

# CENTRELINE

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**Independence Day of Azerbaijan celebrated**

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**Turkish cuisines week celebrated in the Capital**

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**Alisher Tuktaev**

**Pakistan, Uzbekistan deepen political and economic bonds**



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# Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Azerbaijan visit



**P** RIME Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to Azerbaijan marks a significant step forward in Pakistan's regional diplomacy and economic outreach. The visit, punctuated by warm diplomatic gestures, high-level meetings, and promising economic announcements, is a strong indication that Pakistan is looking eastward for strategic alliances and economic partnerships. Azerbaijan, a country that has consistently stood by Pakistan on key international issues, especially Kashmir, has once again shown its deep-rooted fraternal ties with Islamabad. During his visit, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked the Azerbaijani leadership for their unwavering support, particularly during Pakistan's tense standoff with India in recent weeks. In the diplomatic wilderness that followed the revocation of Article 370 by India in 2019, Azerbaijan was among the very few countries – notably alongside Türkiye – that openly supported Pakistan's principled stance on Kashmir. This support was not only a testament to the strength of bilateral relations but also underscored a shared commitment to justice, sovereignty, and the rights of oppressed peoples. Beyond political solidarity, the most tangible outcome of the visit was Azerbaijan's announcement to invest \$2 billion in Pakistan across various sectors. This is a landmark development and a reflection of Azerbaijan's confidence in Pakistan's economic potential. As Pakistan grapples with economic challenges, including dwindling foreign direct investment, a burgeoning trade deficit, and a need for energy diversification, such investment commitments are timely and deeply encouraging.

The Prime Minister's participation in the trilateral forum – alongside Türkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan – further highlights the evolving regional dynamics. The Pakistan-Türkiye-Azerbaijan triangle is fast becoming a bloc of strategic cooperation rooted in shared history, cultural affinity, and mutual economic interests. This trilateral engagement offers a platform to jointly address issues of regional connectivity, trade, security, and diplomacy in a multipolar world where regional blocs are gaining importance. Pakistan must now ensure that this goodwill is reciprocated with action. Facilitating Azerbaijani and Turkish investors, offering them streamlined business processes, and ensuring a secure and welcoming environment is critical. Bureaucratic red tape, inconsistent policies, and a lack of investor confidence have long plagued foreign investment in Pakistan.

It is imperative that special economic zones and investment protection frameworks be strengthened to honor the trust our friends have shown. Moreover, Pakistan can benefit by learning from Azerbaijan's post-war reconstruction and energy management experience. Cooperation in sectors like renewable energy, information technology, infrastructure, and logistics can bring real economic dividends. Since there is a strong will and desire on both sides to diversify and solidify bilateral relations, therefore it is imperative that both governments take proactive measures to ensure the continuity and expansion of direct air connectivity. This includes facilitating airline partnerships, offering operational incentives, ensuring consistent passenger traffic through joint tourism promotions, and removing bureaucratic hurdles that previously hindered similar initiatives with other Central Asian nations such as Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. Sustained air links will not only boost tourism but also significantly enhance trade, investment, educational exchanges, and cultural understanding between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. In conclusion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Azerbaijan is a diplomatic success and an opportunity to turn long-standing friendship into robust economic and strategic collaboration. The onus is now on Islamabad to capitalize on this momentum and create lasting partnerships that benefit the people of all three brotherly nations – Pakistan, Azerbaijan, and Türkiye.

**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.

**Alisher Tuktaev**

# Stronger Together: Pakistan and Uzbekistan deepen political and economic bonds

Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan H.E Alisher Tuktaev gave an exclusive interview to daily Islamabad POST, Centreline magazine and DNA News Agency. Here are excerpts from his interview

## Exclusive

**Ansar Mahmood Bhatti**

**1: How do you assess the current state of Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations following Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit? What key areas have seen the most significant progress?**

The visit of the Honourable Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, to the Republic of Uzbekistan marked an important mile-

stone in the development of bilateral relations. We highly value this visit as a demonstration of the political will of both sides to deepen the strategic partnership.

Today, Uzbekistan-Pakistan relations are on an upward trajectory, showing steady progress across all key areas – from political dialogue to economic cooperation and humanitarian ties. Particularly noteworthy is the significant progress in the fields of trade and transport. During the visit, an agreement was reached to increase the volume of bilateral trade to \$2 billion in the

coming years. Active work is underway to accelerate the implementation of a major regional connectivity infrastructure project – Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway – which is expected not only to strengthen logistical integration, but also to create new opportunities for economic growth across the region.

Moreover, both sides expressed mutual interest in expanding cultural and humanitarian cooperation, academic exchanges, as well as collaboration in agriculture, tourism, and investment. This reflects a com-







prehensive approach to the development of our relationship – one that embraces not only economics and politics, but also brings our peoples closer together. I am confident that, based on the agreements reached, we will be able to elevate Uzbekistan-Pakistan relations to a qualitatively new level.

**2: During the visit, both countries agreed to expand trade volume to \$2 billion. What specific measures are being planned to achieve this target, and which sectors are expected to contribute the most?**

Indeed, during the visit of the Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan to Uzbekistan, both sides reaffirmed their determination to significantly increase the volume of bilateral trade – up to \$2 billion in the foreseeable future. This is an ambitious yet entirely realistic goal, considering the vast potential of our economies and the growing interest of business communities in deepening cooperation. To achieve this target, a number of practical steps are being taken. First and foremost, the work of the Uzbekistan-Pakistan Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation is being intensified, and conditions are being created to strengthen interaction between chambers of commerce and industry, as well as the business circles of both countries. Special attention is being paid to eliminating administrative and logistical barriers, expanding the list of goods under the Preferential Trade Agreement, optimizing customs procedures, and enhancing the capacity of transport corridors.

Among the key sectors expected to contribute the most to reaching this trade target are textiles and light industry, pharmaceuticals, agriculture and agro-processing, construction materials, chemical products, as well as IT and communication technolo-

gies and related services.

Furthermore, cooperation is expanding in the fields of energy, including renewable energy, mechanical engineering, and the mining sector. We also plan to increase the frequency of business delegations, organize regular business forums, exhibitions, and trade missions, including in B2B formats, to promote export-import operations. I am confident that, with sustained political support at the highest level and the continued interest of business communities on both sides, our trade and economic agenda will be fully realized, giving a strong impetus to the sustainable development of the entire region.

**3: The acceleration of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway project was a notable outcome of the visit. Could you provide insights into the current status of this project and its anticipated impact on regional connectivity?**

Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway project is a strategic initiative with the potential to fundamentally reshape the transport and logistics landscape of the region. The project aims to establish the shortest and most economically efficient route connecting Central Asia with Pakistan's seaports on the Arabian Sea.

As of today, the project is in the stage of active preparation and technical planning. In 2023, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan signed a "Roadmap" for the implementation of the project, which outlines the phases of design, financing, and construction. Work is underway on the feasibility study, route planning, and assessment of investment sources. Close coordination is also being carried out with international financial institutions and potential partners under a concession model.

The total length of the railway is expected

to be around 760 kilometers, linking Uzbekistan with Pakistan through the territory of Afghanistan. The implementation of this project will significantly reduce both the time and cost of cargo delivery between South and Central Asia. For example, the route from Tashkent to the Pakistani ports of Karachi and Gwadar could be shortened from 30-35 days to just 10-12 days. The railway is projected to handle up to 20 million tons of cargo per year, with transportation costs expected to decrease by 30-35%.

