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Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine



Saudi Arabia-Iran rapprochement !!

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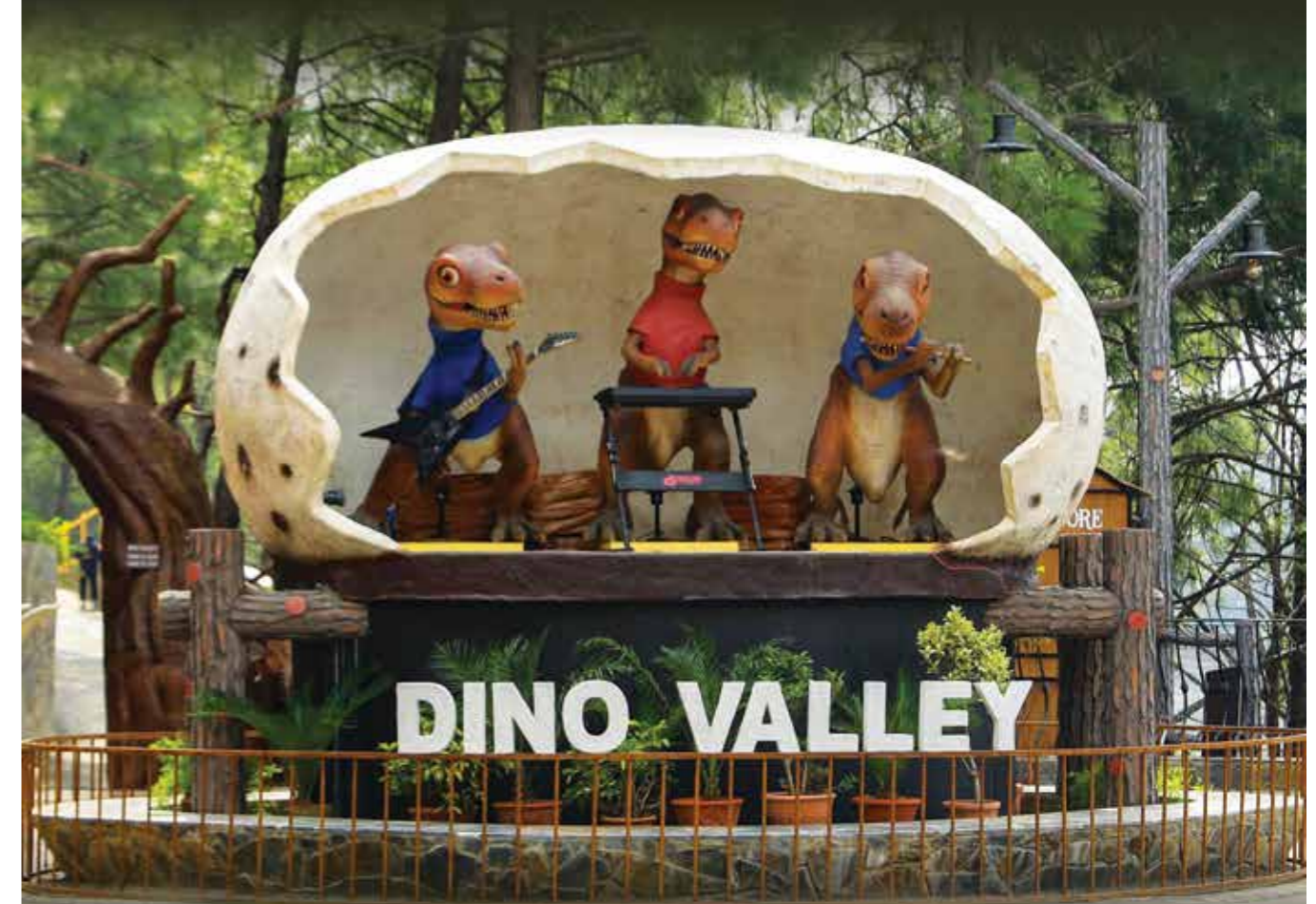
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D E N T A L S U R G E O N S

House # 6-A, Ismail Zabeeh Road, (Service Road Parallel to Faisal Avenue) F-8/3, Islamabad.
e-mail: abrar_associates@yahoo.com | www.drabrarassociates.com
Ph: +92 51 228 7691 / +92 51 228 7692 | Fax: +92 51 228 7693



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Branch Offices

Karachi Room No.14 &15, 3rd Floor, Kahkashan Mall, Main Tariq Road, 172-1,Block-2, P.E.C.H.S, Karachi. Tel: (+92-21) 34530626,34310478 Fax: (+92-21) 34531747 E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com	Lahore F-4, Gulberg Centre, Main Boulevard, Lahore. Tel: (+92-42) 35758861, 35761085, Fax: (+92-42) 35711420 E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com	Peshawar Office No. C-9, 2nd Floor, Zaheer Plaza, Latif Abad, Ring Road, Peshwar. Tel: (+92-91) 2582778 Fax: (+92-91) 2582998 E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com	Kabul House # 4, Street # 4, Charahi Ansari Road, Shahr-e-Naw, Kabul - Afghanistan. Tel: +93 799021 773, 93 797595 808, 93 778468 268. E-mail: kabul@freelinemovers.com
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Editor-in-Chief
Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Executive Editor
Mubashar Ahmad Bhatti

Deputy Editor
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Founding Content Head
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Legal Advisor
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Director Marketing
Rana Farrukh Javed
0333-5486892

Sub Editors
Farrukh Shehzad
M. Shaheen Qureshi
Saifullah Ansar

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Nazir Siyal

Chief Correspondent
Ather Javed Sufi

Online/ Web Editor
Mahnoor Ansar

Photo Journalists
Muhammad Shahid
Shahbaz Sindhu (Lahore)

Head Office: #11, Block 18-A
(Awan Plaza) G-8 Markaz,
Islamabad-Pakistan 44000

Tel: 051-2261960, Fax:
051-2280074 Cell: 0333-5203232

centrelineline@gmail.com

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Imran's 10-point recovery plan: will it work?



FORMER Prime Minister and Chairman PTI Imran Khan while addressing a mammoth public gathering at the Minar-i-Pakistan on March 25, 2023 unfurled a 10-point recovery plan, which, according to him, shall steer the country out of economic and political crises. The salient features of the proposed plan include fetching of foreign investments; boosting exports; tourism promotion; minerals exploration; encouraging the small and medium size enterprises; agriculture; expanding the tax net; checking the money laundering and welfare schemes for the poor class of the country. As a matter of fact these were the very pillars upon which the PTI had established its government

in 2018. And it deserves to be given credit that in some areas such as tourism, tax net, and welfare schemes the PTI government tried to streamline things with a view to facilitating the general public and improving the economic outlook of the country. Compared with the incumbent PDM government, the socio-economic indicators during the PTI regime were quite encouraging, at least in the first one year.

