

CENTRELINE

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine



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Is there any hope at the end of the tunnel?



Amidst the monotony of each passing day, the grim tally of killings and the rampant chaos of lawlessness and poor governance appear to have surged exponentially. Pakistan undeniably presents promising business prospects, attracting foreign investors keen to tap into its vast potential. The recent visit of the high-powered Saudi delegation was also part of government initiatives to fetch foreign investments. The foreign investors took appear keen to investing in Pakistan however, their enthusiasm wanes when confronted with daunting law and order challenges and bureaucratic hurdles. The prospect of navigating through a landscape marred by both security concerns and bureaucratic red tape dissuades potential investors, hampering the country's economic growth. The stability of Pakistan's key alliances, such as those with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and China, seems to be in a precarious state, given the escalating law and order challenges. China, in particular, is facing a significant dilemma due to its substantial investments in Pakistan, which are now under threat. The recent tragic incident involving the loss of Chinese engineers has compelled China to halt work on several projects, including those under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which has already been experiencing delays. If Pakistan wishes to retain these crucial partnerships, it must urgently address the security concerns of foreign investors.

Effectively tackling security issues necessitates a unified national effort, with all stakeholders aligning their interests. However, Pakistan currently lacks the necessary national cohesion, with state institutions, politicians, and the general public seemingly pursuing divergent agendas. This fragmentation is exacting a heavy toll on the country, particularly affecting the marginalized segments of society. To remedy this situation, Pakistan must foster greater unity and collaboration among its various stakeholders to address security challenges and safeguard the interests of both domestic and foreign investors.

This task can only be effectively achieved by entrusting genuine public representatives with control. However, this does not imply the complete elimination of the Establishment's role. It's an undeniable reality that entrusting all responsibilities solely to politicians may lead to chaos. History has shown that unchecked power often results in mismanagement, paving the way for interventions by the military. The Establishment, possessing both power and expertise, can serve as a vital check on politicians. It can act as a watchdog, intervening when necessary to steer politicians back on course if they veer off track. This balanced approach ensures that public mandates are respected while also maintaining a safeguard against potential deviations from the public interest. When contemplating the future of Chinese and other countries' investments and involvement in Pakistan, a shift in strategy is advised. Rather than solely backing specific individuals, it's imperative for these countries to support the establishment of free and fair elections. Historically, these nations have often thrown their weight behind individuals rather than the broader political system, leading to pitfalls. It's time for a change in approach. Without a transparent system and authentic public representatives, their investments will invariably remain vulnerable. A transformative shift in Pakistan's system can only materialize when its leaders adopt a new mindset. Despite being a nation with limited resources, Pakistan finds itself governed by the affluent, who often cling to power to further enrich themselves. The stark dichotomy between the everyday lives of ordinary Pakistanis and the privileged ruling class is undeniable. It's imperative to narrow this gap for the betterment of the entire nation. But the question is who will bell the cat?

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.

Pak-Africa ties poised for a quantum leap

Ambassador of Morocco Mohamed Karmoune says African Continental Free Trade Agreement presents an opportunity for Pakistan to reinforce its trade and investment connections with African nations, opening up new possibilities for businesses and strengthening overall economic ties with the continent



Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Mohamed Karmoune, the Dean of the African Group and Ambassador of Morocco, has expressed his admiration for Pakistan's Look Africa policy. He emphasized that this strategic approach creates a mutually beneficial scenario where both partners stand to gain from each other's expertise and resources. In a special talk about Pakistan-Africa relations, Ambassador Karmoune further said, Pakistan Africa Relations were set by the Bandung Conference 69 years ago. In 1955, Asian and African nations (29 in total) met in Indonesia, from 18 to 24 April, to discuss peace, development, economic cooperation and the role they have to play in the context of Cold War, in conformity with the principles of the UN Charter and International Law. The Bandung Conference, he said, is called now the Non- Aligned Movement. It is at its 19th summit. The last one was held in Uganda in January 2024 and it brought together 120 member states. Ambassador Karmoune further said, the change in name has led, of course, to the updating in the objectives, which hovers now around common human problems, shared prosperity, the advance of science and technology, the protection of the environment, food security, reduction of the global warming and response to the ef-

fects of climate change, combatting international terrorism and transnational organized crime. 'In the case of Pakistan and Africa, their relations are based on the principles of mutual respect, cooperation, and solidarity. In the time of the African struggle for independence, Pakistan was among the nations, which actively supported the liberation struggle of the African countries'. He said, in the post-independence of African countries, Pakistan was there by contributing to the continent's peace and security through the participation in the UN peacekeeping cooperation in the Continent. The country has provided more than 200,000 troops to 46 United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, predominantly in Africa. **The Moroccan ambassador said, on the economic level,** Africa stands out as a land of immense opportunities. Despite maintaining cordial relations, trade figures between Pakistan and African nations have remained modest, at around \$7 billion. The will to develop it to a high level has been expressed, on the part of Pakistan, by the initiative of "Look Africa" policy launched in 2017. The Initiative aims at opening opportunities for Pakistani enterprises to do business with Africa. This initiative was later incorporated in the overall "Engage Africa" Policy, which has resulted up until now in the organization of four Trade Development Conferences and Single Country Exhibitions in different parts of the Con-

continent (Nairobi 2020, Lagos 2021, Johannesburg 2022 and Cairo 2024). The objective is to increase the volume of economic exchange with African countries to its maximum potential, he added. In addition to this initiative, the country is negotiating Preferential Trade Agreements with three of the five African economic blocs (SACU, ECOWAS and EAC). Ambassador Karmoune said, African Continental Free Trade Agreement presents an opportunity for Pakistan to reinforce its trade and investment connections with African nations, opening up new possibilities for businesses and strengthening overall economic ties with the continent.

