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have every reason to
solidify cooperation



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TTP challenges



THE Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has started taking a heavy toll on especially the security forces personnel of Pakistan. In the recent spate of terrorism at least a dozen of security personnel have embraced martyrdom while scores of others sustained serious injuries. The TTP unleashed a reign of terror when it had pulled out of the agreement made with the Pakistan government in September this year. TTP spokesperson Mohammad Khorasani in a statement had claimed that the Pakistani government made no efforts to make the negotiations successful "so it is not possible to continue the ceasefire". The reasons cited by the TTP for ending the ceasefire included non-release of prisoners, continued military

operations and lack of communication from the government of Pakistan. On the announcement of the end of the ceasefire, TTP chief Mufti Noor Wali said that they had never refused meaningful negotiations and it was part of Shariah law. But no progress was made during these negotiations. Therefore, the armed struggle would continue, he announced. Pakistan, in August 2022, had sent a delegation to break the stalemate. Following the visit of a delegation of Ulema led by Mufti Taqi Usmani, a tribal jirga visited Kabul. The purpose of the Ulema delegation's visit was to use the good offices of the religious clerics to persuade the TTP to withdraw its demand for FATA merger and other contentious issues.

Apart from FATA merger issue the TTP, ostensibly on the insistence of Afghan Taliban, has been pressurizing Pakistani authorities to do away with the fencing along the Pak-Afghan border- a demand the Pakistani authorities had turned down vehemently.

Then, recently the Pakistan government banned export of American currency to Afghanistan in the wake of depleting foreign exchange reserves of the country. This check was not very well received within the Taliban ranks as hitherto they had been thieving on these dollars. About \$2 billion used to go to Afghanistan from Pakistan in the form of official and unofficial trade, misuse of Afghan transit trade, smuggling and through the borders. Another mind boggling question is as to how the TTP managed to immediately regroup itself and started coordinated acts of terrorism. The answer is that when the Pakistani authorities launched operations to root out the menace of terrorism be it Operation Raddul Fasad or Operation Zarb-e-Azb, these outfits were perhaps not eliminated altogether. At that time the mantra of good Taliban and bad Taliban was also in action due to which a number of TTP men managed to go scot free only because the authorities believed that they would behave in future. That approach however seems to have backfired as the good Taliban appears to have reunited with the bad ones and both of them have now girded up their loins against Pakistan.

In addition to that the Taliban phenomenon is not just a name of some armed personnel seeking undue largesse, it has now turned into a mindset and that mindset is present in the very ranks of our society. It is not necessary that only the bearded people should represent this mindset, even those hailing from the so-called liberal class may also be representing this mindset. One thing is for sure the TTP cannot do anything without the support of the Afghan Taliban. As mentioned above Pakistan did try to make friends with the new Afghan government but all efforts have gone down the drain. The recent effort proved highly counterproductive when Pakistan sent a delegation to Kabul which was spearheaded by Hina Rabbani Khar. Even those who would otherwise defend this government despite all its weaknesses, did not like that idea. It was indeed a miscalculated and strategically wrong move to send a woman to talk with those who simply hate women's role either in politics or any other sphere.

The TTP chose a time for its subversive acts when Pakistan's political and economic situation was in dire straits. For the government the biggest and foremost task appears to be delaying of general elections till the time it may be in a position to grab some seats while the opposition is hell bent upon getting a date for early elections come what may. The security establishment seems to be in a state of to be or not to be as the new leadership obviously needs some time to grapple with the situation. If the status quo persists then unfortunately there is a likelihood of more such acts, which may take away more precious lives. The stakeholders therefore need to rise to the occasion in the larger interest of the country before it gets too late.

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 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 also served in Pakistan Telecommunication Company (PTCL) as Media Advisor/ Director Communication. He launched Diplomatic News Agency (DNA) in 2012. In May 2020 he launched Pakistan's First & only Diplomatic Newspaper Daily Islamabad POST.

HANNU RIPATTI

Finland, Pakistan have every reason to solidify cooperation

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

1: First of all, we welcome you back to Pakistan after a gap of almost 10 years. If you could tell us why the Embassy was closed in Pakistan and now what has convinced the Finnish authorities that they should have their presence in Pakistan?

Finland closed the embassy about 10 years ago and the reason for closing was for finances basically after the so-called dot com crisis. At the same time security cost was also a reason not just Islamabad but in other countries as well. We closed 10 missions and Islamabad was among them. Our then foreign minister had said that these are bad decisions but you have to do it when running short of money. We have reopened Manila, Islamabad and Doha missions and the only reason Doha was done before Islamabad was the football world cup so we wanted to have a resident consul there before the start of the mega event. At this moment we are at the temporary location at the Serena Business Complex but the idea is that in about a year's time we will have the old premises and start routine operations including the issuing of visas. For issuing visas we have to put in place certain mechanisms including establishment of a secure telecommunication system. Then, arrangements will have to be made to conduct interviews of the visa seekers. So I think we shall be able to put our house in order by Octo-

Ambassador of Finland to Pakistan Hannu Ripatti talked exclusively to Daily Islamabad POST, Centreline magazine and Diplomatic News Agency (DNA). Ambassador Ripatti explained closure of the Finnish embassy back in 2012. He also talked about business potential of Pakistan and Finland. Here are excerpts from his interview



ber 2023. For the moment the Dutch embassy in Islamabad is taking care of our visas for 90 days. However the big problems are for the students because they need longer term visas for which applications have to be forwarded to Abu Dhabi which takes time. That is why we want to bring our visa system here in Pakistan in order to not only cater to the needs of the students but the permanent residency seekers as well. I am pleased to share with you that Pakistani students are keen to pursue their studies especially in the field of IT and Forestry. According to the Pakistani Council General in Finland there are about 1,000 Pakistani students studying in Finland. Pakistan does not have an embassy in Finland and the mission in Sweden takes care of Finland as well. Things would become much easier if Pakistan opens an embassy in Finland.

As regards trade and economic activity, we know the trade volume between the two countries was quite moderate. Which areas you shall be focusing on in order to increase the trade activity?

As you know the trade is done by the companies and the companies need to have a good product so that people could buy those products. Then ostensibly they need to have good connections as well. We can help them get in touch with relevant people, but the most important thing is to get the right contact to make the trade. We have several ways of helping them. We have Fin Partnership which can facilitate and help imports and exports on both ways. The Business Council has promised to host a business summit here in Pakistan. This has been dormant during the time of the Covid pandemic and there were no big meetings during that time. We rely very much on the people who know more about the trade such as the Fin Partnership and the business council. We are trying to make sure that this kind of thing does take place periodically. I plan to visit various chambers of commerce and industries. I have already visited Lahore. Once our place is ready then of course we will be able to do such activities in a planned and much better manner.

Cultural, academic and people to people links play an important role in building relations. How do you plan to promote relations in these fields?

We plan to promote cultural linkages as well. You are right, in the past the Finnish embassy used to host cultural events

on regular basis and it is my plan as well to revive that tradition. Another area where we can have enhanced cooperation happens to be the hospitality industry. There is a possibility that the Pakistani students seeking studies in the hospitality industry can go to Finland for this purpose. In Kuopio we do have institutions that have been imparting training and higher education in hotel management etc. If the Pakistani students have a diploma in this field they can pursue further studies in Finland. Student visa allows students to work in Finland but at a limited scale. Studying in Finland is not an expensive thing as compared with the US or other countries. We do not have a schol-

Studying in Finland is not an expensive business as compared with the US or other countries. We do not have a scholarship program for students but there are some specific foundations that offer scholarships

arship program for students but there are some specific foundations that offer scholarships. The students can log on to specific websites and get further information about these foundations and facilities they offer. As I said, education in the Finnish institutions is not very expensive. There are certain facilities such as subsidized food, sporting facilities etc available at extremely nominal charges. This system is still in vogue in most of the institutions. **Pak, Finland business council was formed in 1985 I believe. Do you intend to re-activate this business council besides having such councils in all major cities such as Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Peshawar etc.**



The business council is very much there. It has meetings as well. I met with one of the co-directors of the council and discussed with him as to how we can give impetus to the activities of the Business Council. We need to expand the ambit and base of the council with a view to enlarging its scope and utility. That is how a business council should work or such councils work everywhere. One way of promoting trade and economic activity between the two countries is holding business summits. We are already onto it and hopefully shall be able to do it sooner

when registered in any of the EU member countries can be marketed in all the EU member states.

Please tell us something about Nokia

Nokia is doing quite well. Nokia as you know is basically a handset maker and not a software company. With the advent of lifestyle smart phones it was perhaps difficult for the company to match challenges posed by other operators such as iPhone, Apple etc. Nokia's decline in the mobile device industry, culminated in the sale of the handset division to Microsoft. But that was only one of the divisions of Nokia. Nokia primarily makes networks. Nokia and Siemens used to work together but then Nokia bought Siemens and quite recently they have bought Alcatel as well. As you know Alcatel is a famous French company dealing with networks. Nokia handsets are still available in the market but another company is manufacturing these handsets under the brand name of Nokia.

What are the prospects of cooperation in the tourism sector between Finland and Pakistan?

Tourism is yet another area where both countries can cooperate. I visited Lahore some time ago and was amazed to see the grandeur of the city. The Walled City was a marvel to see. Then the Waziri mosque is yet another attraction that immediately attracts the visitors. In Taxila too there are quite a few places that attract the visitors. In Finland as well we have a number of tourist attractions. Finland as you know is well known for its Archipelagos. People who wish to explore natural beauty must visit Finland.

Anything you would like to add

It is an interesting experience to be in Pakistan. I am very thankful to the people who have been helping me all along. Before coming to Pakistan I was told that Pakistani people are ever ready to help you and that is exactly what I have witnessed here in this country.

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rather than later. As you know Finland is a country of five and half million people so comparing with Pakistan it may be a small country however the advantage which the Pakistani businessmen have is that they can reach out to the European Union markets through Finland. A product

US-Israel developing joint military capabilities



Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer

ALTHOUGH government-to-government relations between the US and Israel are sometimes strained, in contrast, there is a clear understanding between the militaries of the two countries that their relationship will continue and that both countries' interests are mutually beneficial.