The country possessed handsome foreign exchange reserves with a huge contribution from the overseas Pakistanis. Of course the then PTI government was supposed to do much more as it had come to power to not only break the status quo but introduce a system of Riyasat-e-Madina in which everybody was to be treated equally. But on this front the PTI failed and perhaps failed miserably that is why when it was removed from power people heaved sigh of relief. Imran Khan later claimed that he could not perform since his hands were tied and decisions were taken not in the prime minister's house but somewhere else. If that was the case then he should have stepped down immediately and sought a fresh mandate, is the argument he had to confront even from his supporters.

As analysts suggest the PDM government wants to have its own president sooner rather than later. The obvious reason for this appears to be the sentence of Nawaz Sharif because it is the President who can pardon any kind of sentence. If the PTI would win in Punjab and KP as a result of elections then for sure they would not support the Presidential candidate nominated by the PDM. But if there are no elections at all, even then the PDM candidate will have to face challenges. So in both cases the PDM predicament is quite obvious however in the second scenario where there are no elections, the PDM thinks it might maneuver things in its favour.

The constitution states that election to the office of President must be held no earlier than sixty days and no later than thirty days before the expiration of the term of the incumbent president. If assemblies are not present, the constitution allows the election of president to be delayed thirty days after the general election. The electoral process itself is done via a secret ballot due to the post of the president being constitutionally non-partisan. Therefore, unlike during the election of the Prime Minister, cross-party voting is not liable to be considered defection. The emerging political scene suggests that a lot of haggling is going to take place for the election of the President no matter whether elections for the Punjab and KP assemblies take place within 90 days or otherwise. The PML N supremo Nawaz Sharif is desperate to come back to Pakistan for which he needs a clean chit first. Courts may give him temporary relief by barring the law enforcing agencies not to arrest him upon his return nevertheless the permanent relief i.e to do away with sentence, can only come from the President of Pakistan. The government has got approved law from the Parliament after which persons sentenced under Article 184 (suo motto) shall have right to file an appeal. If this law is not challenged in the courts, then Nawaz Sharif will file an appeal against his sentence. Summing up, Imran Khan and his party need to come up with a revised set of points if it really wants to do some wonders.

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.

Saudi-Iran rapprochement; where does Pakistan stand?

Ansar M Bhatti



MARCH 10, 2023 would ostensibly go down in the annals of history as a landmark day when arch rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia decided to

mend their fences as a result of a deal brokered by China. Though the development has taken almost all regional, and even other countries by sheer surprise, yet this historic development is likely to alter regional as well global political landscape because it was not just Saudi Arabia and Iran's bilateral conflict, the spill-over effects of this bilateral animosity were felt globally. Pakistan was not an exception either given the fact that both Saudi Arabia and Iran had always tried to strengthen their foothold in Pakistan for a variety of reasons.

The agreement turns out to be a rare example of successful Chinese mediation in Middle Eastern disputes and a likely gift to Beijing by the two Middle Eastern nations. Saudi Arabia broke off relations after Iranians stormed the kingdom's embassy in Tehran in 2016 in protest against the execution of a prominent Saudi Shiite cleric. Iran and Saudi Arabia are not directly fighting but they are engaged in a variety of proxy wars (conflicts where they support rival sides and militias) around the region.

In the past 15 years in particular, the differences between Saudi Arabia and Iran have been sharpened by a series of events. The 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq overthrew Saddam Hussein, a Sunni Arab who had been a major Iranian adversary. This removed a crucial military counter-weight to Iran. Saudis believed the overthrowing of Saddam regime opened the way for a Shia-dominated government in Baghdad and Iranian influence in the country has been rising ever since. Fast-forward to 2011 and uprisings across the Arab world caused political instability throughout the region. Iran and Saudi Arabia exploited these upheavals to expand their influence, notably

in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen. Saudi-Iran rapprochement of course may help find a solution to these conflicts, which have adversely affected regional peace and stability. Nevertheless, there are certain quarters who strongly believe there may not be any significant breakthrough either in Yemen or Syria even after the Iran-Saudi détente, at least in the near future. Such elements have their own reasons in support of their argument.

As regards Pakistan's relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia after this 'peace deal', the situation is likely to take some interesting turns. Saudis have always been close friends of Pakistan, especially during the times when the country was hit hard by the economic and at times political crises as well. It was the Saudi support that could salvage Islamabad's economic woes most of the time. Even in the ongoing economic meltdown it is because of the Saudi support that prevented Pakistan from drifting

“ The Pak-Saudi relations witnessed perhaps first jolt in 2015 when the Pakistan's parliament decided against military involvement in the Saudi-led coalition fighting Houthi rebels in Yemen. The then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who was considered a close ally of the Saudis ”

towards a possible default. It remains a fact also that during the past months Saudi Arabian support has not been forthcoming and spontaneous. Attaching stings to its support has never been a practice. This time the Saudis linked any further financial assistance to Islamabad's agreement with the IMF. There are indeed some reasons if things have come to such a pass in terms of 'tepid' relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

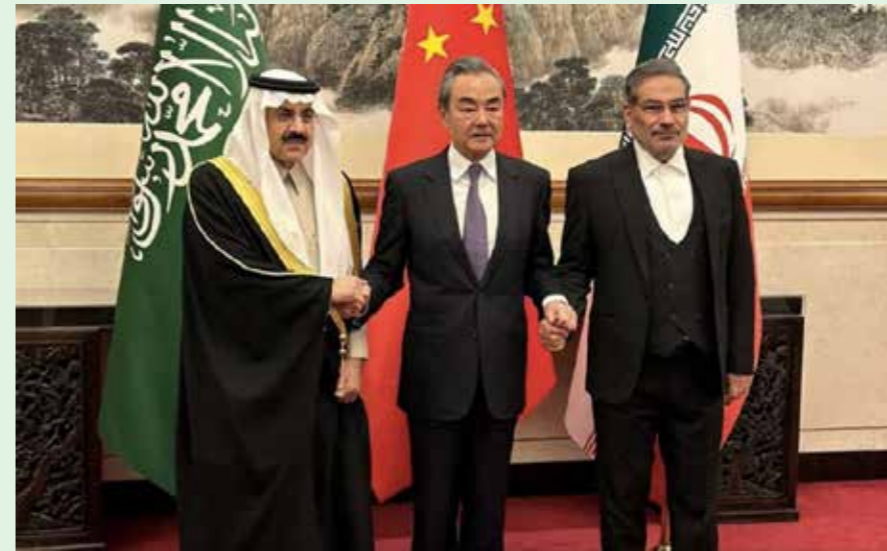
The Pak-Saudi relations witnessed perhaps first jolt in 2015 when the Pakistan's

parliament decided against military involvement in the Saudi-led coalition fighting Houthi rebels in Yemen. The then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who was considered a close ally of the Saudis, refused to send troops under the plea that since the Parliament had decided against it therefore it was not possible for him to entertain the Saudi request. Saudi Arabia had asked Pakistan to contribute ships, aircraft and troops to the campaign to restore President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. Independent analysts earnestly believe that the then government did not want to entertain the Saudi request that is why it took the matter to the parliament and thus got it disapproved there.

