our Country on his social media accounts named "The Food Range. Former Minister of Information of Pakistan, Fawad Chaudhry, announced a new visa policy to revive the country's tourism industry. This measure offers an e-visa option to 175 countries and a visa-onarrival to 50 other countries exhibiting a well-articulated cultural-diplomacy effort. Additionally, the minister had also announced policy decrees toward developing the country's image and making tourism a vibrant sector capable of accomplishing economic growth while enriching the brand image of the country. Ever since the ascension of Imran Khan to power, Pakistan has tremendously improved its soft power capital by utilizing public diplomacy. The Pakistani leadership is in a frenzied move to build a positive image of the country. The emphasis on the tourism sector, therefore, aligns with Khan's reform agenda, which consists of enhancing the use of national resources and making the economic apparatus work for citizens while also making the country safe haven for minority groups more than ever before.

**Ever since the ascension of Imran Khan to power, Pakistan has tremendously improved its soft power capital by utilizing public diplomacy. The Pakistani leadership is in a frenzied move to build a positive image of the country. The emphasis on the tourism sector, therefore, aligns with Khan's reform agenda, which consists of enhancing the use of national resources and making the economic apparatus work for citizens**



# Sarmad Ali, Naz Afreen elected as President, Secy General of APNS

*CENTRELINE magazine, a sister concern of Daily Islamabad POST elected as Member of the Executive Committee for the second time; the newly elected Executive Committee appreciated the performance of the Election Commission. The members gave standing ovation to Mr. Hameed Haroon*

DNA



**KARACHI:** The Annual Meeting of the APNS General Council held on March 24, 2021 at APNS House, Karachi unanimously elected Sarmad Ali as President, Jamil Ather as Senior Vice President, Shahab Zuberi as Vice President, Ms. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani as Secretary General, Mohsin Bilal as Joint Secretary and Owais Khushnood as Finance Secretary of the Society. Earlier, the General Council elected un-opposed the Executive Committee for 2021-22. The AGM was held under the chairmanship of Hameed Haroon, President, at the lawns of the APNS House completely observing SOPs for Covid-19. The Council unanimously approved the report of the Executive Committee for the years 2019-2021 as well as the Annual Accounts of the Society for the years 2019 and 2020. The General Council attended by 146 members from across the country, formed an Election Commission headed by Ms. Shimaila Matri Dawood with Nasir Daad Baloch and Mumtaz Ali Phulpoto as members. The Election Commission conducted the election of the Executive Committee for the year

2021-22. Following were elected un-opposed to the Executive Committee of the APNS for the year 2021-22 at the Annual General Meeting held on March 24, 2021:

**Karachi Daily Seats:** Aghaz, Business Recorder, Deynat, Dawn, Jasarat, Jiddat

**Lahore Daily Seats:** Jang, Khabrain, Tijarat, Dunya, Abtak, Pakistan

**Rawalpindi/Islamabad Daily Seats:** Ausaf, Sahafat

**Balochistan Daily Seats:** Awam Quetta, Mashriq Quetta

**Khyber Pakhtoon Khwa Daily Seats:** Mashriq Peshawar, Wahdat Peshawar

**Sindh (Excluding Karachi) Dailies:** Kawish Hyderabad, Kaleem Sukkur

**Punjab (excluding Lahore/Rwp/Ibd.):** Aftab Multan, Paigham Faisalabad, Business Report, Faisalabad

**General Seats (Metropolitan Dailies):** Pakistan Observer Islamabad, City42 Lahore

**General Seats (Regional Dailies):** Halchal Hyderabad, Sayadat Bahawalpur

**Periodicals Seats:** Naey Ufaq Karachi, Dastak Karachi, Roohani Digest Karachi, Naya Rukh Karachi.

**News & News Comments Periodical (Punjab/KPK):** CENTRELINE Islamabad

**News & News Comments Periodical (Sindh/Balochistan):** Ibrat Magazine Hyderabad

**News & News Comments Periodicals (General):** Cricketer Karachi

The new Executive Committee elected Daily Nau Sijj, Karachi on woman - publishers seat.

The newly elected Executive Committee appreciated the performance of the Election Commission. The members gave standing ovation to Mr. Hameed Haroon, the outgoing President for his services to the newspaper industry. Earlier, the Extra-Ordinary General Council of the Society held a meeting in the morning and adopted a Special Resolution whereby not holding of the AGM due to pandemic for the year 2020-21, was condoned and the actions and decisions taken during the previous year were validated.

# EU supports Pakistan to mitigate impact of COVID

ANSAR M BHATTI



**ISLAMABAD:** The European Union will support Pakistan's Civil Society by cofinancing three projects, for a total amount of 7 237 500 EUR, to alleviate the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on communities and increase the voice of youth in society. The announcement follows the signing of three contracts by H.E. Ms. Androulla Kaminara, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan and the representatives of the main implementing partners: Agha Khan Foundation, Norwegian Church Aid and Deutsche Welthungerhilfe. The three projects were selected through a call for proposals launched in April 2020 and focus on Punjab, Sindh and Gilgit Baltistan. In Pakistan, the virus is posing a threat to people's lives, straining communities, overwhelming health systems and endangering livelihoods. Young people in particular, who make up a majority of Pakistan's population, have been severely affected by the pandemic in terms of unemployment, increased gender inequalities, social exclusion and a diminished voice in the decision-making processes. The projects aim to build Civil Society Organizations capacity to mobilise and engage youth, enhance involvement in decision-making, and improve access to economic opportunities for marginalized groups. At the signing ceremony, Androulla Kaminara, Ambassador of the

European Union to Pakistan, said, "As the world continues to battle the COVID pandemic, it is important to focus our efforts on supporting the most vulnerable. Civil society organisations are important partners for the EU wherever we work, and have been crucial in Pakistan's efforts to respond to the current crisis. The initiative leading to today's successful proposals was one of the first concrete actions taken by the EU last year to alleviate the effects of the pandemic in the short and long term in Pakistan. The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on young people – which is reflected in the areas prioritised by these projects including youth engagement and economic empowerment." Dr Matt Reed, CEO of Agha Khan Foundation (UK), said: "During this pandemic, in Pakistan and around the world, civil society has been vital: raising awareness, teaching people how to help their families and neighbours safely, protecting their communities from COVID-19. The Aga Khan Foundation is delighted to partner with the European Union in strengthening community organisations and civil society at this crucial time." In her speech, Anne Masterson, Country Director of the Norwegian Church Aid emphasized that, "Through this project young people will have opportunities to improve and diversify their skills, obtain

training and establish livelihoods. Youth, particularly young women, will become more effective change agents by strengthening their voice within their communities and in the wider society." Aisha Jamshed, Country Director of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, stated that, "Through the project, CSOs will build the skills of young men and women, provide them with income opportunities and giving them a voice by advocating for improved service delivery with Local Authorities. Welthungerhilfe values the consistent contribution of the European Union to the organization over the past ten years, along with EU's contribution to the civil society development across Pakistan." In Pakistan, the EU is committed to a stable, democratic and pluralistic country that respects human rights and benefits from its full economic potential by supporting sustainable and inclusive development for all its citizens. The EU provides Pakistan with about €100 million annually in grants for development and cooperation. Among other issues, the EU supports Pakistan in its efforts to tackle poverty, increase education, promote good governance, human rights, rule of law and ensure sustainable management of natural resources. EU-funded projects cover all of Pakistan with a special focus on Sindh and Balochistan.





# Ample sports strengthen youth's mental and physical ability

*Isphanyar Bhandara says Sports builds character and personality in young people and strengthens their mental abilities; 117th MP Bhandara Memorial Polo Cup Final played in Rawalpindi*

## STAFF REPORT

**RAWALPINDI:** Chief Executive Murree Brewery Company Isphanyar Bhandara has said that sports help in developing the mental and physical abilities of the youth. This builds their character along with improving patience and courage in their personalities, because self-confidence in a person can play an important role in the country's development. He added that the players are assets of the nation and play an important role in promoting sports for the formation of a healthy society. He expressed his views while talking to reporters after distributing prizes in the successful team at

the 117<sup>th</sup> MP Bhandara Memorial Polo Cup Final in Rawalpindi. Eight teams that participated in the pilot event were: In the final **ASC Iqbal** Team scored **6** goals to beat **PAF** team by **5-1/2** goals. Ambassador of Sweden, Henrick Persson was the Chief Guest of this event. He appreciated the efforts of the Murree Brewery team for the promotion sports event went on to say that the inaugural M.P. Bhandara Memorial Polo Tournament was held in 1904. Besides, Ambassadors of Morocco and Nepal also attended the event and distributed awards among the players.







# Arab states keen to promote strong brotherly bonds with Pakistan

*Ambassador of Iraq hosts dinner for the Arab ambassadors; COVID situation also came under discussion during the meeting*

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

**ISLAMABAD:** Arab states have reiterated their resolve to promote and strengthen strong brotherly bonds with Pakistan. This resolve came during a dinner hosted by Ambassador of Iraq for the Arab ambassadors based in Islamabad.

In an atmosphere of friendliness, serenity and the necessary precautions for prevention, The Iraqi ambassador, Hamid Abbas Lafta, received their colleagues at his place. The Embassy of the Republic of Iraq held a dinner reception at the embassy building in the diplomatic enclave. The Ambassador delivered a welcoming speech at this important meeting, stressing upon that the Arab countries group in Islamabad could be an important factor in developing relations with the host country, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The ambassador further said that the preventive atmosphere from the COVID-19 epidemic requires everyone to take precautionary measures especially in public gatherings, but our meetings are important and must always be activated

by using preventive measures and adhering to the correct Instructions. All the distinguished Ambassadors from the dean of the Arab Diplomatic Corps, Muhammad Ibrahim Muhammad Abdul Qadir, Ambassador, Nassar Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi, the Yemeni Ambassador, Muhammad Muthahar Alashaabi, and the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates Mr. Hamad Obaid bin Ibrahim Al-Zaabi and the other

Ambassadors also participated in the conversation and praised this type of initiatives and working on the continuation of the Arab diplomatic group with regular meetings and adopting contributing projects that serve the trends that consolidate diplomatic and service relations with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan through the channels of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.





