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can boost cooperation
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The emerging political scenario



THE emerging political situation in Pakistan poses significant risks to its struggling economy and already fragmented social fabric. The potential for clashes among various state institutions further exacerbates the challenges faced by the people, who are desperately seeking a leader capable of guiding them out of the current crisis. Chronic issues of governance and misplaced priorities have long afflicted the nation. The most distressing aspect of this scenario is the lack of a clear roadmap toward peace and progress. The February 8 elections, despite being flawed and manipulated, were expected to bring political and economic stability. There was hope that the coalition government, comprised of PML-N, PPP, MQM, and other smaller parties, would steer the country out of crisis. However, events did not unfold as anticipated. The ruling elite's primary hope for reviving the economy still hinges on an IMF deal. The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has yet to make significant progress, as the friendly countries it has approached have not taken practical steps. Although their promises are encouraging, it remains unclear when these commitments will materialize into tangible outcomes.

Countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which genuinely seek to help Pakistan through significant investments, are wary of the country's deteriorating political situation. During high-level interactions with Pakistani officials, the Saudis made it clear that political stability, including the involvement of all political stakeholders including PTI, is essential for successful investment ventures. They emphasized that economic stability cannot be achieved without political stability, a point that makes perfect sense. So, the question now is how to achieve political stability. Undoubtedly, the PTI holds the key to this stability, which is why there is a demand, even from abroad, for the PTI to be engaged in the process. The government claims it is ready and has made efforts to engage the PTI in talks. However, there is no evidence to support these claims. As we know, Imran Khan essentially embodies the PTI, so it raises the question: who from the government side has met with him in prison with the aim of initiating a political rapprochement? The available information indicates that no such effort has been made thus far.

There is yet another intriguing question: will Imran Khan respond positively if approached for talks? The track record of PTI leaders suggests he may not accept this offer, as he views both the PML-N and the PPP as two sides of the same coin. Khan believes there is no point in talking to these two parties because they are the primary defenders of the status quo. However, after the events that transpired with PTI and Imran Khan, even his political adversaries believe he may have learned from his past experiences. Whether he likes it or not, he must live and work with the key stakeholders at the helm of affairs. Consequently, he must reconcile with the ground realities if he and his party genuinely aim to rid the country of its ills. There is no doubt that PTI received a resounding mandate in the February 8 elections and deserved a chance to govern at the federal level. Unfortunately, this is how our system operates. In 2018, PML-N and especially Nawaz Sharif suffered a similar defeat, with the aim at that time being to bring PTI into power.

If there are flaws in the system, only politicians have the power to correct them. Non-political forces are likely to support the status quo because it maintains their influence in politics and other matters. Unfortunately, the current situation doesn't offer much hope for immediate improvement. The political landscape is deeply divided, with stakeholders unwilling to engage in meaningful dialogue and compromise. This lack of unity, coupled with the influence of those who benefit from the status quo, creates a significant obstacle to progress. Endnote: Given the prevailing blame on the PTI for the political impasse, it could be strategic for its leaders to initiate dialogue with all stakeholders, focusing on a singular agenda: "Join us in signing a charter against corruption." Such a proactive move has the potential to shift dynamics in favor of the PTI.

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.

EGIDIJUS MEILUNAS

Lithuania, Pakistan can boost cooperation in IT, other sectors

Mr. Egidijus Meilunas, Vice Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania visited Pakistan in the third week of May 2024. During the visit the Minister held important meetings with the high-level Pakistani officials. The Minister also attended the reception hosted by Hon. Consul General of Lithuania in Pakistan Masood Khan. The Vice Minister talked to Daily Islamabad POST, Centreline magazine and Diplomatic News Agency (DNA). Here are excerpts from his interview

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti



People to People contacts

Enhancing interpersonal connections undeniably serves as a cornerstone in fostering stronger bilateral ties between nations. I'm delighted to convey to you that there's a vibrant exchange of intellect and culture between Pakistan and Lithuania, exemplified by approximately 400 Pakistani students currently pursuing various academic disciplines in Lithuania. Among them, many are delving into the realms of technology and medicine, while others are exploring diverse fields of study. Notably, a cohort of Pakistani scholars is even engaged in doctoral research. It's worth mentioning that Lithuanian universities

actively recruit students from Pakistan, reflecting the mutual commitment to educational collaboration. Furthermore, the student body in Lithuania comprises individuals from various nationalities, adding richness and diversity to the academic milieu. This thriving exchange underscores the enduring bonds and shared aspirations between our two nations.

Tourism potential

Tourism is a burgeoning industry for us, yet one with immense potential. We aspire to warmly welcome tourists from Pakistan and beyond. However, achieving this vision necessitates a concerted effort to foster mutual understanding between Lithuania

and Pakistan. Both governments must commit to tirelessly promoting awareness of the unique offerings, particularly within the tourism sector, that each country possesses. By collaborating closely and championing the cultural richness and natural beauty of both nations, we can pave the way for a flourishing tourism exchange that benefits all involved. Direct airlinks can contribute greatly towards promotion of people to people contacts and spurring the tourism activity on both sides.

Digital solutions

Lithuania is world leader in digital solutions, use of IT. Its key areas are: Life sciences including biotechnologies, ICT, digital solutions, new processes and new materials—in this category, we can give example of Lithuanian laser industry as Lithuania today produces more than 10pc of scientific lasers. It is quite noteworthy that Pakistan is also investing in hi-tech sector, for example, in financial technologies (Fintech). Pakistani banks have made a significant progress in digitizing their systems and they might be interested in Lithuanian solutions.