The final moments of the 20-year American presence in Afghanistan until August 2021 were unpleasant. Maj. Gen. Chris Donahue, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, boarded the last U.S. military flight from Kabul days after 11 U.S. Marines, a Navy corpsman, an Army special operations soldier, and more than 100 Afghans were killed on Karzai Airport. According to an Israeli journalist wrote in 2022 that an Israeli intelligence officer realized that a car bomb was already on its way to the convoy. Taliban operatives attached themselves to the US convoy and detonated hundreds of kilograms of explosives on the Marines. The Intelligence Division is the direct channel to its colleagues at USCENTCOM, the US military's central command. Israeli intelligence knew what the caravan had to do to avoid the volcano and they moved quickly. On November 15 of this year, CENTCOM Commander General Michael "Eric" Kurilla made his fourth visit to Israel since taking office just seven months earlier. He didn't just go to talk about Iran rather than his visit to the Northern Command of Israel on the Lebanese border. It is also included to assess Alpha Line threats between Israel and Syria on Rosh Hankara and the Golan Heights, particularly Hezbollah weapons in southern Lebanon, and the arms and explosives

smuggling routes between Lebanon and Syria. According to General Michael Eric, the Israeli Air Force maintains world-class air power with the most advanced systems, the highest level of professionalism and first-class combat capability. Including our long-standing, iron-clad partnership are critical to regional security and stability. All these visits to the region make aware of the threats and challenges to each country faces and the capabilities available. The visit reinforced the importance of this relationship and the many opportunities before us for the Middle East.

During General Eric's visit, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kohavi said the two countries were "rapidly developing joint military capabilities" against Iran and "other threats in the Middle East". In November, Kohavi arrived in Washington for talks with senior US officials. According to an Israeli military journal, the talks included the possibility of joint action against the Islamic Republic of Iran. "We are working together on all fronts and to prepare for this." In late November, anonymous sources told the Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot that Israeli defense officials said the United States would support an Israeli attack to destroy the Iranian nuclear program. Sources said that US decision-makers realize that Iran is a threat to world peace and the world order.

The recent joint exercises and a joint missile defense test. In July, Israel has tested its entire defense array against rockets and ballistic missiles. In parallel, the US also has tested its Patriot, AEGIS, and THAAD systems. The Defense Ministry said the replica was housed in a unique testing facility to provide real-time data and enable in-depth debriefing. In November, the US and Israeli air forces has conduct-

ed three-day exercises over the Mediterranean Sea and Israel. Unlike previous joint exercises with CENTCOM in the Red Sea, this one was may not designed to provoke Iran. However, the capabilities they used will certainly worry Tehran. "They are practicing fighter escort and aerial refueling," said Brig. According to Pentagon spokesman General Pat Ryder "This is a long planning exercise and it is also not something that is unusual". This is not true at all. Although the Biden administration has seemingly abandoned its intention to use diplomacy to re-engage Iran and find a path to a revised JCPOA, the idea that the U.S. military might take a different path Proceeding with the exercises is, in fact, unusual. There was a time when CENTCOM officials were ordered not to visit Israel, part of the US European Command (EUCOM), until 2021. Joseph Votel became the first commander to make an official visit in 2018. Even when Israel was still in EUCOM, it already had contacts in CENTCOM that worked to the US's advantage. These contacts saved lives in Afghanistan. Likewise, the move to CENTCOM did not completely eliminate Israeli capability from Europe. Israel has used its status as a "major non-NATO ally" to provide intelligence to Kyiv about Iranian drones being used by Russia to attack Ukraine. Heading into 2023, the US military clearly sees its Israeli counterpart as an important part of the US security equation, regardless of the political equation.

Fixing the unfixed

A PARADIGM shift in the statecraft, a strong commitment to institution-building, a pressing push for policy stabilisation, and making the governance model more responsive to public aspirations by weaning away its inherent red tapism - are some of the potential interventions that could set the course right for our long-awaited journey towards progress, prosperity and socio-economic development.

It is encouraging to note that 'the parties in power' have rightly ascertained need of following the constitutional framework of trichotomy of power between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary for running business of the state. All serious stakeholders of the system are on one page in this regard, at least for the time being. Concerns for political certainty, continuity of economic policies and above all sticking fast to the principle of 'Division of Labour' between different organs of the state, as enshrined in the Constitution, have aptly surfaced in our national discourse. Moreover, our cogent prioritisation of geo-economics over geopolitics has all the right reasons to believe that it would contribute significantly to our socioeconomic development as a nation.

A living example of a similar economic miracle in the recent history can be found in the unprecedented economic development and GDP per capita growth of People's Republic of China, that has lifted out of extreme poverty its 800 Million impoverished people in a short span of 04 decades, just because of stability in political order and consistency in economic policies over these years. In a desire to emulate the Chinese economic development model, Pakistan has joined China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Launched in 2013, it is an iconic infrastructure development project, connecting China with the East and the

West through "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "21st Century Maritime Silk Road", in order to reap dividends of shared economic development. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Spanning over 3000 KMs, it connects Pakistan's Gwadar seaport on the Arabian Sea to Kashgar in China's North-West Xinjiang province. With signing a comprehensive Framework Agreement on Industrial Cooperation between the two countries in February 2022, CPEC has entered second phase which aims at industrial growth through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), industrialization and development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Accordingly, Pakistan has successfully realigned its investment ecosystem to make it more business-friendly by adopting necessary changes in the regulatory framework and tax laws. The system is now perfectly poised to attract huge foreign investments for rapid industrialisation and relocation of labour-intensive Chinese industries, which find themselves less competitive back in China because of high labour rates there. This win-win arrangement between the two brotherly countries, Pakistan and China, is mutually beneficial because on one hand it would afford a lot of rewarding employment opportunities to Pakistani workforce, and on the other hand would also help in making the Chinese products more competitive internationally by reducing their labour input cost. Additionally, it would also prove to be instrumental in making the Pakistani manufacturing industry more competitive through technology transfer and capacity building of its manpower. This sort of symbiotic relationship is, no doubt, stable, reliable and mutually rewarding not only in interpersonal but also in international relations. This rightly is the bedrock of "higher than Himalayas, deeper than ocean and sweeter than honey" Sino-Pak dip-



Abdul Rashid Shakir

lomatic relations, spanning over more than seven decades now. In order to make maximum out of this industrial cooperation arrangement between two countries, it is high time Pakistan secures cheap, clean and sustainable sources of energy. Cognizant of its importance, the government has started a 10,000MW solarisation project in order to reduce its reliance on expensive imported fossil fuels that cost the country around \$25 billion annually. During his recent visit to China, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has aggressively advocated Pakistan's cause to attract Chinese investments in Pakistan's solar energy projects, besides undertaking work on the up gradation of Karachi-Peshawar Railway Track (ML-1) and Karachi urban mass transit system, Karachi Circular Railway (KCR). Pakistan is also in hectic negotiations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Qatar, Russia and other friendly Middle Eastern countries to buy petroleum and gas products to ensure uninterrupted and reliable energy supplies for running its industrial units to spur economic growth. To wrap up, it can be said with certainty that all the growth-necessary paraphernalia is in place and ready to kick start industrial development through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by foreign companies, especially the Chinese. The only ingredient missing in the recipe is political certainty and stability of the entire system. It is hoped that sanity prevails and all stakeholders of the governance system would behave more responsibly to avert further damage to the political and socio-economic order, a prerequisite of econobox growth in the country.