# The HEC Affairs



Dr Yousaf Alamgirian

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has turned into another example of bad governance due to many reasons. It has unfortunately gone through many phases of experiments in the hands of different tenures. HEC was once a University Grants Commission, established in 1974 with the mandate of funding, overseeing, regulating and accrediting the higher education institutions. During Musharraf rule, its name was changed into HEC and Dr Atta urRehman became its Chairman in 2002.

He evolved HEC into modern lines. New avenues in the research sector were introduced. Numerous scholarships were announced and hundreds of research scholars were sent abroad for PhD and post-doctorate level research. When Musharraf left, the new government put cut on the funds of HEC and many of the research scholars who were busy in research abroad were caught in the doldrums because of not issuance of the rest of the instalments in time. Many of them have to work to meet their left out charges and a number of them came back without completing their research and degrees.

Dr Javaid Laghari was the second chairman from 2009 to 2013. He unearthed the fake degrees of politicians and refused to accept any pressure on this issue. He was replaced by Dr Mukhtar Ahmed. Dr Tariq

Banuri became the fourth chairman of HEC in November 2018 for a period of four years.

It is worth mentioning that appointment of chairman HEC is considered equal to the federal minister from protocol point-of-view. However, chairman HEC enjoys much more powers than that of the federal ministers. He can appoint the staff even in grade 20/ 21 on a regular basis. For that, he has to fulfil the formality by calling selection board meeting. Whereas federal ministers can only appoint people on non-gazetted vacancies because from grade 17 onwards appointments are made through Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) where federal ministers can't intervene.

The outgoing chairman HEC however used this power only a few days before his removal. Keeping in view the ill intentions and favouritism it is a need of the hour that recruitment in autonomous bodies should also be made through FPSC. Resolution could be passed through parliament or the president can issue the ordinance. This will only be done when any government would like to ensure merit and transparency in the recruitments.

This is major trauma in our country that policies of the institutions are not permanent. Overnight changes are made in the policies. Indeed, governments must not interfere in the affairs of the organisations which are protected legally and constitutionally. This cover allows them to perform with full freedom. Nevertheless if govt. sees that some specific person or institution is going beyond its limitations and it is harming the organisation then options are always there to mend things.

During the last few years several untoward changes were made in higher education. If we take the example of PhD course only, HEC has notified that in future the students will be able to go for PhD only attaining the BS degree. M.Phil. course will be abolished. Matter of the fact is the MPhil degree was very useful in terms that researcher were taught new research techniques before they start PhD course work and

research. Whereas BS level is not that mature level to do research work of PhD level. However, if new PhD policies are implemented as it is what will be the fate of the thousands of research scholars who have done MPhil? There should be an independent body that approves certain education policies undertaken by HEC sort of organisations.

Outgoing chairman Mr. Tariq Banuri may be a very upright and honest person but few facts, however, prove that he has certain motives and agenda to fulfil during his tenure that's why when he came to know that government has brought an ordinance to cut his tenure, he immediately called the selection board to appoint people on senior-level appointments mostly advisors and DGs in grade 21 and 20 respectively. A report published in the newspaper says that "A statement issued by Officers Welfare Association (OWA) HEC said that the officers and staff of HEC welcome the decision of the Federal Government to remove the Chairman HEC. The statement alleged that after the decision of his removal by the federal government, the Chairman HEC called the meeting of the selection board for selection of his blue-eyed/favourite individuals on the position of 12 regular DGs in grade 20, advisors in Grade 21, four positions on MP-I, and two positions of MP-II and MP-III. It said that the HEC employees showed grave concerns over calling the Selection Board in haste in violation of the HEC Recruitment Policy and Rules. The HEC Employees demanded the Prime Minister of Pakistan (who is also the controlling Authority of HEC) to stop the Chairman from holding the illegal selection board, especially when NAB has already initiated an inquiry about illegal appointment of dozen of consultants".

Such reports reflect dubious intentions on the part of the outgoing chairman. Uprightness and high moral values demand that if the chairman was removed he should have relinquished by allowing the next chairman/competent authority to do the

brainstorming, get the applications shortlisted on merit and call the selection board accordingly to select the competent and professional candidates for very senior level appointments. The things done in haste also put questions on the working of HEC and the weakness of the state which could not interfere to stop the loot sale of the recruitments.

There is a need to understand that HEC is a national organisation and not a personal property of any of the chairmen. NAB/FIA should intervene and ascertain the level of misappropriation made in recruitments. If all the candidates selected for the appointments, fulfil the criterion they should be allowed to work otherwise recruitments made in haste be cancelled and documents of all the candidates who applied for different vacancies be reviewed and eligible candidates be called for interviews. There must be many candidates who qualify the given criterion but were not called for interviews.

However, it is not the first time when any government has put a cut on the duration of tenure of any head of the organisation. During the Musharraf era tenure of the then chairman FPSC Jamshed Gulzar Kiani was decreased from 5 years to three years. And he had to relinquish from the duty. Now President of Pakistan has issued an ordinance to decrease the tenure of the HEC chairman.

Nonetheless, tussles are obviously not good for the institutions especially which are related to education as education is the only influential road towards the future of the country. What future will our nation have, depends upon the policies, undergoing now. We all have to be a bit more calculated, careful and honest when it comes to the issue of nation and state. The HEC is a precious institution of the state, so, the responsibility lies with the state to save this organization from kakistocracy and take measures to prevent it from becoming a personal estate of the people sitting at the helm of affairs. Therefore, viable solutions are needed because tussles never work, they simply ruin.

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## BELARUS ENVOY DISCUSSES COOPERATION WITH MINISTER

Invites Hammad Azhar to visit Belarus



**ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belarus Andrei Metelitsa in a meeting with Industries Minister Hammad Azhar. DNA**

### STAFF REPORT

**ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belarus Andrei Metelitsa met with Muhammad Hammad Azhar, the Federal Minister for Industries and Production Division of Pakistan.**

**During the meeting the sides discussed the state of bilateral cooperation in industry and avenues of interaction between Belarus and Pakistan in this area. The interlocutors paid particular attention to the issues of holding the third meeting of the Joint Working Group on industry, as well as preparation for signing of an amended intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the field of industrial, scientific and technical cooperation.**

**Muhammad Hammad Azhar received an invitation from Petr Parkhomchik, the Minister of Industry of Belarus, to visit Belarus in order to get acquainted with leading Belarusian industrial companies and to discuss issues of strengthening industrial cooperation between the countries on the topics of mutual interest.**



# Serena Hotels host Nowruz event in style; Nine countries take part

Nowruz promotes peace, solidarity says Begum Alvi;  
Nine countries established stalls on the occasion

A. M. BHATTI

**ISLAMABAD:** Begum Samina Arif Alvi has said Nowruz promoted values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families as well as fostered reconciliation and neighborliness. Speaking at an event here to mark the celebrations of Nowruz, she said as it contributed to cultural diversity and friendship among peoples and different communities, Nowruz fitted closely with UNESCO

She said the participating countries had given a message of peace and a bright future awaited these countries. "At this time, we also need to step up efforts to tackle the challenges of global warming. Climate change is already happening; temperatures are rising; drought and wild fires are starting to occur more frequently; rainfall patterns are shifting; glaciers and snow are melting, and the global average sea-level is rising. To mitigate climate change, we need to reduce or prevent the emissions linked to

human activities. Climate change will affect both hemispheres of the Earth." She emphasized that it was the moral obligation of the whole world to keep our planet cool and minimize the use of fossil fuels. She told, "in Pakistan, the government has taken initiative of planting billion trees which is indeed a good step and we need to play our role in this regard. Similarly, we also need to utilize alternate sources of

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energy for power generation from solar and wind."

Begum Samina said our festivity and celebrations had been restricted due to emergence of Covid-19 pandemic during last year. "I hope that the process of vaccination will complete soon and we will overcome this disease. We need to be vigilant at this time of crisis because carelessness can lead to problems."

She wished everyone a prosperous and happy Nowruz by saying, "may its spirit of harmony, peace and respect towards humanity serves as inspiration to us all." Parliamentary Secretary for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aftab Jehangir and Chief Executive Officer of Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani also spoke on the occasion.

CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani who also spoke on the occasion and thanked the guests for taking part in this event in large numbers. He said Serena Hotels, under its Cultural Diplomacy initiative, would continue to holding such events even in the prospect.

Begum Samina Alvi visited the stalls set up by embassies of different countries which was followed by stage performances depicting cultures of the region.



**Deputy Head of Mission Kazakhstan embassy  
Mr Arman performs on the occasion of Nowruz festival**





## Zafar Bakhtwari and Ahsan Bakhtawari host dinner for the High Commissioner of South Africa H.E. Mthuthuzeli Madikiza



## Study finds poor state of protections for freedom of expression in Pakistan

*Pakistan scored only 30 out of 100 points on the Freedom of Expression Assessment Index, which monitored the country's performance with 60 indicators for the year 2020. Threats of legal and regulatory action on the basis of expression were compounded by issues related to the online harassment of journalists, Covid-19 disinformation, the digital divide, and restrictions on media access during the pandemic*

### STAFF REPORT



**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan performed poorly with respect to legal and practical protections for the right to freedom of expression of its citizens during 2020, according to a new assessment report published by Media Matters for Democracy. The Pakistan Freedom of Expression Report 2020 was launched through a webinar on Wednesday. Speaking at the report launch, the European Union (EU) Ambassador to Pakistan Androulla Kaminara said, "Today's report provides a comprehensive analysis of the state of freedom of expression in Pakistan and highlights some concerning trends. Freedom of Expression is enshrined in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. It is also one of the important aspects of Pakistan's GSP+ commitment to uphold international Human Rights Conventions and a key priority in the Strategic Engagement Plan between EU and Pakistan." Ambassador Kaminara said, "As this report confirms, the situation of journalists and documentation of threats they face through attacks, intimidation and harassment is particularly concerning.

