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FM Bilawal's India visit: will it make any difference?



FOREIGN Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's visit to Goa, India in the wake of SCO foreign ministers summit held on May 4-5, has evoked a mixed reaction, especially at home. While the leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf continue to take a dig at the foreign minister for 'earning disrespect' for the country, others would give him full marks for not only aptly representing Pakistan at the highest forum but to respond befittingly to the India narrative in which it tried to build a terrorism case in Pakistan. Those who laud Bilawal's Indian sojourn as a landmark event tend to quote his interview with the India Today, in which Bilawal said, "This wolf whistling around the word terrorism which is ultimately an Islamophobic wolf whistle not only to whip up Hindu sentiment in India but also to brow beat Pakistan, that might be election strategy for some but not effective terrorism strategy".

FM Bilawal's visit may be a good omen in terms of easing of tensions between the two arch rivals, nevertheless it may be construed as a big success with regard to resumption of diplomatic and political relations at a full scale. We have to keep in mind that it was not a bilateral activity. It is an SCO and as an active member of the Organisation Pakistan was supposed to be there physically. Contrary to the PTI contention that Bilawal would have participated in the meeting online and thus avoided 'embarrassment inflicted on him by his Indian counterpart by not shaking hands with him', the visit should augur well with regard to future bilateral interactions. Pakistan rightly believes that India should take Kashmir status back to pre-August 5 position in order to pave way for normalization of relations, but if India finds it difficult to immediately go back to that position, it needs to give a word that it might re-think about its policy towards IOJK, which may ultimately lead to pre-August 5 position. The Indian media perhaps was not fair in its comments when it said that FM Bilawal Bhutto visited India just to appease the Establishment and he lacked public support for this visit. This presumption does not hold any ground for the majority of Pakistani people who do want to have normal relations with India as they strongly believe that easing of relations would ultimately benefit peoples of both countries. However, for such contacts to take place on a regular basis the Indian government needs to show flexibility and willingness. The way the Indian foreign minister received his Pakistani counterpart with no traces of smile on his face; no hand shake and no warmth, in no wise, can help contribute to building bridges. But at the same time, there is no denying the fact that Pakistan and India direly need each other at this critical juncture when the world is passing through the worst kind of recession and economic downturn. Pakistan appears to have been hit hard, first because of weak economic policies and secondly due to political instability. Then floods did the rest of the damage. It was perhaps the time when trade with India, though at a small level, could have mitigated sufferings of especially the flood-hit people. India must understand that the Pakistani side needs to have valid excuses in order to engage in any bilateral activity including trade, while the Pakistani side needs to shelve differences, at least during odd times such as floods and other natural calamities, for the sake of its people. At the end of the day it is Pakistan and India who have to sit together to sort out their differences. If we expect that the US or Russia or any other power would help us iron out our differences, it may not be a rational approach. China, however, can be a sincere facilitator as it has huge stakes in Pakistan and India as well. But for this to happen China and India perhaps have to mend fences first, which, at this moment seems to be a daunting task, but not impossible indeed. If Saudi Arabia and Iran, the two deadliest enemies, can reach a rapprochement then why not China and India and India and Pakistan?

Ansar

Chief Editor's Profile: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti is a career journalist. He started off as District Correspondent of Daily The Muslim in 1988 from Gujrat. Later he moved to Islamabad and joined Pakistan Observer as Sub-Editor / Op-ed Writer, in 1993. In 1995 he again moved to The Muslim as Sub-Editor and he left The Muslim in 1997 to join THE Nation as City Editor and Diplomatic Correspondent, where he remained till 2002. His association with the 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.

ALFRED GRANNAS

Germany committed to promoting rule of law, stability in Pakistan

Ambassador of Germany Alfred Grannas talks to Daily Islamabad POST, Centreline and DNA

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

1. Germany is very keen to see democratic and sustainable development in Pakistan. Can you share with our readers some of the salient features of this cooperation with reference to latest political and economic developments in Pakistan?

Germany is committed to promoting good governance, rule of law, and stability in Pakistan. To achieve this, we work closely with our implementing partners, particularly GIZ, on a range of projects related to good governance, climate change awareness, education, and health. However, we are concerned about the recent economic situation in Pakistan, which has been particularly challenging for German companies operating in the country. We are working with the Pakistani government to encourage structural reforms that will encourage investment and economic cooperation between our two countries.

2. Would you like to highlight efforts that your embassy has made to further strengthen trade and economic links between Germany and Pakistan?

We are pleased to note that the Pakistani market has attracted significant attention from a range of German companies and thus from concerned government departments in Germany. This growing interest in bilateral trade has led to the decision to extend the German network of chambers of commerce and industry abroad (AHK) to Pakistan. This represents a major milestone for our economic relations and is poised to be a game changer for future economic inter-

action between our two countries.