It is a fact that both Iran and Saudi Arabia never resorted to a direct scuffle however the Saudis always considered Iran a potential threat for which they always needed support from Pakistan, even military, albeit Islamabad never acceded to this demand under the pretext that it believed in neutrality.

In 2019 the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan incurred upon himself the onus of mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. In October 2019 Imran Khan visited Iran and met with Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani. This mediation attempt came at a time when both Iran and Saudi Arabia were about to go to war over the Yemen issue. The Iranian government had told Imran Khan that the Islamic Republic was always ready, with or without a mediator, to hold talks with its neighbors, including Saudi Arabia. There were many reasons due to which Imran Khan's efforts could not yield any results but the main reason was a strong perception within the Iranian government ranks that Imran Khan had unleashed the efforts on the 'instructions' of the then American administration.

Undoubtedly Iran and Saudi Arabia happen to be the most influential countries in the Muslim world. Their rapprochement will certainly have a positive impact especially on countries like Pakistan, which have been bearing the brunt of Iran-Saudi rivalry for a long time. Apart from government circles, the ordinary Pakistanis too have welcomed this development and



genuinely believe it will usher in a new era of peace and stability in the region. It may be a far-fetched approach yet Iran-Saudi easing of tensions may not augur well for the future investments which the Saudis had planned for Pakistan. The biggest upcoming project of oil refinery in Gwadar to be established at a cost of USD 10 billion may also land in trouble because Saudis may now look for similar opportunities in Iran as well. Pakistan seems firm in its assumption that Saudi Arabia shall continue its engagement with Pakistan without any strings attached and the oil refinery project shall proceed as planned. But in the emerging scenario it seems as if Pakistan had to earn Saudi support in future. It may not be automatic and spontaneous as is the case at the moment. China too may shift its focus from Pakistan to especially Iran given the fact that the CPEC project fate still hangs in a balance and scores of Chinese have been killed so far in Balochistan and elsewhere.

Iran always tried to have good relations with Pakistan because of two main reasons. First it wanted to curtail Saudi influence and secondly it needed new markets to sell its natural resources. Being a neighbor, Pakistan turned out to be a viable option. But unfortunately Pakistan could not respond to Iranian gestures because of its being under American influence and partly because of US sanctions on Tehran. In 2013 a 300-member strong Pakistani delegation led by the then President Asif Ali Zardari and comprising the country's foreign minister, petroleum minister and National Assembly speaker and a number of prominent politicians attended the historic inauguration of the multi-billion dollar Pak-Iran gas pipeline in Chabahar. The then Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad along with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari inaugurated the project.

Even after the inauguration doubts continued to rule supreme that at least from the point of view of the Pakistani side the entire exercise was just an eye wash. Since the general elections were around the corner therefore the then government tried to use this event for political purposes. The successive governments too did not do much about this gas pipeline mainly because of the US and Saudi pressures. Or perhaps that was the impression the Iranian used to give. Recently, Tehran has warned Islamabad to construct its portion of the gas pipeline until March 2024 or pay a penalty of \$18 billion.

“ The foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia held a telephonic conversation on March 23, 2023 to greet each other on the auspicious occasion of Ramazan. It was indeed a gesture that would contribute further towards easing of tensions between them ”

According to the official, Iran has stated that the US sanctions on Tehran are illegal and Pakistan is bound to construct the 780-kilometer pipeline on its portion till February-March 2024. Iran has already completed part of the pipeline in its territory from the gas fields in the west to the border with Pakistan in the east.

The 25-year contract to export Iran's natural gas through a pipeline to Pakistan was signed between the two countries in 2009

and was supposed to be implemented by 2015. The two sides inked a revised deal in September 2019. Iran agreed not to approach any international court if Pakistan would finish the pipeline until 2024. If the Iran-Saudi détente goes well then certainly it will help Pakistan to complete the pipeline project sooner rather than later. If Saudi Arabia throws its weight behind this project then I am sure the American pressure may not be an obstacle.

The development has rung alarm bells in the important capitals such as Washington and Tel Aviv. The Israeli government has already started feeling the heat as the opposition has pointed all its guns towards the prime minister and the entire government. The opposition thinks Iran-Saudi rapprochement has badly exposed foreign policy flaws. In Washington too the atmosphere is somber. It may not be a matter of concern for the US that both Iran and Saudi Arabia have re-established diplomatic relations, for them the most worrying factor turns out to be the Chinese role in the whole exercise. This development is indeed a big foreign policy success for Beijing, which had huge economic stakes in the Gulf region and thus wanted peace and stability there.

While we may not draw a parallel between Iran-Saudi relations and Pakistan India ties, however this development appears to have opened a window of hope for both Islamabad and New Delhi to give peace another chance. We cannot expect China to play a role in this regard because

Chinese tensions with India are of much more magnitude than that of Pakistan and India's. To play a role China at the first place had to mend its fences with India, which seems impossible at least in the foreseeable future. It means the initiative has to come from within. Both India and Pakistan enjoy cordial ties with Saudi Arabia and Iran therefore it is possible that these two countries can play a role in diffusing mistrust between the two arch rivals. To begin with, re-appointment of the high commissioners may be a positive step in that direction and then of course resumption of trade activity may further contribute towards building confidence.

The foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia held a telephonic conversation on March 23, 2023 to greet each other on the auspicious occasion of Ramazan. It was indeed a gesture that would contribute further towards easing of tensions between them. There is no doubt that the path to peace for both countries will not be easy since there are many spoilers who would be seeking to torpedo the deal. Now it is up to both sides as to how they make this agreement work. Sooner it is done, better it would be for the regional peace and prosperity.



Limiting powers of the Chief Justice

Qamar Bashir

THE law Minister introduced a bill in parliament today (28.03.2023) to limit the chief justice of Pakistan's ability to take suo motu notice regardless of the nature, substance, or significance of the matter by subjecting it to the approval of a three-member Supreme Court bench. In addition, the bill proposes to grant the right to appeal the supreme court's decision in a suo motu case, which includes a case against the former three-time Prime Minister. The bill appears to have two overarching objectives. The first is to allow Nawaz Sharif to appeal the Supreme Court's decision to bar him from holding public office, and the second is to clip the wings of upcoming Supreme Court Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Essa, who will take over as Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) on September 17, 2023. The Supreme Court convicted Mr. Nawaz Sharif in the Panama Papers case on allegations of corruption and money laundering in a landmark but highly contentious suo motu decision which removed Sharif from office and imposed a lifetime ban from holding any public office. Sharif could not even file an appeal, as the Supreme Court's decision was final under the principle of res judicata, which states that a matter that has been finally adjudicated by a competent court cannot be reopened or challenged again.

Maryam's strategy, which she outlined after returning from London, is becoming clear. Her rhetoric and narrative to balance both sides of the justice balance has started maturing. She and her party have already put enough pressure on the courts by accusing them of siding with Imran Khan while doing injustice to Nawaz Sharif, which they believe needs to be undone by granting Mr. Nawaz the right to appeal and reverse all cases against him, paving the way for his honorable return and subsequent assumption of the party's leadership during the October elections.