Disinformation is another area of concern, and one, which the European Union is working to address both at home and abroad. Misleading or false information can put lives in danger. It is crucial to resolutely counter disinformation with transparent, timely and fact-based communication and thus reinforce the resilience of societies." The report documents the situation of freedom of expression in Pakistan with a new index based on six dimensions namely the legal environment, press freedom, digital expression, pluralism, the socioeconomic and political situation, and protection from threats to expression. The indicators for these dimensions were measured through a survey of a panel of experts from the fields of politics, media, academia, law, and human rights advocacy, as well as statistics collected through desk research. Pakistan scored low on all six dimensions to provide an overall score of only 30 points out of a total of 100 points on the assessment index. This cumulative score fell in the range of "poor" protections for freedom of expression in the country. The report found that during the year 2020

Pakistan's media and Internet regulatory authorities continued to exert arbitrary legal and regulatory restrictions on speech and online content, by ordering bans, suspensions, and advisories against social media apps, entertainment content, and news discussions of social and political issues. Journalists remained vulnerable to physical, legal, and digital threats in the absence of long-awaited legislation on journalists' safety, according to the study. The report found that at least eight individuals connected with the media were killed, at least 36 journalists were attacked in the line of duty, 10 were arrested, and as many as 23 instances of arbitrary detentions in connection with news reporting and online expression were recorded across Pakistan during the year. Women journalists were especially targeted with coordinated online attacks as they reported on political issues and the government's pandemic response. The report noted that the Covid-19 pandemic intensified the challenges to freedom of expression and access to information in Pakistan. Internet users were consistently exposed to disinformation while journalists reporting on the pandemic faced physical safety risks and restrictions on access to information sources, and many young citizens without Internet services found themselves abandoned as education systems shifted online, according to the report. The online report launch also featured a panel discussion with press freedom advocate Owais Aslam Ali, journalist Asad Hashim, digital rights activist Farieha Aziz, and MMfD Co-founder Sadaf Khan. The panelists spoke about the impact of the pandemic on free speech in the country. Mr. Owais Aslam Ali said the professional solidarity among journalists against press curbs has weakened, which means individual journalists have little support when they face threats.



# PAKISTAN-RUSSIA RELATIONS WILL CHANGE THE REGION



Attiya Munawar

In view of the Iran-China agreement, the growing proximity between Beijing and Moscow, and the recent developments in the region, the Russian Foreign Minister's visit to Pakistan is a matter of special significance. It is the first visit by a Russian foreign minister to Pakistan in nine years. There is a lot of talk in the national and international media that Pakistan's focus is now on the East. This process of looking towards the East is positive for Pakistan. Pakistan, Iran, Russia, China, Turkey and Central Asian countries together form a new political bloc. Russia, on the other hand, has made a concerted effort to reshape and expand relations with Pakistan. This development could be a game-changer for both Pakistan and South Asia. Critical strategic dynamics and policy changes in South Asia could change the perceptions that drove Pakistan into an anti-Russian camp during the Cold War between Russia and the United States. There is no denying the fact that relations between Pakistan and Russia have been strained for a long time. India has always used these relations against Pakistan. Russia was a superpower compared to the United States in the case of the Soviet Union, so India stayed close to it but when the United States through Pakistan smashed the Soviet Union in the background, India stepped up its efforts to move to the US camp. India is a big market, so the United States also wants good relations with India. India extended a hand to the United States for relations, then the United States welcomed it at the expense of Pakistan

since then the United States in relations with Pakistan has grown cold. While India has made it possible to pursue its interests by getting closer to the United States, it has not spared any effort to fill the ears of the United States against Pakistan. This has led to a breakdown in the warmth of Pakistan-US relations. The United States cut off aid to Pakistan and began to make unreasonable demands on Do more. Pakistan has been threatened to teach a lesson in the Trump era while on this occasion, Pakistan has patiently continued its efforts to keep the relations and the situation normal, which is why the US-Taliban peace agreement was signed, but India and the Afghan administration are trying their best to sabotage this agreement. This peace agreement is still in force, but its future is in question. At present, in view of the changing situation in the region, the United States has also come closer to India as it needed a parasitic country in the region to compete with China. At the behest of the United States, India continues to be at loggerheads with China and other neighbors. On the other hand, Russia's distance from India has become a major

**Russia's announcement to provide Pakistan with modern special weapons in the fight against terrorism in response to Pakistan's goodwill message is a significant development as Pakistan has long had its weapons needs from the United States and Western countries. Since then, it has stepped into the field of automatic armaments with the cooperation of China and is rapidly moving towards self-sufficiency.**

reason for Russia's closeness to Pakistan. Russia and Pakistan have gradually come so close that the Russian Foreign Minister is on a long visit to Pakistan. Earlier, Russian forces had conducted exercises in Pakistan now Russia is also becoming part of the CPEC. It had a dream to reach the hot waters which Pakistan had thwarted by force, but now an atmosphere of friendship and reconciliation, Pakistan is welcoming Russia to use the port of Gwadar.

Russia's announcement to provide Pakistan with modern special weapons in the fight against terrorism in response to Pakistan's goodwill message is a significant development as Pakistan has long had its weapons needs from the United States and Western countries. Since then, it has stepped into the field of automatic armaments with the cooperation of China and is rapidly moving towards self-sufficiency. There was almost no cooperation with Russia in this area but for the past few years, the procurement of modern weapons including helicopters has progressed while India under US auspices, is stockpiling arms in the region. Pakistan has relied on China's cooperation to compete with India. If Russia moves forward to meet Pakistan's needs for modern weapons, it will be a great help in maintaining the balance of power in the region.

The warmth in Pakistan-Russia relations will make a significant difference in the region but the US-India alliance could pose further threats to peace, especially in South Asia. To address this, the major powers and countries of the region must unite, which has become a natural environment. For lasting peace in the region, a defense bloc comprising China, Russia, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey should be formed which may include Malaysia and Saudi Arabia as the opportunity arises. Pakistan is one of the most important countries in the region yet Pakistan's foreign policy is no longer the rarity and breadth that its role demands. Unlike in the past, Pakistan's changing foreign policy is important as is the relationship with distant friends from neighboring countries far more important which can improve the situation in the region and make Pakistan's role more prominent and important.

# Elections in Palestine postponed due to Israeli aggression

*We have decided to postpone the parliamentary elections until we ensure the participation of the people of Jerusalem, says President Abbas*

## NEWS DESK

**RAMALLAH:** Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has announced that the Palestinian elections have been postponed because Israel has a decision to prohibit the Palestinian citizens of occupied Jerusalem to participate. President Abbas made the announcement after a meeting of leaders of Palestinian factions in Ramallah. "We have decided to postpone the parliamentary elections until we ensure the participation of the people of Jerusalem," President Abbas said in a statement. "The elections must be held in all the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem."

He said that he will work toward forming a Palestinian national unity government that would "abide by international resolutions and reinforce the PLO." Earlier in the night, President Abbas announced that Israel has informed the Palestinian Authority that it will not allow the Palestinians to hold elections in Jerusalem. "There will be no elections without Jerusalem," President Abbas said in opening remarks during a meeting of leaders of several Palestinian factions in Ramallah.

He said that the US, European Union and some Arab countries also informed the Palestinians of Israel's refusal to allow the elections to take place in Jerusalem.

Today, we received a message from Israel, the US and some Arab countries about Israel's opposition to holding the elections in Jerusalem," he said. "The message we received said that Israel can't make a decision because there is no government in Israel."

Scoffing at the purported Israeli response, President Abbas said: "But there is a government in Israel that is making decisions to build thousands of settlements. Who issued the order to the [Israel] police to stand with the settlers in killing the people of Jerusalem? Where did these decisions come from? Africa? We won't allow anyone to fool us. This is nonsense. Where is [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu? Netanyahu, may God prolong his life, is still the prime minister." President Abbas said that the Palestinians are ready to hold the

elections once Israel agrees to allow the vote to take place in Jerusalem.

"We want the elections to take place in Jerusalem, and not in Abu Dis," he said, referring to a West Bank village south of Jerusalem. "For us, the elections are not a tactic or a game." President Abbas said that the EU made a big effort to exert pressure on Israel to allow the elections to take place in Jerusalem, but to no avail. "When we announced the elections, the Europeans told us that they support us and are ready to help us achieve our goal," he noted. "I told the Europeans that that Israel will not agree to hold the elections

in Jerusalem. They told me that they will talk to the Israelis about this. We also asked the Americans where are they, but we didn't hear from them. We waited and didn't receive a response. We also sent our foreign minister to Europe to tell them we are running out of time."

President Abbas added, the heads of the EU told him that they were "frustrated" by Israel's refusal to respond to the request to hold the elections in Jerusalem.

President Abbas criticized Israel for "beating" Palestinian candidates in Jerusalem and preventing election gatherings.





# Kyrgyzstan on road to progress under new leadership

*Pakistan is a friend indeed; Pakistani tourists are invited to visit Kyrgyzstan; CASA-1000" regional project will allow for the export of surplus hydroelectricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and finally to Pakistan:*  
**Ambassador Erik Beishembiev**

**MAHNOOR ANSAR**



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan Erik Beishembiev has said majority of people of Kyrgyzstan has voted in favour of a presidential form of government. According to the results of the Central Election Commission Sadyr Zhaparov received 79% of the votes at the presidential election.