To overcome their common obstacles for developing their economies and forging a strong and effective partnership for peace progress and shared prosperity, Pakistan and Africa need to work together to launch joint ventures in different economic sectors such as Fertilizers (building fertilizer plants in different African regions), Agriculture, ICT, Health, Mines, Infrastructure, Tourism, Banking, Insurance sector, Car Industry, Renewable energy, vocational and university training 'In line with the Bandung principles, Pakistan and Africa need to maintain unity, solidarity and coordination to make their voice heard in all international and regional platforms'. On the diplomatic level, he said, Pakistan has up until now opened at least 20 embassies across the continent to consolidate its cooperation with the 54 sovereign states and takes it to higher levels. The two regions need to build on the Bandung principles to continue to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, to advocate the settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration for the promotion of peace and stability.

In view of the current challenges in the international arena, the objectives and principles of the Bandung spirit remain as relevant today as the time of the founding of the organization. Pakistan and Africa need more coordination to confront emerging threats and challenges which impede efforts to attain greater economic development and social progress. The emergence and spread of pandemics and health emergencies, including



COVID-19, have taught us that there is no country or region which is immune from these threats and that collective efforts are needed to contain them. The dreamed of shared prosperity needs of us to take huge steps in order to enhance economic and social development. Such development can be achieved mainly through science and technology, industrial cooperation and the promotion of trade and investments. On the international level, Pakistan and Africa need to work together to further promote, preserve and reform multilateralism, and push for full respect of the principles of international law and the maintenance of international peace and security, the Ambassador concluded.



Direct flights between Pakistan and Morocco need of the hour

Tourism is a very important sector in Morocco in which Pakistanis can invest: Mohammad Karamone



Saifullah Ansar

ISLAMABAD: President of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh met with Moroccan Ambassador Muhammad Karamone at the Federation House. On this occasion Atif Ikram Sheikh said that direct flights and strong air links should be established between Pakistan and Morocco. Trade between Morocco is less than expected Joint ventures in new sectors will have to be created CPEC in Pakistan will be a major center of trade in the future Morocco should take full advantage of this. Pakistan has a lot of scope in agriculture, tourism We will soon be taking a delegation to Morocco to hold B2B meetings with businessmen there to explore ventures for investment.

Federation President Atif Ikram said that Pakistan is a country rich in natural resources, there are vast opportunities for investment in many sectors including tourism, construction, hydro, textile, pink salt, solar power projects, mines and minerals, gemstones, agriculture. Pakistan's exports to Morocco have increased from \$24.85 million in 2018 to \$32.06 million in 2022. Efforts must be made to increase this further. The Federation of Chambers of Pakistan and Moroccan Chambers of Commerce should work together to promote more trade, facilitating bilateral visits, organizing trade events and promoting business partnerships should be our aim.

On this occasion, Honorary Consul General Morocco and Chairman Pakistan-Morocco Business Council Mirza Ish-tiaq Baig said that Pakistan and Morocco have very important areas for mutual trade. We will soon go to Morocco

with a big delegation which will also meet the president there. We went to Morocco with a delegation last year too, we organize there Biryani Festival, Pakistani rice, which is the best in the world, is in great demand there. Member National Assembly and former Senior Vice President FPCCI Mirza Ikhtiar Baig said that I am the representative of Federation of Chambers of Pakistan in the National Assembly and I assure the President of the Federation that our business community will be fully represented in the National Assembly. I will be a strong voice while doing this and will play my important role for various institutional support. Morocco's Ambassador Muhammad Karamone thanked the federation and said that Morocco is the gateway to Europe, which has free trade agreements with African countries and the European Union. Pakistan can take full advantage of these agreements through Morocco. He said that tourism Morocco has very important sectors in which Pakistan investors can invest. Business activities like single country exhibition can be worked on, Morocco has ten major ports, large scale investment in telecommunication, energy, banking system. happening It is our effort that our Islamic brother country Pakistan takes maximum benefit from the investment opportunities. On this occasion, Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Coordinator Diplomatic Committee Ahmed Waheed, Chairman Coordination FPCCI Malik Sohail Hussain, Mian Akram Farid, Vice President ICCI Azhar Islam, Chaudhry Naseer, Tariq Jadoon, Special Advisor Afshan Malik, Amina Malik, Rashid Humayun and others were also present there.