West's Double Standards: Pursuit for Human Rights or a Tool for Dominance

Sabah Aslam

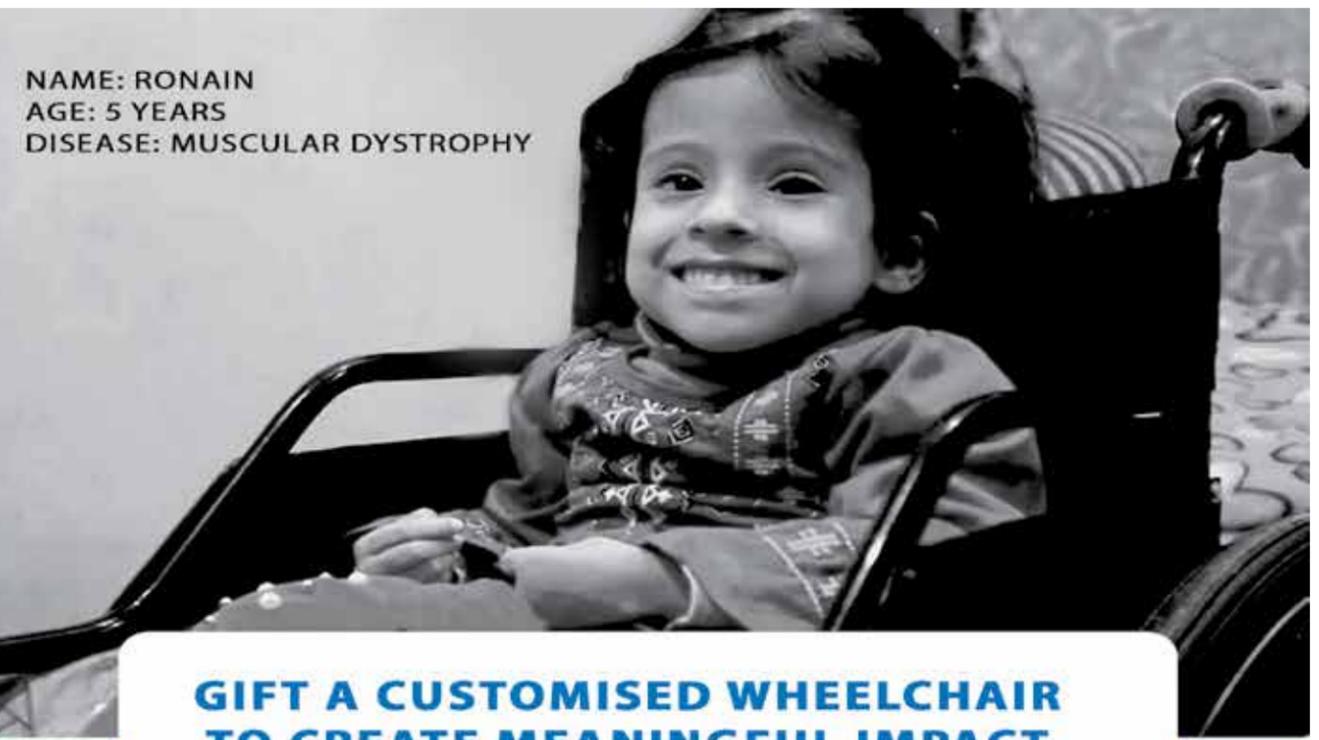
WITH the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, it was hoped that the world especially the eastern part of the globe would have at least peace at borders and within. The regional power competitors were looking for regional prosperity through development and multilateralism. However, the emerging situation in Ukraine since 2014 was a preparation for another regional chaos, which exacerbated as the Ukraine - Russia war. The US planned and secretly pushed the war to Russian borders. US since 2014, has provided around \$22.1 billion to Ukraine in security assistance for training and equipment, and to help maintain its territorial integrity, secure its borders, and improve interoperability with NATO. In response to Russia's unjustified war against Ukraine, US and its allies sided with Ukraine and supported it to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Furthermore, other than military assistance, disinformation is also employed as one of the chief weapons to manipulate the international arena with fabrication. Moreover, in controlling states' behaviour, Weapon modernization - a tactic to engage the world into arm race to ensure negative peace and stability through deterrence is massively employed. On one hand, through weapon modernization, countries come under heavy debt, the donors' economy flourish and these recipient states suffer at home due to multiple encumbrances. Security assistance in that regard is a trap by U.S. Secondly, under the banner of peace, U.S. itself is playing a role of war promoter by supplying all sorts of weapons and equipment to other states. It is arming the states with an aim to destabilize the globe at large. Despite Joe Biden's election pledge to not "check [America's] values at the door" when it comes to arms sales, the U.S. has increased, not decreased, its weapons sales around the world, according to a new report of Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, a Washington-based thinktank. Furthermore, as per Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) study, the United States accounted for 39 percent of major weapons deliveries for the five-year period from 2017-21, this is twice as large as Russia's share, and over eight times China's share to the world market. Defense Security Cooperation Agency director James Hirsch said "Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing conflict has helped spur a greater de-

mand for U.S. weapons, particularly from European nations who find themselves needing to replenish their own munitions stockpiles or have begun rethinking their own defense needs."

"In this time of uncertainty, we have a clear way forward: Help Ukraine defend itself. Support the Ukrainian people. Hold Russia accountable," Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State said in a statement in February this year when Russia launched an offensive against Ukraine. However, U.S. arms sales would also pose challenges to its own security by promoting conflicts, provoking other regional powers, encouraging arms races, and drawing the US itself into excessive or counterproductive wars. US arms sales is also facilitating human rights abuses by associate states like India in Occupied territory i.e. Kashmir.

The definition of 'Human' and 'Human Rights' is different under western countries lens. From, last seven and half decades, the Muslims of Palestine and Kashmir are under occupation by Israel and India, but not a single western country came forward with military or security assistance. A question for Western Powers, 'Who will hold India and Israel accountable?'. The hypocrite nature and double standards of major international players are making this world - a war zone. The issue of Palestine and Kashmir, and aggression done by Israel and India is far graver. However, no Human Rights advocate (Western States) pushed to at least take some proactive measures to end these two prolonged occupations. International arena is clouded with 'Double Standards and Hypocrisy'. US always wanted to be in East because of many reasons for instance natural resources, threat to its hegemony, emergence of a powerful eastern bloc, and to counter China and Russia's rise as global powers. Furthermore, in this reference, one of the key measures taken were also to weaken the Muslim bloc by preoccupying Muslim countries with terrorism and counter-terrorism. Pakistan - the only nuclear Muslim state is going through challenging time due to political instability and terrorism. Pakistan is suffering for being frontline non-NATO Ally in US war against terrorism. Additionally, in last few decades, we have witnessed a strong effort by some states to push propaganda against Islam and Muslims using overt and covert means including media outlets, academia, civil societies, and contaminating media (social, electronic, and print) with disinformation.

Ambassador Designate of the Philippines Ms. Maria Agnes Cervantes hosts thanks-giving reception



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Ambassador Leopoldo hosts Barbecue Party to celebrate Football World Cup Victory

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Argentina Leopoldo Francisco Sahores hosted Argentine style Barbecue party to celebrate football world cup victory. A large number of people attended the party and enjoyed the traditional Argentine Barbecue.



Ambassador of Vietnam hosts dinner for friends



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Ethiopia for equitable utilization of transboundary water: Envoy

DNA

ISLAMABAD” Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula has said that his country fully adhered to the international rule of equitable and reasonable utilization of transboundary water. “As far as, the Nile River water is concerned, Ethiopia is determined to follow international rules, treaties and conventions, but we do not recognize any treaty to which Ethiopia is not the party,” the ambassador said while delivering a lecture on international water law, hydro-politics and hydro-diplomacy at a workshop titled “Winter School for International Law”.

The “Winter School for International Law” was hosted by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) in collaboration with the Research Society of International Law. At the outset of his lecture, the ambassador elucidated the terms of hydro-politics and hydro-diplomacy and shed light on this subject's evolution in the last couple of decades. He also informed the audience about the existing international water laws and treaties, the United Nations Watercourse convention, and theories regarding the use of shared transboundary water resources.

Around the world, he said three-quarters of UN Member States shared rivers or lake basins with their neighbors. “There are more than 270 shared river basins, which provide freshwater for almost 40% of the globe's population, including the Nile, the Indus, the Ganges, the Euphrates-Tigris, and the Mekong.” As regards the inter-state relations of the African continent in the context of shared water resources, he said the Nile River was the longest transboundary river in the world whose water was shared among 11 countries including Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan, and Egypt.

The ambassador said during the last two centuries, several treaties were concluded in respect of the Nile River, which Egypt has been invoking to justify their ‘right’ to the use of the waters of the Nile River.

He said Ethiopia was not the party to any of these treaties, however, it directly and actively participated in the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) forum which was established in 1999 to “achieve sustainable socio-economic development through equitable and reasonable utilization of, and benefit from the shared Nile Basin water resources.”



The ambassador said the NBI produced a draft agreement called the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) after a decade-long extensive negotiation among the riparian countries with the help of WB, UNDP, and other donors. The Comprehensive Framework Agreement entailed, reflected, and contained the international water laws and principles such as equitable, reasonable, and fair utilization of water, do no harm rule, the obligation to protect the ecosystem, the principle of cooperation, and the obligation to share information and exchange data that end the monopoly of Nile River and begin the new era of cooperation. He said the upper riparian countries of the Nile River including Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi had signed the CFA and agreed to utilize more of the Nile's water resources based on the international water laws, instruments, and principles mentioned above. To this end, Ethiopia has taken a decisive measure of confidence restoring by establishing an International Panel of Expert, and a National Independent Scientific Research Group (Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan) to conduct scientific studies on the impacts of the Dam in which Ethiopia accept the outcome of the study. The ambassador said Ethiopia had built the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in line with international water laws, the UN watercourse convention, NBI, CFA, and the

Declaration of Principles (2015). It was the largest hydro dam in Africa and 10th in the world which would eventually generate 6500MW of clean energy.

He said the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam would be a game changer for the entire African region as it would promote regional integration through the transfer of clean energy. It would also hold sedimentation in the countries such as Egypt and Sudan and also help avert drought and flood low riparian states with huge storage capacity while it also reduces evaporation. He also shared Ethiopia's perspective on the Nile River dispute and presented an analysis of the transboundary issue in the Nile River Basin and the benefits of the Grand Renaissance Dam for all the states in the African region.

H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula said Ethiopia was ready to uphold and continue the trilateral negotiations under the auspices of the African Union. “There is no agreement restricting Ethiopia's right to exploit the water within its territory, including the construction of a dam taking into account the principles of equitable and reasonable utilization and do no significant harm principles.” He said Ethiopia believed that all the riparian countries in the Nile River were connected through the Nile blood and would work together to achieve win-win cooperation that will transform the entire region and form the whole Nile Community.

Finest Hotel in Quetta

Munaza Kazmi

FAMOUS as the “Fruit Garden of Pakistan” Quetta, city district and division of Baluchistan province and the 5th largest of Pakistan. Quetta is a variation of Kwatkot, a Pashto word meaning ‘Fort’, as it is encircled by the four imposing hills namely Chiltan, Takatu, Zarghoon and Murdaar, which really gives it a status of enchanted valley, that surely engulf the visitor is its charm. The city enjoys rich history dating from 11th Century when Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi conquered it, and on top it is a love land for all Pakistanis because it’s the region where founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, have spent last of his memorable his days. The only high-altitude city of Pakistan, Quetta situated at 1,680 meters above sea level, having total population of 2.8 million. Local language is Pashto, but don’t worry as some people can even communicate in English, otherwise we have option open for sign language. Climate is dry and temperate is chilly where you would find a rich diversity of dry fruits. Moreover, the valley is abundant with juniper and pistachio forests and diverse wild life.

Also, if anyone is obsessed with horses, it’s the right place to be, as horse breeding is thought to be the passion of locals. Next, I would suggest you pay a visit to the colorful bazars where you would found yourself in brightest of colors of silk, handmade coppers, precious jewels, luxurious rugs, and mesmerizing perfumes, not less than that of the Arabian Nights. I would say, it’s hard to describe the Quetta valley without getting carried away. However, I landed Quetta in the later afternoon, where I was surprised with the hospitality of locals who went so far to communicate with me even in signs as I don’t understand Pushto, to tell me about the beautiful surroundings and their rich culture. However, it was just a little episode as the hotel driver was waving the board with my name and the shuttle was waiting outside with a basket full of fruits and assorted fritters for my aftar. Really grateful for the hospitality of Serena. I checked into the Quetta Serena Hotel, as is Serena is my favorite, reasoning its remarkable hospitality and the best services, moreover you can find them all over the country.