While we currently have a “Pakistan Desk” at our chamber of commerce and industry in Dubai, our sincere aim is to establish a proper representation on Pakistani soil as soon as possible. This development has also fueled an increased interest in delegations travelling to Pakistan to explore the market. However, we must also acknowledge that the current economic conditions and import restrictions in place in Pakistan present significant challenges for businesses. Therefore, we advise the interested German businesses to keep monitoring the situation and come to Pakistan as soon as we see improvements with regards to structural reforms and removal of restrictions that will encourage investment and economic cooperation.





3. Security issues by and large are the main hurdles in the way of foreign investments in Pakistan. Do you share this perception and how optimistic you are that things will get better, in terms of security, in the coming days?

The increase in attacks since the Taliban takeover in Kabul has understandably had a significant impact on the assessment of business opportunities in Pakistan. While we have not seen German companies targeted by militants, we recognize the concerns of German businesses regarding the security situation in the country.

It is important to note that German companies adhere to high standards when it comes to security, and an improved security situation may not be enough to alleviate all concerns in German company headquarters. We share the view that an absence of attacks is necessary to fully address these concerns, particularly as such attacks primarily harm the Pakistani society and have the potential to destabilize the country.

Moreover, the current import restrictions are having a negative effect on German companies' interest in investing in and trading with Pakistan. We hope that this situation will improve soon, as further damage to the businesses of German companies already working in Pakistan can be avoided.

4. As we know, quite a few German NGOs are working in Pakistan. How would you comment on the role of these NGOs in bringing people of both countries closer besides their contribution to the socio-economic development and especially the women empowerment?

German NGOs, such as Kindernothilfe, Welthungerhilfe and the German Red Cross, are actively involved in various development projects and programs to sup-

port the socio-economic development in Pakistan. These German NGOs have contributed a lot during the recent flood in Pakistan in terms of emergency response, rehabilitation, and economic development and especially women empowerment. Women empowerment is a challenging and very important topic in Pakistan. In terms of better opportunities, German NGOs aim to create better conditions for women and reduce gender violence across different sectors. Indeed, it won't be easy and it is not a onetime activity but more of collective participation and mutual understanding. Thus, German NGOs in collaboration with local and national NGOs are looking



forward to more women participation in economic, political, and social participation to a more equitable and more prosperous society in Pakistan.

5. Culture and education is yet another field where both countries have been working hand in hand. Can you tell us some details of co-operation in these particular fields with special reference to recently held Film Festival?

Cultural diplomacy is very important for people-to-people contact. Germany has an academic exchange service, DAAD, which works in Pakistan and sends many students to Germany for higher studies. We have a network of schools called PASCH, which teach German language as a subject. Our cultural centers in Karachi and Lahore offer German language courses on different levels. Recently, we supported the Women's Film Festival to encourage and facilitate young girls and women to express themselves and celebrate the success stories, struggles, and achievements of inspiring women from all walks of

life. This year, we supported the Lahore Literary Festival and brought two acclaimed writers from Germany to Pakistan, who read from their latest works. We are also partners of the Lahore Digital Arts Festival through the EUNIC Cluster Fund to celebrate the emerging digital culture of Pakistan by bringing together artists and audiences to explore the intersection of art and technology.

6. After Taliban govt take over in Afghanistan influx of Afghans to various countries including Germany has been huge. Can you share data that how many Afghans, Germany has entertained so far?

Since the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, Germany has seen a huge influx of Afghan refugees seeking safety and shelter. To date, we have welcomed more than 30,000 Afghans on humanitarian grounds. Our priority is to ensure that they are provided with the necessary support and assistance to rebuild their lives in a safe environment.

7. Your impressions about Pakistan?

As the German ambassador to Pakistan, I have had the privilege of visiting some truly amazing places in this country. From the vibrant city of Lahore to the bustling metropolis of Karachi, and the scenic beauty of Quetta and Peshawar,

I have been struck by the rich and diverse local cultures and traditions. Above all, what stands out for me here is the warmth and hospitality of the Pakistani people. It is truly humbling to receive so much love and support from everyone I meet.



Good bye my friend!

Waheed Hussain

The news of the death of former Senator Muhammad Enver Baig was shocking for me as for many his friends. I was at my native village in Abbottabad (a hill resort) in Khayber Pakhtoonkhwa province for the Eid ul Fitr when came to know about the departure of my friend. Unfortunately, I could not attend his Nimaz-i-Jinnaza (funeral) and burial, as was away from the city, which may keep me haunting for rest of my life.

ENVER Baig was a lively, sweet, loving and caring human being. He was very soft spoken but firm on his ideas and opinion. Whenever, I called him on phone or met him he shared a light joke to make me laugh and feel relax. Despite many personal troubles and difficulties, he always gave an impression that nothing is wrong with him. Especially the last few years of his political life disappointed him but he never complained.

Enver Baig was a social person really loved to invite friends for dinner and exchange of views at his place frequently. Whenever there was a gap of such gatherings, I used to call him and said “Baig Sb missing your delicious food and company.” His guests list included, personal and family friends, politicians, diplomats, businessmen, bureaucrats, doctors, academicians, media persons in short people from all walks of life. Like myself many journalists got the opportunity to interact with important people who were at the helm of affairs, gathering news and collecting background information.