It appears to be a case of you scratch my back while I will scratch yours. The government is dead set on bringing Nawaz Sharif back to power at any cost, and the Establishment did not want an independent and powerful Supreme Court judge in the form of QaziFaizEssa. As a result of this bill, the PML(L) will have its leader back who will be able to challenge Imran Khan, while the establishment will have weakened and truncated the Chief Justice, making him subservient to the other senior most judges allegedly cultivated by the establishment.

However, there are a number of complications. The court was given the power of soumotu by the Constitution, not by subordinate legislation. The Supreme Court is authorized by Article 184(3) of the Constitution to "make any order for the enforcement of any of the fundamental rights conferred by Chapter I of Part II," as well as "for any other purpose" that the court deems necessary. This broad language has been interpreted by the Supreme Court to include the power of suo motu, which allows the court to take notice of issues of public importance or relating to the enforcement of fundamental rights even in the absence of a formal petition or complaint. whereas, according to Article 189 of the Pakistani Constitution, "all authorities, civil and judicial, in the territory of Pakistan shall act in aid of the Supreme Court," and "decisions of the Supreme Court shall be binding on all other courts in Pakistan." This means that once the Supreme Court rules on a case, the decision is final and binding on all lower courts and authorities in Pakistan. There is generally no right of appeal against a Supreme Court decision, except in certain limited circumstances where a review petition or a constitutional petition may be filed before

the same court. To clip the wings of the Chief Justice, the relevant provisions of the constitution must be amended, which would require a two-thirds majority, which the government currently lacks.

Another issue is that Supreme Court jealousy protects its independence, which was bestowed upon it by Article 175A, which was added to the Constitution by the 18th Amendment in 2010, and establishes the procedure for appointing judges to Pakistan's superior courts, including the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the High Courts. According to Article 175A, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan has the authority to appoint judges to the superior courts, guarantees the tenure of judges, and prohibits their removal from office except in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Constitution. Article 50 establishes a system of separation of powers among the three branches of government: the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary declaring Parliament to be the country's supreme legislative authority.

Article 90 delegated executive authority over the Federation of Pakistan to the Prime Minister and the federal cabinet. Article 175 declares the judiciary to be a separate and independent branch of government with the authority to interpret the Constitution and the law. In his famous decision in Sindh High Court Bar Association v. Federation of Pakistan (2010), Justice Chaudhry stated that "the independence of the judiciary is a fundamental principle enshrined in the Constitution and is essential to the rule of law and democracy." Our memories are still fresh of the Supreme Court's ruling wherein it declared the deputy speaker's ruling "contrary to the Constitution and the law, and of no legal effect, and sat it aside."

This bill apparently has all the ingredients to make it an instrument of the government and the parliament to intervene in the internal affairs of the courts which is likely to receive equal and proportion rebuke by the court. Another issue is the appointment of Qazi Faiz Essa whose independent and free spirited nature prompted the then-government to file a reference against him which was later quashed by a Supreme Court bench. Once appointed as a chief justice, which appears obvious nevertheless, there are many slips between the cup and the lips, the establishment will have far less say in judicial matters than it did previously. We haven't heard much from Qazi Essa lately. He is being barred from many high-profile benches, despite the fact that he is the senior most judge, and he is not responding either through his decisions or public statements. It is only a matter of time before he strikes back.

Above all, with no opposition in the national assembly, the bill, even if passed, will lack credibility, legitimacy, and integrity, making it an easy target for the courts to strike it down as soon as it is challenged, which will be sooner rather than later. The prime minister's lengthy speech in the parliament today did nothing to establish the need and urgency of presenting this far-reaching bill in parliament, but rather created more doubts and confusions. The government, already weary of dealing with Imran Khan, has opened up a new war front, this time with the judiciary. The public will soon learn whether the judiciary, like Imran Khan, will give the government a hard time or will, unlike him, succumb to its pressure.

- The writer is the Former Press Secretary to the President of Pakistan - Former Press Minister in the Embassy of Pakistan to France



UAE's ambitions for global sustainability

Opinion

Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi

AS the UAE prepares to host the largest United Nations climate change conference, COP28, later this year, UAE President His Highness Sheikh Mohamedbin Zayed Al Nahyan recently announced 2023 as the "Year of Sustainability" to emphasize the importance of sustainability in shaping a more prosperous future. This announcement signifies the UAE's commitment to sustainable development and its recognition of the global climate emergency that can only be addressed through collective action. The Year of Sustainability will include a range of initiatives to reduce the UAE's carbon footprint, increase environmental awareness, and promote sustainability in the public and private sectors.

The UAE has emerged as a global leader in sustainability in recent years as a result of its ambitious vision, strategic investments, and robust pro-climate policies. With a rapidly growing population, the UAE has recognized the need to transition to a more sustainable future and has taken bold steps to achieve this goal.

One of the key pillars of its sustainability agenda is renewable energy, as the UAE has set a target of generating 50% of its electricity from clean sources by 2050. In 2020, the UAE commissioned the world's largest single-site solar energy project at Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park with a capacity of 1.2 gigawatts (GW). Significant reforms are also underway in the transport sector, with sizeable investments in the country's mass transit systems, such as the Dubai Metro. Dubai's road and transport agency wants to see 100% electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles across the emirate's public transport network by 2050, and around USD 160 billion is also being invested in a range of ambitious schemes aimed at achieving carbon neutrality through the UAE's Net Zero by 2050 Strategic Initiative.

“ The UAE has emerged as a global leader in sustainability in recent years as a result of its ambitious vision, strategic investments, and robust pro-climate policies. With a rapidly growing population, the UAE has recognized the need to transition to a more sustainable future and has taken bold steps to achieve this goal ”

In addition to its domestic efforts, the UAE has also emerged as a leader in global sustainability initiatives. The country is a signatory to the Paris Agreement on climate change and has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 23.5% by 2030. The UAE also hosts the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and has convened several important international conferences on sustainability, including the World Future Energy Summit and Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week.

The UAE's sustainability efforts have received widespread global recognition. In 2021, the UAE was ranked first in the Middle East and North Africa region in the Global Green Economy Index.

The UAE's commitment to sustainability is a model for other countries to follow, and the Year of Sustainability will be a turning point for the country and for the world as the UAE demonstrates that sustainability is not only achievable, but essential for our future.

As we look ahead to COP28 and beyond, the UAE and Islamic Republic of Pakistan can advance regional and global cooperation through collective efforts to create a more sustainable, equitable and prosperous future for all, especially for the most vulnerable countries on the Climate Risk Index.

In conclusion, the UAE's role in sustainability is an inspiring example of what can be achieved when a nation prioritizes sustainable development through its investments in renewable energy, water conservation, and global initiatives. As the world confronts the urgent challenges of climate change and environmental degradation, the UAE's leadership in sustainability is more important than ever.