Serena Hotels takes over PC Hotel Peshawar

DNA

PESHAWAR: Tourism Promotion Services (Limited) Pakistan, the owners and managers of Serena Hotels in Pakistan announces the take over of Pearl Continental Hotel Peshawar. This will be the ninth Serena Hotel property in Pakistan. The addition of Serena Hotels in Peshawar, the oldest city of Pakistan with a rich cultural heritage, will not only help in extending the tourist circuit in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but will also allow regional connectivity for tourists and business travelers through its vast portfolio of hotels in Islamabad, Peshawar, Kabul, and Dushanbe. The Hotel shall serve as a gateway to Central Asia, taking

the brand portfolio to a whole new level. Serena Hotels, a brand associated with unique destinations globally, will be renovating and refurbishing the centrally located Hotel building as all Serena Hotel properties' stand as a reflection of its vision and brand values. Continuing our legacy of giving back to society and benefitting the communities where we operate, the company intends to exploit the untapped, rich potential in the tourism sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This will be the second Serena Hotel in the KP province after the Swat Serena Hotel, enabling the brand to connect the diverse tourist communities to the rustic areas of the province. The upgradation of Peshawar Serena Ho-

tel including the new construction will enhance the quality and comfort of the guest rooms, restaurants, banqueting and meeting rooms, public areas and Maisha Spa & Health Club. The Company has rigorous training plans for its Associates to ensure service delivery, bringing it in line with Serena Hotels' standards. Serena Hotels' properties in Pakistan are currently located in Islamabad, Faisalabad, Quetta, Gilgit, Shigar, Khaplu, Altit, Hunza and Sost. In addition, two new Hotels are under construction in Gilgit-Baltistan; the Hunza Serena Hotel with 85 rooms, expected to be commissioned towards the end of 2023, and Sost Serena Hotel with 56 rooms, expected to be commission in 2024.



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Christmas tree lighting ceremony at Islamabad Serena Hotel

ISLAMABAD: The General Manager of the Islamabad Serena Hotel Otto Kurzendorfer has said a year had passed since his predecessor Michel Galopin had stood here to open the festive season at the ISH. He said they all had missed that in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic. Christmas is such a celebration by itself but I guess together with the people from near and far it is more meaningful and nice again. He expressed these views on the occasion of the Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony held in the lobby of the ISH. Diplomats and members of the civil society attended the ceremony in large numbers. Tree lighting ceremony is a regular feature of Serena Hotels Christmas celebrations. The GM further said, we remember those who celebrated with us in the years before fondly, be it here in beautiful Pakistan or as for example with my family in Kuwait where I had spent the past 4 years. 'Please allow me as well to thank each of us for your loyalty over the past

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General Manager of the Islamabad Serena Hotel Otto Kurzendorfer welcomes guests; assures to continue this tradition

12 months, your loyalty to our hotel and the people who come every day to make Serena such a special place. He also thanked guests for helping them in making this place a better place for all', he added. Mr. Otto said 2022 had its dark moments as Pakistan witnessed devastating floods but as Christmas is sometimes celebrated as a festival of light and hope, I did witness in the past 4 months such hope and light with our individual contributions to our hotel wide charity drive still ongoing. 'As you must know each mean room night or service you avail here offers on chargeable basis the opportunity to donate 5 percent of its value to our flood relief charity and as we try to help as we can this amount is matched to 100 percent by the hotel. Thank you for making the dark moment a means of joint efforts for the benefit of those who are affected by the flood'. He also thanked the artists and the priest for being a part of the Christmas celebrations.





Legendary Sain Zahoor and Zarsanga steal the show

Serena Hotels and Aga Khan Trust for Cultural Services Honour the Pakistan Laureates of the Aga Khan Music Awards 2022



Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels and the Aga Khan Trust for Cultural Services hosted an evening celebrating the laureates of the "Aga Khan Music Awards" that was established in 2018 by His Highness to recognize and develop exceptional creativity, promise and enterprise in music, and music education in societies across the world where Muslim communities have a significant presence. The event was attended by prominent dignitaries including Diplomats, Federal and Provincial Ministers, Government functionaries, Representatives from Corporate Sector, and business community and media houses. The evening was illuminated by live performances by the award winners Sufi Music Legends Sain Zahoor and Zarsanga along with a performance by the students of Leif Larson Music Centre, which was established in April 2011, at the Altit Fort with the musical instruments of the Northern Areas of Pakistan. The Laureates are international representatives of our musical heritage and deserve global recognition. **Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels**, complimented the efforts of the Aga Khan Award winners Zarsanga and Sain Zahoor of Traditional, Folk, and Sufi music education in societies across the world where Muslim communities have a significant presence. The event was attended by prominent dignitaries including Diplomats, Federal and Provincial Ministers, Government functionaries, Representatives from Corporate Sector, and business community and media houses. The evening was illuminated by live performances by the award winners Sufi Music Legends Sain Zahoor and Zarsanga along with a performance by the students of Leif Larson Music Centre, which was established in April 2011, at the Altit Fort with the musical instruments of the Northern Areas of Pakistan. The Laureates are international representatives of our musical heritage and deserve global recognition. **Tauseef Ahmed, CEO AKCSP** briefed the audience regarding vision of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture programmes i.e., like the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme, the Aga Khan Music Program, and the Aga Khan Museum. He also gave the presentation on the Aga Khan music awards 2022. The Laureates of the 2022 Aga Khan music award selected 15 top performers for the main award by a master jury out of 400 nominees from 42 nations. They share the prize money of \$ 500,000 USD was shared by the 15 award winners. The award winners from Pakistan were the "Queen of Pashtu" Zarsanga and the "Mystical Punjabi Sufi Singer" Sain Zahoor, whose work stands out on its own as being unique and standalone power houses. The award ceremony was hosted in October 2022, in Muscat, Oman in a two-day musical gala held at the Royal Opera House of Musical Arts. The awards presentation marked the culmination of a spirited celebration, featuring the laureates, who showcased their talent on a global platform.



Handcrafts show at Islamabad Serena Hotel



Kazakh artists perform in the Capital



Japan provides US\$ 3.87 million new grants for polio eradication efforts in Pakistan

Mahnoor Ansar

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan extended its support to the Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme by providing more than US\$ 3.87 million as a grant. The grant will be used for the procurement of essential oral polio vaccine, which will reach more than 18.61 million under five years old children in Pakistan living in endemic and outbreak districts. The notes of the grant were signed and exchanged between the Government of Japan and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and between Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UNICEF. Minister Abdul Qadir Patel, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination and other dignitaries were present during the signing event. "Pakistan has come a long way in the last 30 years. From thousands of children paralyzed by poliovirus in the 1980s and 1990s, we have managed to reduce the number of cases and affected communities drastically," said Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel. Referring to the commitment of the government to polio eradication, the Minister said, "The Programme has successfully restricted virus circulation to endemic districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; we are committed and op-

timistic about eradicating polio by 2023." The Minister extended his sincere appreciation for the support of the Government of Japan and partners for their unwavering commitment to Polio eradication. The Government of Japan has been supporting the Polio Eradication Programme in Pakistan since 1996. The long-standing partnerships have helped to reach millions of children with life-saving vaccines over the years. The grant and loan contribution from the Government of Japan to date has amounted to more than US\$ 238.66 million dollars to support the Polio Programme in Pakistan through UNICEF. H.E. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan commended the Government of Pakistan and UNICEF for their tireless efforts in emergency vaccination campaigns in southern KP and establishing transit points in North Waziristan to limit the spread of Wild Polio Virus. He also reiterated his continuous support for eradicating poliovirus, by saying that "I would like to renew my commitment to achieve the polio-free world. Japan will continuously support the Government of Pakistan and UNICEF in this regard. I sincerely hope that the national and sub-national campaigns of the next year will be safe and successful." "It is very appreciative that polio program

has supported the flood relief efforts in the flood affected districts. Health camps have been opened to provide basic clinical services, treatment of water-borne, vector-borne diseases and immunization for children and women of reproductive age. The Government of Pakistan, UNICEF and Japan has a strong target to achieve polio-free in Pakistan by the end of 2023. I would appreciate the continuous and unwavering leadership and commitment of the Government of Pakistan and UNICEF, with the highest respect to the frontline workers," said KINOSHITA Yasumitsu, Chief Representative, JICA Pakistan Office. While polio remains a challenge for Pakistan, the country is facing extraordinary challenges due to recent floods. "Already these children and families have lost so much, it is imperative that we safeguard them from this deadly disease," said Abdullah Fadil, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan, highlighting the situation of children and families living in endemic and outbreak districts following the devastating recent floods. "Through the unwavering support and generosity of the people and Government of Japan, more children can now be immunized to prevent the devastation of paralysis and even death. We are now closer to securing a polio-free future for all." The programme has made concerted efforts, including working with families at the household level by engaging parents and caregivers and consistently focusing on persistently missed and refusal families. Over 339,521 trained and dedicated polio frontline workers go door-to-door during every national campaign and inoculate vaccines to eligible children. Despite challenges, the Polio Programme has successfully limited the transmission of poliovirus to the endemic region of southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), which is a substantial gain. Following the new risk categorisation, the next 13 months are critical for the Programme to sustain the gain and eradicate polio from Pakistan. The timeline for stopping all poliovirus transmission in the current global polio eradication strategic plan is the end 2023. As a partner of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, UNICEF has been working with the Government of Pakistan, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, WHO and other partners to make sure the national polio eradication and vaccination programmes reach every child in Pakistan.