Muhammad Enver Baig was successful businessman, honest and intelligent politician. When I met him for the first time in 2004, he was serving as member senate (Federal Parliament) representing the Pakistan Peoples’ Party. He was part of various standing committees in the upper house and played a very important role in legislations and scrutinizing the decisions and policies of various ministries. As member of Pakistan Peoples’ Party he was very close to late BB Shaheed but after her death in 2007, Baig could not win the confidence of Asif Ali Zardari so decided to leave PPP and join Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz).

But his experience in the PML (N) was not that good rather very disappointing. During Nawaz’s government from 2013-2018 he was appointed as chairman Benazir Income Support Program for a very short period of time and removed. Later he informed that some cabinet members of Nawaz Sharif government were not happy with him they had past grudge so they poisoned the then PM ears against Enver Baig and he was sidelined not only from the government but from party as well.

He always told that he was never invited



“ Enver Baig was a social person really loved to invite friends for dinner and exchange of views at his place frequently. Whenever there was a gap of such gatherings, I used to call him and said “Baig Sb missing your delicious food and company.” His guests list included, personal and family friends, politicians, diplomats, businessmen, bureaucrats, doctors, academicians, media persons in short people from all walks of life. ”

for any party meetings by the leadership. He was an out-spoken politician criticized his own government policies and decisions which the PMLN leadership did not like. In our political culture leadership do not encourage disagreement. They only like flattery and praising. He could not adjust himself with the PML (N) working conditions but didn’t join any other political party till his death. He will be missed by many. Let me say good bye my friend and rest in peace. May Allah give you highest place in Jannat ul Firdous Amin. He remained with Pakistan People’s party from 1988-2013.

Population anxiety in Pakistan



Dr Luay Shabaneh

In the past, families wanted to have more children because of child mortality and the need for a workforce, and to have more fighters in a world made of a tribal system that linked all good values, such as courage, strength, decisiveness, etc, to men and the risks of failing, such as keeping honour and avoiding stigma and shame, to women.

YEARS ago, I asked my mother why she had nine kids, and she responded that her mother and mother-in-law kept telling her that it is the only way to avoid polygamy; some children and all husbands are disobedient. Twenty years later, my Pakistani Canadian friend, Saima, when she consulted me on the idea of freezing her eggs, argued that she could not afford to have a baby and pursue her education and career. Her income is insufficient to cover the expenses of a baby in Montreal or New York, and support is not made available either by her husband or through affordable babysitting and kindergarten services. Both Saima and my mother, with a two-decade gap between them, were pushed to take their reproductive decision by economic and societal social norm factors far from national or global population growth trends. We live in an almost polarised demographic world; population anxiety is at both poles of increasing and decreasing population. The common feature is that both are focused on the outcome (population size and fertility levels) away from the root causes and the dynamics through which reproductive decisions are made.

In the past, families wanted to have more children because of child mortality and the need for a workforce, and to have more fighters in a world made of a tribal system that linked all good values, such as courage, strength, decisiveness, etc, to men and the risks of failing, such as keeping honour and avoiding stigma and shame, to women. Therefore, we inherited from them the preference for boys over girls. Governments with high population growth rates, including Pakistan, got anxious because of their inability to create enough jobs and provide decent education and health services to all and the security threats they might face with increasingly growing unemployed youth.

Therefore, they direct their thinking around reducing fertility. While governments with declining populations got anxious about the future of the nation. For example, during an informal chat, an ambassador from an Eastern European country hinted at a sort of blame on UNFPA for advocating an increased dose of women's rights to the extent that some women have lost direction and forgotten their reproductive duty to produce more babies for the nation's existence. Historically, governments failed to understand or accept the fact that people's reproductive decisions do not factor in the opinion of politicians, academics and experts regarding population growth – they have their own reasons for having more or fewer children. UNFPA launched the annual report on the State of World Population last week, identifying rising population anxiety and urging a radical rethink of how countries address changing demographics.

The report notices that increasing population anxieties are widespread, and governments are increasingly adopting policies aimed at raising, lowering or maintaining fertility rates. But efforts to influence fertility rates are very often ineffective and can erode women's rights. The landmark report called for a radical rethink of how population numbers are framed, urging politicians and media to abandon overblown narratives about population

booms and busts. Instead of asking how fast people are reproducing, leaders should ask whether individuals, especially women, are able to freely make their own reproductive choices – a question whose answer, too often, is no. Women's bodies should not be held captive to population targets, says UNFPA Executive Director Dr Natalia Kanem, adding, "To build thriving and inclusive societies, regardless of population size, we must radically rethink how we talk about and plan for population change." Family planning must not be used as a tool for achieving fertility targets; it is a tool for empowering individuals. Women and couples should be able to choose if, when and how many children they would like to have, free from the coercion of pundits and officials. Governments must first realise that deciding to have children is an individual and couple's decision, not a community or a public affair. Governments must realise that any attempt to intervene in this matter will face push-back from society for religious, cultural, liberal, political and many other reasons, and the outcome will be a distortion of the demography of society that leaves negative socioeconomic multiplier effects. The proper approach is the human rights that promote the fact that getting babies is an individual decision.