Agriculture cooperation

This doesn't mean that we start action right now. First step is exchange of information. Take example of agriculture, Lithuania is traditionally agriculture country with old practices for ages. Now, of course still it is an important sector but it's only 3pc of our GDP which used to be 10pc some 30 years ago. What we did: We modernized our agriculture sector to be more productive. Today, I presented to my Pakistani friends some solutions on biological fertilizers. Traditionally, we used synthetic chemicals and fertilizers in agriculture which are quite effective but you need big quantity of them and they are not good for your health. Some Lithuanian companies produced fertilizers based on organic solutions so they are not harmful for nature and for your health and importantly, you don't need big quantity of them.

Trade relations

Last year our trade turnover was around Euros 50 million. It is not high but it has the potential to increase. Our exports are a little bit more than the imports from Pakistan but more or less they are balanced. We are keen for mutual investment from Pakistan to Lithuania and from our country to Pakistan. Lithuanian gained independence 35 years ago. We faced challenges of transformation of political system, establishment of democracy, freedom, rule of law and also economic transformation. Under Soviet occupation, we had very ineffective economic system which was so-called centrally governed. Private initiative and private properties were not allowed. So, we had to create new economic system from a scratch. We have successfully gone through this new system and our economy is very open, very stable and rapidly developing. 84pc of our GDP is created by exports and it is because we are very open globally. Pakistan's public and private sector— banks, businesses, enterprises and companies— can multiply their growth as well as revenues by entering into cooperation with their Lithuanian counterparts as the country is a world leader in cutting edge technologies such as development of business service centers, startup ecosystem, fintech, software development, cyber security, life sciences, engineering and electronics.

Hi-tech advancement

We have invested a lot in hi-tech sector. Biotechnologies alone create 3pc of our GDP that means 4-time more than EU average. Our goal is 5pc GDP by life sciences or biotechnologies. We are specializing in this sector and last year we developed semiconductors in cooperation with Taiwan. We are going to build our first semi-conductor plant in 2029 and it would be one more hi-tech industry in Lithuania. Traditional industries are also well-developed like chemical industry. We also have the biggest oil refinery in Baltic Sea region. We also produce petrol. Engineering industry is also doing well. Logistics and transport sector also create 10pc of our GDP. Small Lithuania has one of the biggest truck fleets in whole Europe. We serve as transportation hub in Europe. Fast Train Project: We still have



to improve connectivity in Europe. We have a very ambitious plan extending railway connection starting from Finland, then going through Estonia and Lithuania and then to Poland. This project is called 'Rail Baltica' going through five Baltic states.

Energy Sector

In energy, we are also going through energy transformation. We are building new capacity i.e. renewable sources two wind offshore farms in Baltic Sea and by 2030 we shall be able to produce more than 7Gigawatt electricity. Currently, we are importing electricity but by 2030 we shall be exporting or selling it. Currently, renewable energy share in our grid is 40pc mainly generated from hydro, wind and solar (though solar's share is less than the other two).

Education Cooperation

A large number of Pakistani students, more than 400 are studying at various colleges and universities of Lithuania. Twenty of these students are doing their Ph.D. Most popular discipline for Pakistani students is technical education. Majority of them are concentrated in Vilnius and Kaunas, two major cities of the country. The University of Vilnius established in 1579, is more than 445 years old and among the top universities of Europe. We are also members of NATO and we were present in Kosovo, Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq so we are not only the regular member but also contributing to EU.

Historical Perspective

Historically as well as traditionally Lithuania is a tolerant nation and respects all religions, faiths, languages, nationalities and beliefs. We condemn Russian's aggression and see it as brutal violation of international law and our stance is very clear and we have to help Ukraine fight back. We support Ukraine as much as we can that means we spent 2pc of our GDP in support to Ukraine that includes humanitarian, financial assistance, energy and military support. Our minister said, victory whatever it takes because for Ukraine and for many other countries in Europe it is an existential question. Nowadays Russia has imperialistic ambitions. They are preparing for long conflict. 20 years ago, we were dependent on Russia for gas and oil but today we are buying zero oil and zero gas from Russia. Today we are buying oil from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and gas from America.

Lithuania keen to expand, diversify ties with Pakistan

The Vice Minister of Lithuania Egidijus Meilunas says they had very fruitful and friendly discussions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan on political and economic developments in our countries, bilateral relations, relations between the European Union and Pakistan, situation in South Asia and Europe'

Ansar M Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: The Vice Minister of Lithuania Egidijus Meilunas has said it was a great honour for him to be in Pakistan on occasion of the 30th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the Republic of Lithuania and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He said 'these three decades were extremely dynamic for Lithuania. We established diplomatic relations between our two countries just in four years after Lithuania succeeded to restore its statehood after 50 years of Soviet occupation, and just in few months after withdrawal of Russian troops from the Lithuanian soil'. This year Lithuania also marks the 20th anniversary of the European Union and NATO membership. He expressed these views on the occasion of a reception. Seanor Sherry Rehan , Additional Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania Ambassador

to Pakistan Ricardas Degutis (based in Ankara) and a large number of guests attended the reception hosted by Masud Khan, Hon. Consul General of Lithuania in Pakistan. Minister Meilunas further said, fast transformation period brought to Lithuania stability and security, contributed to firm establishment of the rule of law and respect to human rights, provided welfare, believe in the future of the sustainable development, and the most important - feeling of being integral part of the European and Euro-Atlantic family, where opinions are shared and heard, and culture of compromise and consensus in the politics is appreciated. He added, 'we had very fruitful and friendly discussions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan on political and economic developments in our countries, bilateral relations, relations between the European Union and Pakistan, situation in South Asia and Europe'. We also discussed other challenges for

regional and global security. We live in very challenging and difficult times, so if we want to preserve our world order, based on rules and international law, we have to unite our efforts on protecting it, he added. 'Our discussions reflected mutual interest in deeper understanding of our positions and concerns, as well as readiness to look at the opportunities to enhance bilateral links, especially in economic cooperation. Being strong in development of business service centers, startup ecosystem, fintech, software development, cyber security, life sciences, engineering and electronics Lithuania can be a very useful partner for Pakistani companies'. He said he was very happy that my country is so well represented here by Mr Masud Khan, our Honorary Consul General in Pakistan. He wished that the next 30 years of cooperation between Lithuania and Pakistan would be successful, productive, based on mutual respect and friendship.