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Foreign Defence Attaches collect Rs 0.6 million for flood affectees

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Corps of Services Attaches (COSA) has collected a handsome amount of Rs 0.6 million for the flood affected people of Pakistan. The collected amount was handed over to the concerned Pakistani authorities during the gala even arranged by COSA at a local hotel. It may be mentioned here that the COSA has actively been engaged in promotion of defense relations between Pakistan and the respective countries. Like COSA, COSALA, which

consists of spouses of the defence attaches, has also been active in strengthening the bilateral relations. Pakistani authorities have thanked the COSA for its goodwill gesture adding their generous support would for sure help mitigate sufferings of the flood affected people. After the devastating floods that had hit the country hard, the response from the international community has been forthcoming. It is because of this response that the situation on ground has improved a lot and the affected people have already started returning to their homes.



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Danish Ambassador visits Sialkot; feted by Ijaz Khokhar

SIALKOT: Renowned businessmen Ijaz Khokhar of Ashraf Group of Companies presenting souvenir to Ambassador of Denmark Jakob Linulf during his recent visit to Sialkot. – DNA

Pakistan keen to enhance ties with Int'l community: Arif Alvi

Envoys of Canada, Austria, Syria, Serbia & Slovak Republic present credentials to the President

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed envoys of Canada, Austria, Syria, Serbia, and the Slovak Republic presented their credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi during the Presentation of Credentials Ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Later, the High Commissioner-designate of Canada, Ms Leslie Scanlon, Ambassador-designate of Austria, Mrs Andrea Wicke, Ambassador-designate of Syria, Dr Ramez Alraee, non-Resident Ambassador-designate of Serbia, Mr Dragan Todorovic, and non-Resident Ambassador-designate of Slovak Republic, Mr Ladislav Ballek, also made separate calls on the President. While talking to the Ambassador of Canada, the President highlighted that there was great economic potential in Pakistan, a market of 220 million people, and investment opportunities, adding that Canadian businesses should be encouraged to explore the opportunities available in Pakistan. He further said that the resolution of the Reko-Diq project was a positive development, and expressed the hope that it would encourage further Canadian investment in Pakistan. The President stated that Pakistan and Canada enjoyed cordial and friendly relations and that Pakistan looked forward to greater bilateral cooperation in the areas of the economy, commerce, and investment.

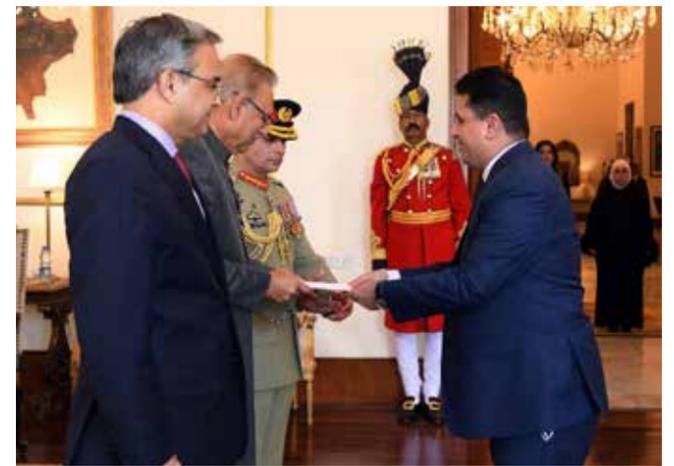
While welcoming the Austrian Ambassador, the President said that Pakistan attaches high importance to its relations with Austria, both bilaterally and in the context of the European Union. He informed that Pakistan's investment regime was very liberal, and Austrian companies should benefit from it and consider making investments in the Special Economic Zones being set up all over the country. He further said that Pakistan offered significant opportunities for investment in the fields of hydropower, railways, communication, renewable energy, and waste management technologies. He added that there were ample opportunities for cooperation in start-ups and information technology sectors, and expressed hope that the two countries work towards enhancing cooperation in these fields. The President also urged the need to further enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation, adding that the true potential of bilateral trade was still unrealized. He noted that Austria has remained supportive of Pakistan's GSP+ status, Pakistan looked forward to Austria's continued support towards the successful completion of the ongoing 4th biennial review and for the new GSP Plus Scheme post-2023. The President underscored that Pakistan would like to work together with its international partners, including Austria, to address the global issue of climate change. He expressed gratitude to the government and the people of Austria for providing Euro 2 million in humanitarian assistance for the flood victims in Pakistan. Talking to the Syrian Ambassador to Pakistan, the President urged the need for regular contact between the two countries at different tiers of leadership in order to further cement cordial relations. He said that Pakistan's relations with Syria were multi-faceted and deep-rooted and that cultural, religious, and historical ties bound the people of the two countries. He appreciated the friendly gesture by the Syrian government to open group visas for Pakistani Zaireen and commended the decision taken by the airlines of both countries to operate direct flights between Karachi and Damascus. While talking to the Non-Resident Ambassador-designate of Serbia to Pakistan, the President said that both countries need to work diligently to strengthen their bilateral economic and trade relations in order to bring them to par with the actual trade potential.



High Commissioner of Canada



Ambassador of Austria



Ambassador of Syria



DNA

National Day of Bahrain celebrated



Strengthening partnership in Central Asia and prospects for cooperation between France and the region

Anvar Nasirov

WITH the election of Shavkat Mirziyoyev as head of state in 2016, the internal and foreign policy of Uzbekistan have changed drastically. The leader of the country has begun the implementation of a huge range of large-scale reforms aimed at modernizing all spheres of society and the state, which should ensure the sustainable development of the country in the long term. This is reflected in the Strategy of Actions on priority areas of the country's development until 2021 and the Development Strategy until 2026, the priority of which is the principle "From the Strategy of Actions to the Strategy of Development". The result of conceptual programs and cardinal reforms were the prerequisites for the construction of a New Uzbekistan and the Third Renaissance. The New Uzbekistan is a dynamically developing state, the main goal of which is to ensure a free, well-ordered and prosperous life of our multinational people. It is a State developing in strict accordance with universally recognized norms in the field of democracy, human rights and freedoms, based on the principles of equal and mutually beneficial cooperation with the international community. The main principles of all transformations are "Not the people should serve state bodies, but state bodies should serve the people" and "The honor and dignity of a person should henceforth be in the first place in all spheres." During his first speech at the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2017, the president of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev clearly stated from the rostrum that Uzbekistan defines the Central Asian region as the main priority of its foreign policy. And this is a conscious choice. Then the Leader of the State stressed that: "Being in the heart of Central Asia, Uzbekistan is directly interested in making the region a zone of stability, sustainable development and good neighborliness. A peaceful, economically prosperous Central Asia is our most important goal and key task." Today we can say that in the region, where more than 70 million people live, thanks to the efforts of Uzbekistan, a completely new political atmosphere has formed, which has allowed us to transform the course of development of our region in a creative way. All this was the result of restoring constructive dialogue, strengthening good neighborliness and building mutually beneficial partner-



ship between the Central Asian States, and the ongoing regional changes have acquired a systemic irreversible character. The President of Uzbekistan is determined to consolidate efforts to increase regional cooperation in Central Asia, as well as to deepen bilateral relations with neighboring countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, with which strategic partnership relations have been established, and with a number raised to the level of alliance. This has never happened in history. By joint efforts, we managed to solve many issues that previously overshadowed and hindered the development of cooperation. Thus, thanks to the open and pragmatic policy of Uzbekistan, borders were opened and favorable conditions for mutual trips of citizens were created, new air, road and rail routes were restored and launched, water use issues are being successfully resolved. At the initiative of the Leader of Uzbekistan, a mechanism of Consultative meetings of the heads of Central Asian states has been launched since 2018, within the framework of which the most pressing issues of regional cooperation are discussed and mutually acceptable solutions are developed based on respect and consideration of each other's interests. Such dynamics of development laid the foundation for the transformation of the Central Asian region into a single trade, investment, transport and communication platform, promotes the implementation of industrial cooperation projects in various sectors of the economy, starting from the automotive indus-

try and ending with agriculture, the implementation of transport and transit integration, the expansion of contacts between the regions of our states, the deepening of cultural and humanitarian ties. Stable Central Asia is becoming one of the important centers of economic growth. According to a number of experts, the total GDP of the countries of the region has grown by 25 percent over the past four years and exceeded \$300 billion.

Uzbekistan's trade turnover with the countries of the region has increased tenfold and exceeded \$6.5 billion. Cooperative ties are being strengthened, joint investment companies and other financial instruments for the implementation of major projects have been created. In turn, Uzbek businesses began to actively invest in neighboring countries, which contributes to the development of economies and the creation of new jobs. For the first time in history, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are launching joint projects in the field of energy – the construction of large hydropower stations on the Naryn and Zarafshan rivers. The consequence of such changes has also been the consistent development by countries of agreed positions on intra-regional issues and close coordination on international and regional platforms. The unified position of the Central Asian states began to be voiced within the framework of the UN, CIS, SCO, OIC, ECO, OTG and other structures. Uzbekistan's foreign policy is also aimed at strengthening the interconnectedness of the Central Asian region with other important partners and regions. This was exactly what

the high-level international conference «Central and South Asia: Regional Interconnectedness» organized on the initiative of the Leader of our state in July 2021 in Tashkent served. Challenges and opportunities».

The interest of the international community in the Central Asian region as a whole has significantly increased, as evidenced by the effective, in our opinion, international formats "5+1", with the participation of the United States, South Korea, Japan, India, China, Russia, the European Union and the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Persian Gulf. And the region itself is also interested in multilateral platforms through which the Central Asian countries seek to build a constructive dialogue with the world's leading actors on equal terms. It is important that the process of rapprochement is not directed against anyone's interests and aims to deepen regional cooperation.

As President Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted at the recently held first Central Asia-European Union summit, "there are still unresolved issues in the region. But we are convinced that our strong political will and common creative spirit will contribute to the further rapprochement of fraternal countries and peoples of the region." Our country is also interested in establishing a constructive bilateral dialogue with the EU member States, of which France is one of the locomotives.