Branding such decisions as good or bad is a bad idea; people should freely decide if they want to get babies and choose how many. Nevertheless, it is important to understand the dynamics in which families take decisions, and governments should do their best to ensure the right people make their own reproductive choices; women should not be pushed to get pregnant and not be forced to become infertile; they should take their decisions in the context of an approach of bodily integrity and autonomy. Governments also need to ensure that whatever the decision is, families are provided with all proper services, information and understanding to implement their own reproductive decision. Women are not accountable for the nation's problems; they are victims of social norms. Nobody should hold women accountable for population decline or increase. This matter is an outcome of the societal values shaped over years by the men-led State's organs, including media, supporting programmes, and the enabling environment to decide. In countries facing population decline like Singapore, Japan, Poland, Germany, etc, we observe the difficulties that women face to have babies without compromising their human capital gains as professionals and human beings whose lives are in accumulated development and progress.

In those societies, babies can come once women feel that they do not have to choose to get pregnant or continue their progress in life; when they realise that having another baby will not distort their future and spoil their economic aspirations due to costly childcare, babysitting, education, recreation and getting a healthy child whose mother can continue her own progress. Making the best services, advocacy and information in which women and couples can make informed decisions is the most appropriate approach to address population anxiety. All other alternative attempts proved not to work very well. In a nutshell, enjoying reproductive rights is the key.

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Luqman Ali Afzal CEO Monal Group hosts grand iftaar dinner for Pakistani friends and diplomats





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‘Turkey indebted to Pakistan govt, people for whole-hearted support’

Ambassador of Türkiye says We should mention the assistance of the Pakistan Red Crescent, Turkish Red Crescent Pakistan Office the aid campaigns held at NUST and the DESTEK Donors' Conference organized by NUST again, which was personally supported by President Dr. Arif Alvi

D.N.A

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Türkiye Mehmet Pacaci has said 7.8 magnitude earthquake occurred in southeastern Türkiye on February 6. This was followed by two more earthquakes of similar magnitude in the following days. This disaster was called the earthquake of the century by scientists. He said, 14 million people in 11 different provinces were affected by this earthquake. Millions of people were left homeless in harsh winter conditions. More than 50 thousand people lost their lives. Over 110,000 people were injured. He expressed these views during an iftaar dinner hosted by the Embassy in collaboration with TIKA. The Religious Minister, Talha Mahmud, Chairman of the NDMA, Inam Heider Malik, Federal Tax Ombudsman Asif Jah, and Addl Secretary Muhammad Humaid Kareen also attended the event. The ambassador further said, what happened in Pakistan when this news of the disaster was heard? ‘First of all, I must say that Pakistan, the people of Pakistan, from seven to seventy years old, as we say in Turkish, felt the pain and sorrow of the disaster effected people in Türkiye as if it had happened in their own country, as if it had happened to their own relatives’. Everyone in all families, in every household, Mothers, Fathers, children, grandchildren, grandmas, grandpas, shared the suffering of the victims in Türkiye. ‘I strongly believe that their brothers and sisters in Türkiye felt their sincere good wishes and prayers



from here'. He added, on February 6, during the first working hours of the day, he received a phone call from NDMA Chairman Mr. Inam Heider Malik. Mr. Chairman informed that he called upon the instruction of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sherif and its institution was ready for any kind of help. Meanwhile, Turkish Disaster Management Authority AFAD had just declared a 4th degree disaster and stated that it was open to receive needed aid from the world. Thus, in the first hours of the disaster, the Pakistan Army Search and Rescue Team already set out for Türkiye. This professional team accomplished great job in Adiyaman and pulled many people alive out of rubble in the disaster effected cities. 'In the first days, the USAR 1122 team, the search and rescue team of the Al-Khidmat Foundation, joined this first team. When Mr. Prime Minister went to the earthquake-effected area in Türkiye to personally express his condolences and support, these teams received him and his delegate there', he added. Ambassador Pacaci said NDMA delivered much needed 70,000 winter tents, tens of thousands of blankets and medical supplies to the earthquake victims in Türkiye until March 23, using land, air and sea routes with a very effective and professional operation. International institutions in Pakistan also played important roles. Together with the tents donated by IOM, UNHCR, IFRC, the number of tents dispatched from Pakistan has exceeded 100 thousand. Non-governmental organizations such as Baitussalam, Nisar Amin Fatima Foundation, Muslim Hands, FRGF delivered tons of aid materials to Türkiye, under the coordination of NDMA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Pakistan Air Force and Pakistan Navy. Aid campaigns were organized in Pakistan at all levels to help earthquake victims in Türkiye. We should mention the assistance of the Pakistan Red Crescent, Turkish Red Crescent Pakistan Office the aid campaigns held at NUST and the DESTEK Donors' Conference organized by NUST again, which was personally supported by President Dr. Arif Alvi. He said, Cabinet members donated their salaries to the relief account opened by Prime Minister's Office. Members of the Azad Kashmir Parliament and then Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas personally made donations. Civil servants donated their salaries all over Pakistan and Kashmir. In many primary secondary and high schools, students donated their pocket money. 'I would like to express my special thanks for all donators from Pakistan. I thank all the people of Pakistan, all governmental and non-governmental institutions of Pakistan, our brothers and sisters. For us it is impossible to forget their sincere support', the ambassador concluded.