Referendum on the political system of the country with voters asked whether they would prefer a presidential system, a parliamentary system, or opposed both, ended with 81% of votes in favor of presidential form of governance.

The ambassador made this announcement during a press conference held at the Kyrgyz embassy on Monday.

The ambassador further said, that following parliamentary elections of October 4 last year, which were marked by numerous violations of the election law, falsifications and vote buying, leading to annulment of the election results and changes in the political leadership of the country, this Embassy had organized first briefing on October 23, 2020.

He said today he will give briefing about further development of political and socio-economic situation in the Kyrgyz Republic. Following the resignation of President Sooronbay Jeenbekov in October 2020 and appointment of Sadyr Zhaparov as Prime-minister and acting

President, presidential elections alongside with a referendum on the form of government were held on 10th January 2021.

Shortly after the parliament approved and President signed decree on appointment Mr. Ulukbek Maripov as new Prime Minister and as well as members of his cabinet of ministers.

Recently, on April 11th of the current year, a constitutional referendum and local elections were held in Kyrgyzstan. According to the Central Election Commission 79.3 percent voted in favor of the new constitution, with just 13.6 percent voting against it.

The ambassador further said, only 30 percent of Kyrgyzstan's eligible voters needed to participate for the April 11 referendum to be declared legitimate. Preliminary results show 37.1 percent of eligible voters cast their ballots in the referendum. International observers found no any violations of the law during plebiscite.

Talking about the international reaction, Ambassador Erik said, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization declared that referendum was held in the atmosphere of openness and transparency with active participation of civil society representatives and creation of favorable conditions for voters to make their own and informed choice.

Commonwealth of Independent States Parliamentary Assembly noted that referendum on the new Constitution of Kyrgyzstan meets international standards.

The new constitution replaces previous mixed presidential-parliamentary system with a presidential one. The President is the head of the state, highest official and heads the executive branch of power. His term is limited to two five years periods instead of a single six-year term before.

The position of the Prime Minister is transformed to the head of the cabinet of ministers and presidential administration.

The new law, he said, also reduces the number of seats in the Parliament from 120 to 90 and establishes a constitutional court. The new constitution will enter into force after its signature by the President and official publication.

To a question the ambassador said, currently, transitional period of change of leadership and reforms has mainly completed, we have a new President and a new Constitution. We expect to finalize in full reforms after the new parliamentary elections planned in September 2021.

"Today Kyrgyzstan is continuing to dynamically develop as a country with diversified and liberal economy, where foreign investors are widely represented, including from Pakistan".

After election as President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Zhaparov paid official visits to Russia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, launched Central Asia – South Asia "CASA-1000" regional project that will allow for the export of surplus hydroelectricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and finally to Pakistan, as well as major investment project on development of Kyrgyzstan's second-largest gold deposit Jerui with annual output eventually reaching 5.5 tons. Gold reserves at the deposit are estimated at 88 tons. These major developments show that international community and investors have trust in the new government of the Kyrgyz Republic.

On January 29, 2021 President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Zhaparov signed a decree on the protection of property and support for entrepreneurs and investors. The document was adopted to provide constitutional guarantees for the protection of property, stimulate sustainable economic growth, to exclude unjustified state interference in the economic activities of business entities, as well as to increase investor confidence, create a favorable investment climate and business environment.

Ambassador Erik further said, in the 2020 Doing Business report published by the World Bank, Kyrgyzstan ranked 80th out of 190 countries, which represents that country is making significant progress on payment of taxes (the government has reduced the tax burden on repatriation of profits by foreign investors to conform to the tax rate for domestic investors) and getting credit.

"Investing in Kyrgyz Republic is profitable and easy as the main factors are the liberal trade regime, full protection of investments and unlimited repatriation of profits, as well as currency exchange freedom, low business costs, an educated



workforce. At the moment, there are five Free Economic Zones (FEZs) in the Kyrgyz Republic: Bishkek, Naryn, Karakol (Issyk-Kul province), Leylek (Batken province) and Maimak (Talas province)". When asked to comment on bilateral relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan the ambassador said, unfortunately, despite the fact that Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan have good bilateral and regional cooperation for more than 25 years, trade relations between our countries are still at a developing stage.

I think that the major difficulty on the way of our bilateral relations remains in little knowledge about Kyrgyzstan and Central Asian region and its opportunities in Pakistan as well as about Pakistan's great potential in my country. So, we need to intensify our people to people contacts, spread more information about our countries and arrange exchanges of the visits between our governments and businessmen in order to boost the trade between our countries, he added.

I invite Pakistani businessmen to look into opportunities of joint cooperation. From the beginning of this year charter frequent flights are carried out between the countries. Kyrgyzstan's geostrategic position on the crossroads between Central Asia and China and further through Karakorum pass to Pakistan opens excellent opportunities for regional trade and economic cooperation and connectivity.

When asked as to how Pakistan can play its role in providing trade route, the ambassador said, Pakistan can play a vital role as a gateway for Central Asian states by the shortest way to the open sea.

Another important area of cooperation is education. In recent years, higher

education is developing very fast in Kyrgyzstan. We had only 12 universities before independence in 1991 and now there are about 50.

We have also a number of international higher educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan, including American University in Central Asia, Aga Khan's University of Central Asia, two Turkish Universities, Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Academy, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University and others.

To yet another question about tourism, the Ambassador invited Pakistani tourists to visit Kyrgyzstan to see the beautiful mountains of my country, which cover more than 90% of the territory.

The highest mountain peaks after the Himalayas and Pamir are located in Kyrgyzstan. With population of 6 million people, before Covid-19 pandemic, Kyrgyzstan was visited by more than 4 million foreign visitors a year. We provide a visa-free regime for more than 60 countries and introduced e-visa system two years before. This year New York Times readers included Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan in the list of best countries for visit in 2021.

To a question about NDMA support, the ambassador said, he was indebted to the Government of Pakistan and National Disaster Management Authority for providing humanitarian aid in the form of 5 thousand N95 medical masks, 5 thousand protective suits, 5 thousand protective shields, with a total weight of 1400 kg. for the needs of the health care of the Kyrgyz Republic in the fight against corona virus infection. There is a saying that a friend in need is a friend indeed. So Pakistan is really is our true friend and brother.





## Azerbaijan indebted to Pakistan for support: Col Mehman

*The Azerbaijan defence attaché especially thanked the government of Pakistan that took a bold stand on the issue thus sending a loud and clear message to Armenia that Pakistan was with Azerbaijan and will extend all possible support*

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

**ISLAMABAD:** Col. Mehman Novruzlu the Defence Attache of the Azerbaijan has said his country was greatly indebted to Pakistan and people of Pakistan for extending whole-hearted support during 40-days war with aggressor Armenia.

He expressed these views during a dinner he hosted for friends from media and think-tank CGSS.

Col. Mehman further said that the Armenian aggression had left for them with no option but to respond to the aggression adding by the grace of God and with the help of friends, Azerbaijan successfully liberated the occupied territories from the aggressor.



The Azerbaijan defence attaché especially thanked the government of Pakistan that took a bold stand on the issue thus sending a loud and clear message to Armenia that Pakistan was with Azerbaijan and will extend all possible support.

Col. Mehman also thanked people of Pakistan saying Pakistani people have a unique love and affection for their Azerbaijani brothers and sisters and vice versa. He said Azerbaijani people keep Pakistanis in very high esteem.

It may be mentioned here that relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan have touched new heights. The Azerbaijan embassy spearheaded by Ambassador Ali Alizade is actively taking part in various humanitarian as well other social and welfare projects in Pakistan. Besides, various high level delegations from Pakistan have visited Azerbaijan in recent days. The Pakistan Air Force delegation is still in Azerbaijan to explore difference avenues of cooperation.

The Azerbaijan government has invited Pakistani companies to take part in the rebuilding of the newly liberated areas. The Azerbaijan leadership on a number of occasions expressed its earnest desire to engage Pakistani companies in order to further strengthen bilateral relationship.



## U.S. envoy extends Ramazan greetings

**STAFF REPORT**

**ISLAMABAD:** U.S. Chargé d'affaires a.i. Angela P. Aggeler extends her best wishes to all Pakistani Muslims during the holy month of Ramazan.

In her video message the US diplomat extended warm greetings to the Muslims living in Pakistan adding the holy month of Ramazan teaches us patience and sacrifice.

The US envoy delivered her message in Urdu language. She said this month also calls for self accountability.





# Indonesia's National Strategy of Artificial Intelligence



**Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become "part and parcel" of our lives. Survival and future growth of "humanity" has direct correlation with the AI which actually, paves the way of achieving the goals of smarter economy, smart governance, digitalization of economy/society, massive industrialization, diversification of economy and last but not least, innovative future orientations. In this context, Indonesian government announced its national strategy for the development of AI. It termed it "safe" and widely "beneficial". For achieving the desired goals of technological revolution, innovative transformation, digitalization transmission, and highest standards of higher education and to cope with deadly diseases, and expedite research Indonesia published a blueprint, known as Stranas KA, for the national development of AI between 2020 and 2045.

The head of Indonesian national research and innovation agency (BRIN) shared the future plans of his government pertaining to AI mainly in education and research, health services, bureaucratic reform, and food security as well as mobility and smart cities.

It would start a giant automation process in the country. By outlining the national strategy for the development of AI he termed it vital for an independent, advanced and prosperous Indonesia, one that can be reformed or reinvented) from a natural resource-based country to an innovation-based country.

The agency and broader government outlined five sectors of its focus, the first being AI, as well as Internet of Things (IoT), advanced robotics, augmented reality, and 3D printing. Stranas KA is a framework that

provides a road map to unite many of the digital developments taking place in the country and aligns closely with Visi Indonesia 2045, its broader development strategy.