This project holds not only economic but also strategic importance. It will open up new opportunities for trade, enhance the transit potential of the participating countries, create thousands of jobs, and contribute to the stability and economic recovery of Afghanistan. Uzbekistan views this project as a symbol of regional connectivity, pragmatic cooperation, and a shared commitment to a prosperous and peaceful future. We count on the active support of the international community and, above all, on further strengthening our partnership with our brotherly nation, Pakistan, to ensure the successful implementation of this initiative.

**4: Beyond economic ties, cultural and educational collaborations are vital. Are there any new initiatives in this regard?**

Undoubtedly, cultural and educational cooperation plays a vital role in strengthening mutual understanding and friendship between our peoples. Uzbekistan and Pakistan share deep historical, spiritual, and civilizational ties rooted in a common Islamic culture and the rich heritage of great figures such as Imam al-Bukhari, Imam al-Tirmidhi, Al-Biruni, Babur and many others. In recent years, we have witnessed an increase in humanitarian engagement. In particular, we are working to expand aca-



demographic exchanges, establish direct partnerships between universities, and develop joint educational programs. A Memorandum of Cooperation is already in effect between several leading universities of Uzbekistan and Pakistan. Negotiations are underway regarding the potential opening of university branches or representative offices on a reciprocal basis. Among the new initiatives are the establishment of cultural centers, the organization of "Cultural Days" of both countries, art exhibitions, film screenings, festivals, and reciprocal tours by theater and music ensembles. Special attention is being given to promoting the study of the Uzbek and Urdu languages, as well as holding youth forums and dialogues between students and young leaders. Notably, joint projects have been launched in the field of Islamic education, along with research in history and archaeology aimed at preserving and promoting our shared heritage. We firmly believe that culture, education, and humanitarian initiatives form a solid foundation for long-term and sustainable partnership between our two countries.

**5: Given the regional security dynamics, how do Uzbekistan and Pakistan plan to enhance cooperation in defense and security to ensure mutual stability and peace?**

Uzbekistan and Pakistan view the maintenance of regional security and stability as one of the top priorities in their bilateral cooperation. Both countries are situated in a geopolitically sensitive region, where challenges such as cross-border terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, and instability in Afghanistan require close coordination and joint efforts. Our nations already have positive experience in defense and security collaboration, including regular exchanges between military and

law enforcement agencies, participation in multilateral forums, and joint consultations on regional threats. Work is ongoing to strengthen the legal framework for defense cooperation and deepen intergovernmental dialogue in this area. Particular focus is placed on information sharing, personnel training, joint exercises and capacity-building, especially in counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and combating the illicit activities of transnational criminal groups.

Uzbekistan, while adhering to a peaceful foreign policy and its principle of non-membership in military-political alliances, consistently advocates for dialogue, political resolution of conflicts, and the building of trust among regional states.

We highly value our cooperation with Pakistan within the frameworks of the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and other regional and international platforms.

I am confident that the expansion of cooperation in the field of security will contribute significantly to the stability not only between our two nations but also across Central and South Asia.

**6: What opportunities exist for Pakistani investors in Uzbekistan, and how is the Uzbek government facilitating foreign investment, particularly from Pakistan?**

Uzbekistan today represents one of the most dynamically developing markets in Central Asia and is open to mutually beneficial investment cooperation. We view Pakistan as an important partner and are actively working to expand the presence of Pakistani businesses in key sectors of our economy. Favorable conditions have been created in Uzbekistan for foreign in-

vestors. A wide range of reforms is being implemented to improve the business and investment climate, including the liberalization of currency policy, tax and customs incentives, guarantees for the protection of investors' rights, and the free movement of capital and profits. A "Single window" system is also in place to streamline the registration and support of investment projects. Sectors of particular interest to Pakistani investors include the textile, food, and leather-wool industries, pharmaceuticals, agro-processing, construction, logistics, IT, and tourism. Uzbekistan offers extensive opportunities for the creation of joint ventures, industrial zones, and investment projects within free economic zones such as "Navoi", "Angren", "Jizzakh" and others. Several joint projects are already underway between our two countries in areas such as pharmaceutical production, textiles, packaging materials, and agribusiness. In addition, we actively promote direct business-to-business contacts through trade forums, exhibitions, and delegation visits. Given our geographic proximity, cultural and historical commonalities, and growing political trust, we are confident that the interest of Pakistani businesses in Uzbekistan will continue to grow. The Embassy of Uzbekistan in Islamabad stands ready to provide comprehensive support to potential investors and entrepreneurs from Pakistan at every stage of project implementation.

**7: With both countries possessing rich cultural heritages, what steps are being taken to promote bilateral tourism, and are there any joint ventures planned in this sector?**

Uzbekistan and Pakistan share a unique cultural and historical heritage, which holds great significance not only for our peoples but also for the entire Muslim world. The fact that both countries are the birthplace of outstanding Islamic scholars, architects, and cultural figures provides a strong foundation for the development of spiritual and cultural tourism.

The development of bilateral tourism is one of the priorities on our agenda. In recent years, we have seen growing interest among Pakistani citizens in traveling to Uzbekistan, especially to such holy and historic cities as Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, and Khiva. Similarly, more and more Uzbeks are showing interest in visiting Lahore, Karachi, and other historical cities in Pakistan. To stimulate tourist flows, specific measures are being taken. Starting from September 2024, the visa process for Pakistani citizens was simplified. Regular flights are operated twice a week on "Tashkent-Lahore" route. Negotiations are underway to expand direct air connections between our countries, including the opening of new flights. Efforts are also being made to establish new cooperation agreements between tourism organizations and tour operators.



Joint projects in the field of ziyorat tourism are also planned, including tours to holy sites. We are considering the creation of cultural and tourist routes tracing the footsteps of our great ancestors and Muslim scholars, as well as the implementation of programs for tourist exchanges, participation in exhibitions, festivals, and fairs. The Embassy of Uzbekistan in Pakistan is actively promoting Uzbekistan's tourism potential through information campaigns, presentations, and supporting initiatives to develop direct connections between the relevant institutions of both countries. We are confident that the activation of tourism will not only contribute to economic cooperation but also strengthen the friendship and mutual understanding between our peoples.

**8: Agriculture plays a significant role in both economies. Are there plans for collaborative projects or knowledge sharing in agricultural technologies and practices?**

Agriculture indeed holds a strategic position in the economies of both Uzbekistan and Pakistan, ensuring food security, employment, and export potential.

Given the similar climatic conditions and shared challenges in this sector, our countries possess great potential for mutually beneficial cooperation.

Currently, active work is underway to ex-



hibitions, as well as scientific and educational programs to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between agricultural universities and relevant research institutes of both countries. In the long term, we aim to create a platform for the systematic exchange of best practices, specialist training, and the promotion of sustainable agriculture. Uzbekistan is interested in joint production of agricultural machinery, technologies for product storage and processing, as well as learning from Pa-

kistan, I consider my primary task to be the comprehensive strengthening of the strategic partnership between our fraternal countries. In this context, I would highlight several priority areas that we intend to actively work on in the coming years. First and foremost, it is the deepening of economic cooperation. We aim to expand the volume of bilateral trade, implement large-scale investment and infrastructure projects, and enhance business contacts between the entrepreneurs of the two countries. Special attention is being paid to promoting projects such as the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway and the creation of logistics hubs. The second area is diplomatic and institutional interaction. We plan to maintain regular high-level visits, expand inter-parliamentary and inter-agency links, and strengthen cooperation within international organizations such as the SCO, OIC, and others.