UNESCO Proclaims May 5th as World Day of Portuguese Language and Lusophone Cultures

IN 2009, fifteen years ago, the date of 5th of May was officially established by the CPLP – the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries – as the World Day of the Portuguese Language. Ten years later, in 2019, the 40th session of UNESCO General Conference decided to proclaim this day as the World Day of the Portuguese Language and Lusophone Cultures. Speakers of Portuguese are called “Lusophones” (lusófonos).

A neo-Latin language, the Portuguese is one of the most globally diffused languages in modern world. It is native to more than 260 million people in 9 countries covering 4 continents (Portugal in Europe; Brazil in America; East Timor in Asia; Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, S.Tomé and Príncipe, and Equatorial Guinea, in Africa) making it the most spoken language in the Southern hemisphere.

Each of the nine countries which form CPLP contributes to the development of the language, each one with its own accent, with its own local expressions, with its own culture. Portuguese language is our common language, our common heritage but there remains an enormous space for the development of each Cultures own particularities. Fernando Pessoa, in Portugal; Guimarães Rosa, in Brazil; Mia Couto, in Mozambique; Pepetela, in Angola; Ruy Cinnati, in East Timor; Germano Almeida, in Cape Verde; Alda do Espírito Santo, in S.Tomé e Príncipe; Abdulai Silá, in GuineaBissau represent a few author’s names that illustrate how masterly and innovatively the Portuguese Language can be dealt.

Presently, Portuguese is among the

most used languages in international communication, due to its global geographical extension, including, besides the CPLP space, strong historical or diaspora-driven presence in India’s Goa, Damão and Diu, China’s Macau, Spain’s Galiza, in African states as Senegal, Namibia or South Africa, in Latin American countries as Venezuela or Uruguay, in Oceania, as Australia, or in the North America, as the USA and Canada. On the context of the celebration in Pakistan of the 2024 World Day of the Portuguese Language and Lusophone

“ Presently, Portuguese is among the most used languages in international communication, due to its global geographical extension, including, besides the CPLP space, strong historical or diaspora-driven presence in India’s Goa, Damão and Diu, China’s Macau, Spain’s Galiza, in African states as Senegal, Namibia or South Africa, in Latin American countries as Venezuela or Uruguay, in Oceania, as Australia, or in the North America, as the USA and Canada ”

Cultures, the Embassies of Brazil and Portugal prepared a program of events and activities both in Lahore and Islamabad, in partnership with several Pakistani Universities, Aga Khan Culture Service and Alhamra Art Centre. As special guest, Guimar de Grammont, renowned Brazilian author, dramaturgist, curator and professor, born and resident in the UNESCO classified World Heritage

city of Ouro Preto, in the State of Minas Gerais, is coming to Pakistan. It was through the varied seas of this world, starting at the very beginning of 15th century, that the Portuguese Language navigated from its western-European birthplace to varied new locations in all the world’s 5 continents. The sea takes as the sea brings, and language is a shared construct. Many Portuguese words were incorporated in a significant number of other languages and dialects around the world, including Urdu. Many shared terms as “chave”, “mesa” and “cami-

sa” demonstrate that relationship. Conversely, many words from those languages and dialects enriched the Portuguese language, for Urdu, words like “Shal” and “Oxalá”. “From my (portuguese) language, one can contemplate the sea” – Vergilio Ferreira

Joint letter of the Ambassadors Olyntho Vieira, from Brazil, and Frederico Silva, from Portugal.

29 embassies take part in event

'Taste the World' food festival at Serena Hotel

Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels said, our commitment to cultural diplomacy extends beyond hospitality, it is about creating meaningful connections through shared experiences

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Food Festival - Taste the World - was held featuring 29 embassies as a fundraising event. The event is a celebration of culinary diversity and cultural exchange, bringing people together through the universal language of food. The participating embassies offered a unique and authentic taste through cuisine ranging from savory dishes to sweet treats representing the flavors and traditions of the world.

Taste of the World, a charity event, is the collaborative effort of many embassies, IFWA (Islamabad Foreign Women's Association), Serena Hotels, the Head of Missions' Spouses (HOMS) Group with the participation of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women Association (PFOWA). IFWA and the Serena Hotels have a long history of partnership that aims to make a mean-

ingful impact by raising funds for charity projects that benefit vulnerable groups, especially women and children in Pakistan.

Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels said, our commitment to cultural diplomacy extends beyond hospitality, it is about creating meaningful connections through shared experiences. Taste the World is not just a culinary event; it is a celebration of diversity, unity, and compassion. Through the language of food, we bridge cultures, nurture understanding, and empower communities. I am also pleased to announce that the proceeds from this event will be directed towards IFWA funds, aimed at supporting underprivileged communities. Together with IFWA, we embark on a culinary journey that enriches lives and fosters a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

IFWA is a non-political, non-profit charitable organization established in 1995 by women from around the world, living in

Islamabad. IFWA's organizing committee, drawn from volunteering spouses of foreign diplomats and expats, creates an exciting program of cultural and social activities with all profits going to worthwhile causes. Through various programs and initiatives, IFWA provides support, resources and opportunities to women and children in need, and those facing social and economic challenges. Some past projects include donating 100 wheelchairs to the National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, providing school supplies to the Haraf Foundation, Khatoon-e-Fatima High School, and Al-Firdous Community Model School, as well as medical equipment to Care for Special Persons (CFSP). IFWA launched a charity drive to respond to emergency needs by The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) after the devastating floods in 2022 by purchasing equipment for a mobile Nurturing Care Center.