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Serena Hotels hosts a Soulful Qawwali Night Ustad Asif Santoo enthralls audience with performance

DNA

The Mehfil began at midnight and was well attended by diplomats, members of the corporate sector, government dignitaries, and media personnel

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels hosted a soulful qawwali night featuring the world-renowned qawwal Ustad Asif Ali Santoo Khan on April 07, 2023, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. The event was hosted under the Cultural Diplomacy initiative of Serena Hotels which aims to promote discourse around plural thought, cultural appreciation and to further mutual understanding and tolerance amongst all. The evening began with Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels, South and Central Asia, and Mrs. Wiqar

Boolani greeting the guests as they were served a selection of delectable Hors D'oeuvres and a variety of beverages.

The Mehfil began at midnight and was well attended by diplomats, members of the corporate sector, government dignitaries, and media personnel. Ustad Santoo is a shagird of the legend Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Qawwal Asif Ali Santoo Khan is the youngest son of the famous music producer Manzoor Hussain and belongs to the world-famous musical family Santoo Family whose musical heritage can be traced back 350 years including his great grandfather Mian Maula Baksh, one of the most famous classical singers of the subcontinent.

The night was a tribute to Sufism with traditional soulful melodies that had the crowds swaying in unison. Asif Ali Santoo performed Sufi melodies amidst cheer and applause all night. The Mehfil was followed by a decadent suhoor for the guests, which had Pakistani favourites and a mix of continental dishes to cater to a variety of palettes.





RCCI hosts Iftar-Dinner in the honor of diplomat community

President RCCI Sakib Rafiq, Group leader Sohail Altaf, Zahid Latif and others host iftar dinner for the diplomatic corps.

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) hosted an Iftar Dinner in the honor of the Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Diplomats and Commercial Counselors in Islamabad. A large number of ambassadors and diplomats were present on the occasion, including the Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Turkiye, Indonesia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Iran, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Morocco. Federal Minister Energy Khurram Dastgir and Federal Minister Petroleum Musadiq Malik were also present on the occasion. RCCI Group Leader Sohail Altaf and President Saqib Rafiq thanked the ambassadors, dignitaries and businessmen for the overwhelming gathering. President Saqib Rafiq said that Rawalpindi Chamber considers the diplomatic community an important pillar for promoting trade ties and RCCI always believes in better connectivity with all diplomats. RCCI iftar dinner for diplomats is being held every year to promote a positive and true image of the country, he added. Group leader Sohail Altaf in his remarks said that we are thankful to Federal Ministers Energy Khurram Dastgir and Federal Minister Petroleum Musadiq Malik for joining us today. This is a great opportunity for networking and we are very honored to host the large number of ambassadors and commercial counselors, he added. Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, former presidents, President FCCI, Dr. Khurram Tariq, President Small Chamber Tariq Jadoon, President WCCI Rifat Shaheen, members of the executive committee and representatives of district and local administrations, representatives of Anjuman-e-Tajiran and a large number of members and businessmen attended the Iftar dinner.



National Day of Bangladesh celebrated

DNA



The Founding Role of Heydar Aliyev in Pakistan-Azerbaijan Relations

Prof. Dr. Saqib Riaz

It was a fascinating morning (March 30th 2023) when we received His Excellency Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan in Pakistan on a visit to Allama Iqbal Open University. I have had the honor to invite His Excellency to my University where I am serving for the last 27 years. The Ambassador very kindly accepted my invitation to visit AIOU. The date was fixed as March 30, 2023. Benefiting from the expected arrival of the Ambassador H.E. Khazar Farhadov, we planned a one-day seminar with the consultation of the relevant staff of the embassy. The title of the seminar was finalized as “The Founding Role of Heydar Aliyev in Azerbaijan-Pakistan Relations”. As Chairman and Head of the Department it was my obligation to make

the necessary arrangements for the seminar and we did it with the team of committed and hardworking colleagues at the Department. We made every possible effort to make the best arrangements with the consultation of Embassy. We were in contact with Mr. Elchin Mehdiyev, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Azerbaijan regarding the arrangements of the ceremony. It was a unique moment in the golden jubilee history of Allama Iqbal Open University that Ambassador of Azerbaijan came to deliver a guest lecture. The staff of the Department worked day and night with zeal and zest for the beautification of the venue. The embassy staff arranged an exhibition of historic pictures in the open air just outside the seminar venue. The beautiful weather of Islamabad added fragrance in the ceremony. A great number of the officers from the Embassy of Azerbaijan participated in the ceremony which was our honor and pride.