The writer is the Ambassador of United Arab Emirates to Pakistan



Annual corporate Iftar hosted by the CEO Serena Hotels

The guests enjoyed the iftar dinner in a tranquil setting with soulful music, while the evening highlighted the true spirit of Ramadan

ISLAMABAD: CEO Serena Hotels, South and Central Asia and Mrs. Wiqar Boolani, hosted the Serena Hotels Annual Corporate Iftar Dinner to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan. The dinner was attended by large number of Government officials, members of the Armed Forces, Diplomats, Heads of International Agencies, Corporate executives, and Media personnel.

The festive look of Sheesh Mahal with an impressive array of regional cuisine from across Pakistan, coupled with Continental and Asian cuisine added to the ambiance. An exquisite assortment of desserts with individual servings including dietary desserts attracted the guests. **- DNA**



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Pakistan Canada Western Trade Association President Bushra Rehman and Secretary General Malik Sohail Hussain host dinner



CENTRELINE again elected as Executive Committee member



Nazafreen, Sarmad Ali elected President, Secy General of APNS

Imtinan Shahid elected Senior Vice President, Aslam Kazi Vice President, Shahab Zubairi Finance Secretary, Munir Jilani Joint Secretary

DNA

KARACHI: The Annual Meeting of the APNS General Council held on March 20, 2023 at APNS House, Karachi unanimously elected Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani as President, Imtinan Shahid as Senior Vice President, Muhammad Aslam Kazi as Vice President, Sarmad Ali as Secretary General, S.M. Munir Jilani as Joint Secretary and Shahab Zubairi as Finance Secretary of the Society. The AGM was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Sarmad Ali, President of the Society. The Council unanimously approved the report of the Executive Committee for the year 2022-2023 as well as the Annual Accounts of the Society for the year 2022. The General Council attended by 128 members from across the country, formed an Election Commission headed by Dr. Waqar Yousuf Azeemi with Nasir Daad Baloch and Mumtaz Ahmed Phulpoto as members. The Election Commission conducted the elec-

tion of the Executive Committee for the year 2023-24. Following dailies and magazines were elected un-opposed to the Executive Committee of the APNS for the next tenure: Daily Aghaz, Daily Business Recorder, Daily Deyanat, Daily Dawn, Daily Jasarat, Daily Jiddat (Khi), Daily Abtak, Daily Dunya, Daily Jang, Daily Khabrain, Daily Pakistan, Daily Tijarat, Daily Ausaf, Daily Sahafat, Daily Awam (Quetta), Daily Mashriq (Quetta), Daily Mashriq (Peshawar), Daily Wahdat, Daily Kawish (Hyd), Daily Kaleem (Sukkur), Daily Aftab (Multan), Daily Paigham, Daily Business Report, Daily City 42, Daily Pakistan Observer, Daily Halchal (Hyd) and Daily Sayadat, Monthly Dastak, Nawa-i-Waqt, Monthly Naey Ufaq, Monthly Naya Rukh, Monthly CENTRELINE, Fortnightly Ibrat Magazine and Weekly Nikhar were elected on periodical seats. The new Executive Committee elected Mrs. Zahida Abbasi of Daily Nau Siji, Karachi on woman - publishers seat. The newly

elected Executive Committee appreciated the performance of the Election Commission. The AGM in a resolution, expressed its profound concern on the state of print media due to the present economic situation which has caused severe financial crisis for newspapers, many of them are at the verge of collapse. In this situation, the media expected support from the government to brave the financial crunch. The AGM urged upon the Federal Government to pay the long outstanding dues of newspaper industry amounting to over Rs.2 billion, increase the quantum of advertisements and allocate a separate share of print media in the advertising budget so that the newspaper industry would be able to survive in the present situation. The AGM reiterated that the Federal Government has not yet implemented the recommendation of 8th Wage Board to increase the government advertising rates in proportion increase in the wages despite various assurances.

SQA

SAMDANI QURESHI AQLAAL (SQA) is an amalgam of two boutique law firms, named "Samdani and Qureshi" and "AQLAAL Advocates".



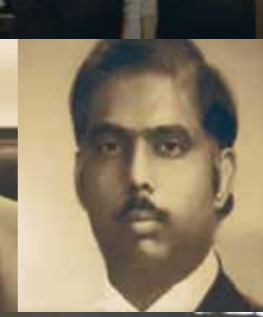
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With a combined experience of over 50 years in niche areas of law, both firms joined hands in January 2023 to serve the clients with a diversified experience that the team brings under the Firm's name.

SAMDANI QURESHI AQLAAL (SQA)



1989 Samdani and Qureshi (formerly Walker Matriveau Saleem) was founded in 1989 by the late Justice K.M.A Samdani and Barrister Farrukh Qureshi.



'Awakening of the Soul' exhibition held at the Argentine embassy

Mahnoor Ansar

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Argentina Leopoldo Fransisco Sahores hosted an exhibition titled 'Awakening of the Soul' by artist Alejandra Bubuli and curator Roma at the Argentine Embassy the other day. A large number of art lovers attended the exhibition and evinced interest in the pieces of art. Ambassador of Argentine while speaking on the occasion introduced the artists and lauded her work. He told the audience that Ms. Alejandra was an embassy employee as well and had created these pieces of art despite her hectic official work. Born in Argentina in 1967 Alejandra Bubuli is a visual artist who is extremely creative and passionate about art.

She did her post graduate specialization in cultural management studies and taught Textile Techniques at the Ministry of Culture of Valparaiso in Chile. Art is important to Alejandra because she speaks dreams and expresses emotions through it. While speaking on the occasion the artist said, 'it gives her a sense of freedom of expression that feels pure and uninhibited. A big part of her work is combining recycled materials, textures, colors and shapes. Combining these elements helps her elicit expressions and emotions in the most nurturing way'. The show 'Awakening of The Soul' was organized by Zainab Omar (Founder Artcade) and curated by Roma Ali. Working in mixed media and installation, Alejandra Draws from the endless well of recyclable objects and raw Materials from nature. She believes using recycled materials gives them a new life. Most of the components she experimented with were not only sustainable, but also purchased from the local markets in Pakistan. Alejandra is drawn to the beauty of the entire creative process which keeps her connected to each element and appreciate each step. She uses herworkstoevokeemotions in heraudiences. Accordingto Alejandra theviewer's appreciation brings meaning and beauty to the entire process. For her works she mostly uses handmade recycled paper, inks and acrylics and incorporates layers by pouring the paint mix onto the canvas where she then manipulates the results by pooling, tilting and swiping using paint brushes and other objects she collects from nature. Through her work she hopes to connect viewers to the beauty of the organic world and feel it's calmness and engage with nature.



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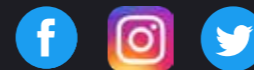


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Turkish Airlines Golf Tournament

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Airlines organized Amateur World Golf Cup series at the Margallah Green Golf club. General Manager Turkish Airlines Islamabad Ali Battal and his team hosted the event. Former Chief of the Naval Staff Pakistan Navy Admiral Asif Sandila ® was the chief guest and distributed prizes among the winners. World Golf Cup series is Turkish Airlines regular feature. The event is held every year in Pakistan as well. A large number of Golf lovers attended the event and appreciated the Turkish Airlines efforts for encouraging the amateur golfers.