CELEBRATING AUSTRALIA DAY IN SPRING

Australia remains a steadfast supporter of Pakistan: Neil Hawkins

"Australia and Pakistan are both relatively young nations but old civilisations. We share a federal system of governance, together with a rich cultural diversity, delicate ecosystems, and unique biodiversity," Mr. Hawkins remarked

Staff Report / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Australia's High Commissioner in Pakistan Neil Hawkins celebrated Australia Day in Spring with a vibrant reception, to mark the enduring ties between Australia and Pakistan. In his address, High Commissioner Hawkins emphasised the historical ties of over 160 years and the shared ambition to capitalise on the dynamism in the two countries. "Australia and Pakistan are both relatively young nations but old civilisations. We share a federal system of governance, together with a rich cultural diversity, delicate ecosystems, and unique biodiversity," Mr. Hawkins remarked. Australia remains a steadfast supporter of a Pakistan that is democratic, inclusive, prosperous and stable, consistent with its Constitution. Highlighting the importance of gender equality, the High Commissioner affirmed: "We're particularly excited to be working with our Pakistani colleagues to support their efforts to

empower women and girls and unleash their full potential." Mr. Hawkins elaborated: "This year we celebrate 40 years of cooperation between the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and Pakistan. Drawing on Australia's own experiences, we have been helping develop the agricultural sector and implement sustainable water management practices, crucial for both nations given the impacts of climate change. We also celebrate 40 years of cooperation between our police agencies." Looking ahead Mr Hawkins concluded, "I'm confident that the more than 100,000 Australian-Pakistanis and many thousands of Pakistani Australian alumni will bring our countries closer together. Not to mention the growing Australian involvement in the development of Pakistan's mining sector and in building Pakistan's emerging dairy industry." The celebration witnessed the participation of many friends of Australia, including politicians, officials, diplomats, media, businesses, development partners and colleagues.





RITBA also offer Rs 2 to Al-Khidmat for Palestinian

RITBA presents Rs 2 million cheque to Palestinian ambassador for oppressed Palestinian

Islamabad: A Rawalpindi and Islamabad Tax Bar Association (RITBA) delegation has shared for noble cause of extending financial support to Palestinian who are facing the worst genocide being commit-

ted by Israel forces in Gaza and West Bank for over six months. The delegation comprising Rawalpindi Islamabad Tax Bar Association Faisal Latif, chairman Faisal Chartered Accounting Firm, Hafiz Idrees Advocate Supreme Court of Pakistan, Fraz Fazal Shaikh, president RITBA, Zafran Yousaf joint secretary RITBA and Bilal Kiani, presented a cheque of Rs 2 million to Palestine ambassador to Pakistan, Ahmad Ameen Rabaie, during a meeting. – DNA



Newspaper industry issues to be addressed amicably: Tarar

Minister was requested that the regional quota be implemented; ads should be released to APNS members only

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government firmly stands for the promotion of print media and the issues confronted by newspapers will be amicably addressed," stated Mr. Attaullah Tarar, the Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting.

Mr. Tarar was addressing a meeting of the Executive Committee of the All-Pakistan Newspapers Society at Islamabad chaired by its President Ms. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani, Mr. Sarmad Ali, Secretary General APNS welcomed the Minister and apprised him about the problems being faced by the print media. These included long pending notification of 35% increase in the government advertisement rates approved by the Prime Minister in his last tenure.

He reminded that the Prime Minister during his last meeting with APNS office bearers had given an assurance that an amount of Rs. 50 crore will be released to newspapers before Eid as initial payment of outstanding dues of the print media against advertising released by the federal government. However, the print media was paid Rs 4.6 crores only. The APNS office bearers also explained the hardship faced by members in getting renewal of their registration by the Press Registrar office due to a highly complicated procedure practiced by the Press Registrar and requested that the procedure be made hassle free and that the registration be made one time as stipulated in the law. The APNS members requested that the regional quota be implemented in letter and spirit and no publications other than regional newspapers be given advertisements from this quota. They also requested that in the forthcoming budget GST, custom and import duties on imports of newspaper consumables like ink and printing plates be exempted. Mr. Atta Ullah Tarrar assured that the issues being faced by the newspaper industry will be addressed to the satisfac-



tion of the print media's. He stated that he would take up the issue of increase in the government advertisement rates with the Finance Ministry for its incorporation in the next fiscal budget. He reiterated that the Ministry of Information had disbursed an overall amount of Rs.1.3 billion to media outlets before Eid. He stated that he has asked the ministry to evolve a mechanism for future budgetary arrangements for payment of advertisement expenses. He assured that the old liabilities will be cleared in the first quarter of next financial year. Mr. Tarrar proposed a joint committee of Information Ministry and APNS to evolve a system for registration of newspapers. He stated that the newspapers played a pivotal role in countering fake news and disinformation. In order to promote newspaper readership, the Federal Minister stated that he would ask the Information Ministry to suggest to the Ministry of Aviation and other government ministries and departments to subscribe to newspapers as in the past. In this respect he proposed to initiate a pilot project with the Ministry of Education to promote newspaper readership at the school and college levels in the ICT.