The Electric Vehicles (EVs) & Public Policy of Pakistan



Khalid Mahmood

THE concept of electric vehicles (EVs) has been around for a long time, with early experiments and prototypes dating back to the 19th century. In the early 19th century, inventors like Robert Anderson and Thomas Davenport created some of the earliest electric vehicles. These were usually small-scale models or prototypes. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, electric cars actually enjoyed a period of popularity, particularly among urban dwellers. They were quiet, clean, and easy to operate compared to early internal combustion engine vehicles. Companies like Baker, Detroit Electric, and Columbia produced electric cars during this time. Interest in electric vehicles began to revive in the late 20th century due to concerns about pollution and dependence on fossil fuels. Companies like General Motors and Toyota introduced modern electric cars in the 1990s, such as the GM EV1 and the Toyota RAV4 EV.

The real breakthrough came with the founding of Tesla Motors by Elon Musk, Martin Eberhard, and others in 2003. Tesla's Roadster, introduced in 2008, demonstrated that electric cars could be sleek, high-performance vehicles with significant range. Since then, Tesla has become synonymous with electric cars and has spurred other automakers to invest heavily in electric vehicle technology. The Governments of European, American and Chinese incentives, stricter emissions regulations, and growing environmental awareness have also played significant roles in the rise of electric vehicles. Many countries now offer subsidies or tax incentives to encourage the adoption of EVs, while others have announced plans to ban the sale of new gasoline and diesel cars in the coming years.

In short, the origin of electric vehicles is a story of innovation, competition, and evolving societal priorities, with early experiments paving the way for the modern electric car revolution. The future of electric vehicles (EVs) holds significant promise, with several potential effects on human life such as: Environmental Impact, Energy Independence: Health Benefits: Technological Advancements: Economic Opportunities and Urban Planning and Mobility: In summary, the importance of electric vehicles in modern times cannot be overstated. They represent a sustainable, efficient, and technologically advanced solution to address pressing environmental, energy, and transportation challenges facing society today. By embracing EVs, individuals, businesses, and governments can contribute to a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future for all. Different countries like Norway, China, Germany, United States and Netherlands took

different initiatives to promote Electrical Vehicles in the present time. A few initiatives taken by these government are as under: Exempt from import duties, exempted one-time registration tax, Reduced or waived tolls on many roads and bridges. Granted the privilege of using bus lanes, allowing them to bypass traffic in congested areas. Many public charging stations in Norway offer free electricity, encouraging the use of electric vehicles.

Free or discounted parking in city centers, Credit system for automakers, where they earn credits based on the production and sales of new energy vehicles, Imposed sales quotas for NEVs on automakers. These quotas mandate that a certain percentage of an automaker's total annual vehicle sales must be new energy vehicles, introduced regulations related to the recycling of batteries used in electric vehicles. These regulations aim to address environmental concerns associated with battery disposal and promote sustainable practices in the electric vehicle industry., Chinese authorities have established product certification and safety standards for electric vehicles to ensure their reliability, safety, and compliance with technical specifications, China has extended its tax exemption policy for new energy vehicles (NEVs) until 2027, Reduced or waived vehicle taxes, Some cities government in Germany announced financial incentives, Access to car-pool lanes, and preferential parking for electric vehicles, Partnerships between the government, private sector, and local authorities for EV charging infrastructures, The German government has allocated funds to support the deployment of charging infrastructure. Financial incentives and grants are provided to businesses, municipalities, and organizations to install public charging stations.

The German Government is committed to have 1 million public charging points across the country by 2030. In different European countries, the tax credit ranges from \$2,500 to \$7,500 per vehicle at Federal Level. Some states in Europe provide their own tax credits for electric vehicle purchases, which can be applied in addition to the federal tax credit. The states also offer special license plates for electric vehicles, often providing additional benefits such as free parking or reduced tolls. Educational programs to raise awareness about the benefits of electric vehicles. These programs may include outreach events, workshops, and informational resources for consumers.

Public & private collaborations to install public charging stations in strategic locations such as urban areas, shopping centers, parking lots, and along highways.

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced rates of Auto: 2.5%, Trucks: 25%, Motorcycles: 2.4% including exempt

from the BPM (import tax) & Registration. The Pakistani government started offering various incentives a few years ago in an effort to encourage the use of electric vehicles in the country. Without a doubt, these actions will boost the nation's economy and generate new employment opportunities. Nevertheless, Pakistan's government hasn't taken the necessary action to encourage more electric vehicles, unlike those in Europe and East Asia. Promoting electrical vehicles in the nation is hampered greatly by the established automakers in the nation. In the upcoming budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, the government ought to take into account and declare the following practical measures to encourage electrical vehicles. To import CBUs units: Sale tax (18%), Income tax (12%), additional custom duty (7%) be exempted for at least 2 years. Such measures will help to decrease import of gasoline products and save the foreign currency. Engineering Development Board - Provincial Assembling / OEM-SKD/CKD certificate be issued under a specific time framework. No lead acid batteries are allowed to be used in any category of EVs. (Lithium iron phosphate battery (LiFePO4) be used).

The vendors must give specific guaranty of batteries. (for 2 & 3 Wheelers minimum 2 years and for 4 Wheelers Upto 5 Years or 120,000KM) Special incentives and grants are given for R&D to different universities/ organizations to develop new EVs projects. Grants are provided to different educational institutions to train human resources development for local and international markets including Scholarship to deserving students. Only certified human resource should allow to work with industry. The Higher Education Commission should prepare a curriculum for BS & MS level including the needs of future technology, vehicle design and soft skills. EV/ Battery & Motor Quality Standards: According to Pakistani culture and requirement quality & safety standards be adopted. Standards required for the construction and operation of charging stations, as well as technical specifications for charging connectors. Special Financial loans policy is required from States Bank, incentives from city governments for charging stations network. All new filling stations must have EV charging facilities. All present oil marketing companies are directed to provide the EV charging facilities on priority basis (PSO, Shell, Total, etc.) NEPRA should announce a special discounted rate for EV charging companies. Special Green plates are provided to all EVs to promote the EVs industry.