Independence Day of Mauritius celebrated



SHAKIL EXPRESS HOSTS BRUNCH FOR DIPLOMATS



Chauhdry Usman Nisar's new office inaugurated



Javed Akhtar

MALAYSIA: The opening ceremony of Malaysia's most influential & famous businessman and philanthropist, Chairman Panjtan Group of Companies, Chauhdry Usman Nisar's new office was held at Setia Alam. Former Army Chief Malaysia, Tan Sri Azumi, was present as the Chief Guest. Other respectable guests included Tan Sri Danny Ooi, Chairman Malaysia Book of

Record; Dato Nazir Mir Salam, President Malaysia Pakistan Business Council; and Famous Lawyer Supreme Court Mr. Habizan Rehman was present at the event. Madam Sughra Habib especially congratulated CEO Panjtan Group of Companies, Chauhdry Usman Nisar, on behalf of Madam Amna Baloch, Pakistan's High Commissioner in Malaysia from High Commission Pakistan, and Dato Wan Saha, Chairman Halal Trade Malaysia. Commercial Wing First Secretary, Miss

Sughra Habib; Visa Counsellor, Yasir Kiani; Marriott Group's Mr. Arbind; In-charge Media cell PTI Malaysia, Farooq Malik (Media Advisor, Advisory Council of Overseas Pakistani Commission Punjab for Malaysia); and famous journalists, Javed ur Rahman and Zia ur Rahman also attended the event. All the attendees congratulated Chauhdry Usman Nisar and commended his efforts for the promotion of trade and goodwill between Pakistan and Malaysia.



National Day of Lithuania



Award giving ceremony at French embassy

Women backbone of our family system, society: Sherry Rehman

We are very pleased to bring the Gender and Climate Award to Pakistan said Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of France



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman, Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey posing for a picture with the recipients of the awards. – DNA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday said the women were like the backbone of our family system, society, country and economy in every sphere of life. In her speech which she delivered at the French embassy on the occasion of award distribution ceremony Ms. Sherry further said “I pay my respects and congratulations to the brave, hardworking and valiant women of Pakistan, including the women of the world.” The purpose of celebrating this day was to encourage women, recognize their rights and spread awareness among people regarding the equal status of women, she added. “49% of Pakistan’s population consists of women. Women across the country should have access to health, education and other basic facilities and an environment of equality,” Sherry Rehman said. The Minister said on this day the women in the country were not demanding more, rather asking for their human, constitutional and legal rights. Women, she said should get their rights and status according to the constitution and law so that they could lead a socially and economically dignified life.

It may be mentioned here that the Embassy of France and Agence française de développement (AFD), together with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN Pakistan), announced the winners of the first Pakistan Gender and Climate Awards to mark the International Women’s Day. The objective of this award was to highlight women’s commitment and leadership in the fight against climate change and the need to adopt gender-responsive policy, in line with Paris Agreement. “We are very pleased to bring the Gender and Climate Award to Pakistan, and I am very honored that Minister Rehman is honoring this event with her presence” said Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of France in Pakistan, “this award provides a platform for organizations and individuals in Pakistan to showcase their efforts in promoting gender equality and climate action and to inspire others to join the movement. This award echoes Pakistan’s leadership in international climate change negotiations after the floods of 2022, particularly during the COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh.” Mr. Mahmood Akhtar Cheema, Country Representative of IUCN Pakistan said that “The Gender and Climate Award is in line with the gender policy objectives of the

National Climate Change Policy of the Government of Pakistan (October 2021). The IUCN has also made up a concrete follow up to the launch of the first national Climate Change Gender Action Plan of Pakistan, with the assistance of Green Climate Fund. The winners have received recognition, visibility, and support to scale their initiatives and to further advance gender and climate action in Pakistan.” The award winner Humera Iqbal, said “We women thought carefully about our own values and set ourselves challenges to lead by examples. We are better able to defend our role in taking genuine action to protect the next generation because of the threat that climate change poses to the entire world. We are stronger together”. Irum Fatima, said “We believe in empowering women to play a key role in promoting environmental sustainability, thereby ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.” Mehreen Raza in her speech said “She-Guard is a shield to ensure women and earth’s health. She-Guard is the silver lining for the most ignored problems of women health and climate change. She-Guard ensures that women problems aren’t taboo anymore.”



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United States Sponsors Innovation Expo in Islamabad

Shujaat Hamza

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad on March 19 concluded the "U.S.-Pakistan Innovation Expo" to showcase the success stories of U.S. government-sponsored Pakistani startups and to encourage further investment in them. The two-day expo provided a platform for established startups to showcase their business ideas and prototypes, and network with potential U.S. and Pakistani venture capitalists and investors. In his opening remarks at the event, U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome said, "One of the top priorities of the U.S. government is promoting inclusive economic growth and increasing trade and investment between the United States and Pakistan. The United States is already Pakistan's largest export market and every year we are seeing more and more U.S. investment come to Pakistan - but there is still room to grow and entrepreneurs like you are central to that effort. Pakistan is a country with immense potential, but it needs innovation and technology to take it to the next level." Since 2012, the U.S. Embassy has funded over 181 entrepreneurship-related projects valued at \$14.7 million dollars. He was joined by Chief Executive Officer at Ignite National Technology Fund, Asim Shahryar, who acknowledged the efforts of the U.S. government in supporting entrepreneurial activities in Pakistan. Senior Advisor for the Asia Foundation Pakistan, Haris Qayyum, expressed appreciation for the ongoing collaboration with the U.S. Embassy and National Incubation Center to highlight

success of Pakistani startups. He further stated, "The U.S.-Pakistan Innovation Expo is an endorsement of Pakistan's dynamic tech entrepreneurs. It exemplifies Pakistan-U.S. bilateral trade, foreign direct investment, and technological innovation. The Asia Foundation is committed to the collaborative efforts supporting Pakistan's tech ecosystem, as we continue. The Asia Foundation is honored to partner on initiatives that value entrepreneurship and innovation. It is our goal to support Pakistan's sustainable development and inclusive growth." The Expo featured a speaker session for venture capitalists and angel investors led by an American expert. Business leaders and investors from Pakistan, the Middle East, and the United States attended the event and discussed the opportunities and challenges in the Pakistani startup ecosystem. Project Director at the National Incubation Center, Parvez Abbasi said, "I am thrilled to see the U.S.-Pakistan Innovation Expo come to fruition. This event is a demonstration of the power of collaboration between our two nations and the endless possibilities that arise when we combine our talents and resources. I am grateful to all the participants and organizers who have made this expo a success and look forward to seeing the incredible innovations that will emerge from this partnership." The delegates at the Expo showed great enthusiasm for the event and expressed confidence that it would encourage further investment opportunities and potential trade partnerships between United States and Pakistan. They expressed their desire to see more initiatives like this in the future that support and grow Pakistan's startup ecosystem.