According to Indonesian Stranas KA, for the national development of AI (2020-2045) there are five priorities of it mainly health services, bureaucratic reform, education & research, food security and mobility & smart cities. There are four focus areas i.e. industrial research & innovation for the development of research ecosystem and artificial intelligence innovation platform in order to accelerate bureaucratic and industrial reforms, infrastructure & data development, create a data ecosystem and supporting infrastructure for AI to contribute to national priorities, talent development, nurture AI talent that is competitive and has good character, and last ethics & policies to create ethical artificial intelligence in accordance with national values.

One of the foremost priority of Indonesian government is to upgrade and replace the nation's unsupportive bureaucratic. To achieve this goal President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo outlined plans to replace a number of civil service positions with AI in 2019. It would be a big step towards e-governance and smarter economy in the days to come.

From Aristotle to modern philosophers Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Berkeley, Kant, Marx, and Wittgenstein bureaucracy by design, composition and orientation is a passive class which has been creating serious socio-economic and geopolitical issues in the evolution of human civilization. But governments/states have the authority and capability to remodel it by re-designing forward-thinking processes, protocols, and business orientation.

In this regard, AI may be an ideal choice to overhaul it. Indonesia's government has introduced an innovative concept of e-bureaucracy in the country so that caravans of socio-economic prosperity, economic sustainability, political stability and societal cohesion may be achieved by implementing people and business's friendly policies through an interactive mechanism of the AI. The government will employ an online single submission (OSS) system and the Single Map policy for accomplishing this vision.

Various AI projects are being carried out in diverse sectors of economy and civility too mainly agriculture and education, with machine learning helping to streamline production, anticipate forest fires, and

rejuvenate traditional teaching faculties. The national strategy identifies 186 programs, pilot schemes, and policies.

The national strategy focuses a number of unique datasets that can help it develop AI. It also recognizes some potential pitfalls of its immediate growth. Indonesia does not have the provisions to regulate the technology, nor an official agency to oversee AI development. It fears that without proper supervision, close monitoring, and refinement, AI can become as much an obstacle to development as it can a contributor. The country also leans heavily on imported technology and holds its own concerns with regard to data misuse and cyber-security. To combat these limitations, the guidebook advises that country focuses on infrastructure and data, research and industrial innovation, ethics and policies, and talent development while setting up a data ethics board to oversee implementation of much-needed data privacy and security systems.

According to consulting firm Kearney and Singapore-based investment firm EDBI (2020-2021) Artificial intelligence could add US\$366 billion to Indonesia's gross domestic product in the next decade and almost \$1 trillion in added GDP across Southeast Asia.

To conclude, Indonesian national policy for the national development of AI between 2020 and 2045 has strategic importance which would further enhance elements of fairness, accountability, and transparency among the ranks, organs, organizations and departments of its government in the near future. It would further accelerate its country-wide drive of massive industrialization. It would revolutionize its government, society, industry, IT, ICT and patronize immense growth of digitalization of economy in the near future.

Moreover, it would enhance its agriculture productivity. It would give new innovative outlook to his tourism industry. It would fasten elements of research, higher education, science & technology and saver living in the country. It would start a new concept of living with nature by implementing smarter cities in the country. Moreover, it would further enhance inter-cities & rural connectivity and would be beneficial for the generation of new jobs in the country. All in all the largest economy of the South East Asia, Indonesia is poised to lead the region also in terms of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the near future for branding a prosperous, independent, innovative and modern Indonesia in the very near future.

# Experts discuss pros and cons of Intl'l moot in Uzbekistan

**MAHNOOR ANSAR**



**ISLAMABAD:** The experts from Pakistan and Uzbekistan discussed in detail the upcoming international conference being held in Tashkent. In this regard, the CGSS arranged an interactive session.

During the meeting, the importance of the upcoming international conference on Central and South Asia regional connectivity: Challenges and opportunities was discussed. The meeting was hosted by Akromjon Nematov, First Deputy Director of the ISRS under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Akromjon Nematov, First Deputy Director of the ISRS under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan elaborated the significance of the upcoming conference that is to be attended by Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoye, Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan, President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani and other important regional leaders. He explained that the idea of Central-South Asian connectivity encompasses broader paradigms, i.e., trade and transport connectivity for sustainable growth, revival of cultural and humanitarian ties as a way to strengthen friendship and mutual confidence, analyzing regional security challenges, ensuring the security of cross-border infrastructure and devising strong policies to tackle common global threats.

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan, Regional Geopolitical Analyst & Member Board of Experts, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS) appreciated the effort of ISRS for organizing the meeting. He stated that socio-economic integration, academic collaboration and broader prospects of

regional integration hold immense importance in today's changing dynamics of the world. He elaborated the role of CGSS as a major stakeholder in bridging the gap between Central and South Asia via policy-making, researches, building trust and facilitating joint academic projects. Prof. Dr. Shabir Ahmed, Director Area Study Centre (Russia, China & Central Asia), University of Peshawar and Member Board of Experts, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS) stated that 21st century is the century of Eurasian integration. He highlighted the importance of regional connectivity and cooperation of Central Asia with South Asia. He said that BRI, CPEC and other integration programs are there to enhance regional cooperation. However, regional states need to help themselves. He elaborated that there is a need to enhance regional connectivity in all spheres including political, economic and security. Dr. Shabir also highlighted the importance of the rail routes and the existing economic integration projects like ECO, BRI, and CAREC etc. He stated that development of cross-border connectivity and physical infrastructure is a dire need of time. He proposed that addition of Central Asian Republics into CPEC would be beneficial. There are huge prospects for the investment.

Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies, (CGSS) appreciated and welcomed the initiative of regional connectivity by Shavkat Mirziyoye. He suggested certain meaningful options to be discussed in the upcoming online conference on Central and

South Asia regional connectivity: Challenges and opportunities. First, there should be a banking system in the regional states that have smooth and easy transaction policies for Pakistan. Second, the academic collaboration should be enhanced and an integrated system to recognize the degrees should be formulated and discussed. Third, there should be easy custom-trade regimes and free trade agreements that should be signed between Central Asian Republics and Pakistan. Fourth, there must be an easy visa regime to enhance tourism and people-to-people connectivity. Fifth, Central Asia and South Asia must devise such policies to formulate a joint narcotics plan as Afghanistan is facing a dreadful situation due to the Narco-trafficking. Six, there should be a coherent regional plan to counter the transnational cybercrimes. Seventh, people should know the origin and legacy of Central Asia as it was initiated from Amir Taimoor. There is a dire need to understand the actual roots and legacy. While concluding, Mr. Taimur highlighted the importance of the initiative of the president of Uzbekistan as a new regional policy for open borders, regional cooperation and sustainable development. Akromjon Nematov, First Deputy Director of the ISRS under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan while giving the concluding remarks, appreciated the suggestions given by Dr. Shabir Ahmed, Khalid Taimur, and Dr. Mehmood to be discussed in the upcoming international conference to promote regional connectivity. He expressed his gratitude to CGSS for the value of time and input.





# ہمیں جینا ہے

تھیلیسیمیا و ہیموفیلیا کے مریض بچے

## آپ کے عطیات و زکوٰۃ کے حقدار

تو آگے بڑھ کر ان کا ہاتھ تھامیے اور ان میں جینے کی اُمنگ جگائیے

آپ اپنے عطیات بذریعہ چیک یا بینک ڈرافٹ بنام فرنٹیئر فاؤنڈیشن یا آن لائن بھیج سکتے ہیں۔

اکاؤنٹ نمبرز

MCB بینک 0027701010033790  
(MCB بینک مین برانچ پشاور کینٹ)

UBL بینک 244111984  
(UBL ارباب روڈ یونیورسٹی روڈ پشاور)

ہیڈ آفس: 98-ای/بی، ایدرہ روڈ، نزد بلور چوک یونیورسٹی ٹاؤن پشاور۔  
فون نمبر: 091-5704363 / 5843642  
کوہاٹ برانچ: پشاور چوک میرمن سینٹر، نزدی اینڈ ویلیو آفس کوہاٹ  
فون نمبر: 0922-860200  
سید و شریف برانچ: بالمقابل سید و پولیس اسٹیشن، سید و روڈ، یگانورہ، سوات  
فون نمبر: 0946-712601-02

# Quetta Serena Hotel people's first choice for iftars

## BUREAU REPORT

**QUETTA:** The Serena Hotel Quetta is attracting interest of all and sundry because of its mouth-watering cuisines and lucrative iftar packages. Being the only Five Star Hotel in the provincial capital of Balochistan, Serena Quetta caters to culinary needs of those who believe in quality food stuff. Like past practice, this year too, Serena Quetta made elaborate arrangements especially for Iftar.

"Serena Quetta offers cost-effective and exquisite dining facilities therefore we are thankful to the management of the Hotel", said Zarmeen Gul, who came to have iftar at the Serena Quetta with her family, on Thursday.

At Serena Quetta we can see merging the best of the local culture and cuisine with culinary influences from around the globe, each of the restaurants and bars at Quetta Serena Hotel offers its own distinctive style and setting. Every one boasts sophisticated ambience, gracious service and fresh, flavourful ingredients – whether you're seeking an exploration of traditional Pakistani delights, savouring the delicacies of China and Thailand or gathering for authentic local snacks amidst the opulent décor of the Gidan Tea Lounge. In addition, the perfect stop any time of day, the warm, casual Ziarat Coffee



Shop serves Pakistani and International cuisine both buffet-style and a la carte. In addition to creative themed nights, Ziarat features live music. Indoor and outdoor seating are available.

With a wonderfully opulent dining area and an outdoor terrace overlooking the gardens, Xuelian Restaurant is known for serving the best Chinese and Thai food in Quetta. Showcasing a rich design and décor with colourful Balochi tapestries, carpets, rugs and antiques,

the Gidan Tea Lounge features coffee, tea and authentic local snacks.