*- The writer is the CEO, Pak-China Huazi Green Energy (Private) Limited
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ISLAMABAD: CEO Murree Brewery MNA Isphanyar Bhandara presenting a book to Editor Daily Islamabad POST Ansar Mahmood Bhatti . Ambassador of Morocco Mohamed Karmoune, Bastien Blanc CEO of Hashoo Group Hospitality and Maj. Sabih also in the picture. – DNA

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World Bicycle Day celebrations Sustainable transportation Choices need of the hour

Serena Hotels together with Turkmen embassy Mark World Bicycle Day with Healthy Initiative

D.N.A

ISLAMABAD: In celebration of World Bicycle Day, the Turkmenistan Embassy and Serena Hotels organized a cycling event to promote a healthy, eco-friendly lifestyle under the Sports Diplomacy initiative. The event highlighted the commitment to encourage an active lifestyle and environmental sustainability. Participants gathered at D-Chowk, where they were greeted with a lively atmosphere filled with excitement and solidarity. Along the way, participants experienced the scenic beauty of Islamabad while engaging in a healthy activity. The event was attended by the diplomatic community, corporate and media personnel and Serena Hotel's associates. Mr. Ahmed Naseem Warraich, Additional

Foreign Secretary (Afg. & West Asia) was the chief guest of the event, who highlighted the significance of cycling in fostering a healthy lifestyle, decreasing reliance on fossil fuels, and reducing noise pollution by minimizing road traffic. He also advised for a transition to sustainable transportation choices and urged for the hosting of additional events to champion cycling as a viable and efficient means of travel. H.E. Mr. Atadjan Movlamovin, the Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, stating, "we are delighted to celebrate World Bicycle Day with this wonderful event. Cycling is not only a fantastic way to stay fit, but it also contributes to a cleaner and greener environment. We hope this event inspires more people to take up cycling

and make it a part of their daily lives". Serena Hotels, beyond its environmental efforts, is deeply committed to supporting sports initiatives that contribute to community well-being and development. By sponsoring and hosting sports events, Serena Hotels provides a platform for athletes to showcase their talent and promotes a culture of health and fitness among guests and employees alike. One such initiative is the World Bicycle Day, an annual event that brings together cycling enthusiasts to explore scenic routes while promoting eco-tourism and adventure sports. By organizing events like these, Serena Hotels not only promotes a love for sports but also encourages responsible tourism practices that benefit local economies and ecosystems.



Chairman Monal Group Luqman Ali Afzal fetes Pakistan National Hockey Team at Monal Tree House





– Chairman Monal Group Luqman Ali Afzal fetes Pakistan National Hockey Team at Monal Tree House –



Creative Minds organization holds cricket tournament

Sadaf Shan, the President of the Creative Minds Organization said that they were deeply honored to have esteemed guests who joined them for this special event

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Creative Minds Organization is thrilled to announce the resounding success of its interfaith harmony Youth Cricket tournament, held on June 1st and 2nd! This two-day event brought together young cricket enthusiasts from diverse backgrounds, fostering a spirit of unity, friendship, and healthy competition.

The tournament was a spectacle to behold, with talented young players showcasing their skills and teamwork. The atmosphere was electric, with cheering crowds and inspirational displays of sportsmanship. Sadaf Shan, the President of the Creative Minds Organization said that they were deeply honored to have esteemed guests who joined them for this special event, sharing their wisdom and enthusiasm with

the players and spectators alike. Their presence added a special dimension to the tournament, inspiring the youth to embrace the values of harmony, respect, and fair play. She extended heartfelt gratitude to honorable guests, players, officials, and volunteers for making this tournament an unforgettable experience. Together, we celebrated the power of sports to unite and uplift our communities, she added.



French Gastronomy at Monal

Exquisite French delicacies provide a real feast to guests

In the serene ambiance of Monal's Tree House, amidst delectable French delicacies and warm camaraderie, bonds were forged and memories created, fostering enduring ties between nations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Luqman Ali Afzal, the CEO and Founder of the Monal Group, graciously hosted a sumptuous dinner to inaugurate a three-day celebration of French cuisine at the enchanting Monal's Tree House. This culinary extravaganza, held in collaboration with the esteemed French Embassy, was a testament to the rich cultural ex-

change between Pakistan and France. The distinguished presence of His Excellency, French Ambassador Nicolas Galey, alongside his esteemed family, lent an air of elegance to the evening. Their attendance was complemented by the esteemed presence of Ambassadors from Poland, Japan, Palestine, Italy, the European Union, and Jordan, symbolizing the unity and camaraderie among nations.

Adding to the diplomatic charm of the occasion, the Chief of Protocol from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs graced the event with his presence, further highlighting the significance of this cultural rendezvous.

In the serene ambiance of Monal's Tree House, amidst delectable French delicacies and warm camaraderie, bonds were forged and memories created, fostering enduring ties between nations.





World Day of Portuguese Language

DNA

ISLAMABAD: At initiative of the Embassy of Brazil and of the Embassy of Portugal, together with the support of Instituto Guimaraes Rosa and Instituto

Camoes, Prof. Guiomar de Grammont; accompanied by Olyntho Vieira, Ambassador of Brazil, and Frederico Silva, Ambassador of Portugal participated in cultural events. To cap off the program, the Ambassadors of Portugal and Brazil graciously hosted a reception at the es-

teemed residence of the Brazilian Ambassador. In a harmonious gathering, both ambassadors underscored the profound importance of the event, affirming their commitment to perpetuate these festivities with even greater splendor in the days ahead.