Despite the fact that diplomatic ties between our states were established on March 1, 1992, however, Uzbek-French relations have received their true development since the second half of 2016, when a vector for open dialogue in all spheres was laid. At the invitation of President Emmanuel Macron, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan paid an official visit to France in October 2018. It was the first European country to be visited by the Leader of Uzbekistan. The last conversation between the two leaders took place in

August last year on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Relations at the level of parliaments and the public are actively developing. In the Senate and Legislative Chamber (lower house) The Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of Uzbekistan has established friendship groups with the Senate and the National Assembly of France. Today, France is an important partner of Uzbekistan in the economic, investment, financial and technical spheres. There are successful examples of partnership in the field of energy, automotive, geological exploration, production of building materials, tourism and others. Mutual trade is growing dynamically. In January-September of this year, its volume exceeded \$ 230 million, including the export of Uzbek products, which increased 9 times and reached almost 70 million. Although these figures are unimpressive, however, if you take a look into the past, this is significant progress. The cultural and humanitarian sphere also plays an important role in the development of Uzbek-French relations. The Association for the Study of the Art and History of the Timurids, the Association "Avicenna-France" operate in Paris. Representatives of France regularly take part in the international festival "Shark Taronalari" in Samarkand.

In Uzbekistan, over 280 thousand students in 1,260 schools, colleges and lyceums, as well as in 11 universities, are studying French with great enthusiasm. Next week, one of the largest and most popular museums in the world, the Louvre, is scheduled to open a unique exhibition "The Splendor of Central Asia. On the caravan routes of Uzbekistan", which will include items related to the ancient history of Uzbekistan. In addition, an exhibition "The Road to Samarkand, the colors and splendor of Uzbekistan" is planned at the Institute of the Arab World. Despite these achievements, the expert circles of Uzbekistan believe that

there is a huge potential for building up both bilateral Uzbek-French cooperation and partnership between France and the Central Asian region as a whole. In this regard, it is advisable to develop relations between the parties in the following areas: "green" development, widespread introduction of innovations, energy-efficient and resource-saving technologies, digitalization of economic sectors, development of "smart" agriculture and cities. The following points of interaction are also very promising:

- ensuring compliance of Central Asian industrial goods with high European standards and technical regulations;
 - creation of efficient transport and logistics corridors for optimal access to each other's markets, taking into account current restrictions, primarily through the development of the Trans-Caspian multimodal route;
 - conducting joint targeted events and promotions, with the aim of recognition and demand for goods from Central Asian countries by European consumers;
 - expansion of educational, scientific, tourist and cultural exchanges.
- Thus, the New Uzbekistan today has become a kind of gateway to the whole of Central Asia and provides partners with a unique opportunity to successfully interact with the entire region, using the growing economic and humanitarian potential.

I am sure that during the upcoming official visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the French Republic, a detailed exchange of views on the current state and the most promising areas of Uzbek-French cooperation will take place, and concrete agreements on a wide range of issues will be reached, which will bring mutually beneficial partnership to a new level.

– Anvar Nasirov is the Director of the International Institute for Central Asia

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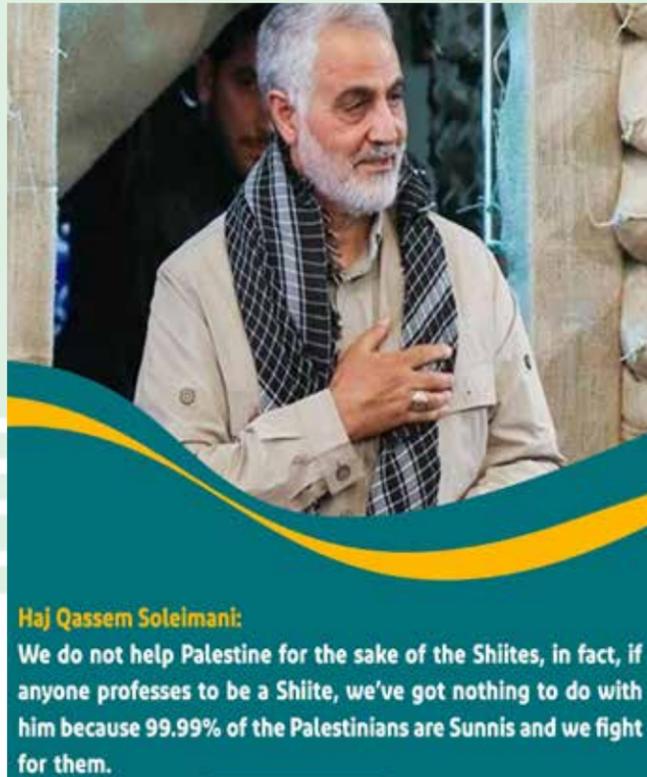
The unprecedented Crime

occurrence of any war, has emphasized on principles such as the prohibition of intervention, the right to sovereignty and the non-use of force, as the fundamental and key concepts of international law and the foundations of this historical document. According to reports by the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, the main cause of terrorism is actions that lead to the violation of political independence, sovereignty and political integrity of countries, as well as the widespread and systematic violation of human rights. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 40/61 explicitly condemns all acts, methods and methods of terror as a criminal act regardless of the perpetrator or perpetrators (state or non-state actor). Killing and terrorizing civilians as well as organizing and encouraging such brutal acts have always been condemned by the international community as gross violations of human rights, and all mandatory international documents confirm the statement that governments are obliged to avoid any form of participation in acts of terror either by inciting or organizing them.

This is why the crime of assassination of a senior Iranian official and top anti-terror figure on January 3, 2020, by the United States is unprecedented and cannot be compared to any other assassination in the world. So far, no country's military in the world has assassinated a foreign official, who is an internationally protected person, with drones and officially claimed responsibility for it. The US committed the first and most horrific and unprecedented crime in history.

The impropriety of America's action was such that shortly after this incident, Agnes Callamard, the special rapporteur of the United Nations, in her official report, called the US drone attack illegitimate and a violation of international human rights. She said, "This is the first time in history that a drone targets a foreign official on the territory of a third country. Targeting Soleimani will undoubtedly cause the international responsibility of the US government. This assassination shows that the American government does not even adhere to its own domestic laws; because with this action, it has practically violated its internal laws in accepting the right to life of people".

It is worth noting that US is the only covenant-breaking country in the world which is an indication that this country holds no respect for its domestic law as well international commitments. The assassination of Iran's top anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, in addition to violating the provisions of international agreements and customary law that the United States is committed to fulfilling, is also an example of violating the domestic law of crimes and criminal proceedings of this country. Based on this, any failure and procrastination of the US government in not prosecuting the perpetrators behind the terror will not only result in the international responsibility of this government; rather, according to international documents, it will place Iran in the position of demanding and fulfilling those rights in any possible way.



Haj Qassem Soleimani:

We do not help Palestine for the sake of the Shiites, in fact, if anyone professes to be a Shiite, we've got nothing to do with him because 99.99% of the Palestinians are Sunnis and we fight for them.

Abbas Ali Kadkhodaei

UNDER international agreements as well as customary law, assassination of foreign officials, official guests, or internationally protected persons is illegal and many countries around the world have criminalized it in their criminal laws. For instance, the United States Code of Crimes and Criminal Procedure in Section 1116 of Chapter 51 which includes crimes related to "murder" provides: "Whoever kills or attempts to kill a foreign official, official guest, or internationally protected person shall be punished as provided under sections 1111, 1112, and 1113 of this title". Furthermore, according to this Code, if the victim of an offense is an internationally protected person outside the United States, the United States may exercise jurisdiction over the offense if (1) the victim is a representative, officer, employee, or agent of the United States, (2) an offender is a national of the United States, or (3) an offender is afterwards found in the United States. Therefore, US courts have the jurisdiction to deal with the crimes of people who have violated this provision even outside the territory of the United States of America. Thus, with respect to the legal status of internationally protected persons under domestic and international laws, the assassination of a foreign official or official guest is not only an example of violation of the domestic law of most countries, but also any failure of courts to try the perpetrators of these crimes is a violation of anti-terror conventions, especially the 1973 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents. In such a situation, the victim's government, in the capacity of asserting its rights, can take action to try the perpetrators of such a crime in its domestic courts. But the assassination of a foreign official by a government, often in addition to violating the domestic law, is also considered an international criminal act which will provide countermeasures for the victimized government. This is while the United Nations Charter, in order to prevent the

7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament-2022-23

Aziz Boolani CEO of Serena Hotels was Chief Guest at the closing Ceremony



D. N. A

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tennis Federation is pleased to inform you that the 7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament-2022-23 concluded in a highly befitting manner at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex, Islamabad. In the Men's Singles Final Aqeel Khan bt Muhammad Shoaib 6-3,6-2 and won the 7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament-2022-23 title In the Ladies Singles Final Sarah Mahboob Khan bt Esha Jawad 6-2,6-2 and won the 7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament-2022-23 title Mr Aziz Boolani CEO of Serena Hotels was the Chief Guest at closing Ceremony. He distributed the prizes amongst the winners and Runner-ups and congratulated all the winners and runner-ups. Senator Salim Saifullah Khan President-PTF was the

Guest of Honour at the closing Ceremony. The President-PTF thanked Serena Hotels for conducting the Serena Hotels National Ranking Tournaments for the last seven years. He also appreciated and valued their support for promoting tennis in Pakistan. He also congratulated and appreciated the participation of the players from all over Pakistan. The President also lauded the efforts of the PTF Management and especially Mr Shahzad Akhtar Alvi ITF White Badge Referee, for organizing the event in a highly professional manner. He also thanked Print Media for the excellent coverage of the event. The President also wished everyone a very HAPPY NEW YEAR. The Closing Ceremony was also attended by Mr Saeed Ahmad Khan SVP-PTF, Mr Faisal Khan- Serena Hotels Col.Gul Rehman Secretary-General-PTF, diplomats, Serena Hotels Officials, Tennis Players, Coaches, Parents, MEDIA Persons and PTF Officials.