Earlier the Executive Committee, on the recommendations of the Advertising Committee, granted provisional accreditation to M/s. Starcrest Communications (Pvt.) Ltd Karachi,

M/s. SAP Communications (Pvt.) Ltd. Islamabad and M/s. URS Digi (Pvt) Ltd. Islamabad. The members expressed condolence to Mr. Ahmed Baloch, Publisher Daily Kainat Bahawalpur on the sad demise of his mother. The meeting was attended by the following. Ms. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani, President, Mr. Imtihan Shahid, Senior Vice President, Mr. Sarmad Ali, Secretary General, S.M Munir Jillani, Joint Secretary, Mr. Waaseem Ahmed, (Daily Awam, Quetta), Mr. Mohsin Bilal, (Daily Ausaf), Mr. Humayun Tariq, (Daily Business Report), Mr. Ansar Mahmood Bhatti, (Monthly Centre Line), Mr. Muhammad Waqaruddin, (Daily Dunya), Mr. Javed Mehr Shamsi, (Daily Kaleem). Ms. Rukhsana Saulat Saleemi, (Weekly Nikhar), Mr. Bilal Mahmood, (Daily Nawa-i-Waqt). Mr. Sardar Khan Niazi, (Monthly Naya Rukh), Mr. Faisal Zahid Malik, (Daily Pakistan Observer), Mr. Humayun Gulzar, (Daily Sayadat), Mr. Irfan Ather, (Daily Tijarat), Syed Haroon Shah, (Daily Wahdat), Mr. Nasir Dad Baloch, (Daily Sindh Sujaag), Mr. Mehtab Khan, (Daily Ausaf), Mr. Tahir Mughal, (Daily Nawa-i-Pak) attended the meeting as special observer. Following attended on ZOOM. Ms. Fauzia Shaheen, (Monthly Dastak), Ms. Zahida Abbasi, (Daily Nau Sijj), Mr. Mohsin Siyal, (Daily Aftab), Mr. Tahir Qureshi, (Monthly Naye Ufaq).



Portuguese Ambassador feted

Zahid Latif Khan and Aftab Ahmad Chaudhry Co-sponsors, promoters of the Capital Holding Company hosted dinner for the Ambassador of Portugal Frederico Silva. The friends from the diplomatic community, business fraternity and parliamentarians were invited to be part of the event. – DNA



Portuguese ambassador opens exhibition 'Blurring Boundaries'

"Blurring Boundaries" is a strong, purposeful art exhibition curated by Nageen Hyat, Founder Director, Nomad Gallery as a tribute to the establishment of the art and cultural space

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan Frederico Silva inaugurated arts and paintings exhibition titled 'Blurring Boundaries' held at the Lok Virsa. The exhibition was arranged by Nomad Art Gallery. A large number of arts lovers and members of the diplomatic corps witnessed the pieces of art displayed at the exhibition. Ambassador of Portugal in his speech said

'Pakistan provides to us a rich and diverse historical, sociological and cultural landscape'. He added, Pakistan appeared to be like a big and quite lively lake into which so many different rivers brought and continue to bring distinct but interacting waters, persons, faiths and views and cultures. Ambassador said, Under the expert guidance of the curator Nageen Hyat from Nomad Gallery, 40 years of very good services, who has put together a vibrant ensemble

of artistic voices, speaking through paintings but also through the blessed hands of artisan crafters. "Blurring Boundaries" is a strong, purposeful art exhibition curated by Nageen Hyat, Founder Director, Nomad Gallery as a tribute to the establishment of the art and cultural space. The purpose of an art exhibition is ultimately unique to each exhibition, driven by the concept of the curator, by the select artists creations and the context of the space.





ASEAN Committee in Islamabad hosts an inclusive cycling event

Apart from ASEAN members the Dean of the African Group, Mohammad Karmoune, Ambassador of Morocco also participated in the event



D. N. A

ISLAMABAD: The ASEAN committee's cycling event in Islamabad is indeed a fantastic initiative that showcases the spirit of regional cooperation and cultural exchange. Cycling events, beyond promoting physical activity, serve as platforms for fostering connections and understanding among people from diverse backgrounds. The participation of ASEAN member states in such an event underscores the significance of sports in diplomacy and friendship building. It provides an opportunity for individuals from different countries to come together, share experiences, and build lasting bonds through a shared activity. Moreover, the fact that the Philippines is currently chairing the ASEAN Islamabad Committee adds another layer of significance to the event. It reflects the commitment of ASEAN member states to engage actively in

promoting regional cooperation and solidarity, not only in diplomatic circles but also through initiatives that bring people closer together, such as sports events.