The third area is security cooperation. We continue the dialogue and exchange of experience on issues of regional stability, combating terrorism, extremism, and transnational crime, building trust and coordination at the level of relevant agencies. Equally important is the expansion of humanitarian ties. We plan to enhance cultural exchanges, educational programs, academic cooperation, and tourism initiatives. It is crucial for our peoples, especially the youth, to get to know each other better – this is the foundation for strong friendship and sustainable interaction.

Furthermore, I consider it extremely important to create platforms for direct communication between regions, universities, business communities, and civil societies of our countries. I am confident that with the support of the leadership of Uzbekistan and Pakistan, and thanks to the friendly sentiments between our peoples, we will be able to elevate bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level and further strengthen our strategic partnership.

**“ Uzbekistan and Pakistan view the maintenance of regional security and stability as one of the top priorities in their bilateral cooperation. Both countries are situated in a geopolitically sensitive region, where challenges such as cross-border terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, and instability in Afghanistan require close coordination and joint efforts ”**

pand cooperation in the agricultural sector. We are exploring opportunities to create joint ventures for the processing of agricultural products, the introduction of modern irrigation and greenhouse technologies, seed production, and logistics.

Special attention is being given to the implementation of drip irrigation, the digitalization of agriculture, and the exchange of innovative solutions, in which both Uzbekistan and Pakistan have accumulated significant experience. There is also consideration of organizing joint agro-forums,

kistan's experience in growing certain crops, including rice and vegetables. We are confident that the development of agricultural cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan will bring tangible economic and social benefits, as well as contribute to strengthening food security in the region.

**9: As the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, what initiatives are you prioritizing to further strengthen the bilateral relationship in the coming years?**

As the Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Islamic Republic of Pa-

# Uzbekistan Embassy hosts business forum to expand trade, investment ties

The forum was attended by Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), and Mr. Usman Shaukat, President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) along with prominent Pakistani entrepreneurs from the pharmaceutical, construction materials, leather and wool processing, textile, and food production industries



of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), and Mr. Usman Shaukat, President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) along with prominent Pakistani entrepreneurs from the pharmaceutical, construction materials, leather and wool processing, textile, and food production industries. Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Mr. Alisher Tukhtaev, delivered opening remarks emphasizing the importance of strengthening economic ties and the strategic potential of enhanced business-to-business cooperation between the two countries. He emphasized the deep-rooted historical, cultural, and spiritual ties between the peoples of Uzbekistan and Pakistan. "This is not just a gathering of business leaders and officials – it is a gathering of hearts and hopes," Ambassador remarked, setting a warm and visionary tone for the event.

Uzbek Ambassador highlighted Uzbekistan's ongoing transformation under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, stressing that the country is more open than ever to international cooperation. "We are reforming, transforming, and growing. Most importantly, we are ready for you," he said, inviting Pakistani businesses to explore new opportunities across Uzbekistan's emerging sectors. Ambassador Tukhtaev also emphasized the strategic importance of Pakistan, describing it as a vital partner and a gateway to South Asia. "Uzbekistan sees Pakistan as a true partner. But our current trade turnover of \$400 million does not reflect the potential. Together, we can multiply this figure fivefold," he asserted. He highlighted several key sectors with strong potential for immediate joint ventures between the two countries. These include agriculture and agro-processing, where Uzbekistan's expertise in cotton and horticulture can be effectively complemented by Pakistan's agri-tech and market access. In the textile and leather industries, both countries can benefit from value-added production partnerships, combining Uzbekistan's raw materials with Pakistan's manufacturing know-how. The energy sector also offers opportunities for cooperation, particularly in renewable energy and related services. In pharmaceuticals, collaboration in research, development, and the production of affordable medicines was emphasized. Tourism is another promising area, with historical Uzbek cities like Samarkand,

## Saifullah Ansar

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Islamabad organized a high-level business forum aimed at enhancing trade and investment cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan. The event brought together leading representatives of Pakistani business circles and prominent entrepreneurs, including heads of industry associations and executives from key economic sectors. The forum was attended by Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation







Bukhara, and Khiva offering rich opportunities for cultural exchange, especially as air connectivity expands. Finally, logistics and transport infrastructure, covering warehousing, supply chains, and regional connectivity, were identified as essential areas for joint development.

Uzbek Ambassador further announced the upcoming launch of Uzbekistan Airways' new direct flight from Islamabad to Tashkent starting June 14, in addition to current flights from Lahore, and invited Pakistani airlines to start operations to Uzbekistan to further boost connectivity. In his address, FPCCI President Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh reaffirmed Pakistan's keen interest in deepening trade relations with Uzbekistan and highlighted the untapped potential in bilateral investment opportunities. He emphasized the importance of deepening trade and industrial partnerships with Central Asia and called for enhanced B2B interaction and practical steps to raise bilateral trade volumes significantly.

RCCI President Mr. Usman Shaukat, in his address, emphasized the need to further expand economic relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. He highlighted the importance of effectively utilizing the vast potential in Central Asia, increasing bilateral trade volume, and fostering closer cooperation between business communities. Usman Shaukat also called for the establishment of practical mechanisms for continuous dialogue and experience sharing between entrepreneurs of both countries. As a concrete step, he announced plans to visit various regions of Uzbekistan in June-July this year, leading a business delegation from the Chamber. During the forum, Mr. Bahrom Yusupov, Trade and Economic Counselor at the Embassy, gave a detailed presentation on Uzbekistan's trade potential and growing industrial base, liberalized trade environment, economic reforms, and opportunities and significant incentives offered to foreign investors in the country's Free Economic Zones (FEZs). The presentation underscored the favorable business environment, tax incentives, and legal guarantees available to international partners. He showcased sectors such as agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, energy, logistics, and tourism as high-potential areas for collaboration. The forum concluded with an interactive Q&A session, where attendees posed insightful questions regarding market access, customs procedures, investment protections, financing options, logistics, legal frameworks, business regulations and sector-specific collaboration opportunities. Embassy representatives responded in detail, reaffirming Uzbekistan's openness to deeper economic engagement with Pakistan. Participants praised the event as a timely and practical step toward strengthening economic linkages, expanding exports and imports, and exploring joint ventures in strategically important sectors. Several expressed intent to organize follow-up visits to Uzbekistan and explore joint projects. "This forum must not end with speeches – it must begin a journey," the Ambassador concluded. "We will support you every step of the way – as a friend, as a partner, as a brother. Let this be the beginning of a new chapter."