German envoy highlights cooperation with Pakistan

Photo Exhibition launched in Islamabad's National Art Gallery to highlight local governance in Pakistan's Merged Areas

STAFF REPORT



ISLAMABAD: The week-long exhibition is showcasing the efforts of integrating the Merged Areas into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the region's rich culture and potential as well as Germany's support to its Pakistan counterparts in local governance, health and education. To mark the development cooperation between Pakistan and Germany, GIZ Pakistan and the Embassy of Germany in Islamabad jointly launched a photo exhibition on the Merged Areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Islamabad. The exhibition is being held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) from the 8th to 13th of December.

Some 150 representatives and officials of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Government and its line departments, the German Embassy, the European Union, donor agencies, Members of KP's Provincial Assembly, implementing and development partners, academia as well as the media attended the inaugural ceremony of the photo exhibition. Various photographers have contributed to this photo exhibition, most notably Mr. Abdul Majeed Goraya of Peshawar and Mr. Alamgir Khan of Mohmand in the Merged

Areas. Their pictures show people following their trades, earning their livelihoods and striving to provide their children with a better future. The photographs also illustrate an emerging local governance system, community development initiatives, women standing up for their rights, and improvements in the education and health sectors. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, guest of honor, Mr. Shahram Khan Tarakai, Minister of Elementary & Secondary Education of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa expressed his gratitude to the German Government and the European Union for their support to the province in various fields of development. "The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is highly valuing the partnership with GIZ Pakistan and the joint work in areas such as good governance, education and health. This has led to major changes in the lives of the people in the Tribal Districts and has contributed to reduce the development lag. Our cooperation has also enhanced public trust in government institutions and has helped to improve public services." Among the important achievements, he listed im-

proved school curricula, the training of over 5,000 members of Parent's Teacher Councils, capacity development for over 3,000 managers in the health and education sectors, as well as training of several hundred officials of the Local Government Department. In his opening remarks, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Alfred Grannas, highlighted that "the photo exhibition and its catalogue not only offer vibrant insights into the regions' history, its rich and diverse culture and traditions, but also into the lives of the people and their development needs." He pointed out the long-standing and successful development cooperation between Germany and Pakistan over a period of 60 years during which countless development projects have been implemented. This cooperation has over the decades been continuously adapted to meet new challenges and changing social, economic and ecological conditions, he said. "The FATA Development Programme is also an example of joint European efforts in the field of development. Over the years the program with its budget of almost 40 million Euro was co-funded by the Government of France, the Government of Switzerland and currently by the European Union."

In his address to the audience, Mr. Karim Kettani, Head of the Finance and Audit Section at the European Union Delegation to Pakistan, outlined that the European Union's programme "Aid to Uprooted People", which has been implemented by the GIZ's FATA Development Programme since 2017, has supported the KP Education Department in improving education for internally displaced and host communities in the Merged Areas. "Dr Peer Gatter, Head of the GIZ-implemented FATA Development Programme, thanked the programme's counterparts in KP's government and in civil society for 13 years of trustful cooperation. "We have assisted the Provincial Government in the challenging task to make the Merged Areas' integration into the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a success.

Islamic architectural heritage of Hungary exhibited in Lahore

One year after the unforgettable exhibition in the Lahore Fort of the paintings of August Schoefft restored by experts from Hungary, on Friday the Hungarian Embassy was back with its brand new project in the cultural capital of Pakistan. This time the Embassy displayed the beautiful photo collection of the Islamic architectural heritage of Hungary. The venue of the event, the Grand Hall of the College of Art and Design, University of the Punjab had a symbolic meaning being just a few steps away from the Oriental College founded by the Hungarian professor Dr. Wilhelm Leitner.

Ali Hamza / DNA

LAHORE: Embassy of Hungary organized an exhibition on Islamic Architectural Heritage of Hungary in collaboration with the College of Art and Design, University of the Punjab, at their historic Grand Hall. The exhibition is conceived with an idea of highlighting the architectural heritage from the 16-17th century Ottoman period of Hungary (Madjaristan). Speaking at the inauguration Béla Fazekas Ambassador of Hungary to Pakistan, mentioned that there are hardly any European countries; apart from Spain and the countries of the Balkans, in which Muslim memories complement the range of



architectural styles. This rich Ottoman Islamic architectural heritage of Hungary is represented by well preserved and renovated mosques, minarets, tombs and hammams those were built by the finest artists of the time. These are the northernmost examples of Ottoman architecture in a non-Muslim European cultural environment.

In his opening remarks the Ambassador highlighted that „even if the large majority of your country belongs to one religion it does not mean that you can afford the luxury of not taking care of the rich cultural heritage of the minority people. It is not only a generosity, but a great potential for the religious tourism.” Béla Fazekas also mentioned that later on the Embassy was planning to take the exhibition to Islamabad and Peshawar as well.

Principal of the college Prof. Dr. Sumera Jawad, explained the students about the value and contribution of Muslim architectural art in Europe and precisely in Hungary. Teachers, students, journalists and people from different walks of life visited the gallery and appreciated the initiative.





Austria keen to have enhanced trade ties with Pakistan: envoy

Says Austria and Pakistan's mutual trade volume can grow from \$150m to \$1billion with given opportunities available



Our Correspondent

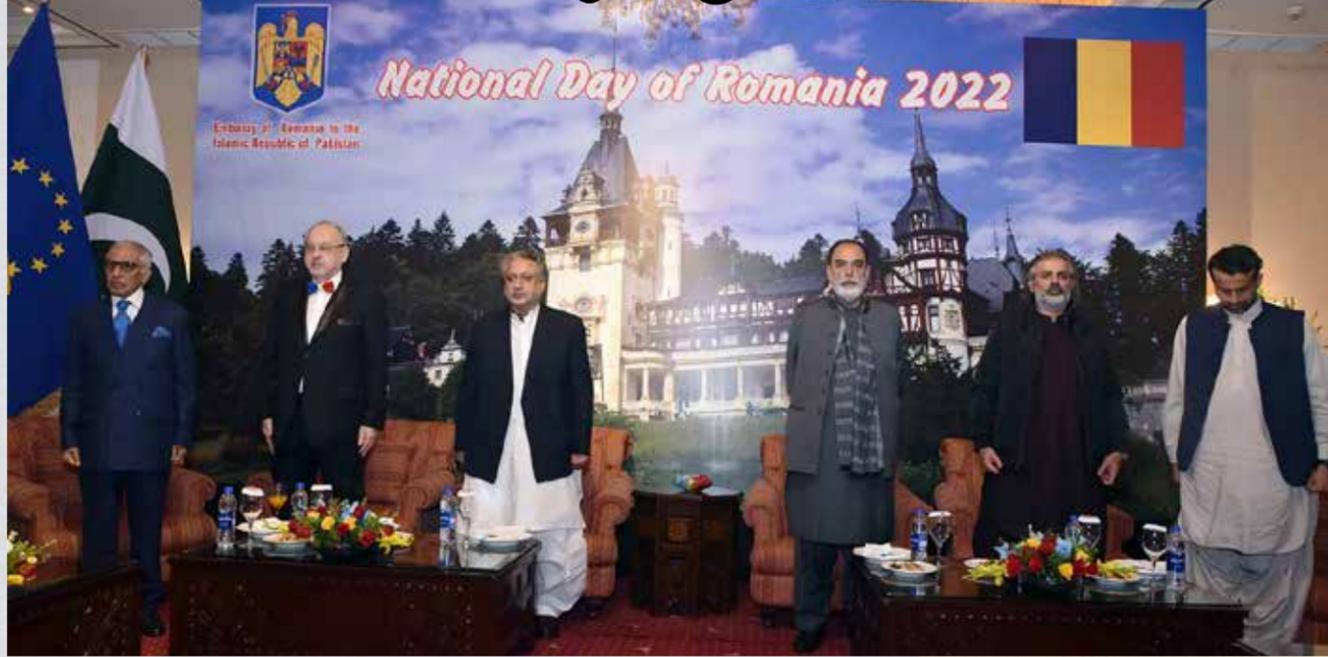
SAHIWAL: Ambassador of Austria to Pakistan Andrea WICKE has said Austria has a lot to offer being a manufacturer and exporter of products and technology in the areas of Industrial Machinery and materials, construction & Infrastructure, Services, Creative Industries, Energy & Sustainability, Natural Resources, Food, Retail & Consumer goods, Mobility, Technology and Health etc. She made these remarks while speaking during a reception hosted by Suhail Ansari, well known as ambassador of Sahiwal. She added, she was delighted for the warm hospitality given to her in Sahiwal, especially by Mr Suhail Ansari and his family. While talking about business ties she said, Austrian imports last year were around \$220 billion and we are seeing around 30% yearly increase in our imports in the recent years. However our imports other than from Europe mostly come from China and USA; and we have a lot of potential to explore other markets too. She added, Gems and precious metals posted the fastest growth in value among the top 10 import categories, with 82% last

year. The greatest accelerations in Austrian imports under this product category were for gold, silver and jewellery. She reckoned Pakistan had potential in this category. 'Austria and Pakistan's mutual trade volume can grow from \$150m to \$1billion with given opportunities available. I am delighted to notice that Sahiwal has a lot to offer in terms of not only warm hospitality, but also huge potential for industrial and agricultural growth that promises rampant trade possibilities between Austria and Pakistan'. Ambassador Wicke said she wished to see tourism, education and skill exchange programs that we can plan together to bring this zealous nation of Pakistanis at par with the first world of business, industry and agriculture. Sohail Anjum Ansari in his speech thanked the ambassador for visiting him and his family. He said, Austria and Pakistan though have diverse cultures, however with the wide use of information technologies, barriers are diminishing, and globalisation is getting stronger roots. Sohail added, the Austrian government appears to be much committed to provide and create synergies

between two countries and create an environment where education, new technologies and collaborations can result in the overall development of both countries. There can be many ways to collaborate with the trade platforms, Industries and educational institutions of Austria and those of Pakistan; from win-win trade agreements to extensive student exchange programs we may have limitless mutual opportunities. He said, Pakistan's leather export volume is around \$750 million/annum, with semi-processed and finished hides and skins to Italy, and finished leather articles to the Federal Republic of Germany. Austria may also benefit from the quality leather exports from Pakistan. Sahiwal is a promising dairy production hub of Pakistan, and has vast potential for future food needs. The local breeds are one of the best natural thorough breeds in terms of milk production, which can further be nurtured to have exponential growth in production. Pakistan is a 230 million population, 6th largest in the world and 34th largest economy, he concluded.