As Brunei prepares to take over the rotating presidency soon, the cycling event also serves as a symbolic transition, highlighting the continuity and commitment of ASEAN member states to work together towards common goals. Overall, events like these demonstrate the power of sports in bridging cultural gaps, promoting understanding, and fostering meaningful connections among people, regardless of their nationality or background. They embody the principles of unity, friendship, and cooperation that are at the core of the ASEAN community. Apart from ASEAN members the Dean of the African Group, Mohammad Karmoune, Ambassador of Morocco, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka also participated in the event.





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Women empowerment priority of French foreign policy: envoy



We indeed believe that the contribution of the private sector is critical to achieving the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals by creating employment, building skills, giving opportunities and reducing poverty and inequalities: Nicolas Galey

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France to Pakistan Nicolas Galey has said women's empowerment and gender equality are priorities of French foreign policy, which includes an ambitious "feminist diplomacy." "Today we have a perfect demonstration of this convergence with this series of "inspiring stories" – short videos which highlight the contribution of four French companies to the promotion of women's empowerment in Pakistan". Ambassador of France made these remarks during a ceremony held to honour the contribution of French companies in Pakistan to women empowerment and corporate social responsibility. A panel discussion was also arranged on the occasion where representatives of the four companies detailed their activities undertaken under their corporate social responsibility initiative. The ambassador further said, 'We are gathered here to recognize the role of the private sector for causes of general interest, which are often considered to be the responsibility of public institutions. But fortunately, times are changing, and for the better'. Ambassador Galey said, some companies have been pioneers in this regard and have

introduced CSR before the concept was even known. Others became aware of this responsibility following legislations which organized CSR in many countries. He noted that companies are not philanthropic organizations. But what is important, and which is a very significant development over the last few decades, is that public and private interests and concerns have converged more and more to promote developments and changes that, in certain cases, societies were expecting and, in other situations, which societies find difficult to engage in spontaneously. While giving the background of the project, he said it was launched by four French companies and the Embassy - namely L'Oréal, Schneider, IPSOS and Servier. 'We indeed believe that the contribution of the private sector is critical to achieving the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals by creating employment, building skills, giving opportunities and reducing poverty and inequalities, and we are convinced that, in this regard, French investors abroad have duties and responsibilities in their host countries'. For their activities have both a systemic impact through the promotion of values and standards, but also an impact on individuals – and this exactly what these short videos are about, as you

will see in a few minutes, he added. He said he was very happy and proud that French companies in Pakistan developed good practices in terms of governance, gender equality and human rights, as well as working relations and conditions, environment, and local development. He mentioned about a legislation adopted in France in 2019 to include consideration of social and environmental issues in the management of French companies. And as far as public and government policies are concerned, all our international development and cooperation projects must now systematically integrate actions related to women's rights and gender equality, as well as climate change issues. The ambassador was of the view, the initiative that brought them together was also an opportunity to highlight that the French economic presence in Pakistan – 20 subsidiaries, 1,2 billion Euros of investments - was beneficial not only to the economy of this country but also to its people, and to show that these companies, apart from the business perspectives, actively participate and locally contribute to the development of Pakistan. 'Also, in some particularly tragic moments, like the floods of summer 2022, French companies demonstrated their solidarity and their involvement in the Pakistani social and economic fabric by helping local communities, directly or through funding of NGOs, some of them represented here'. Despite difficult economic conditions for all businesses in Pakistan during the recent years, these NGOs have not given up on this essential part of identity, which is to be more than a business – a responsible actor in the Pakistani society.

Eid Milan party at the Malaysian High Commission



Advancing Gender Equality for a Sustainable Future

SZIA hosts groundbreaking CAS SDG Conference

Saifullah Ansar

ISLAMABAD: The CAS SDG Conference held at Sheikh Zayed International Academy (SZIA) in Islamabad on April 19, 2024, marked a significant milestone in the collective pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #5: Gender Equality. The event commenced with a stirring rendition of blended national anthems, symbolizing the unity and diversity among attendees. Mrs. Wafaa Abdul Ghaffar, Principal of SZIA, set the tone for the day with her welcome address, highlighting the importance of advocating for gender equality. The presence of esteemed guests, including Mr. Jeroen WILLEMS, Head of Cooperation for the Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan, Diplomats from the Embassy of the UAE and Mrs. Mushaal Malik, Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization, underscored the global significance of the

conference. Throughout the day, attendees were treated to engaging presentations, multimedia showcases and cultural performances. A standout moment was the captivating Neon Lights performance titled "Breaking Barriers," presented by talented MYP2, 3, and 4 students, showcasing their creativity in promoting inclusivity and overcoming obstacles. The conference also featured insightful speeches from country representatives focusing on SDG #5. SZIA students voiced their views as representatives from countries including the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, China, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States of America, Kuwait, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan delivering compelling addresses, highlighting diverse efforts and contributions toward gender equality and sustainable development. A cultural walk honoring the achievements of women globally served as a poignant re-

minder of the importance of gender equality in SDG implementation. The event concluded with an awards ceremony recognizing female students who demonstrated outstanding commitment to advancing the SDGs, emphasizing the collaborative spirit within the school community.

