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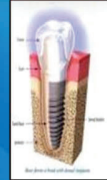
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Publisher: **Ansar Mahmood Bhatti**

Printers: 051-5441 786.Com

Price Rs. 500/-

Pakistan's Largest Circulated Diplomatic Magazine

MEMBER ALL PAKISTAN NEWSPAPERS SOCIETY (APNA)

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Uzbek President's Pakistan visit



PRESIDENT of Uzbekistan returned home Friday at the conclusion of his two-day state visit to Islamabad. The Uzbek president during his stay in the capital met President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan. A number of agreements and Memoranda of Understanding were signed between the two countries during the visit of the Uzbek president. President Mirziyoyev marked the historic commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Pakistan and Uzbekistan are linked through a common faith, shared history and cultural affinities. The two countries have been closely collaborating at regional and international fora, especially at the UN, OIC, ECO, and SCO.

It was Uzbek president's first ever visit to Pakistan after becoming the President of Uzbekistan. He took over the charge of the Presidency after the demise of Islam Karimov who was the first President of Uzbekistan after the country got independence in 1992. Since then Uzbekistan has been on the move. The country, under the dynamic leadership of President Shavkat has made huge strides in all fields, especially in the field of trade and economy.

As regards the infrastructural development the country had done marvels. After having been to Uzbekistan on a couple of occasions, I can surely say Uzbekistan happens to be the apt example of modernity and religious tolerance. The country can rightly boost off its religious tourism potential and that is what the Uzbek president talked about during his joint press take-out with the Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. He expressed hope to further deepen cooperation with Pakistan in the field of religious tourism. Both sides agreed for the early resumption of flights. Uzbek air used to operate from Lahore to Tashkent twice a week but it was discontinued due to Covid pandemic. Ostensibly, closure of the air link badly affected the tourism industry on both sides but it is good sign that leaderships of both countries, after realizing the difficulties of people, have now decided to re-open this route. The step is likely to further deepen people to people cooperation between the two countries. On Afghanistan both sides agreed to work together because peace in Afghanistan is directly linked to peace in Pakistan and Uzbekistan. In addition, all energy projects between the two countries can only be made operational when there will be complete peace there.

The hallmark of the visit perhaps was the signing of Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between the two countries. As per the PTA, a number of products will have duty free access to markets of both countries, which means consumers will get those products on cheaper rates. Besides, this arrangement is going to enhance trade and economic activity between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has signed the PTA with only a few countries and Pakistan happens to be one of them. Prime Minister Imran Khan announced to produce a joint movie on Babur in order to promote and strengthen cultural links between the two countries. Both Pakistan and Uzbekistan are gifted with rich cultural heritage. Cooperation in the field of culture would ostensibly provide both sides with an opportunity of benefiting from each other's cultural treasures.

In a nutshell, the visit can rightly be termed as a complete success. Pakistan, as per its Look Central Asia Policy, is already engaged with most of the Central Asian states. Establishment of direct air linkages would certainly do wonders in terms of enhanced trade and economic activity therefore all asides need to work zealously to establish these linkages. The national flag carrier has to take a lead in this regard. PIA has already hinted at opening new routes in Central Asia. It is time now to act and act rather swiftly.

Arif Alvi

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.

Preferential Trade Agreement signed Pakistan, Uzbekistan friends for ever: PM Imran Khan

EXCLUSIVE

Special Correspondent

UZBEK PRESIDENT SHAVKAT MIRZIYOYEV
SAYS BILATERAL COOPERATION
WILL BE TAKEN TO NEW HORIZONS



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Uzbekistan have expressed commitment to revive the traditional cooperative partnership through improved connectivity. At a joint press stakeout with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Islamabad on Thursday, Prime Minister Imran Khan said it is matter of satisfaction that trade between the two brotherly countries increased by

50 percent in last one year while joint ventures between the business communities of the two countries enhanced by 5 percent. The Prime Minister said we have decided to resume direct flights between the two countries that will not only improve connectivity but will help promote tourism and trade. He said train route with Uzbekistan will help boosting linkages with