And last but not the least, those who really want to enjoy traditional Balochi, Pakistani and continental delicacies including live BBQ prefer relaxing garden setting.

In addition to that, the Quetta Serena Hotel is also playing a key role in community development and corporate social responsibility. It offers huge employment opportunities to the local community.





# Ambassador Tugio highlights media role in promotion of bilateral ties

*Indonesia ambassador shares future plans and initiatives of the embassy with the media and think-tank*

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**



**ISLAMABAD:** Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio in a group photo with Executive Director CGSS Lt. Col. Khalid Taimur Akram, Chief Editor Daily Islamabad POST/ CENTRELINE/ DNA Ansar M Bhatti, Indonesia Defence Attaché and Counselor (DNA)

**ISLAMABAD:** Ambassador of Indonesia Adam M Tugio has highlighted the role of media in promotion and strengthening of relations between Indonesia and Pakistan.

He expressed these views during a meeting which was held between the Ambassador and Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies

(CGSS), Islamabad, and Ansar Mahmood Bhatti, Chief Editor, Daily Islamabad POST / Diplomatic News Agency /CENTRELINE magazine, and Member Board of Experts, CGSS at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Islamabad.

During the meeting, future projects and initiatives were discussed to enhance the ties

between Indonesia and Pakistan. It was agreed that media can play an effective role in portraying various sectors of collaboration between both countries.

The ambassador appreciated CGSS's and media efforts in enhancing people-to-people contact and diplomatic ties between Indonesia and Pakistan.

# JAPAN IN SPRING

**DR NUSRAT MAJEED**

Gloomy lockdown in beautiful spring makes me nostalgic about my stay in Japan and the lovely springs that I enjoyed in different parts of the country. The first spring was experienced during my cardiology training in Tokushima university. What took me there is a frequently asked question. It dates back to my studies in McMaster's university in Canada and then Mayo clinic Minnesota in the US, where I had gone for my post graduate training, after graduating from King Edwards medical college in Lahore. At both these prestigious universities I was thoroughly impressed by original work and the research by the Japanese cardiologists, so I decided to go to Japan to have firsthand experience. It was not easy but I was bent upon visiting Japan and finally landed at Tokushima airport on the 20th of March 1992. I was greeted very warmly by the Dean and the professorial staff of cardiology department.

It was a new world all together, homogeneity of society, very rich culture and above all THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS were out of this world.

My university was in Shikoku [four countries] prefecture. It is famous for its towering mountains in the middle of island and has its share of natural marvels and attractions not be missed. Like our twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Tokushima too has a twin city Naruto, a place famous for Whirlpools, as a matter of fact it is among the world's top three whirlpools. In between sky and the whirlpools is Naruto bridge, a beautiful piece of architecture, is simply awe inspiring.

Shikoku's history can be traced back all the way back to the era, when Buddhism was first introduced to Japan from China. This prefecture is full of ancient, historical temples and shrines and has breath taking scenery [only in Tokushima there are 86 temples and shrines].

Now coming back to Spring – In Japan it is synonymous with Sakura [cherry blossom] and Hanami, it literally translates to flower [hana] viewing [mi]. It is much more than just admiring flowers, though it is a celebration of newness but it is also transience. Hanami and sakura are a major cultural phenomenon throughout the country and heralds the arrival of spring. Boughs upon boughs of cherry blossoms decorate the sky in pale pink, their delicate silhouette no larger than a thumb. Beneath this sea of flowers is the



huge sea of plastic mats. The delicate cherry blossom trees bloom and from the very first pop of colour to the last fallen petals, the people celebrate Hanami. The full bloom of cherry blossoms happen from late March to Early April. It is also a season of many changes in Japan including graduations and entrance ceremonies to school, so there are many reasons to celebrate. Academic and fiscal year also starts from 1st April.

This fleeting beauty of Japan is renowned all over the world. On the 3rd day of my arrival, my department planned a Hanami trip at Mount BIZAN, it is called so because it is shaped like an eye brow. It was an unforgettable experience. People from all walks of life including women, children and the elderly come out in these beautiful gardens.

They eat and drink while basking under the flowers.

Appreciation of nature aside, HANAMI is where everyone from salary man to tourists can meet and greet, with the sole purpose of having good time. It is an experience so uniquely Japanese. For centuries sakura has been an integral part of culture from music and performing arts to handicrafts and cuisine.

This sense of appreciating nature – petals falling on the ground along with change in people's lives, the delightfulness and gentle excitement of it all – is closely connected with the perishing of the moment. We are startled into thoughts on the brevity of life. This is a deep philosophy of the Japanese culture which is reserved, humble and formal.



# Mental Well-Being and Social Cohesion- The Primers of a Healthy Lifestyle.



**Hani Zarbaft Ali**

The association between mental well-being and social cohesion are recognized as the key elements in the concoction of a healthy lifestyle. Mental health as characterized by the World Health Organization (WHO) is a state of well-being permitting individuals to understand their own abilities, to learn and have a positive sense of identity, to control their contemplations and emotions, to adapt to the ordinary stresses of life, to work profitably and productively, to have a satisfying public activity and extending full cooperation to the community. Emotional wellness accordingly surpasses the shortfall of mental issues or incapacities. All things considered, it is a powerful capacity to discover a harmony between all parts of life. In accordance with the WHO, mental health analysts progressively recognize that the shortfall of dysfunctional behavior doesn't really suggest a condition of a healthy mind.

Mental well-being issues (MHP) can be characterized as the presence of psychopathological side effects e.g. depressive mood, excessive anxiety, or compulsive behavior that indicate mental disorders defined in the classification systems of the American Psychiatric Association. MHP has become a serious cause for concern for the present generation with the advancements in technology, financial lopsidedness, and everyday stressors. In Pakistan, mental disorders account for more than 4% of the total disease burden, with the mental health burden higher among women. It is estimated that over 15 million people in Pakistan are suffering from some form of mental illness. Like many developing countries, Pakistan is struggling in several



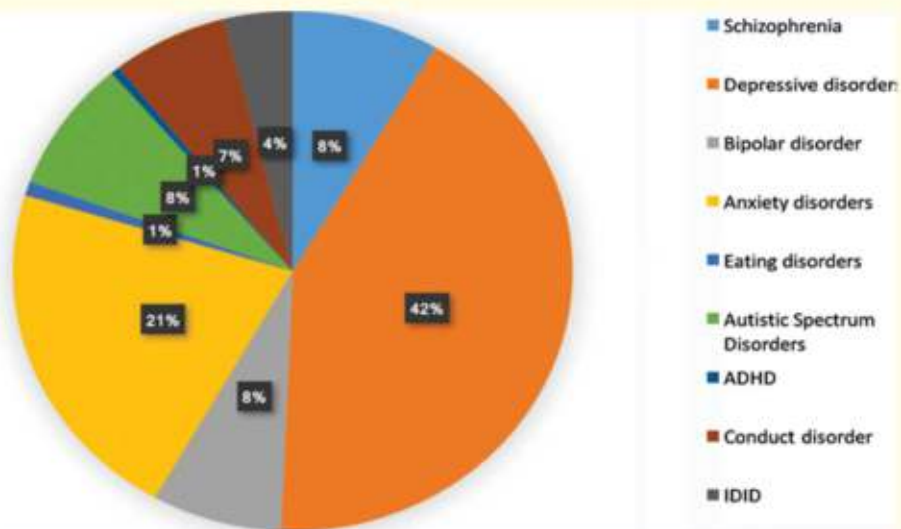
health and social spheres, which have substantial impact on lifestyle at populace level. The country's healthcare is similarly set apart by metropolitan rustic variations in medical care conveyance and a disparity in the workforce, with insufficient health professionals especially in the peripheral areas.

There is so much pain in the world, and most of these people keep their secret, rolling through agonizing lives in invisible wheelchairs, dressed in invisible body casts. Even though the subject under examination and its related predicaments is not given enough consideration and is generally described as a "shortcoming of character", its fundamental significance can't be denied.

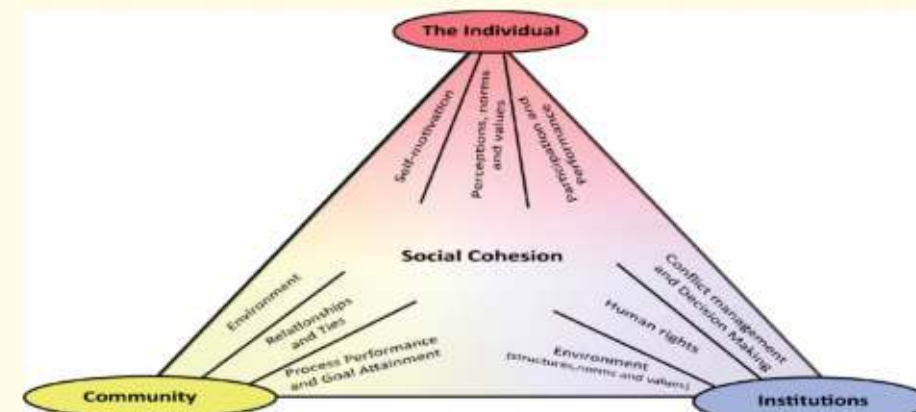
Psychological well-being is impacted by numerous variables, including regular practices that can be modified by people. Emotional and psycho-social well-ness can be achieved by improving ordinary well being practices that are empowering, destigmatizing, and can have a huge effect at populace level requiring little to no effort.

Individuals manifesting adequate rest, physical activity, work, supportive family, social circle, and a healthy eating regimen (sufficient fruit/vegetable intake) foster a healthier lifestyle resulting in lower emotional disturbances, stress and higher self-esteem; while several risk factors have been identified to cause dramatic cognitive decline including high liquor utilization, smoking, obesity, peer pressure, conflicting social environment leading to higher mental pain, stress, and lower self-confidence. The pertinence of lifestyle on mental health as indicated by the WHO fact sheet show huge relationship to psychological well-being.