In her closing remarks, esteemed International Lawyer Mrs. Sibha Farooq commended SZIA for its dedication to promoting awareness and action on the SDGs. She emphasized the need for continued dedication and cooperation to address global challenges.

The CAS SDG Conference at Sheikh Zayed International Academy-Islamabad celebrated diversity, innovation, and youth leadership, leaving attendees with a renewed sense of purpose to contribute to achieving the SDGs and building a more sustainable and inclusive world for future generations.





CEO Club Pakistan & World CEO Forum in collaboration with ISE Tower REIT Management Company Limited hosted Diplomats, CEOs, Ministers, Business Leaders Talks on Reshaping the Future of Pakistan. Zahid Latif Khan and Ijaz Nisar welcomed the guests.



Poland concerned over civilian casualties in Gaza: ambassador

Pak-Poland trade volume satisfactory; needs to be further enhanced: Maciej Pisarski

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: "The Polish Ambassador to Pakistan, Maciej Pisarski has said that the relations between Pakistan and Poland are based on solid foundations. 'We are working with Pakistani partners in the development sector, and the volume of bilateral trade between the two countries stands at 930 million dollars, with the potential to increase to \$1 billion'. 30% of Pakistan's exports go to Europe through Poland. Polish gas company is providing Pakistani gas to Pakistani consumers, and Polish companies are playing a role in addressing Pakistan's energy crisis. Polish oil and gas company is working in Sindh. The ambassador said, thirty Polish pilots and instructors had come to Pakistan to enhance the capacity of the Pakistan Air Force after independence of Pakistan. The Polish Ambassador expressed these views while addressing a meet the press at the National Press Club, where he was invited by the club's office bearers.

The ambassador said, the relations between Pakistan and Poland are based on solid foundations, and both countries have trade, cultural, and other ties. The trade volume between the two countries is near \$1 billion, with the potential to increase to \$1 billion. 'My priority is to



strengthen the relations between the two countries, and we are working to address Pakistan's energy crisis through Polish companies'. We have established a vocational school in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and a complete project for women in Hunza, which has been named "Safe Space". 30% of Pakistan's imports go to Europe through Poland, and Polish in-

vestment is present in Sindh and other provinces. There are friendly and close relations between Poland and Pakistan, and economic cooperation is the center of our relations. Despite the distance, both countries have economic, political, and public ties. The Polish Ambassador further said that Pakistan is affected by environmental changes, and Polish companies are expert in green technology. Recently, Polish companies showcased their expertise in green technology at an exhibition in Lahore. He clarified that the Polish embassy does not charge any fees for interviews and appointments. Those who demand money are fraudsters, and there is a fake website of the Polish embassy which has my picture on it.

Poland is a champion of human rights and follows the UN Charter, and we are providing humanitarian aid in Gaza. Polish individuals are working as volunteers in Gaza, and Poland has recognized the resolution for the establishment of an independent state. He said while Israel had a right to defend itself, killing of civilians in the ongoing war was indeed a source of concern for Poland. 'Palestine has an embassy in Poland. However, we are in a sensitive and tense environment, and we are facing a war on our border. Russia is killing civilians in Ukraine every day', he concluded.

Amid Gaza crisis a disturbing humanitarian scandal on horizon

Reports indicate that self-proclaimed 'muftis' in Islamabad, some based in Islamabad, have initiated public appeals urging individuals to adopt orphaned children from Gaza. These individuals have even established WhatsApp groups to solicit consent from potential adoptive parents

ISLAMABAD: In the midst of the Gaza crisis, a disturbing scandal has emerged in Pakistan, particularly in Islamabad. Certain unscrupulous individuals are exploiting the tragedy in Gaza for their own selfish gain. Reports indicate that self-proclaimed 'muftis' in Pakistan, some based in Islamabad, have initiated public appeals urging individuals to adopt orphaned children from Gaza. These individuals have even established WhatsApp groups to solicit consent from potential adoptive parents. Investigations have uncovered that these individuals are not only soliciting money from families interested in adoption but also disappearing once they receive payment. This exploitation of a humanitarian crisis for financial gain is deeply concerning." When contacted, the Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan Ahmed Rabei made it clear that not even a single child had come to Pakistan from Gaza. 'This is not true. There is no orphaned child from Palestine, and no child will come from Palestine', the ambassador added. He reiterated that it's highly improbable for orphan children to enter Pakistan without the awareness of the Palestine embassy in Islamabad. The ambassador urged Pakistani citizens to remain vigilant against such deceptive tactics and not to succumb to their schemes. Similar elements similarly took advantage of the situation following the devastating earthquake that struck Pakistan in 2005. Certain individuals and organizations shamelessly established fraudulent charities, purportedly to aid in earthquake relief efforts. However, rather than directing the donations towards assisting the victims, these deceitful entities shamelessly diverted the funds for their personal enrichment. - DNA

Students exhibit skills during Arts & Paintings competition at the PRCS

Students of The Educators G -10 branch excel in their works by especially expressing solidarity with the innocent Palestine people through paintings



Need to explore new avenues to promote Pak-Uzbek trade



Uzbek Ambassador Oybek Arif Usmanov calls on FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh Saifullah Ansar