Central Asian States which will also benefit the war torn Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister said both countries will jointly produce a film on Mughal Emperor Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad Babur. He said he has shared his narrative on human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir to the Uzbek President. The Prime Minister said the United Na-



tions should fully implement the international law against human rights violations in the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Over Afghanistan issue, the Prime Minister said we will be lobbying to unfreeze the assets of Afghanistan. He said campaign will be launched to devise ways and suggest measures for the recognition of Afghanistan. The Uzbek President in his remarks thanked PM Imran Khan for extending great hospitality. He said both Uzbekistan and Pakistan have many things in common adding especially the PTA signed between the two countries would usher in new era of progress between the two countries.

He said the railway line from Uzbekistan to Peshawar via Afghanistan will be yet another milestone between the two countries. He said Afghanistan needs humanitarian assistance at this critical juncture there the world community should come forward and help Afghans. Earlier, the two countries signed different Memorandum of Understandings including Strategic Partnership and Preferential Trade Agreement. Others agreements include cooperation in the field of Television and Radio, Promotion of Pilgrimage Tourism, co-operation in the field of environment and climate change, Action Plan of practical measures in the field of security and cooperation in Railways. Prime Minister Imran Khan and Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who also signed the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Joint Declaration: "Next Step in the Strategic Partnership", witnessed the signing ceremony here at the PM House after the two leaders had a one-on-one meeting and wide-ranging delegation-level talks.

The agreement on cooperation in the field of Television and Radio Broadcasting between the National Television and Radio Company of Uzbekistan and the Pakistan Television Corporation was signed by Minister for Information Chaudhry Fawad Hussain and Uzbek Minister for Culture Ozodbek Nazabekov. The MoU between the Uzbek Ministry of Tourism and Sports and Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony for the promotion of Pilgrimage Tourism was signed by Minister for Religious Affairs Noor ul Haq Qadri and Uzbek Minister for Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Kamilov. The MoU between Uzbekistan and Pakistan on cooperation in the field of environment and climate change was signed by Special Assistant to the PM on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam, and Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Investment and Foreign Trade Sardar Umurzakov.

Advisor to the PM on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood and Uzbek Minister for Investment and Foreign Trade signed the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Preferential Trade Agreement. The Action Plan of

practical measures (roadmap) to further develop cooperation between Pakistan and Uzbekistan in the fields of security was signed by National Security Advisor Dr Moeed Yousaf and Secretary to the Uzbek Security Council Viktor Makhmudov. The MoU between Pakistan's Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Transport of Uzbekistan was signed by Secretary / Chairman Pakistan Railways Habib ur Rehman Gilani and Uzbek Minister for Transport Ilkhom Makhkamov. The MoU on cooperation between Khokimiyat of Tashkent City of Uzbekistan and the Administration of Islamabad City of Pakistan was signed by MCI Administrator Hamza Shafqat and Uzbek Ambassador to Pakistan Oybek Usmanov. The MoU on cooperation between Surkhandarya Region of Uzbekistan and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan was signed by Secretary Industries Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zulfiqar Ali Shah and Uzbek Ambassador Pakistan Oybek Usmanov.

JOINT DECLARATION

On Next Steps in the Strategic Partnership between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

1. At the invitation of the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan His Excellency Mr. Imran Khan, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan His Excellency Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev paid a state visit to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on March 3-4, 2022.

2. The Leaders of the two countries held comprehensive consultations and considered all aspects of bilateral relations, paying special attention to the development of cooperation in the trade and economic sphere, science and technology, culture, education, security and defense and regional connectivity.

3. Emphasizing the centuries-old historical, religious, cultural and scientific ties between the two peoples and based on previously reached agreements, the parties agreed to further deepen and expand strategic partnership in all areas and in this context, decided to conclude a treaty on strategic partnership.

4. The Leaders also exchanged views on issues of global and regional importance, intensifying contacts in international forums, including within the framework of the United Nations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Economic Cooperation Organization.

5. The two Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to close interaction based on common positions and to continue the practice of mutual support at international and regional forums on all issues of mutual interest.