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Donald Trump's Indictment: What Next?



Qamar Bashir

FORMER President Donald Trump has been charged with 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in the first degree. These charges stem from an investigation into hush-money payments made to adult-film actress Stormy Daniels to cover up an alleged affair before the 2016 election. The charges, brought by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, allege that Trump, along with others, orchestrated a scheme to influence the election by suppressing negative information about him, thus violating election laws. Under New York state law, falsifying business records with the intent to defraud or conceal another crime is a felony. Trump has pleaded not guilty to all charges and has called them politically motivated.

The guilty verdict against Donald Trump has significant implications for his potential presidential run in the upcoming elections. Legally, a felony conviction does not automatically disqualify a candidate from running for or being elected as president, as the U.S. Constitution does not list a criminal conviction as a disqualifying factor. Therefore, despite the charges and any subsequent convictions, Trump can still contest the elections. However, the charges and ongoing legal battles may influence voter perceptions, divert campaign resources, and attract intense public and media scrutiny, potentially impacting his campaign's effectiveness.

There have been numerous claims that the verdict against Donald Trump is biased, with critics arguing that the jury was selected to include individuals predisposed against him. Concerns have been raised about the impartiality of the jurors, suggesting that the selection process was manipulated to ensure an anti-Trump outcome. Additionally, Trump's supporters have accused the presiding judge, Juan Merchan, of bias. They claim that his rulings were unfairly prejudicial against Trump, indicating a judicial partiality. Judge Merchan, known for his tough but fair approach, has faced scrutiny in this high-profile case where the stakes are particularly high. Allegations of judicial bias are common in politically charged cases, but there has been no substantiated evidence provided to support these claims against Judge Merchan specifically.

The most prominent claim is that the Biden administration is using the legal system to

undermine Trump's credibility ahead of the 2024 election. Critics argue that the timing and nature of the charges are politically motivated, suggesting a coordinated effort to discredit Trump and prevent him from running for office again. Prominent Trump supporters, including his legal team and political allies like Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene and Senator Lindsey Graham, have publicly denounced the charges as part of a broader campaign to silence Trump. While the investigation was initiated by the Manhattan District Attorney's office, which operates independently of the federal government, the perception of political motivation remains strong among Trump's supporters.

The guilty verdict against Donald Trump carries significant implications for his future. Legally, it could result in penalties such as fines, probation, or imprisonment if the conviction is upheld. Politically, it may harm his reputation and influence, complicating any potential 2024 presidential run. Personally, the ongoing legal battles and public scrutiny will take a considerable financial and emotional toll.

Trump has several forums available for appealing the verdict. Initially, his legal team can file post-trial motions in the trial court that delivered the verdict, requesting a new trial or to set aside the verdict based on procedural errors or new evidence. If these motions are unsuccessful, he can appeal to the intermediate appellate court, which in New York is the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. If the Appellate Division upholds the conviction, Trump can further appeal to the New York Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, which has the discretionary power to select cases of significant legal or public interest. In certain circumstances, if there are claims of constitutional violations or issues of federal law, Trump could take his case to federal courts, potentially leading to the U.S. Supreme Court, although this requires substantial legal grounds.

The success of Trump's appeals will depend on several factors, including the strength of his legal arguments. Demonstrating significant legal errors during the trial or presenting new evidence that materially impacts the verdict could improve his chances. Historically, appeals have seen varying degrees of success based on these grounds. For example, in **United States v.*

*Skilling** (2010), the U.S. Supreme Court narrowed the scope of the honest services fraud statute, leading to a resentencing for former Enron CEO Jeffrey Skilling.

While appellate courts are generally deferential to the trial court's findings of fact, they thoroughly review alleged legal errors. High-profile cases attract significant public and media attention, which can indirectly influence the legal environment. Trump's case will likely follow this pattern, impacting the procedural aspects of the appeal process. Overall, Trump's path forward involves leveraging the appellate mechanisms, with success hinging on the robustness of his legal arguments and the interpretations of the appellate courts.

If Trump is elected president and later declared guilty by the final federal court, several complex constitutional questions would arise. One major issue would be presidential immunity. The U.S. Department of Justice has maintained that a sitting president cannot be indicted or prosecuted, based on concerns about the separation of powers and the executive branch's functionality. This stance was notably referenced during the investigations into Presidents Nixon and Clinton. However, this opinion is not legally binding and could be challenged. Another potential consequence of a final guilty verdict could be impeachment. If Trump were convicted of serious crimes, Congress could pursue impeachment and removal from office, which is the constitutional mechanism for addressing presidential misconduct. The process and outcome would depend on the political climate and the composition of Congress at the time. Historical precedents, such as the impeachments of Nixon (who resigned before he could be impeached) and Clinton, provide some context but no direct parallels, as no president has been convicted of a crime while in office.

Ultimately, any legal battles over presidential immunity or the ability to prosecute a sitting president could reach the U.S. Supreme Court, which would have the final say on these unprecedented issues. While Trump can legally run for and serve as president despite his legal troubles, the implications of a final guilty verdict would introduce significant constitutional complexities and potential political turmoil.