# Turkish cuisine week celebrated with flavor and fraternity in Islamabad

This year's celebration focused on classic Turkish dishes—the backbone of its national cuisine. Guests were treated to an array of traditional homemade specialties, prepared by Turkish chefs, reflecting the essence of Turkish hospitality

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The enchanting aromas of Turkish spices and the spirit of camaraderie filled the air at the residence of the Türkiye Ambassador, as Türkiye Cuisine Week was celebrated with a warm gathering of dignitaries, friends, and food enthusiasts. Hosted by Ambassador Dr. İrfan Neziroğlu, the event was a heartfelt tribute to the rich culinary heritage of Türkiye and the enduring bond between Türkiye and Pakistan. The event was graced by the presence of State Minister for National Heritage Mr. Huzaifa Rehman, Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Ms. Ambreen Jan, and CEO of Serena Hotels Global, Mr. Aziz Boolani. In his welcome address, Ambassador Neziroğlu highlighted the deep-rooted interest of the Pakistani people in Turkish cuisine, noting the emotional and cultural connections that unite the two brotherly nations. "Sharing is the key word," he said, emphasizing the communal essence of Turkish dining traditions. "We want to share Turkish food with you tonight in a memorable way." This year's celebration focused on classic Turkish dishes—the backbone of its national cuisine. Guests were treated to an array of traditional homemade specialties, prepared by Turkish chefs,

reflecting the essence of Turkish hospitality. Recipe booklets were also made available for guests who wished to recreate the dishes at home. The evening culminated with Turkish coffee served in the traditional way under the hot sand, symbolizing not just a beverage, but a cherished ritual of conversation and connection. Ambassador Neziroğlu took the opportunity to reflect on the unique and enduring ties between Türkiye and Pakistan. "Fraternal ties between Turkey and Pakistan have been granted to very few nations in the world," he stated. "We are proud of each other's achievements and share each other's pain."

He expressed deep appreciation for the warmth shown to him in Pakistan, saying, "Here, we never consider ourselves as foreigners." Looking ahead, he affirmed that collaboration between the two countries in fields such as trade, tourism, culture, media, and education will only continue to flourish. The ambassador also offered special thanks to his wife for her dedication in organizing the event, and to Deputy Head of Mission and the young Turkish diplomats for guiding guests through their culinary journey. "The evening concluded on a heartfelt note with a resounding message: 'Türkiye-Pakistan dosti zindabad! Türkiye cuisine paindabad!' — a celebration of friendship and flavor that united hearts through food."









# A right time to redefine a new political order

There is an old saying: “Never waste a good crisis.” The war, unfortunate as it was, created space for internal realignment. The existential threat from across the border forced various political actors to see beyond their narrow agendas and realize that Pakistan’s survival and prosperity depend on unity, not division



## Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

**I**N a move that has stirred intense debate across Pakistan’s political spectrum, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has extended what appears to be an open-ended offer to the government and the establishment. The message, delivered through the public statement of Imran Khan’s sister, Aleema Khan, is straightforward yet loaded with implications: “Tell us what PTI should do so that Imran Khan can be freed.” This unusual and striking appeal has raised eyebrows and triggered speculation about PTI’s current strategy and its future direction. Some critics have interpreted this statement as a sign that PTI has finally bowed before the establishment — a party that once prided itself on resisting “political engineering” is now seemingly seeking accommodation. To its detractors, this is seen as a humiliating U-turn. Yet others term it a well-thought-out tactical maneuver — a temporary retreat to en-

sure Imran Khan’s release, after which the party will regain its footing and confront its opponents head-on. Aleema Khan’s message is important not just because of its timing but also because of the shifting political realities. The courts are set to hear appeals regarding Imran Khan’s sentence. There is strong speculation that if there are any backchannel negotiations already underway — and many observers believe there are — then this court hearing might produce a dramatic outcome, potentially paving the way for Imran Khan’s return to active politics. If his conviction is overturned or his sentence suspended, it would be a political earthquake and a serious boost for PTI’s morale. Regardless of whether the statement is tactical or conciliatory, one truth is unavoidable: excluding PTI and its leader from the political mainstream has not brought the stability or unity the country so desperately needs. Instead, Pakistan remains mired in polarization, economic uncertainty, and institutional mistrust.

To continue down the path of one-sided politics, where major political forces are sidelined or criminalized, is to risk further fragmentation of the democratic order. PTI’s offer must be seen through the broader lens of national interest. The current power structure — whether political or institutional — must understand that reconciliation, not repression, is the way forward. Imran Khan, whether one supports or opposes him, still commands the loyalty of millions. Ignoring or eliminating such a large political force is not only unjust, it is strategically unwise.

Pakistan’s future lies in inclusive politics. No party or leader should be above the law, but neither should they be punished arbitrarily. PTI’s latest offer — whether read as surrender or strategy — provides an opening. It is now up to the establishment and the government to respond wisely. Rebuilding Pakistan’s fractured political landscape begins with allowing all voices, including PTI’s, a fair chance to be heard.

With a fragile ceasefire in place between Pakistan and India after a brief but intense exchange of hostilities, there lies an opportunity—perhaps a rare one—for deep introspection, particularly within Pakistan’s own political structure. While the military has once again proven its capability to respond effectively to external aggression, the short conflict also highlighted an equally vital element: the importance of internal political harmony in matching enemy threats and maintaining national cohesion.

The recent crisis underscored that a na-



tion's strength lies not just in its military prowess but in the unity and clarity of its political direction. In this moment of post-conflict reflection, it is imperative that Pakistan reconsiders and, where necessary, redefines its internal political order for the greater national good. The current system, marred by division, mistrust, and selective justice, needs urgent repair if Pakistan is to move forward as a stable and resilient state. At the core of this needed transformation is the principle that the country's interest must be kept paramount over individual egos and political grudges. Pakistan's turbulent recent history—punctuated by political witch hunts, selective accountability, and the marginalization of key political players—has weakened its democratic institutions and undermined the people's confidence in the political process.

It is time to ensure a level playing field for all political parties, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which despite its contentious relationship with state institutions, remains one of the most popular political forces in the country. Whether one agrees or disagrees with PTI's policies or rhetoric, it is undeniable that millions of Pakistanis see the party, and particularly Imran Khan, as their chosen representatives. Ignoring or suppressing this political reality not only risks further instability but also damages the democratic fabric of the state. The need for redefining relations with PTI is not merely about appeasement; it is about practical statesmanship. In the recent conflict, PTI's social media apparatus—often labeled as a thorn in the side of the establishment—surprisingly showed maturity

by rallying behind the military in the face of foreign aggression. This gesture of unity, despite underlying grievances, deserves recognition and reciprocation. Political inclusivity, rather than exclusion, will strengthen the country's ability to present a unified front both domestically and internationally.

There is an old saying: "Never waste a good crisis." The war, unfortunate as it was, created space for internal realignment. The existential threat from across the border forced various political actors to see beyond their narrow agendas and realize that Pakistan's survival and prosperity depend on unity, not division. This moment should not be wasted. Political reconciliation now could lead to a stable future.

The possibility of early, free, and fair elections in which all political parties, including PTI and Imran Khan, are allowed to participate without hurdles, may offer a viable path toward political stability. The international community, investors, and even Pakistan's own citizens are watching closely. They want to see whether Pakistan is ready to chart a new course that puts democracy, transparency, and inclusion at the forefront. Pakistan's enemies had hoped to exploit our divided political landscape and fraying national fabric. The attempted incursions and strikes were not just acts of war—they were a test of our internal strength. That test has revealed our vulnerabilities, but also our potential. We have seen that, even in a politically fractured environment, a spark of unity can ignite collective strength.