His Excellency Ambassador of Azerbaijan Mr. Khazar Farhadov arrived in the University at scheduled time and his first comment was a matter of pride for the University. He said, “AIOU has a most beautiful campus in the capital and I am happy to be at this beautiful campus”. He also mentioned that it was his first visit to this University. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood and the colleagues from the Mass Communication Department welcomed H.E. Ambassador. Soon after arrival we all came to the outdoor exhibition where Ambassador briefed Vice Chancellor and our colleagues about the background of different historic photographs. Most of these pictures were showing the great national leader of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev with the former president and Prime Minister of Pakistan during his visit in 1996. The participants, students and faculty members shown their keen interest in the pictures displayed. Later on, the Chief Guest H.E. Ambassador Khazar Farhadov, Vice Chancellor Dr. Nasir Mahmood and other dignitaries entered in the seminar hall of the Mass Communication De-





partment. The students of the Department welcomed His Excellency with their shining and smiling faces. The ceremony was started with the recitation from Holy Quran.

Vice Chancellor Dr. Nasir Mahmood welcomed Ambassador Azerbaijan in his welcome address. He paid tribute to the Great National Leader of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev for his tremendous contribution in strengthening relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. He said that the people of Pakistan have great affiliation with the state and people of Azerbaijan. He stated that AIOU is interested to develop academic cooperation and collaboration with its Azerbaijan counterparts. He expressed his gratitude to the Ambassador of Azerbaijan for his visit to AIOU. He said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan are closely linked in historic cultural and political relations and both countries support each other on various international platforms including UN. The Ambassador of Azerbaijan and the Vice Chancellor, AIOU agreed to cooperate in educational matters of bilateral interest including student exchange programs and joint degree programs. Ambassador said that they will make every effort to pave the way to strengthen the relations between the two countries. The Vice-Chancellor said that the photo exhibition by the Embassy was reflecting Pakistan-Azerbaijan friendship.

Chief Guest of the ceremony H.E. Am-

bassador of Azerbaijan was invited for his key-note address. The hall was full of participants, and they were waiting anxiously for the speech of H.E. Ambassador. The ambassador Khazar Farhadov thanked the Vice Chancellor and the Chairman Department of Mass Communication for arranging this wonderful event. He said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan are closely linked with each other, and both support each other on various global forums. He said that the people of Azerbaijan have a great respect and love for the people of Pakistan. He paid tribute to the National Leader of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev who was the person behind the tremendous development of the Nation. He said that he was the only Muslim leader in the Soviet Parliament before its collapse. He said that Heydar Aliyev was a great supporter of Pakistan and he paved path for the bilateral relations. As President of Azerbaijan he visited Pakistan in 1996 and had meetings with the then President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Ambassador said that Heydar Aliyev was the person behind the tremendous development of his country. He was a real visionary leader who earned respect all over the world. The ambassador mentioned that there are sufficient opportunities of mutual cooperation and collaboration between the two countries. He said that although there are already two flights of PIA from Lahore to Baku but Azerbaijan Airline is

also going to start its flights to Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi very soon. The Ambassador replied to the questions of the audience with detail. He said that presence of 500 years old Multani Carvanserai in Baku is a proof that the relations between the two countries are centuries old. Both nations are linked in strong bonds which can never be broken. Prof. Dr. Saqib Riaz, Chairman Department of Mass Communication Allama Iqbal Open University expressed his gratitude to the Ambassador of Azerbaijan H.E. Khazar Farhadov for sparing time to visit AIOU and to address the audience on a very important topic. He said that the people of Pakistan have a great affection and attachment with the state and people of Azerbaijan. He hoped that with every passing moment these relations will be strengthened. He informed audience about the contribution of the Department of Mass Communication AIOU for strengthening media education in the country. At the end of the ceremony, Vice Chancellor AIOU Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood and Prof. Dr. Saqib Riaz presented University mementoto the worthy guest H.E. Khazar Farhadov, the ambassador of Azerbaijan. H.E. Ambassador also presented Souvenirs of his embassy to the Vice Chancellor Dr. Nasir Mahmood and Dr. Saqib Riaz. The meeting was ended with a vote of thanks. Dr. Asad Munir performed the duties of coordination and announcements.



Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei hosts dinner for friends at the Palestine House





Golden Jubilee of Constitution of Pakistan

Exhibition 'Islamic Architectural Heritage in Hungary' inaugurated

Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Mehnaz Aziz, Hungarian ambassador and others opened the exhibition

Ansar M Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf inaugurated the exhibition titled Islamic Architectural Heritage in Hungary, at the Parliament House on Tuesday. The exhibition is first of its kind jointly organized by the Hungarian embassy in Islamabad and the National Assembly to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Constitution of Pakistan.

Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Mehnaz Akbar Aziz, Head of Pakistan-Hungary Parliamentarians group, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, former ministers and senators also attended the event. A large number of members of the civil society thronged to the event in order to enrich their knowledge of the Islamic Architectural Heritage of Hungary.

The Speaker National Assembly in his speech said Hungary became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1526 after Suleiman the Magnificent defeated the Hungarian Royal Army. It is just coincidence that it happened in the same year when Mugal emperor Babur invaded the northern part of the Subcontinent as a result of the first battle of Panipat.