Film shows to promote ASEAN-Pak cultural ties

Vietnam enrich culture gives a message of peace, love to world: Ambassador of Vietnam



D. N. A

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, Nguyen Tien Phong has said that Vietnam is enriched in culture and literature and its culture and art give the message of peace and love to the rest of the world. The Ambassador said that film, art and literature connect hearts and minds in the world communities and teach humanity and tolerance and also bring people's hearts closer to each other. The Vietnamese envoy said this while addressing the Vietnamese art film screening organized by the Embassy of Vietnam in Islamabad. Ambassadors of different countries, including the, Chairperson ASEAN Committee Islamabad, Ambassador of Philippines, Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, Ambassador of Belgium, Charles DELOGNE, Ambassador of Turkiye Mehmet Paccaci, Ambassador of Morocco Mohamed Karmoune, Ambassador of Japan, High Commissioner of Malaysia Azhar Mazlan, Charge d Affairs of Myanmar and Charge d'Affaires Indonesia in Islamabad, Rahmat Hindiarta and families of diplomats, writers and journalists from different walks of life participated and enjoyed the movie. The Ambassador of Vietnam said that those great liter-

ary and academic personalities came to the fore in Vietnam and filmmakers played an important role in revealing the real identity of Vietnam and brought the local culture to the international level. He said that today's event is part of the vision in which ASEAN countries have been given an opportunity to promote their culture. The ambassador said that the film "Yellow flowers and green grass" is an art film that highlights the lifestyle of the people of Vietnam and their cultural colors. He said that Pakistan and Vietnam are also working to promote mutual culture and the Embassy of Vietnam is playing its full role in this regard. It is pertinent to mention that the Vietnamese art Movie "Yellow Flowers on the Green Grass" is a 2015 Vietnamese drama, which was directed by Victor Vu. It is adapted from the novel of the same name by 'Nguyen Nhat Anh'. The film stars Thinh Vinh and Trong Khang. The film is about the childhood of the brothers Thieu (Thinh Vinh) and Tuong (Trong Khang) in a poor rural village in central Vietnam in the 1980s. They share and do everything together. However, when their friend next door, Man (Thanh My), comes to stay with them and a big flood hits their village, there is a big misunderstanding that leads to Tuong's back injury. The film has an open ending with the scene of Thieu and Tuong studying in their house.



Africa Day celebrations in Islamabad





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Impressions of Pakistan exhibition by Spanish artist

Gonzalo Ruiz Navarro, a distinguished alumnus of the University of Valencia with further training from renowned institutions like the Taller del Prado in Madrid, brought with him a wealth of artistic expertise



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ISLAMABAD - The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), in collaboration with The Embassy of Spain in Islamabad, proudly presented the inauguration of a captivating art exhibition by acclaimed Spanish artist Gonzalo Ruiz Navarro. Titled "Impressions of Pakistan," the exhibition offered a mesmerizing collection of modern impressionist works inspired by Navarro's profound experiences in Pakistan. The inauguration ceremony, graced by His Excellency Jose A. de Ory, Ambassador of Spain in Islamabad, alongside M. Ayoub Jamali, Director General PNCA, and esteemed guests, was held at PNCA Gallery no. 6. Attendees were treated to a remarkable showcase of 52 oil paintings, each capturing the rich landscapes and vibrant inhabitants of Pakistan. Reflecting on the occasion, Ambassador de Ory commented, "It is truly a privilege to witness the remarkable talent of Gonzalo Ruiz Navarro and the deep connection he has formed with Pakistan through his art. His ability to capture the essence of this beautiful country is commendable and serves as a testament to the strong cultural ties between Spain and Pakistan."

Gonzalo Ruiz Navarro, a distinguished alumnus of the University of

Valencia with further training from renowned institutions like the Taller del Prado in Madrid, brought with him a wealth of artistic expertise. Mentored by esteemed artists such as Carlos Moreu Spa and Guillermo Muñoz Vera, Navarro's career spanned over 50 exhibitions, including eight solo showcases across Spain and the United States. His outstanding contributions to the art world had earned him several prestigious awards. Navarro's deep connection with Pakistan was evident in his latest exhibition, a culmination of his immersive study of the country and its people from 2022 to 2024. Through his masterful brushstrokes, he encapsulated the essence of Pakistan's diverse landscapes and cultural tapestry. The "Impressions of Pakistan" exhibition was open to the public from May 22 to May 27 at Gallery 6 of PNCA, Islamabad. Additionally, on May 23 from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm, Gonzalo Ruiz Navarro conducted a captivating talk and painting demonstration at the PNCA Lecture Hall. Furthermore, in a heartfelt gesture, 50% of the sales proceeds were directed to the IFWA Charity Fund, dedicated to supporting local NGOs focused on the empowerment of women and children. The event concluded with a sense of admiration and appreciation for Navarro's remarkable talent and his dedication to portraying the beauty of Pakistan through his art.



Ambassador Mazlan highlights Malaysia-Pakistan relations

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Dato' Mohamad Azhar Mazlan, High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan delivered a lecture at Quaid-e-Azam University, one of the premier universities in Pakistan. Upon arrival, Amb. Dato' Azhar and his delegation were warmly received by Professor Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, lecturers, and staff. During the insightful session, Amb. Dato' Azhar highlighted the robust Malaysia-Pakistan bilateral relations, focusing on trade and economic cooperation, tourism, and the vital people-to-people connections that bind the two nations. He elaborated on how these elements have strengthened the strategic partnership, fostering mutual growth and understanding. The session was attended by academicians, staff, and about 120 students from the international relations discipline. The presentation also covered various aspects, focusing on Malaysia's foreign poli-

cies, emphasising its role within ASEAN, and Malaysia's commitment to regional stability and development, among others. Additionally, Amb. Dato' Azhar highlighted the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program (MTCP), which plays a crucial role in capacity building and development cooperation between Malaysia and Pakistan. A significant portion of the lecture was dedicated to promoting educational opportunities in Malaysia for Pakistani students. Amb. Dato' Azhar stressed that Malaysia offers a conducive environment for students, with state-of-the-art facilities and globally recognised education standards, all within a Muslim-friendly setting. He proudly noted that, as of 2024, nearly 5,000 Pakistani students are pursuing their studies in various higher education institutions across Malaysia. His Excellency's lecture not only provided valuable insights into the dynamic relations between Malaysia and Pakistan but also inspired students to consider Malaysia as a destination for higher education. The event concluded with a lively Question-and-

Answer session, where students had the opportunity to engage directly with the High Commissioner, with questions on Palestine-Israel war, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Jammu & Kashmir and neutrality between superpowers were posed by the students, further enriching their understanding of the topics discussed. Following the lecture, attendees had an opportunity to indulge in the rich flavours of Malaysian cuisine as they were served with Nasi Lemak & Ayam Goreng (coconut rice and fried chicken), a popular Malaysian delicacy, symbolising the culture exchange and friendship between Malaysia and Pakistan. This initiative was part of a cultural promotion aimed at introducing the students to the rich and diverse culinary heritage of Malaysia. The session is part of the ongoing efforts by the High Commission of Malaysia in Islamabad to strengthen bilateral ties through educational and cultural exchanges within institutions of higher learning in Pakistan, fostering people-to-people contact between Malaysia and Pakistan.