However, let's not be under any illusions:

economic recovery and long-term national strength cannot be achieved in a politically unstable environment. Wars are fought—and won—by nations with robust economies, resilient institutions, and united populations. Pakistan's current economic state is dire. Inflation is sky-high, foreign reserves are dwindling, and the IMF continues to dictate terms. Without political stability, there can be no investor confidence, and without investment, there can be no sustainable growth.

Thus, better sense must prevail—among all stakeholders. The establishment must realize that its role is to support, not steer, the democratic process. Political parties must understand that rhetoric alone cannot replace governance, and mutual respect is the foundation of lasting cooperation. The judiciary, media, and civil society must also play their part in fostering accountability without bias. In conclusion, this is not just a political moment—it is a national one. A time to look beyond individual ambitions and work collectively for the survival and success of Pakistan. The war may have been short-lived, but its message was clear: a divided nation is a vulnerable one. Let us not wait for another crisis to teach us the same lesson. Pakistan today stands at a crossroad. One path leads to reconciliation, reform, and resurgence. The other, to continued polarization, economic decay, and eventual collapse. The choice, as always, lies in the hands of those who lead us—but the consequences will be borne by every citizen of this country.

It is indeed the right time to redefine a new political order—before it's too late.

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# Islamabad POST

**A Credible Daily Newspaper**

**Chief Editor: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti**

**Deputy Editor: Abid Raza**



# Harmony of Melodies

**H**armony of Melodies, Serena Hotels and Embassy of Poland Hosted a Fundraising Dinner Gala Featuring European and Polish classical music. Serena Hotels, in collaboration with the Embassy of Poland in Pakistan, hosted a captivating fundraising dinner gala under its Cultural Diplomacy Initiative, bringing together the elegance of European music and the power of community-driven philanthropy. The event featured mesmerizing performances by distinguished artists from the Kuwait Music Academy. Renowned pianist Karol Masternak, laureate of the prestigious Chopin Competition, joined forces with tenor Kamil Mateusz Derylo and the exceptionally gifted pianist and soprano Kinga Masternak. Their enchanting performances, which have graced stages across Europe and the Gulf, brought an unforgettable night of artistic brilliance and musical excellence to Islamabad. Guests were treated to a remarkable blend of piano virtuosity, operatic arias, and timeless European classics honoring the rich tradition of Polish music and the enduring beauty of opera. All proceeds of PKR 1 million from the gala evening were given to Pehli Kiran Schools (PKS) a non profit organization dedicated to educating street children from the impoverished ar-

reas, benefiting over 5000 out-of-school and underserved children. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, stated: "At Serena Hotels, we are committed to creating meaningful impact through initiatives that promote culture, inclusivity, and community development. Through our Cultural Diplomacy Initiative, we proudly raise cultural exchange while supporting causes that uplift vulnerable communities. This collaborative event with the Embassy of Poland beautifully combined the power of music with the spirit of giving, and we are honored to contribute to Pehli Kiran Schools in their mission to provide quality education to underserved children." His Excellency Mr. Maciej Pisarski, Ambassador of Poland to Pakistan, said: "Culture is a powerful bridge between nations, and tonight's event demonstrated how music can connect hearts and inspire action. We are proud to partner with Serena Hotels in supporting education through Pehli Kiran Schools and showcasing the richness of Polish musical heritage." The evening concluded with a resounding appreciation from the audience and partners who made the event possible. It stood as a beautiful reminder of how music and compassion can come together to create lasting change.





# The Decay of International Law

**I**NTERNATIONAL law these days mostly derives from European practices shaped in the 17th Century. The 1648 Westphalia Treaty set the framework for relationships between European monarchs. They were pledged to respect for sovereignty and exercise non-interference in domestic affairs of other countries. These principles become the foundation of today's international relations, reflected in the United Nations Charter. Yet, if we observe closely, it was pretty much a European legal system. Dutch scholar Hugo Grotius – often hailed as the father of international law – even assumed these laws were meant only for “civilized” European monarchs, completely sidelining the rich legal traditions in Asia, the Middle East, and other parts of the world which he contended the latter as less developed or even barbaric – a clear echo of colonial biases. By the 20th century things started shifting, thanks largely to decolonization process following the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. Newly independent states sought to shape the laws governing global interactions, inspired by Ten Principles of 1955 Bandung Declaration of Asia-Africa Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement's objectives. UN General Assembly suddenly become fora for reinterpretation of legal structure that reinforces old power structures. Take example of the law of the sea. Newly independent coastal states pushed for having expanded maritime zones, securing jurisdiction over exclusive economic zones (EEZs) stretching 200 nautical miles from their shores. Archipelagic countries argued to close the pocket of vast high seas within their waters and subjected them to sovereignty of countries with this specific geographical unique situation. These new legal regimes were finally codified in the 1982 UNCLOS. In climate negotiations, the Global South also pushed for “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” underscoring that the Western countries bear more responsibility in mitigation of global climate change due to their historical emission. In most cases, the West could no longer dictate the rules of global engagement. Yet, this shift has exposed stark inconsistencies in the so-called “rule based order.” Consider the West's response to two contemporary crises. In Ukraine, the West leaders promptly condemned Russia's invasion, invoking international law to impose sanctions and rally global sup-

port. Contrast this with their muted response to Israel's genocidal acts against Palestinians and continue supplying weapons to Israel – thus revealing Western complicity. As Yanis Varoufakis, former Greece's Finance Minister, cynically notes, the phrase of “land without a people for the people without a land” sounds like preserving old practices of white settlers to grab indigenous lands with forces because the former considered it as “terra nullius” or a land without people. This double standard fuels a growing perception that the so called “rules-based order” apply only when they serve Western interests. Today, the idea of a rule-based order feels increasingly like a legal relic of the past. As a response, the West has started to get creative with legal strategies to keep its influence and upper hand position alive. Take, for instance, EU regulatory frameworks for the importation of commodities. The regulations introduce various technical requirements such as traceability, geolocation of productions and verification of legal compliance with pretext of preserving environmental. Albeit sounds positive in its objective, these technical standards eventually create non-tariff barriers for import of commodities from developing countries with the ultimate goal of protecting local producers in European. Language, too, has become a sort of tool for reinvention. By reworking familiar terms and introducing fresh legal concepts, the West is trying to redraw the “rules of the game.” In many cases, values like free speech, human rights, and democracy only take on true meaning when they fit with Western interests. Often, this kind of semantic acrobatics acts as a cover for waning influence. These legal maneuvers, in effect, compensate for a declining capacity to enforce direct control and creating what it is called by Martti Koskenniemi, Finnish lawyer and diplomat, as concealed imperialism. Traditional international law isn't entirely collapsing, but it is definitely transforming; the old, state-centric order and that narrow post Second World War arrangement just don't fit with today's multipolar reality. The question now is how the world can steer this change into a legal system that genuinely reflects its diverse global membership. Let me offer my take on this. First, real inclusivity goes beyond hollow promises. It necessitates a genuine commitment to multilateralism. The UN, despite its



**Adam M. Tugio**

limitations, remains the most important forum for such dialogue. The structure of the UN Security Council, however, has to be reformed so that the Global South is well represented. Middle powers like Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Turkiye, and Australia might inject much-needed regional perspectives into global deliberations to ensure the credibility of international legal system. They can also work together with countries in their respective region through regional organizations to amplify their views for promoting fairness in international law.