The relationship among MHP (Mental Health Problems) and irregularities of circadian rhythms is reported, particularly for schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, delirium, and a lack of concentration. Interruptions of the circadian cycle may trigger or aggravate manic episodes. There is proof that the circadian framework does likewise impacts one's ability for disposition guideline.



Moreover, a sporadic social cadence, which incorporates social contacts, are additionally connected with state of mind problems. In one of the primary populace based examinations researching social inconsistency and emotional well-ness, unpredictable social rhythm was related with more MHP and lower life fulfillment. This finding is reproduced diversely by cross cultures. Corpulence, which depicts extreme overweight with a BMI higher than 30 is related with more terrible MHP, particularly with self-announced manifestations of gloom, depression and stress. In a recent study conducted on mid life individuals in Pakistan, higher BMI was related with side effects of anxiety and misery and furthermore with lower PMH (Positive Mental Health), estimated with a psychological wellness sub-scale of the Medical Outcomes Study Short-Form 36 (SF-36); a questionnaire that measures well-being and quality of life. Both overweight and corpulence anticipate future side effects of despondency just as beginning of a burdensome issue. In a review of prospective studies, physical activity was identified as a defensive barrier against the risk of developing depression and obesity. In individuals with enduring difficulties, aerobic exercise, resistance training and yoga practices diminish consequences of pressing factors. Smoking has been distinguished as a risk factor for MHP besides other cardiovascular diseases. A meta-analysis of forthcoming investigations with follow-up periods between 7 weeks and 9 years showed that people who quit smoking experience a critical abatement in MHP—indications of discouragement, anxiety and stress—and an expansion in PMH—mental personal satisfaction and positive affect—contrasted with continuing smokers. In a multi-group model understudies that were coordinated for sexual orientation and age, some way of life decisions—proactive tasks, smoking, and social beat abnormality—were prescient of future PMH or potentially MHP in any event, while controlling for age, and sex. A solid match of this model demonstrated that, in general, the effect of lifestyle on PMH and MHP was similar across nations. These discoveries recommend that picking better way of life practices can increment mental health. Social cohesion itself being an integral facet of a psycho-social environment, impacts various human behaviors, stability, and progression. Social affiliation has been depicted as a piece of insightful cordial capital that is passed on by good cause, correspondence, attributes and standards between individuals from a community. Markers of cognitive well-being, including social cohesion, are consistently seen as determinants of a healthy individual and society in the broader coalition. The idea of social cohesion, albeit complex, typifies a theoretical supporting that is



transforming into a huge savvy contraption of various human practices experienced by individuals in certain social settings. Social association, alongside its components, is multidimensional as explained by the assortment of available designs and approaches used to examine it. Existing literature describes social cohesion in a startling manner; the capacity of societies, not merely groups or networks, to manage collective action and solve problems. It is the glue that holds the society together. The first definition of social cohesion as a policy tool (as opposed to academic concept) was suggested by "Judith Maxwell": "Social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community." The OECD describes a socially cohesive society as the one that pursues the prosperity of every one of its individuals, battles prohibition and underestimation, makes a feeling of having a place, advances trust, and offers its individuals the chance of upward friendly mobility. It is adversely identified with pay imbalance; social capital is a blend of trust and metro commitment; social capital has been associated with two components, structural and cognitive. Structural refers to associational links and activity within society, such as civic engagement or 'what people do'. Cognitive refers to people's perceptions of their social relationships, such as interpersonal trust, sharing and reciprocity, or 'what people feel', and is a measurable indicator of social cohesion which is conceptualized as a collective community-level characteristic measured by the levels of trust, norms of reciprocity and the formation of strong social bonds within the local social structure. There is evidence to suggest that this concept of community-level social cohesion is useful in investigating the determinants of general health status and common mental health disorders (CMD), social portability mirrors how much individuals can change their situation in the public arena and lead a progressive life, mentally and physically. Studies suggest that social cohesion had a

protective role on the risk of experiencing high depressive symptomatology.

Social cohesion has been seen both an objective, as well as a process by which to improve the health of the public. It has been referenced as a means of improving health in numerous policies. However, recent evidence suggests the need for social cohesion to be studied at a local level, as the function of social cohesion appears to vary by the characteristics of the community being studied. Among a relatively homogeneous cohort, the reported level of social cohesion was found to be significantly associated with higher mental wellbeing. It may ensure against common mental health issues by discouraging deleterious health behaviors, through the regulation of social norms and security against daily stressors.

Given the current interest in resource-based approaches to support health and well-being, it is proposed that examinations to investigate the relations involving social cohesion are required before mediations which endeavor to adjust social cohesion to improve wellbeing are created. It is therefore stated that Positive Mental Health is necessary to human wellbeing and prosperity. Mental health and its associated markers areas yet not addressed in the wellbeing framework in Pakistan. A critical need exists for an acknowledgment from both public and private areas for improving mental health plan and services in the country. Government should complete social procedures that ought to be basic, impartial, and practical, just as having the option to address the issues of the standard necessities. It is critical that interventions are made to review about existing strategies with a focus on setting sustainable priorities in the field of mental health, particularly in policymaking, mindfulness among public, and the utilization of media to minimize social stigma. Such actions throughout would give freedom to both improving population mental health and diminishing perils of those psychological issues that are associated with social inequalities.

The writer is a 3rd year Medical student, an aspiring Doctor, and a member of Students Research Society. Her research interests revolve around Interventional Medicine and Public Health.





# Korea keen to expand ties with Pakistan: Ambassador

*Korean government has funded a huge Information Technology Center in Islamabad. The ambassador hoped Prime Minister of Pakistan shall inaugurate this significant project, which ostensibly shall contribute greatly towards further strengthening of bilateral relations*

**ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI**

**ISLAMABAD:** Ambassador of Republic of Korea Suh Sangpyo has said his country was keen to expand and diversify relations with Pakistan adding Korea was undertaking multiple projects in the fields of IT and culture. The Korean ambassador expressed these views during a meeting with the senior journalist of Islamabad. It was perhaps a first formal diplomatic gathering ever since the spread of the pandemic. Strict COVID SOPs were observed during the entire meeting.

He said the Korean government has funded a huge Information Technology Center in Islamabad. The Center was to be opened this week however due COVID situation the inauguration is delayed for a while. The ambassador hoped Prime Minister of Pakistan shall inaugurate this significant project, which ostensibly shall contribute greatly towards further strengthening of bilateral relations. The ambassador told that the government of Korea provides

trainings to several hundred government officials every year. These training programs are one of the major components in KOICA ODA programs for the improvement of government departments through human resource development and sharing Korean development experience. KOICA is organizing training programs focused on Pakistani participants, i.e Education Policy (planning & implementation), Economic Empowerment of Women, IT development Policy, Fiscal

Management & Reforms, Advance Tax Administration, Healthcare Policy & Program Management etc.

KOICA invites a large number of government officers every year from different public sectors including Health, Finance, Education, Information Technology, Tax administration and Governance to Korea for experience sharing and capacity building.

KOICA's fellowship program (CIAT) is Korea's leading human resources development (HRD) training program where KOICA invites civil officials, engineers, researchers, and policy makers in partner countries who will lead economic and social growth of their countries and provides capacity building trainings focusing on sharing Korea's experience and technology for development.

He said, Pakistan, where the Indus Civilization began, has a rich and diverse cultural heritage such as the Mohenjo Daro civilization, the Gandhara Buddhist arts and Islamic traditions.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1983, the bilateral ties between the two countries have been enlarged substantially in the areas of trade, investment, human exchange and development cooperation. Nevertheless, considering the immense potential of Pakistan, the current level of ties is not sufficient and needs to be upgraded.

The Korean Embassy will spare no efforts to support all the people who are interested in enhancing relations between Korea and Pakistan, he added. The ambassador said for the moment there were around 14,000 Pakistanis staying in Korea while 700 Korean nationals were staying in Pakistan. To a question the ambassador said as many as 500 students are currently undertaking their studies in Korea in various disciplines.

It may be mentioned here that the Government of the Republic of Korea had provided in-kind assistance of worth US\$ 500,000 to WHO for strengthening the Corona response efforts in Pakistan. The Korean donation included Real-time PCR Kits, IgG/IgM Standard COVID-19 kits and Face Masks to support Corona response efforts in the country. The Republic of Korea has always been supportive of WHO response and relief efforts to meet different health needs in humanitarian emergencies and disasters.





# UZBEKISTAN-PAKISTAN: Strengthening centuries-old ties and mutually beneficial cooperation

**Pakistan is a developing agro-industrial country, the 24<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world in terms of GDP in PPP (2019). Today it is among the eleven states with the greatest potential to become one of the largest economies in the world in the 21st century.**



Furkat Sidikov

This is a country that, due to its enormous political, economic, military-technical and human potential, favorable geopolitical location, balanced foreign policy, is currently playing one of the leading roles in regional politics and solving major international issues. Certainly, the comprehensive expansion of multifaceted mutually beneficial cooperation with Pakistan meets the interests of Uzbekistan, which today is at a new historical stage in its development. This was especially emphasized by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in his Address to the Oliy Majlis (Parliament). History itself has created the preconditions for the establishment and strengthening of a fruitful dialogue between the two states at the present stage. The mutual acceptance of cultures and spirituality was facilitated by the emergence in the 16th century of a powerful empire on the territory of modern Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and southeastern Afghanistan, the founder of which was Zakhiriddin Muhammad Babur, a descendant of the great ancestor of the Uzbek people - Amir Temur. The richest cultural, historical and scientific heritage of that era will forever remain as the asset of present and future generations.