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New documentary 'When the Floods Come' premieres on World Environment Day

Ministry of Climate Change, Aga Khan Foundation and United Nations mark World Environment Day

Mahnoor Ansar

ISLAMABAD: Today the United Nations, the Aga Khan Foundation and the Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Co-ordination celebrated World Environment Day in Islamabad with an event raising awareness on how climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are affecting Pakistan, and how people are taking action. "Pakistan is among the countries most adversely impacted by climate change, but it is leading the way with its climate diplomacy," said Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change. "We are educating our youth on this crucial subject. We will leave no stone unturned to slow environmental degradation down and increase our ability to deal with the fallout of global warming and its impacts on clean water, health, agriculture, food systems, and energy."

During the ceremony, Pakistan's 'Living Indus' initiative officially received the World Restoration Flagship award which the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) announced in March; UNEP supports Pakistan's National Adaptation Plan for building resilience to climate change. Living Indus is a Government-led initiative, which the UN supports, to restore the ecological health of the Indus River Basin. Moreover, the event

paid tribute to 30 'Climate Heroes' – women and men who take action against the climate crisis across the country.

"Just last week, temperatures in Pakistan crossed 52 degree Celsius. We cannot turn back time, but we can take collective action to adapt to this new age of global warming," said Mr. Mohamed Yahya, the UN Resident Coordinator in Pakistan. "Across the country, communities are already trying to cope with the impact of climate change; they combat pollution, deforestation, rapid glacial melt, floods, droughts and heatwaves. By supporting 'Living Indus' and a range of innovative programmes, UN agencies aim to help them protect and restore nature, biodiversity, water sources, as well as their lives and livelihoods."

The event marked the premiere of 'When the floods come', a new documentary by Nyal Mueenuddin. This young Pakistani filmmaker went on a 3000km odyssey down the Indus River to capture the most intimate stories of how people's lives are inextricably bound to climate change. The film will be screened again during a public event at PNCA this Friday.

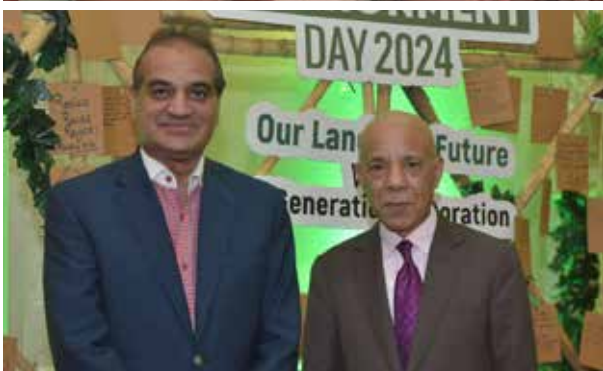
"Communities have been experiencing firsthand the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. It is already transforming landscapes, habitats, livelihoods,

and local aspirations," said Mr. Akhtar Iqbal, CEO, Aga Khan Foundation. "That said, we have witnessed how our collective actions can make a difference. We, at the Aga Khan Foundation and agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network, have been fully committed to doing our part for over 55 years and we will continue to support Pakistan to cope with the challenges ahead. We want to ensure that communities are empowered to be more resilient, have access to clean energy, adopt more sustainable natural resources management practices and contribute to large reforestation efforts. We also want to place women and young people at the centre of climate leadership and invest in their future through boosting green businesses and jobs."

In Pakistan and all over the world, ecosystems are threatened. From forests and drylands to farmlands and lakes, natural spaces on which humanity's existence depends are reaching a tipping point. This year, World Environment Day focuses on land restoration, halting desertification and building drought resilience under the slogan "Our land. Our future. We are #GenerationRestoration."

Led by the UNEP, and held annually since 1973, World Environment Day has grown to be the largest global platform for environmental outreach. It is celebrated by millions of people across the world.





Ambassador Khazar Farhadov says Direct air links have further brought peoples of Pak, Azerbaijan closer

Says Republic of Azerbaijan was chosen to next host COP29 in December 2023 with unanimous support from all countries, and it showcases the recognition of Azerbaijan's leadership and efforts in addressing climate change at the national, regional, and global scales'

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov has said relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan continue to grow on an upward trajectory in all fields. Direct flights between Azerbaijan and Pakistan (from Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore) which have been operated since 2022 by PIA, and 2023 by AZAL tremendously contribute to these relations. More than 50,000 Pakistani tourists visited Azerbaijan in 2023. I have to mention that Pakistan is one of the countries that is included in the online ASAN visa system of Azerbaijan.

He expressed these views on the occasion of 106th anniversary of our independence. The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was established on May 28, 1918, and that was the first democratic republic in the Muslim East. Prime Minister Coordinate on Climate Change Romina Khurshid was the chief guest. A large number of diplomats, members of the civil society and business fraternity attended the reception. The Ambassador said the citizens of Pakistan can easily obtain a visa online within 3 hours and visit Azerbaijan. This direct connectivity brings people from all circles of the two countries closer. In December 2022,

the Government of Azerbaijan, taking into account the fraternal relations, exempted rice from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan with the same origin from import customs duty. It is not a coincidence that the trade turnover between the two brotherly countries reached up to 100 million dollars.