Australia supports Cricket training for Blind Women

DNA

THE Australian High Commission sponsored a six-day cricket training for visually impaired women and girls from across Pakistan, organised in collaboration with the Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) and Serena Hotels on 15-20 March. The training builds on Australia's support to PBCC since 2018 that led to the formation of Pakistan's first blind women cricket team. The new team played its first international Twenty20 game in the same year. Speaking at the award-giving ceremony at the conclusion of the training today, the Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins shared that Australia's sup-

port aims to provide more women and girls with disabilities the opportunity to compete and demonstrate their ability, while promoting inclusion in sport. "We hope to break gender stereotypes and negative perceptions associated with people with disabilities through our support of this initiative. Australia and Pakistan share a passion for cricket, so we are happy to support the Pakistan Blind Cricket Council's efforts to bring women and girls living with disabilities into the sport," Mr Hawkins added. Coaches Abdul Razzaq, Tahir Butt and Bakhtawar Iqbal, who coached the national blind men's team, helped these players push their boundaries. The Chairman of Pakistan Blind Cricket

Council, Syed Sultan Shah, said, "Blind Cricket is a sport that has gained popularity in recent years for its unique approach to inclusivity. It provides an opportunity for people with visual impairments to compete at a high level, develop their skills and confidence, and become people of vision, both on and off the field. I hope that this initiative will inspire more people with disabilities to participate in sports and lead fulfilling lives." Two blind factory workers invented blind cricket in Melbourne, Australia, in 1922 when they improvised the game using a tin can containing rocks. A few years later, in 1928, the first sports ground and clubhouse for blind cricket was built at Kooyong in Melbourne.

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The Ambassador-designate of Portugal to Pakistan, Mr Manuel Fredrico Pinheiro da Silva, presenting his credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad, on 15-03-2023. – DNA



The High Commissioner-designate of Malaysia to Pakistan, Mr Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, presenting his credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad, on 15-03-2023. – DNA



Islamabad Marriott Hotel hosts corporate Iftar dinner





DNA

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, reviewing the historic relations between two brotherly countries, said the Kingdom had always stood by Pakistan through thick and thin since its independence in 1947. Addressing an event, organized by the embassy's media bureau, the other day, to confer awards to winners who participated in a short video competition on Pakistan and Saudi Arabia relations, he said Saudi Arabia paid special

attention to its relations with Islamic countries, particularly Pakistan as it was one of the most important Islamic countries for the Kingdom. The Saudi envoy said, "The relationship between two countries is based on sincerity, brotherhood and pure love for each other."

He, eulogizing Saudi Press Attaché Dr. Naif Alotaibi and his team for organizing such an informative activity on behalf of the royal embassy, felicitated the winners of competition and expressed the hope that it would further boost their confidence and help them in their future endeavors.

During his welcome address, Dr. Naif Alotaibi said this healthy competition was organized to celebrate 70-year bilateral relations between the two countries as in March, 1953 the Governor General of Pakistan Ghulam Muhammad during his first official visit to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia held an exclusive meeting with King Shah Abdul Aziz bin Abdur Rehman Al-Saud.

Briefing the audience, he informed that the royal embassy received 114 videotapes on

Pak-Saudi relations which had always been a fascinating chapter in the diplomatic history of two countries.

He said the videos were of good quality and content adding that out of the total, ten documentaries were selected for the prizes. The first prize holder got \$2,000 while those who stood second and third were given \$1,500 and \$1,000, respectively, he said adding that the remaining seven video clip makers received \$500 each, however, other contestants were awarded vouchers of SAR 2,000 and free visas to perform Umrah. It is worth mentioning here that a silent video enthralled the audience very much as the story was a mouth-piece of overseas Pakistanis who were not only earning bread and butter for their families but also adding a huge foreign exchange in the national kitty. It showed that after the death of a Pakistani laborer, how the Saudi government supported his family and translated his daughter's dream into reality of becoming a doctor in the life.

Kingdom stood by Pakistan through thick and Saudi envoy



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Pan Asian Twist

AB Khan

IT is true that islooties tastebuds have developed over the years and Islamabad is settling well with the new food scene around its boundaries. This upcominggastronomic romance drive is not limited to burgers or pizza joints popping up every next month but fine-dining and pan-asian cuisine in particular is taking its toll over the tinsel town. Gone are the days of Chicken corn soup, Chowmein, Egg fried rice and Spring rolls. The new kid on the block is now Sushi, sashimi, Korean Chicken, Khao Suey, Laksa and a variety of pan-asian salads. Going with the flow, Nicole and Zaafir, of Loafology famesaid au-revoir tothe family-owned Chinese eatery by the name of "Dragon City" after two decades and recently opened up a Pan-Asian fine-dining restaurant "Sesame & Soy" rightbeneath the same place. Coming down from the stairs into the restaurant lobby, the foyer casts the first impression on what awaits to be unfolded. Monochrome tiles contrast with massive Asian inspired paintings sets the tone for the evening. The décor in this 100-seater eatery, influence both eastern and western themes depicting Asian Deco era. The place even has a dedicated placement for a large lip sofa together with an ostrich feather lamp which sets the mood of the guests as they step in the dining room through fluted glass doors creating a vibrant and energetic ambiance. The interior of Sesame & Soy is bright with neon lights, walls hung handcrafted silk embroidered paintings, vintage paneling and stone table tops with gold trim stone table tops and cane style chairs blending well with seven-seater booths. To one side of the menu an array of appetizers, soups, Hotpot and Mains

and once flipped, Rice and Noodles, Curries, Sides, Drinks and Desserts takes the center stage. Going south, we preferred to order the things which have not been stumbled across before in the likes of Xo fried rice, Chili Caramel Beef, Teriyaki Salmon apart from the regulars like Thai Green Curry, Beef with Broccoli, Korean Fried Chicken and Hot Pot. From the starters section the anonymous decision was reached amicably on Prawn Toast whereas the offer on salads demanded a voting at the table. The side salads, namely GadoGado salad, Kimchi, Sesame Carrots and Bean Sprouts, Miso Butter and Roasted Sweet corn made it a difficult choice to pickso we went with the recommendation of the chef and ordered GadoGadosalad. The ingredients of this Balinese delicacy were stacked into a pile of multilayered extravaganza of texture, and of sweet and sour peanut dressing. The tofu, potato cubes, boiled eggwere roasted until soft and half done whereas crispy slices of cucumbers gave the desirable crispy punch. Itwas indeed a fresh start. Prawn Toast is basically a Cantonese appetizer, triangles of bread coated with paste made from minced shrimps, with ginger and garlic infusion before being deep fried in a golden-brown color. The platter carrying 6 pieces was indeed crunchy as well as meaty and the best part was that although it was deep fried yet it was not dripping with oil, spotting an interesting aftertaste of prawns and diminutive sesame seeds as its name suggested. Thai Green Curry was piled under drifts of fresh basil, bay leaf's, bamboo shoots and ground crunchy driedchilies cooked in curry paste busting with flavors. The heat, emphasized by vivid slices of creamy chicken, but all of it was tempered by sweet brown sugar and fish sauce.