National Day of Romania



ISLAMABAD: Tariq Fatemi, Prime Minister Adviser, Ambassador of Romania Nicolae Goia, Federal Minister Shazain Bugti, Romanian Consul Generals in Karachi Tariq Saud and Lahore Faiq Jawed and others cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Romania. – DNA





ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Morocco to Pakistan H.E Mr Mohamed Karmoune visited Naval headquarters, Islamabad and called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi. Matters of mutual interest, regional maritime security and bilateral collaboration were discussed during the meeting. The dignitaries agreed upon enhanced maritime cooperation and collaboration between the brotherly countries. – DNA

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Indonesia sends additional logistics for flood victims

D.N.A

KARACHI: The third and fourth batch of humanitarian assistance from the people and the Government of Indonesia for people of Pakistan have arrived in Karachi. The logistics worths around USD 193,000 contains hygiene kits, tents, clothes, blankets, sleeping bags, and mosquito nets with total weight of 15 tons. Consul General Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat representing Indonesian government delivered the assistance to the representative of National Disaster Management Authorities (NDMA) of Pakistan in Karachi.

The two governments signed grant agreement on 22 December in which the Indonesian government presented assistance amounting to around USD 1 million to NDMA of Pakistan. The grant previously pledged by President Joko Widodo during telephonic conversation with PM Shehbaz Sharif will be utilized in the recovery and rehabilitation of the most vulnerable population in the aftermath of the 2022 Pakistan Floods. Floodwaters continue to recede in many flood-affected areas across Pakistan. Last report of

UN on 06/12 indicated around 11 districts of Sindh and 2 districts in Balochistan are still submerged. As the two biggest Muslim majority countries, Indonesia and Pakistan have strong bonds of brotherhood and friendship. The two countries have always supported each other at the time of natural calamities. Early on September 2022, the government of the Republic of Indonesia has sent first batch of assistance weighing around 90 tons, followed by the dispatchment of 29 health professionals to the affected areas in Sindh Province.

Cognitive Hacking an Invisible Parasite in Today's Digital World



Sher Zada

HARDLY anyone will be unaware of the term "hacking", while using the internet in this era of social networking. Every day, we hear people do complaints that their accounts are hacked or they are under threats of such attacks. Most often the hackers try to reach and get control of a person's or company's bank accounts, social media accounts to achieve their targets aimed financial gains or other malicious ambitions. There is another trend of phishing and scamming, the prior is an act of sending emails disguising one's self as member of a reputed company offering financial benefits or packages, while the latter is fraudulent business deal either in physical or through online platforms. The basic difference between hacking and the phishing/scamming is the nature of the incidents. Where in first case one is totally unaware of who is attacking his/her account. While in the other case there is two-way communication between the perpetrator and the victim. However, in both cases the victim has no knowledge of the intentions of the attacker. Although hacking itself is not that much hard-hit issue as it considered by most of the internet users these days. There are two types of hacking, one is known as ethical hacking that's used to secure the assets and system of an IT firm or an organization, where proper permissions are granted to the IT experts to apply hacking skills aimed to further strengthen the security of the firm and organization. While the other is malicious hacking where the perpetrator do attacks with malevolent intentions to get access to the accounts of internet consumers without their due permission. However, the risk factors of the above mentioned means of data thefts are not that much dangerous as the cognitive hacking, the practice that is trending very fast in the digital world of information blast. Whereas, news are spread in the blink of eyes without any confirmation whether it's authentic or fake. "Cognitive hacking" is a cyber-attack where peril actors manipulate victim's perceptions by appealing his/her psychological Achilles heels and making them addicted toward designed manifesto of perpetration. To perform their actions the perpetrators or group of perpetrators apply disinformation to catch readers' attention and attract audiences thorough showcasing wrong information in text writing, alluring audio podcasts and thrilling and thundering video broadcasts. Mostly this done to grab consumers attention to like, subscribe, share and retweet the contents created or edited by the perpetrators. Cognitive hacking causes riots, protests and creating challenges for the individuals, companies as well as create headache for the state's authorities. The era of information blasts and social media platforms bulge are the key elements that gave birth to the alarming trend of cognitive hacking. According to Finance Online report Nov, 2022 there is more than half (50.64%) of the global population now uses social media and, out of 4.57 billion internet users, 83.36% are active users. Such an excessive social media users have created challenges for the professional journalists, where they have been facing problems to bring at once truth-based news while following the canvas of ethics of journalism. The digital gadgets i.e., smartphones, tablets, camera enabled smart watches and other portable devices are being used widely, where a million worth information is uploaded in a disinforming manner aimed getting popularity or fame to attract other social media users to like, share or subscribe one's profile. That on another side caused a postmortem of genuine information. Most of the social media platforms i.e., Meta (Facebook), twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram etc. use an algorithm setting that bring the news items, videos, photos and audios that have once watched by a social media consumer and displays an array of such elements for the consumer. Whenever a consumer scrolls on the screen the algorithm aligns similar trending materials that pops up on screen before the consumer. Indeed this not due to black magic but yes it's the cognitive hacking that works out in background. This male-informed and disinforming news are being shared by a social media consumer with his/her family, friends and others who are connected with him/her on social media platforms. As a result, when there real and accurate news have to come the fake news had already worked out on the cognitive sphere of the

social media users, mobilizing their psychology to bluntly believe in false information causing chaos in society. Nonetheless, nowadays the world is considered as global village, not only the underdeveloped and developing countries are facing such challenges of cognitive hacking, but the technologically advanced developed countries i.e., United States, Russia, United Kingdom, China etc. are also under black shadow of cognitive hacking. The storming of the U.S. Capitol in Washington DC, on January 6, 2021 can be considered as one of the incidents of cognitive hacking in the United States, where the motive of storming was to pressurize the congress not to recognize the victory of the current U.S president Joe Biden by blaming him an enemy by mob supporters of Donald Trump, through social media campaigns, sharing images of riot control police through projection and textures as violent offenders of human rights and U.S laws. Such cognitive hacking has also been used in Russia-Ukraine war, where the states of both of the countries, including their allies, social media users are implicating fake news, disinformation and using as a tool to attract the world support in their favors. The scenario of cognitive hacking is also being utilized in India, Pakistan and rest of the developing countries in the world. In November 2022 an online digital website NapoleonCat reveals that There are 46 451 900 active Facebook users in Pakistan, which accounts 21% of its entire population. The majority of them are men - 77.2%. People aged 18 to 24 are the largest user group (17 100 000). The highest difference between men and women occurs within people of aged 25 to 34, where men lead by 12 700 000. It is not clear whether each person has a single social media account on a particular platform or having multiple accounts. On April 1, 2019 AFP reported that Facebook removed 103 pages, groups and accounts linked with Pakistan's Military. Similarly, On June 4, 2021 Facebook revealed that there are 6.5m fake accounts on its platform, out of which 40 Facebook accounts, 25 Pages, six Groups and 28 Instagram accounts were run from Pakistan, involved in spreading disinformation. Most of these accounts were pretending as representatives of Pakistan Army. The cyber war of fake news and disinformation has no territorial limits and its being used everywhere and in each field in contrast that was formerly limited to the field of media industry. However, Cognitive hacking is one of the most powerful psychological tools that is being used with various projected targets by its perpetrators. However, there are certain techniques that can play role to keep us safe not to become victim of cognitive hacking. First, if anyone comes across a news story that's quite alluring mental emotions, then a cross check should be applied to find out its authenticity before posting it to someone's social media account. Second, a news story that's received in the forms of social media banners, graphically well-designed pictures, video contents, should not be shared in haste with others without prior confirmation and authentication. Third, keep avoid following such profiles, groups and pages, which clinches your attention to keep clicking on hyperlinks or links to other pages, there is severe risk both of traditional hacking i.e., account hacking and cognitive hacking i.e., invisibly driving one's cognition to be an addict of particular contents and digital implants designed by the hacking mind sets. Fourth, there is no need to be excited at once while receiving a ping about financial offers in personal messenger or in email. However, if you are interested in such investments or offers then conduct deep research about the firm or company instead of relying on an online communication with someone through chat or email. The above mentioned techniques can vigilantly help one to keep him/her safe from malicious designs of hackers. To counter these challenges organizations committed to secure the ethics of professional journalism are continuously working to train professional journalists to overcome these challenges of misinformation, disinformation and male-information. There is dire need to combat this menace by devising effective policies by the states to discourage the trends of fake news, disinformation and cognitive hacking as well as global cooperation among countries in world.

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Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Sohail Mahmood assumes charge of DG ISSI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Sohail Mahmood on Monday assumed charge as Director General of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI). Ambassador Sohail Mahmood took over from Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry whose term has been completed, said a news release. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood brings with him vast experience of diplomacy and high-level decision-making. He served in the Foreign Service of Pakistan for nearly 37 years and rose to the rank of Foreign Secretary, serving in that position from April 2019 to September 2022. Prior to that, he served as the High Commissioner of Pakistan to India from 2017-19. Earlier, he served as Ambassador to Turkiye (2015-17) and Thailand (2009-13). He has also served as Additional Secretary (Afghanistan/West Asia) and Director-General (Americas) and Director-General (Foreign Secretary's Office).



Earlier, in his diplomatic career, he served in Pakistan Embassies in Ankara and Washington, D.C., and as a Counsellor at Pakistan's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York. He had also served as Director (Iran & Turkiye). Ambassador Sohail Mahmood holds a Master's degree in International Affairs from Columbia University, New York, and a Master's degree in History from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. — DNA

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