He added Hungary was different from other parts of the Ottoman Empire not only for economic and social but for cultural reasons as well. In fact the Ottomans never succeeded in strengthening their power in Hungary during the 150 years of the occupation of the country.

Raja Pervez Ashraf declared relations between Pakistan and Hungary as excellent and hoped these relations would grow further even in the days to come. He thanked the Hungarian ambassador and the Embassy for arranging the exhibition. He hoped that both countries would be able to further expand cooperation in the field of culture and art as well.

Ambassador of Hungary Bela Fazekas in his speech said he was happy to co-host the important event along with the National Assembly secretariat. He hoped through the exhibition people would get information about the Islamic Architectural Heritage of Hungary.



Turkish Airlines hosted Iftaar dinner for leading figures of the Aviation Industry, travel agents and media partners



Shares outcome of the parliamentary polls Kazakhstan put on path to development under President Tokaev, says envoy

Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin briefs media about the outcome of recently-held parliamentary elections



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin has declared the recently held parliamentary elections as a hallmark of futuristic vision and wisdom of President Kassym Jomart Tokaev. He added as a result of the elections the nation shall be taken to a better future.

The ambassador expressed these views while briefing the media people about the outcome of the parliamentary elections that took place in March this year. Ambassador Kistafin further said the idea of the press briefing was to raise awareness about the political transformation that is happening in Kazakhstan. He said the main idea is to liberalize the Kazakh society with a view to implementing democratic reforms, which ostensibly is a very important milestone in the history of Kazakhstan.

The ambassador further said bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Pakistan are excellent. He particularly mentioned launching direct flights between the two countries. He said a direct flight from Karachi to Almaty shall start within a couple of months while flights from other Pakistani cities to various Kazakh cities shall start in the due course of time. He said both sides were hectically engaged in negotiations in order to make this project a complete success. He said last year both countries celebrated the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Various high level visits between the two countries have already taken place, which clearly shows how deep-rooted relations between the two brotherly countries are.

He also talked about a single country



exhibition organized by businessmen from Pakistan in the business hub of Kazakhstan, Almaty. The exhibition went very well and a number of applications were received from Kazakh businessmen seeking various avenues in Pakistan. The Pakistani businessmen too expressed keen interest in exploring the Kazakh business potential and facilities offered to foreign investors and businessmen. Ambassador Kistafin also shared with the media persons some salient features of the President Kassym Jomart Tokaev's address at the opening of the first session of the Parliament of the VIII convocation, in which the President had said that for the first time a party which had long been in opposition was represented in Parliament. This was made possible thanks to large scale political reforms and liberalization of legislation governing party registration. Henceforth the parties will be at the forefront of the political processes that will determine the future of the country.

The President in his address further said that to actively involve the younger generation in the affairs of the state was one of the most important tasks. Young people must bring new values to society. Many young candidates united during the election campaign and created their own bloc.

Young people should assess this as a unique opportunity to work for the benefit of the country. Along with this conditions were created for women and persons with special needs to enter the Mazhilis, he added.

'Next five years will be decisive for our country. We will have to create a quality legal framework to ensure the country's dynamic progress. This will require changing the rules and principles of how our economy functions. The first steps in this direction have already been taken- work on demonopolization and the return of illegally withdrawn capital from the country is under way'. The ambassador said that the Kazakh President rightly pointed out in his address that Kazakhstan's economy was still dependent on the extraction of minerals. In other words, its structure remains raw materials, while the country's progressive development requires economic diversification. Of course we also have our competitive advantages in the world market, which must be effectively used to solve current and strategic tasks. Ambassador Kistafin hoped that under the dynamic and visionary leadership of President Kassym Jomart Tokaev Kazakhstan shall continue to make strides towards development and prosperity with the ultimate aim of empowering the people of Kazakhstan.

100th birth anniversary of Heydar Aliyev

Azerbaijani artists present a beautiful musical performance

Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov says relations between two countries excellent