Sweet Korean Fried chicken was a bowl of sweet, sticky sauce crusted with peanuts laying on a bed of sticky boiled rice. It soothes and playfully slaps the tastebuds as it is difficult to accept weather it's the tangy sauce or chicken cubes which leaves so much flavors on the pallets.

Chilli caramel beef was the show stopper of the evening. The party enjoyed the succulent and well-marbled beef, lovely balance of colors on the plate, coleslaw garnishing with colorful cabbage helping to balance the palate. "This dish took most of our time till it came out it should have been. The beef marinades for 48 hours to absorb all the sauces in the likes of, chili Sao, honey and other homemade recipes" adds Nicole with beaming eyes. The beef cube portion size was just right, boosting a perfect elasticity and simply melts in the mouth. It was no doubt piece de resistance

Hot Pot cauldron at Sesame and Soy offers variation within the hot pot itself. Guests are given option to choose from four different broths in the likes of Vegetable and Mushroom, Peanut Butter chicken, Coconut and Laksa Spicy Malaysian broth. But this is not where it ends. Lower your gaze and you find a cornucopia of Protein, Vegetables and Noodles choices in their respective sections. My pick was Spicy Laksa broth. It was thick, dark in color but I was awestruck with flavors. The Malaysian herbs were full in attendance infusing the assortments to the next level.

Xo Rice sounded very intriguing so it was ordered. This multi-purpose sauce commonly called Xo is made from seafood and abundantly used in Hong Kong cuisines. Light brown rice, in a mix of textures, tender juicy seared chicken, caramelized bits of Xo sauce accompanied by crunchy onions and beans sprouts stole the show giving rice a total spin. It packed quite a punch. Freshen up after that boom and clash with a knotty tangle of herbs withchilies and garlic. There was so much depth and fragrance in the Xo sauce that it could be classified as one



Pan Asian Twist

of the mains on its own.

Two golden brown filets of manicured salmon captured the attention the moment it arrived. The fillets had been taken off the bone and lightly battered and pan fried. The fish had then been turned in a sweet, chili-hot soy glazed in Teriyaki sauce and returned to the golden frame, with translucent taste. It was peeling, juicy and absolutely delicious with the homemade teriyaki sauce. The first bite left no doubt that the filets were well marinated as per the thickness, simmered and cooked to perfection sliding in the mouth and fighting to take center stage. The Salmon which was definitely a distinct element of the dish that resonated well with Teriyaki sauce. This dish could not go wrong come what may as it can call chef's magnum opus. The artisan at work behind the stove was trained by the chef of the Japanese ambassador in Islamabad. So, seafood epicureans are in for a treat at Sesame & Soy for sure.

From the non-meat side of the ledger, Ma-Po-Tofu, Kung Pao Cauliflower, Baked Cubed Tofu and Quinoa and Stir-Fried Spinach was on the card. These dishes not merely to be eaten, but to be explored, especially when one has tried Kung Pao Chicken and Kung Pawn Fish, this will surely be a tongue twister. All veggies are dressedwith vinegar and peanuts whereas the baked Cauliflower was a dish totally "flavor driven" fresh and crispy. Fried milk dessert. deep friend rolls with cinnamon and crumbs crust and vanilla custard filling raised an eye brow and instead of going for Fried Banana Fritters,



a must have on all pan-asian menus we took a chance to order this new and unheard off dessert item. The guests can easily be mistaken on the arrival of the platter as these deep-friedgolden dopelganger rolls could easily be taken for crumb fried eggrolls. A custard like dish served warm with a dusting of cinnamon sugar and a chocolate sauce dip. The custard is made from milk and egg yolks and sugar whereas once fried it turns into roll, crisp on the outside with pudding-like milk on the inside. The dessert is a must have on all your visits.

The menu at Sesame and Soy is contemporary, crafted carefully based on availability of ingredients thus taking a

sustainable approach to the utilization of each ingredient's quality. "

Our orderliterally covered all pan-asian tastebuds be it Korean, Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Hong Kong and even Indonesian cuisine all under one roof. Sitting at Soy, it was hard not to be drawn to the glassed kitchen where the action was taking place in full glory. No doubt the dining scene evolves to become more sophisticated and diverse with an open concept and interactive dining seems to be the next thing to watch out for. The restaurant opens at 6:00pm for dinner every day and post Ramadan it will be fully operational offering lunch as well as dinner.



Arts and Crafts Festival at Islamabad Serena Hotel



First Lady talks about gender parity thru different initiatives

The invitees included members of the diplomatic community, representatives of international agencies, corporate sector, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Serena associates, and other women



Mahnoor Ansar

ISLAMABAD: Begum Samina Alvi, wife of President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday terming talented women the ‘future of Pakistan’ said their inclusion in decision-making and equal job opportunities was crucial for the country’s progress. Speaking here at an event to mark ‘International Women’s Day’, she said the day serves as an important opportunity to reflect on the challenges that stand in the way of women’s rights. Samina Alvi said women being the country’s fifty percent population still had a long way to go in terms of their inclusion and empowerment. “Pakistan can only progress with the participation of women in all fields of life, particularly in trade, business, FinTech (financial technology), digitalization, and finance,” she said. She emphasized programmes by national and international agencies to set up micro-enterprises, women’s chambers, and industrial academia linkages. According to Global Gender Gap Index Report 2022, she said, Pakistan ranked low in economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, and health and survival, but was

placed higher in political empowerment. It may be mentioned here that Serena Hotels hosted a networking breakfast to celebrate International Women’s Day to honour, appreciate, and laud women who have excelled through achieving success in their professional careers. The invitees included members of the diplomatic community, representatives of international agencies, corporate sector, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Serena associates, and other women who have been striving to change behaviours for the betterment of women. These women are focused on paving way for the young and talented women in exploring their potential for career development and economic independence. The meet and greet started in the foyer where the women had an immersive experience of arts and crafts on display, along with an auditory delight of soulful melodies where a beautiful cake was cut towards the end of the ceremony, re-iterating the celebration of Women’s Day. The Chief Guest for the occasion was the First Lady, Begum Samina Arif Alvi, the guest list included accomplished women

from all walks of life who graced the occasion with their collective presence. Key-note speakers were, Ms. Naima Ansari, who has been part of the Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Ms. Ayla Majeed, the first Muslim, South Asian, Pakistani woman in the role of Vice President (VP) of the ACCA and Ms. Kashmala Khan Former Federal Ombudsperson for Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace, shared their experiences with the audience. Begum Samina Alvi also spoke about the efforts that the government has been making for gender parity through different initiatives and emphasized on the importance of providing women an inclusive and fair working environment, regardless of the field they choose. Serena Hotels has been celebrating the International Women’s Day for almost a decade, the company truly believes in gender equality. The Serena Hotels is the only company in Pakistan to be EDGE (Economic Dividends for Gender Equality) Certified, and is a founding member of the Male Champions of Change, Pakistan Chapter.





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