Today, the Embassies of the two states operate in capitals of Uzbekistan and Pakistan, which are established in May 1992 to contribute to the dynamic development of bilateral relations. Friendship groups operate in parliaments of the two countries, and political dialogue at various levels is of a regular nature, which has recently become more and more dynamic.

The meetings of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, held within the framework of international events (the SCO and Organization of Islamic Cooperation summits) in 2017-2018 with the President of Pakistan Mamnun Hussain and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. On April 2019 in Beijing at the international forum "Belt and Road Initiative" and in June of the same year in Bishkek at the summit of the SCO heads of state, the head of Uzbekistan met with the Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan are the testimony of above mentioned. Both countries mutually support each other in the international arena, actively interacting within the framework of such international organizations as the UN, SCO and the Islamic Cooperation Organization.

The consistent development of Uzbek-Pakistani relations meets the long-term



interests of not only our two countries, but also has a positive impact on strengthening security, developing trade, economic, communication and humanitarian ties in the region as a whole.

Thus, being immediate neighbors of Afghanistan and being equally interested in establishing peace and stability in this country, Uzbekistan and Pakistan are unanimous that the Afghan problem can be solved unambiguously exclusively through peaceful political negotiations under the auspices of the UN and an armistice of the opposing sides.

Today Tashkent and Islamabad are actively cooperating with Kabul in the implementation of joint economic and infrastructure projects that meet the interests of all three states. One of these is

the project for the construction of the Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar trans-Afghan railway, the prospects for which to become part of the New Silk Road have already taken shape.

There was a high-level meeting in early February in Tashkent with the participation of delegations from Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as representatives of international financial institutions to discuss this project, following which a joint Action Plan in this direction was adopted.

Undoubtedly, the construction of direct transport corridors between our countries will contribute to the expansion of mutual trade and economic ties and investment cooperation. They are developing quite intensively even today. Thus, at the end of 2020, Pakistan ranked 13th among trading partners in terms of exports of products and services from Uzbekistan. This indicator in the specified period amounted to \$98.5 million with a total volume of trade turnover of \$123.3 million.

The Uzbek-Pakistani intergovernmental commission on trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation, as well as the joint Business Council serve as effective platforms for resolving issues of bilateral cooperation in these areas.

It should also be noted that the number of joint and foreign enterprises with Pakistani capital in Uzbekistan has almost doubled over the past five years. Today it is more than 140 enterprises, including 4 with 100% foreign capital, which successfully operate in Uzbekistan in such areas as trade, light industry, paper production, leather goods and food products. In general, the total volume of Pakistani investments in the economy of Uzbekistan is currently \$11 million.

During the visit of the delegation headed by the H.E. Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan Mr. Sardor Umurzakov in September 2020 to Pakistan, matters of expanding cooperation in this area, as well as important issues of enhancing transport and logistics interaction were discussed. In Islamabad bilateral meetings were held with the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan, in the ministries and departments of Pakistan.

Another important event in the development of bilateral economic cooperation was the recent visit to Uzbekistan of a delegation led by H.E. Governor of Punjab, Muhammad Sarwar Chaudhary.

Honorable guests visited Namangan province, where matters of establishing interregional cooperation between Punjab and the Namangan region were discussed. During this visit, parties have signed an agreement on the

establishment twin ship between the Namangan region and the Punjab province, the first interregional business forum "Namangan-Punjab", as well as "B2G" and "B2B" talks were conducted. Relations in the cultural and humanitarian spheres between our countries are also consistently developing. Historical ties and common spiritual values of the Uzbek and Pakistani nations serve as a solid basis for this. Since the first days of independence, the Uzbekistan-Pakistan Friendship Society operating in Uzbekistan, contributing to the development of cultural and educational ties between the two nations, developing people to people contacts.

In recent years, taking into account the potential of the countries in the field of pilgrimage, tourism, including pilgrimage tourism, has become an increasingly promising area of bilateral cooperation, which is of high mutual interest. In 2020, the leader of Naqshbandiya H.E. Hasib ur-Rahman

was appointed as the Ambassador of Ziyarat Tourism of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, and in 2019 the Information Tourism Center of our country was established. Before the pandemic, more than five thousand tourists and pilgrims have been visiting Uzbekistan every year. In 2020, despite the pandemic, almost a thousand travelers from Pakistan visited our country.

Thus, the current state and results of bilateral cooperation over the past almost 30 years will undoubtedly become a solid basis for building up cooperation in trade, economic, investment and transport and logistics spheres. Using the existing potential, Uzbekistan and Pakistan will not only be able to successfully overcome the economic consequences of the global crisis associated with the pandemic, but also make a worthy contribution to the economic development of Central and South Asia.

**The writer is the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan**



## Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad Directorate of Health Services

### OPEN AUCTION OF SCRAPED MATERIAL

Auction of material (Scrapped/ Non-Scrapped and old motor bikes) will be held on the basis of "where it is as it is" following schedule.

S. #	Site and Items	Inspection Date	Date & Time of Auction
01	Directorate of Health Services, CDA/MCI, Street-58, Agha Nasir Road, F-11/4, Islamabad (Materials Wooden and steel Almirah, Foggers, Water Dispensers, Chairs, Tables, Gas Heaters, Inner Lined Refrigerators (ILR) etc.)	19.04.2021 to 03.05.2021	04.05.2021 at 11.00 a.m
02	1 GL-526 100CC Yamaha 2006 2 GL-527 100CC Yamaha 2006 3 GL-528 100CC Yamaha 2006 4 GL-530 100CC Yamaha 2006 5 GL-532 100CC Yamaha 2006 6 GL-539 100CC Yamaha 2006 7 GL-844 100CC Yamaha 2007 8 GL-845 100CC Yamaha 2007 9 GL-846 100CC Yamaha 2007 10 GL-847 100CC Yamaha 2007 11 GL-848 100CC Yamaha 2007 12 GL-850 100CC Yamaha 2007	19.04.2021 to 03.05.2021	04.05.2021 at 11.00 a.m

2. Materials and motor bikes can be inspected during office hours (9.00 AM to 04.00 PM) at Directorate of Health Services, CDA/MCI, Street-58, Agha Nasir Road, F-11/4, Islamabad.

#### TERMS & CONDITIONS:-

- The initial bid will be announced by the auction committee at the time of auction.
- Successful bidders will have to deposit 25% of total bid amount at the spot and the remaining amount will be deposited within one week in shape Bank Draft in favour of DDO (DHS), CDA/MCI.
- GST and Income tax shall be apply / paid as per prevailing laws.
- Successful bidders will be responsible to lift the material from site within 30 days after receipt of written orders.
- Authority reserves the right to keep 25% deposited amount into its custody until acceptance/ rejection of bids.
- In case the material is not lifted from the site within 30 days, a penalty of Rs. 5000/- per day will have to be paid.
- Persons interested to take part in auction will have to deposit cash Rs. 3000/- as token money (non-refundable) with written request containing CNIC and Mobile Number to Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO) DHS, CDA/MCI till 30.04.2021.
- Documents i.e Registration book of any auction vehicles if available will be handed over to successful parties after deposited the required amount.
- Authority reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids prior to the acceptance of bids without assigning any reason thereof.

(Dr. M. Iqbal Afridi)  
Director Health Services, DHS, Islamabad  
051-9267582

PID 7303/20



# US CG, VC UoS sign accord

STAFF REPORT



**ISLAMABAD:** In a virtual ceremony, U.S. Consul General Catherine Rodriguez along with Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad Vice Chancellor University of Sargodha, signed an agreement to renew the Lincoln Corner partnership between the University of Sargodha and the U.S. Consulate General in Lahore. The newly renovated and expanded Lincoln Corner Sargodha is a vibrant center of student interaction, learning, dialogue, and creative thinking.



## CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Road Division No. III

Sealed tenders are hereby invited on percentage basis from the approved contractors of PEC enlisting up-to-date in Category C-3 or above, with Project Code CE-01 for the year 2020-21, as per following details:-

S. #	Name of Work	N.I.T Cost	Earnest Money	Date & Time of Opening
01	Rehabilitation of Road in Industrial Triangle, Kahuta Road, Islamabad.	374,315,700/-	Rs. 11,229,471/-	28.04.2021 (Box closed at 11:30AM & opened on 12:00 Noon)

Detailed terms & conditions can be seen from CDA Website [www.cda.gov.pk](http://www.cda.gov.pk) and PPRA website [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)

- 1) Tender documents can be obtained on Non-refundable cash payment of Rs. 5,000/- per set. Open in the office of Director Roads (South), CDA on during office hours. Application for issuance of tender documents will be received up to 26.04.2021, 12:00 Noon and tender documents will be issued on 27.04.2021 and no tender will be issue on the opening date.
- 2) E/Money in the shape of deposit at call in favor of Dy. Director Roads Division-III, CDA must accompany the tender application. Cash / Cheque will not be accepted. No tender document will be issued without showing deposit at call.
- 3) The authority (CDA) may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of the bid or proposal. The authority (CDA) shall upon request communicate to any supplier or contractor who submitted a bid or proposal, the grounds for its rejection of all bids or proposals, but is not required to justify those grounds.
- 4) The bid security of all bidders would be deposited in the CDA Bank Account and same may be returned after the acceptance of the Contract with the successful bidder.
- 5) The eligibility criteria of the firms with the relevant experience i.e. at least three (03) No. of works in last two (02) financial years may be observed / fulfill before issuance of tender documents.
- 6) The firm shall provide all relevant attested documents according to laid down in invitation for bids in bidding documents otherwise bids will be considered as a non responsive bid.
- 7) Authority letter in favor of the person deputed by the contractor to submit the application and collect the tender from along with CNIC (original) is to be provided.
- 8) Certificate is required on Judicial Stamp Paper worth of Rs.50/- their firm are not involved in any litigations.

Deputy Director  
Road Division-III  
051-9212719

PID 5600/20

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