Mahnoor Ansar

ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijan Ambassador to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov has said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan have very good and friendly relations and these ties are based on ancient historical traditions of both countries. Addressing an event arranged to celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of Heydar Aliyev, the National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, he said, "President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attaches great importance to Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations, which were constructed by Heydar Aliyev. The ties between the two brotherly countries are at a high level in all fields." Ms. Almakhani Ahmadli - Mugham singer, Mr. Masim Islamov and Mr. Elvin Novruzov traveled all the way from Azerbaijan for this concert. The traditional Azerbaijani music provided a real feast to people of Islamabad. A large number of people hailing from various walks of life attended the concert. The ambassador further said that Pakistan was one of the first states to recognize Azerbaijan after it declared independence. Heydar Aliyev, he said, was the "architect of the development of Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations". He attached great importance to Pakistan. On April 9-11, 1996, Heydar Aliyev paid an official visit to Pakistan and during his stay, several documents were signed between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. "That visit played an irreplaceable role in the development of relations between the two countries," he noted. While sharing about Heydar Aliyev, the envoy said, 2023 was declared the "Year of Heydar Aliyev" and the day would be celebrated solemnly in Azerbaijan and abroad. He said Heydar Aliyev proved that he was a visionary and decisive politician when he first led the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic from 1969-1982. As a result of the intense activities of Heydar Aliyev, great successes were achieved in the economy, industry, agriculture, education, and culture, the envoy said. The adoption of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR in 1978 and the establishment of the Azerbaijani language as the state language are the services of national leader Heydar Aliyev. At that time, when the totalitarian Soviet regime ruled, the determination of the legal basis for the preservation and development of the moral wealth of the Azerbaijani people, especially the language, in the supreme law of the republic was considered a very brave step, the envoy added. In 1991, Heydar Aliyev was elected as chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan. In May-June 1993, when Azerbaijan was on the verge of civil war and loss of independence, the people of Azerbaijan demanded to bring Heydar Aliyev to power. On June 15, 1993, Aliyev was elected as chairman of the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan, and on June 24 took the office of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. On October 3, 1993, in a nationwide voting which saw a high turnout, he was elected as President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. When Heydar Aliyev came to power, he eliminated chaos and anarchy, economic and political difficulties in the country. The Agreement of the Century, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, and other internationally important projects are connected with the name of Heydar Aliyev.



Indian High Commission hosts Iftaar dinner for friends





CEO Murree Brewery Isphanyar Bhandara hosted 119th M.P. Bhandara Memorial Murree Brewery Polo Cup 2023







Malaysia's most famous and influential Pakistani, Chaudhry Usman Nisar's Eid Milan Dinner

MALAYSIA'S most famous and influential Pakistani, Chaudhry Usman Nisar's Eid Milan Dinner attended by prominent businessmen and Diplomats of Malaysia. Pakistan's leading singer Sahir Ali Bagga was also present at the event. Leading businessmen including Tan Sri Richard Koh (OWG GENTING) Tan Sri Danny Ooi (Malaysia Book of Records) Tan Sri Robert, Dato Sri Desmond (Alladin Group) Dato Sri Garry Chua (MRCA) Dato Johnson, Dato Wan Saha (Halal Trade) Dato Shaheen (Securiforce) Dato Sri Mir (ASEAN E commerce) Dato Sri Nazir (Malaysia Pakistan Business Council). Dato Arif Siddique (ex CEO Standard Chartered bank Malaysia), Dato Zulquernain,

& Mr Habizan (Famous Lawyer) & Representatives of Pakistan high commission in Malaysia H.E Mr. M. Adil, (Deputy High Commissioner of Pakistan to Malaysia) Mr. Yassir Kayani (Visa counsellor Pakistan High Commission Malaysia) Mr. Haseeb (Community Counsellor Pakistan High Commission Malaysia). Sahir Ali Bagga (Famous Pakistani Singer) Nimra Mehra (Famous Pakistani Singer) Kazim Ali Shah (Junoon Malaysia) Mr Jabbar (Chef Tabdoor), Mr Arham (Taste of Pakistan) And other dignitaries of Pakistani community attended the Eid Milan Dinner hosted by most prominent and influential Pakistani Businessman in Malaysia Chaudhry Usman Nisar. – DNA



Serena Hotels Sports Diplomacy

SANTE POLO WINS SERENA

CHALLENGE POLO CUP 2023

D.N.A

ISLAMABAD: Team Sante Polo clinched the Serena Challenge Polo Cup 2023, beating strong Beretta Asean by close margin which was played at the lush green Islamabad Polo Club on Sunday organised by Serena Hotels.

The thrilling final match saw both the teams – Beretta Asean and Sante Polo Team who made it to the finals after putting up a great performance in the preliminary matches. The match was intense, with fire-with-fire till the end and when the final whistle after the fourth chukker was blown, the match was tied at 4.1/2-4. Babar Naseem hammered the match-winning goal to steer Sante Polo team to a nail-biting victory in the final. The significant contribution of Ahmed Ali Tiwana of two tremendous goals

for Team Sante, emerged as best player of the final while his teammates Maisam Baloch and Umer Minhas also played out their hearts and banged in a brace each. Maisam Baloch was also declared the best emerging Player of the polo cup. The players of Beretta Asean also played wonderfully to show their best skills specially Hamza Nawaz looked superb with polo pony and kept on attacking the opponents' goals but his all efforts went into vain after losing the decisive final. First Lady Samina Arif Alvi was the chief guest of the closing ceremony of the event while CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani, ambassadors, diplomats from different countries, government officials, corporate community and a

large number of polo enthusiasts from all walks of life were also present in the concluding ceremony.

Meanwhile, talking to the media, Aziz Boolani CEO Serena Hotels said that we will continue our support for the promotion of sports in the country. He congratulated both teams on their excellent performance and sportsmanship in the polo cup. He said that we believe in supporting sports activities through sponsorships and by providing a platform to players and teams under our Sports Diplomacy initiative. The Serena Hotels Polo Cup is an annual event organised by the Serena Hotels under the Hotel's very active Sports Diplomacy initiative, which aims to promote sports and sportsmanship in Pakistan.





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