Second, the world needs teamwork and cooperative solution to address issues of shared concern – from climate change to pandemics, and from transnational organised crimes to cyber threats. The Paris Agreement, for instance, might be flawed, but it shows what's possible when nations negotiate as equals. Perhaps extending the approach of the Agreement which recognised different degree of responsibility amongst states into trade, security, and human rights, could pave the way for a more inclusive international order.

Third, rebuilding trust in a system that many say is unfair might be our best bet for meaningful change. A renewed emphasis for peaceful resolution of disputes is crucial for fostering greater trust and understanding between states. For this reason, dialogue and diplomacy are critically important. Legal moves should stand for true fairness rather than just protecting old, or self-serving interests since global community has been witnessing how law is twisted into a political tool.

In conclusion, the evolution of international law, from the courts of European monarchs to the halls of the UN, has always been a story of adaptation. Today, as old privileges erode and new voices rise, the challenge is to craft a system that's truly international, not just a shadow of Western dominance. The decay of the old order isn't an end, but it's an opportunity—if only the world can seize it. The views expressed in the article are personal views of the writer.



# “Pakistan-Japan Human Resources Stakeholders Meeting” in Capital

The forum centered on the growing demands for skilled Pakistani labor in Japan and explored strategies to build stronger linkages that enable the smooth deployment of qualified professionals across multiple sectors, including IT, healthcare, construction, agriculture, and manufacturing

## Mahnoor Ansar

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mr. Akamatsu Shuichi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Pakistan, hosted the “Pakistan-Japan Human Resources Stakeholders Meeting” at the Ambassador’s Residence in Islamabad. The high-level gathering brought together approximately 70 key stakeholders actively engaged in developing and facilitating Pakistani human resources for employment opportunities in Japan. The event witnessed the presence of distinguished figures including H.E. Mr. Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, H.E. Ms. Shaza Fatima, Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications, H.E. Mr. Mohammad Awn Saqlain, Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, and representatives from leading Japanese and Pakistani organizations. Major participants representatives from Plus W, Proud Partners, Japan Pakistan Innovation Institute (JPPI) and Japan Station. Also, representatives from key institutions such as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) presented. The forum centered on the growing demands for skilled Pakistani labor in Japan and explored strategies to build stronger linkages that enable the smooth deployment of qualified professionals across multiple sectors, including IT, healthcare, construction, agriculture, and manufacturing. Ambassador Akamatsu stated in his welcome remarks as follows: “I am confident that the success of Pakistani professionals in Japan is becoming one of the key pillars of the bi-

lateral relations. Both Japanese and Pakistani Embassies remains committed to making contributions in this area. The evaluation of Pakistani talents in Japan is becoming higher and higher. Therefore, I expect that the demands for skilled Pakistani professionals will be expanding in the future. Japan seeks high-quality human resources, and by engaging with Japan, young Pakistani talents will contribute significantly to strengthening the Japan-Pakistan relations. For Pakistan, remittances are one of the major economic pillars, and the skills and knowledge Pakistani workers acquire in Japan will help to foster industrial development after returning to their home country. Please allow me to touch upon the Osaka-Kansai Expo, which has opened as of 13th of April until 13th of October, half a year. I have already had the pleasure of visiting it in the last month. More than 160 countries participate in this Expo. Among them, Pakistan Pavilion, which is consist of pink salts, is so popular among the visitors. I hope this Pakistan pavilion attracts many Japanese people and arouse their interest towards Pakistan. I would also like to encourage many Pakistani people to visit Japan on this occasion and experience the advanced and human-friendly technologies firsthand.” Minister Salik Hussain emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and Japan to help Pakistani professionals access opportunities in the Japanese corporate sector. He commended the partnership between the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) and PlusW, noting that its recent expansion under the Specified Skilled Workers (SSW) program now covers sectors beyond IT, including healthcare, construction, agriculture, and manufacturing.





# Africa Day celebrated with vibrancy in Islamabad

**Ansar M Bhatti**

ISLAMABAD: The rich cultural diversity and heritage of the African continent came alive in Islamabad as diplomats, officials, and guests gathered to celebrate Africa Day at a vibrant reception hosted at the residence of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Pakistan, Mr. Mohamed Yahya. The event was co-hosted by Mohamed Karmoune, Dean of the African Group in Islamabad and Ambassador of Morocco, and Hamid Asghar Khan, Additional Foreign Secretary (Africa) from Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The celebration marked not just Africa's shared history and achievements, but also its evolving partnership with Pakistan and the international community.

Africa Day, observed annually on May 25, commemorates the founding of the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union) in 1963. In Islamabad, it served as a moment of cultural exchange and diplomatic camaraderie. Diplomats from across Africa and friends of the continent joined in a spirited evening that reflected Africa's

unity in diversity. The highlight of the evening was the array of food stalls, set up by various African embassies, offering guests a chance to indulge in authentic African cuisine. From Moroccan tagine to Egyptian koshari to Sudanese stews, the event was a culinary journey across the continent. The colors, aromas, and flavors at each stall told stories of traditions, history, and national pride. In a unique cultural gesture, the Embassy of Ethiopia established a traditional coffee corner, introducing guests to the centuries-old Ethiopian coffee ceremony. Attendees were treated to freshly brewed Ethiopian coffee, served with customary hospitality. The ritual of roasting, grinding, and brewing was performed live, and many found the aromatic experience both relaxing and enlightening.

Speaking on the occasion, the dean of the African group emphasized the growing importance of Africa in global geopolitics and development. He noted that Africa, with its young population and abundant natural resources, represents both a challenge and an opportunity in the world's pursuit of peace, prosperity, and sustainability.

Ambassador Mohamed Karmoune thanked Pakistan for its continued support and engagement with African nations. He highlighted the historical bonds that unite Africa and Pakistan, rooted in anti-colonial solidarity and enhanced by modern-day cooperation in trade, education, and diplomacy. Hamid Asghar Khan, representing the Foreign Office, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to deepening ties with Africa under its "Engage Africa" policy. He appreciated the role of the African diplomatic corps in Islamabad in fostering people-to-people and government-to-government connections. The evening concluded with music, and an atmosphere of warmth and unity. African diplomats expressed appreciation for Pakistan's hospitality and the opportunity to showcase their cultures in a spirit of friendship and shared vision. Africa Day 2025 in Islamabad was not just a celebration—it was a reaffirmation of a global commitment to unity, development, and mutual respect. Events like these continue to bridge continents and bring people closer together in a world that increasingly values diversity and cooperation.







# "Taste the World" – a celebration of cultures through cuisine

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, and Ms. Dianne Hawkins, President of IFWA, emphasized the significance of cultural exchange in fostering peace, mutual understanding, and global harmony

## Mahnoor Ansar

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotel, in collaboration with the Islamabad Foreign Women's Association (IFWA), proudly hosted "Taste the World" on Sunday, May 25, under Serena Hotels' Cultural Diplomacy Initiative. This vibrant event brought together people from across the diplomatic, cultural, and local communities to experience the rich culinary heritage of 28 countries, each showcasing traditional dishes from their homelands. Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, and Ms. Dianne Hawkins, President of IFWA, emphasized the significance of cultural exchange in fostering peace, mutual understanding, and global harmony. "Serena Hotels is proud to host Taste the World, a true

celebration of global cultures especially through the universal language of food," said Mr. Boolani. "Events like these build bridges between communities and remind us how diversity enriches us all." Ms. Hawkins added, "This event not only highlights our cultural diversity but also supports a meaningful cause. The proceeds from today will go toward charitable initiatives backed by IFWA, making this celebration both joyful and impactful." The event featured culinary delights from around the world, with embassies and diplomatic missions offering visitors a taste of their national cuisines in an atmosphere filled with color, music, and camaraderie. "Taste the World" exemplifies Serena Hotels' ongoing commitment to cultural diplomacy bringing people together through shared experiences and supporting community-led causes.