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of The Republic of Uzbekistan Oybek Arif Usmanov called on FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh at capital office Islamabad and discussed various issues including bilateral trade, mutual cooperation, investment, Pakistan Uzbekistan Business Council and exchange of trade delegations. The Uzbek ambassador was accompanied by Bakurum Yusov Economic and Trade Consul Uzbekistan. FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh said on the occasion that Pakistan is a brotherly country of Uzbekistan, Pakistan's exports with Uzbekistan have increased gradually in the last years, which has to be further increased, bilateral trade can be promoted in textile, pharmaceutical, rice, machinery, agriculture machinery, electrotechnical and other sectors. We have to explore different avenues to further promote this bilateral trade. Atif Ikram added that we will participate in the

single country exhibition to be held in Uzbekistan on June 28. Pakistanis have the problem of business visa, tourist visa, flights to Uzbekistan which should be solved. The first Gems and Jewellery Exhibition is being held in Pakistan in collaboration with TDAP and Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in which Uzbek businessmen who belong to this sector should participate and you provide us their names too.

Uzbek Ambassador Oybek Arif Usmanov said that Uzbekistan is organizing an International Business Forum on May 3 and 4, in which the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the business community are invited to participate, while the Minister of Uzbek Foreign Affairs will visit Pakistan on May 9-10. There will be G2B and B2B meetings. Trade between Pakistan and Uzbekistan is suffering due to Afghanistan, we have to start The Afghanistan-Pakistan Corridor. Direct flights will be started from Islamabad and Lahore, resolving visa issues soon.

Chairman FPCCI Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Convener Diplomatic Committee FPCCI Ahmed Waheed, Vice President FPCCI Ashfaq Ahmed, Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail Hussain, Acting President ICCI Fahad Waheed, Vice President Engineer Azharul Islam, Advisor President FPCCI Dr Afshan Malik, Executive Member FPCCI Farrukh Alvi, Chairman Pakistan Russia Business Council Mohsin Sheikh and others were also present in the meeting.

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Murree Brewery Polo Cup



RAWALPINDI: Deputy Chief of Mission US embassy Andrew Schofer along with other ambassadors and high commissioners giving away winners' trophy to FC KP team, which won the 120th Murree Brewery Polo Cup, played at Rawalpindi Race Course Ground. A large number of diplomats and Polo lovers witnessed the match. CEO Murree Brewery Isphanyar Bhandara welcomed the guests. – DNA



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Jordan envoy opens "Dances with Colours" Art Exhibition

Sherzada Khalid Iqbal's journey into the world of art was as remarkable as his creations. Despite his professional background as a Chartered Accountant, Iqbal's life took a transformative turn following a brain hemorrhage in 1997



Faisal Sheikh / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) proudly presents the highly anticipated art exhibition, "Dances with Colours," which featured the abstract expressionist paintings of the respected artist Sherzada Khalid Iqbal. The exhibition was inaugurated by Dr. Maen Khreasat, the esteemed Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Muhammad Ayoub Jamali, Director General PNCA. Sherzada Khalid Iqbal's journey into the world of art was as remarkable as his creations. Despite his professional background as a Chartered Accountant, Iqbal's life took a transformative turn following a brain hemorrhage in 1997. This pivotal event unlocked a portal in his mind, igniting an insatiable desire to paint. With colours streaming through his

consciousness, Iqbal embarked on a creative exploration, delving into the intricate relationships between materials, aesthetics, and perceptions. "We are delighted by the overwhelming response to Dances with Colours, art exhibition," said M. Ayoub Jamali, Director General- PNCA. He highlighted the PNCA's commitment to promoting cultural diversity and artistic expression, stating, "PNCA is honored to showcase the exceptional talent of Sherzada Khalid Iqbal and to provide a platform for artists to share their unique perspectives with the world." Khalid's works were bold, bright, and expressed explosive movement. Layers of liquid enamel formed a shifting surface that appeared to be in



a constant state of flux, juxtaposed in complex patterns. Eschewing traditional tools, Khalid employed his hands to create original works of art based purely on his streams of consciousness. Refusing external influences, he adamantly isolated himself from established techniques, maintaining the purity of his work. Constantly evolving, Khalid experimented with various mediums, including metal, glass, wood, board, and canvas. His paintings invited viewers to interpret and engage with them, as they took on a life of their own, developing and evolving until they were complete. "Sherzada Khalid Iqbal's artwork transcends boundaries and speaks to the universal language of the human experience," remarked

Ambassador Dr. Khreasat, "Through exhibitions like 'Dances with Colors,' we strive to foster an environment where creativity thrives and where art serves as a bridge connecting people across borders and cultures." The exhibition will be open for viewing from 8th-14th May, 2024, timings 10 am to 6 pm daily, with the exception of Saturdays when the gallery will be closed. Art enthusiasts and connoisseurs were cordially invited to witness the unveiling of Sherzada Khalid Iqbal's masterpieces and immerse themselves in the transcendent world of "Dances with Colours." The exhibition celebrated the power of abstract expressionism and the boundless creativity of Sherzada Khalid Iqbal.



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