'Within a remarkably brief span, Azerbaijan established its first parliament and government, defined its borders, instituted state attributes, and carried out crucial state-building measures. Important steps were taken in the field of state building, recognition of the Republic as a subject of international relations, and protection



of its national interests', he added. Ambassador Khazar said, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, though it had an existence of only 23 months, played a pivotal role in the formation of democratic traditions and the history of national statehood, and laid a solid foundation for the future independence of the Republic by strengthening the sentiments of freedom and independence.

'The legal successor of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the independent Republic of Azerbaijan restored its independence in 1991 and managed to preserve its sovereignty thanks to the Great leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev who has made an immense contribution to the people and the state of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has been implementing the policy of Heydar Aliyev, continuing and enriching it under the leadership of H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan'.

In 2020, under the leadership of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces, President Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan liberated its internationally recognized territories from the almost 30-years occupation by Armenia, implementing UN Security Council 4 resolutions of 1993.

In this month, on May 1-3, 2024, the 6th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue themed "Dialogue for Peace and Global Security: Cooperation and Interconnectivity" was held at the Baku Convention Center, he added. 'It should be noted that the Republic of Azerbaijan was chosen to next host COP29 in December 2023 with unanimous support from all countries, and it showcases the recognition of Azerbaijan`s leadership and efforts in addressing climate change at the national, regional, and global scales'. Ambassador said, Pakistan was one of the first countries that recognized the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan on December 12, 1991. The diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on June 9, 1992, he concluded.



– Direct air links have further brought peoples of Pak, Azerbaijan closer–



Movie “Kazakh Khanate – Golden throne” screened

Ambassador of Kazakhstan in his remarks thanked the information minister for gracing the occasion. The ambassador hoped cultural linkages between Kazakhstan and Pakistan shall further be strengthened in the days to come

D. N. A

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) and the Embassy of Kazakhstan organized screening of a movie titled “Kazakh Khanate –Golden throne” here at PNCA, auditorium on Friday. Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Minister for National Heritage & Culture Atta ullah Tarar and Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan H.E Yerzhan Kistafin along with Director General PNCA Muhammad Ayoub Jamali and large number of people attended the movie screening. The movie “Kazakh Khanate - The Golden Throne,” an exciting

and highly anticipated historical movie portraying the first Kazakh Khans. Kazakh Khanate is referred to as the “Kazakh Game Of Thrones” by BBC, the movie unfolds in the XV century, showcasing key events in the formation of Kazakh statehood under the leadership of Khans Zhanibek and Kerey. Ambassador of Kazakhstan in his remarks thanked the information minister for gracing the occasion. The ambassador hoped cultural linkages between Kazakhstan and Pakistan shall further be strengthened in the days to come. He announced that the Pakistani movies shall be screened in Kazakhstan with Kazakh or Russian language subtitles.



Envoy pledges to give new impetus to Pak-Italy relations

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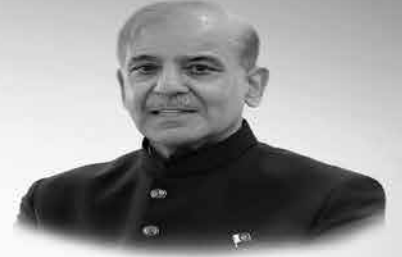
ISLAMABAD, The Italian Ambassador to Pakistan Marilina Armellini in a heartfelt address on Italy's 78th National Day acknowledging Pakistan's strategic importance, pledged to enhance bilateral cooperation across various sectors during his tenure. In an event late at night on Sunday held in connection with the celebrations of Italian Republic Day, the envoy extended her gratitude to the Pakistani people for their warm welcome, viewing it as a testament to the enduring friendship between the two nations. Federal Minister for Housing Riaz Hussain Pirzada was the chief guest while Senator Sherry Rehman was invited as a special guest. Italy and Pakistan share a longstanding bond that transcends geographical boundaries. The Ambassador reflected on the depth and diversity of their bilateral relations, a revelation that has unfolded since his appointment. Representing Italy in Pakistan was not just an honor but also a privilege, as she navigated the complexities of this strategic partnership in a region pivotal to global political, economic, and demographic

dynamics, Italian Ambassador remarked. The Pakistani diaspora in Italy served as a testament to the strong ties between the two nations. Their presence, marked by entrepreneurs, researchers, students, and workers, enriches both societies and fosters a sense of mutual understanding and appreciation' she acknowledged. The significant remittances they send back home, Marilina said, underscored the strength of the bond between Italy and Pakistan. Trade emerges as a cornerstone of bilateral cooperation, with Italy's recent establishment of the Italian Trade Agency Office in Islamabad signaling a renewed commitment to strengthening commercial ties. The Ambassador recognized Pakistan's immense potential, particularly in sectors like agriculture and energy generation, where Italian expertise can play a transformative role. In the realm of agriculture, Italy's innovative technologies offer solutions to Pakistan's climate resilience and modernization challenges. Initiatives like the Programme for Poverty Reduction through Rural Development demonstrate Italy's commitment

to supporting Pakistan's socioeconomic progress and fostering an emerging agribusiness sector. Beyond economic cooperation, cultural exchange forms the bedrock of Italy-Pakistan relations, dating back to the 19th century' she remarked. Renowned scholars like Professor Giuseppe Tucci have unearthed the shared heritage of the Gandhara region, laying the foundation for ongoing archaeological missions supported by the Italian government. As the Italian Ambassador concluded her address, she reaffirmed Italy's commitment to strengthening the bonds between Italy and Pakistan. With a shared vision for a brighter future, both nations embark on a journey of collaboration and friendship, guided by mutual respect and a desire for prosperity. The Embassy of Italy in Islamabad and the Consulate in Karachi stand as beacons of this commitment, renewing their dedication to fostering closer ties between the two countries and peoples. As the world continues to evolve, the enduring partnership between Italy and Pakistan serves as a testament to the transformative power of cooperation and friendship.







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