# Independence Day of Azerbaijan









# Animated Thai film screened in the Capital





# Saad Raza secures master's degree from New York University

DNA

NEW YORK: Saad Raza, son of Abid Raza—Deputy Editor of the Daily Islamabad POST and CEO of Shifa Builders—has proudly earned his Master's degree in Construction Management from New York University (NYU), USA. Saad's achievement marks a significant milestone, not only for him personally but also for his family. His academic journey at one of the world's leading universities has equipped him with advanced knowledge and skills in construction planning, project management, and sustainable development practices. To celebrate this momentous occasion, Abid Raza traveled from Pakistan to the United States to attend his son's graduation ceremony. His presence was a source of immense pride and joy, symbolizing a father's unwavering support and the importance of family in moments of success. Saad's dedication and hard work have been widely appreciated by peers and mentors alike. With a solid academic foundation from NYU, he is expected to contribute significantly to the construction and development sector, both in Pakistan and internationally. The entire team at the Daily Islamabad POST extends heartfelt congratulations to Saad Raza on this remarkable achievement and wishes him continued success in his future endeavors.



## President Asif Ali Zardari for enhanced bilateral cooperation in trade, economy, and culture

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for further improving bilateral ties with Thailand, the Philippines, Slovenia, Serbia, Burkina Faso, Zambia, and Latvia, in the fields of trade, economy, and culture. The President expressed these views while talking to the Ambassadors-designates of Thailand, Philippines, Slovenia, Serbia, Burkina Faso, Zambia, and Latvia to Pakistan, who called on him and presented their diplo-

matic credentials to him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr today. The Ambassador-designate of Thailand, Mr Rongvudhi Virabutr, the Ambassador-designate of the Philippines, Dr Emmanuel R. Fernandez, Non-Resident Ambassador-designate of Slovenia, Mr Igor Jukić, Non-Resident Ambassador-designate of Serbia, Mr Damir Kovacevic, Non-Resident Ambassador-designate of Burkina Faso, Mr Mohamadi Kabore, Non-Resident Ambassador-designate of Zambia, Mr Ivan Zyuulu, and Non-Resident Ambassador of Latvia, Ms

Dana Goldfinča, presented their diplomatic credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari during a credentials ceremony at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Upon their arrival, the envoys were presented with the guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of the Armed Forces. The President highlighted the need for further expanding bilateral trade and business relations with the respective countries. He congratulated the Ambassadors on their new assignments and wished them success in the exercise of their duties.





# President Zardari greets Putin on Victory Day, seeks deeper ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further expand bilateral cooperation with the Russian Federation in the areas of trade, investment, technology, and people-to-people exchanges. Speaking at a ceremony marking the 80th Anniversary of Victory of the Russian Federation in the Great Patriotic War, President Asif Ali Zardari highlighted the growing momentum in Pakistan-Russia relations and expressed confidence that recent high-level interactions between the two countries have laid a solid foundation for deeper engagement and greater understanding. "I am confident that the bonds of friendship between Pakistan and Russia will continue to grow strong-

er," the President said, adding that both nations have "immense potential to expand cooperation in trade, investment, technology, and people-to-people contacts." The President extended warm congratulations to President Vladimir Putin, the Russian government, and the people of Russia on the occasion, saying that the Victory showed the strength and resilience of the Russian people, as well as their strong commitment to peace and prosperity. He noted that people from the Indus Valley—modern-day Pakistan—had also played a critical role in defeating Nazism as part of the British Army.

Recalling his 2011 visit to Russia, President Zardari acknowledged President Putin's efforts to promote Pakistan-Russia friendship. He described Russia as a "key global pow-

er" and highlighted its role in promoting regional peace and stability, especially its role in de-escalating tensions between Pakistan and India. The President also reaffirmed the commitment to building bridges of understanding and cooperation between Pakistan and Russia, besides urging the need to work together for a better future for the region and the world. Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Mr. Albert P. Khor-ev, also addressed the occasion. He shared details of the event with the audience and expressed Russia's desire to strengthen its relations with Pakistan. Another highlight of the event was the traditional cultural dances representing various regions of the country. The performances were thoroughly enjoyed and warmly praised by the audience.









# Portugal, Pakistan bridge nations with spiritual musical journey

Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, remarked, "At Serena Hotels, we believe in the power of cultural diplomacy; Ambassador of Portugal shared, "This collaboration is a celebration of the shared cultural values of Portugal and Pakistan



## Mahnoor Ansar

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, in collaboration with the Embassy of Portugal hosted Soulful Strings: Portugal & Pakistan a great musical journey that brought together two remarkable traditions through the universal language of music. The evening featured a mesmerizing performance by celebrated Portuguese classical guitarist Pedro Jôia and renowned Pakistani musician Arieab Azhar, who captivated the audience with a soulful fusion of Portuguese guitar melodies and the spiritual depth of Sufi verse. This artistic collaboration highlighted the richness of both cultures and offered a profound, meditative experience to all in attendance. The event was graced by members of the diplomatic community, along with distinguished representatives from the corporate sector and media personalities, all gathered to celebrate the power of

music as a bridge between nations. Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, remarked, "At Serena Hotels, we believe in the power of cultural diplomacy to create meaningful connections between people and nations. Soulful Strings reflects our commitment to encouraging dialogue and harmony through art and music". H.E. the Ambassador of Portugal shared, "This collaboration is a celebration of the shared cultural values of Portugal and Pakistan. Music is a profound medium that transcends borders, and this event is evidence to the continuing friendship and mutual appreciation between our two countries." As a part of Serena Hotels ongoing Cultural Diplomacy initiative, the event reaffirmed the organization's dedication to promoting intercultural understanding, creative expression, and people-to-people connectivity. Soulful Strings stands as a tribute to the harmony that can be achieved when diverse artistic traditions come together with a shared purpose.







# Team Yellow win Islamabad Club Cricket League final

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: The Cricket Committee of Islamabad Club organized the Cricket league 2024-2025 among the Club teams Blue, Green, Yellow, orange and Red. The final match of the ICL 2024-2025 was played between green and yellow teams on 3rd May 2025 at Islamabad Club Cricket ground where the yellow team won the final match with nine wickets. As a Corporate Social initiative, the

Cricket Committee also invited the children from Sweet Home to witness the match. The event attracted large number of members and their families who witnessed the match and enjoyed the ceremony. The grand prize distribution ceremony was held after the match followed by the fireworks and dinner. The Administrator Islamabad Club, Mr. Inam Ullah Khan Dharejo graced the occasion as a chief guest. The Convener Sports, Mr. Sohail Nasir,

Convener Cricket, Mr. Shafqat Hus-sain Naghmi distributed the trophies and shields among the team players and Club staff.

Present on the occasion were Managing Committee members, Mr. Najeeb Sadiq, Mr. Atif Ishaq, CEO, Sweet Homes, Mr. Zamrad Khan, Convener Organizing Committee, Mr. Zubair Nasir and Cricket Committee members, Mr. Shoaib Zafar, Mr. Zeeshan Naqvi, Mr. Ahmed Sa-jeel and Mr. Ahmed Ijaz Yousuf.



## Golf tournament in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The 3rd Friendship Through Sports (FTS) Diplomatic Golf Cup was successfully held at Pine Golf Club, bringing together diplomats and defence officials from around the world. Among the distinguished participants were the Ambassadors of Poland and Japan, along with Defence Advisors from Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, the Czech Republic, and diplo-

omats from Australia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, Vietnam, Germany, Belgium, and China. Colonel Ipin of Malaysia clinched the overall title, winning the 3rd FTS Diplomatic Cup, while the Ambassador of Japan secured victory in his category. The event highlighted unity, camaraderie, and the strengthening of diplomatic ties through sports. – DNA





**300 million people speak Portuguese**

# UNESCO world Portuguese language day celebrated

**Ambassador of Brazil to Pakistan Mr. Olyntho Vieira and Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan Mr. Frederico Silva have jointly issued a statement highlighting the importance of the day**

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Every 5th May it is celebrated as the UNESCO World Portuguese Language Day and the Culture of the Lusophone Countries assembled in the CPLP (Community of Portuguese – Speaking Countries), a significant occasion highlighting the global presence, cultural richness, and unifying power of the Portuguese language. In the regards Ambassador of Brazil to Pakistan Mr. Olyntho Vieira and Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan Mr. Frederico Silva have jointly issued a statement highlighting the importance of the day.

Originally sedimented and developed in western Europe, more than one thousand years ago, the Portuguese Language is today the native language to almost 300 million people in nine countries across 4 continents, and to lusophone diasporas living in almost all the corners of the planet. One of the most globally diffused languages in the modern world, the Portuguese is the most spoken universal language in the southern hemisphere.

This World Day also celebrates the diverse and rich Cultures of the nine countries that form the CPLP (Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries), including, in Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé e Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea, in Asia, East Timor, in America, Brazil and in Europe, Portugal. The theme for this year's celebration "The Promotion and Dissemination of the Portuguese Language and Cultural Diversity of CPLP Member States: From Traditional Experiences to Digital Platforms" reflects the growing relevance of Portuguese in the digital age. It



also highlights the need to leverage technological tools, including artificial intelligence and digital media, to preserve, teach, and promote the Portuguese language across generations and borders. Portuguese is not only a means of communication but also a symbol of identity, memory, and shared herit-

age. As a pluricentric language, it reflects the diversity of its speakers and the richness of their individual experiences and national cultures. Celebrating May 5th is an opportunity to honor this diversity, strengthen linguistic and cultural ties, and look toward the future with a sense of unity and purpose.

# Australia Day in Spring celebrated with cultural fusion and warmth in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commission hosted a colourful and culturally rich reception to mark Australia Day in Spring 2025, highlighting the vibrant people-to-people ties that define the ever-growing relationship between Australia and Pakistan. Haroon Akhtar Federal Minister for Industries and Production was the chief guest. The Minister also spoke on the occasion and vowed to further strengthen relations with Pakistan. Held in the lush gardens of the High Commission in Islamabad, the event brought together diplomats, government officials, civil society members, academia, and media representatives to celebrate the shared values and endur-

ing partnership between the two nations. The reception this year embraced a unique and interactive theme—"Powered by People"—which was vividly brought to life through creative expressions of both Australian and Pakistani cultures. From kangaroos adorned with Pakistani truck art to ambient sounds of native Australian birds echoing across the venue, the setting reflected a dynamic blend of heritage, nature, and innovation.

In his keynote address, Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins emphasized the human dimension of bilateral ties. "This relationship is powered by people," he noted, recounting the journey from the Baloch cameleers who helped build Australia's outback to today's thriving Pakistani diaspora of over 100,000 individuals

in Australia. "Ours is a relationship built on cooperation and shared experience—scientists tackling salinity together, girls playing cricket, alumni shaping Pakistan's future. It's about connection, hope, and a shared future," Mr Hawkins said.

The High Commissioner highlighted the enduring cooperation of more than 40 years of working together to build resilience in the agriculture and water sectors, and our long-standing defence ties. Australia's support continues to strengthen climate resilience, education, and gender equality through grassroots partnerships that uplift Pakistani communities.

"This friendship is not just official—it's about connections between ordinary people. And it's growing stronger every day," Mr Hawkins concluded.











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## Bangladesh High Commission in Islamabad Celebrates Bengali New Year with Cultural Fervor

**Ansar M Bhatti**

ISLAMABAD: The Bangladesh High Commission in Islamabad hosted a vibrant celebration of the Bengali New Year, known as Pohela Boishakh, bringing together diplomats, cultural enthusiasts, and members of the Bangladeshi community in Pakistan for a colorful and meaningful event. Held at the Sir Syed Memorial Society premises, the festivities reflected the deep-rooted cultural traditions of Bangladesh and underscored the growing warmth in Pakistan-Bangladesh bilateral relations.

Iqbal Hussain, the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan, inaugurated the event with an address highlighting the cultural significance of Pohela Boishakh—a day that marks the beginning of the Bengali calendar and is celebrated across Bangladesh with music, dance, and traditional attire.

In his speech, High Commissioner Hussain emphasized that the Bengali New Year is not just a celebration of cultural identity, but also a symbol of unity and renewal. “Pohela Boishakh is a time to reflect on

our shared heritage and to look forward to new beginnings,” he said. He also noted a positive shift in the relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh, stating, “Our ties are entering a new phase after a revolution of reform and progress in Bangladesh. The new government in Dhaka is committed to strengthening its diplomatic and cultural relations with Islamabad.”

The event was graced by the presence of Ms. Anbreen Jan, Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, who attended as the chief guest. Ms. Jan shared her personal connection to Bangladesh, having served there for six years during her diplomatic tenure. “I hold very fond memories of my time in Bangladesh. I have witnessed the richness of its culture, the warmth of its people, and the vibrant spirit of Pohela Boishakh. It is a festival that unites people regardless of boundaries,” she said.

The celebration featured a variety of cultural performances by members of the Bangladeshi community living in Pakistan. Traditional songs, dances, and poetry in Bengali captivated the audience, offering a

taste of home to expatriates and a window into Bangladeshi culture for local attendees. The performers, dressed in colorful saris and punjabis, brought the energy and joy of Dhaka’s New Year celebrations to Islamabad. Guests were also treated to an array of authentic Bangladeshi cuisine. From flavorful biryani to traditional sweets like roshogolla and pitha, the food stalls added a festive aroma to the event and allowed guests to experience the culinary richness of Bangladesh. The celebration served as a cultural bridge between the two nations, promoting understanding and goodwill. It highlighted how shared cultural events can foster closer people-to-people ties and support diplomatic engagement.

With growing enthusiasm for strengthening bilateral ties, the Bengali New Year celebration in Islamabad was not just a festivity—it was a step forward in building deeper connections between Bangladesh and Pakistan. As both countries look toward the future, such events offer a promising reminder of the harmony that can be achieved through cultural exchange.





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