6. Prime Minister Imran Khan congratulated the President of Uzbekistan on the chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in 2022 and expressed Pakistan's full support for Uzbekistan's activities within the SCO and OIC, including the holding of the SCO Summit in the second half of 2022.

7. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev expressed the readiness to provide support to Pakistan's initiative to create a poverty alleviation mechanism during the period of Uzbekistan's chairmanship in the SCO.

8. Welcoming the 30th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations, the two Leaders agreed to celebrate this milestone in a befitting manner by organizing joint activities.

9. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev shared his vision on the "New Uzbekistan" strategy and stated that the reform process is aimed at the socio-economic interests of the people of Uzbekistan and the region as a whole. The Strategy lays emphasis on strengthening economic diplomacy and sets tasks to bring existing relations with South Asia, in particular with Pakistan, to a new level of strategic partnership.

10. Highlighting the achievements in the socio-economic sphere, Prime Minister Imran Khan outlined his vision of the "Naya Pakistan" centered on social justice and economic security. He said that Pakistan's main emphasis has shifted from geo-politics to geo-economics. The Prime Minister shared details about the "Ehsaas" program aimed at reducing poverty and underscored that Pakistan's "Qaumi Sehat Card" (National Health Card) program is the first initiative in the field of medical micro-insurance for the citizens of Pakistan.

11. The two Leaders stressed the importance of developing institutionalized cooperation between the two countries within the five main pillars of Pakistan's "Vision Central Asia" political and diplomatic, trade and investment, energy and connectivity, security and defense and people-to-people relations.

12. Noting with satisfaction the intensification of the exchange of high-level visits between the two countries, the Leaders warmly recalled the positive agreements in the areas of trade and investment, customs, military education, culture and tourism, as well as visa facilitation for representatives of business community and tourist groups, reached within the framework of official visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to the Republic of Uzbekistan on July 15-16, 2021.

13. The two Leaders agreed to expand cooperation between

the parliamentary bodies, exchange visits of the leaders of the Senate and the National Assembly of Pakistan and the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan and hold meetings between the established inter-parliamentary groups of friendship and cooperation.

14. The leaders noted with satisfaction that over the past five years, bilateral trade has increased fivefold, and despite the pandemic, it grew by another 50 percent last year.

15. The two Leaders welcomed the signing of Preferential Trade Agreement between Uzbekistan and Pakistan and the entry into force of the Transit Trade Agreement. These agreements are the sign of the beginning of a new era in bilateral trade relations and will serve to increase mutual trade by utilizing existing opportunities.

16. The Leaders welcomed the convening of 7th session of the Uzbek-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic and Scientific and Technical Cooperation, 2nd round of Bilateral Political Consultations, the Joint Business Forum and the 4th meeting of the Business Council, held on February 28 March 2, 2022. They welcomed the understandings reached as a result of these meetings in textiles, pharmaceuticals, building materials, banking and finance, the chemical industry and other areas.

17. The Leaders noted with satisfaction the interregional cooperation and linkages.

18. The Leaders recalled the outcomes of the International Conference "Central and South Asia: Regional connectivity. Challenges and Opportunities" held on July 15-16 2021 in Tashkent.

19. The two Leaders agreed on the need to fast track measures to further expand the connectivity agenda and economic integration. They acknowledged key role of agreed connectivity corridors which envisage expansion of trade links through offering investment opportunities in the transport network, power pipelines and Special Economic Zones in the interests of the two countries, region and beyond.

20. The Leaders reaffirmed the important role of the Termez-Mazar-e-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway project for the future of the region. It was agreed to evolve a joint "Road Map", which includes measures to develop a feasibility study for the project and start construction work on both sides. They acknowledged that the Trans-Afghan Railway project is the most economical and shortest route connecting Central Asia with Pakistan's ports of Karachi, Gwadar and Qasim.

21. The two Leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation in the field of air, rail and road connectivity.





22. Recognizing with satisfaction the steady development of bilateral cooperation in security and defense, the two Leaders agreed to intensify dialogue and constructive cooperation between the armed forces of both countries, including through inter-staff talks and joint military exercises, training and exchange of professional experience. They welcomed the establishment of Uzbekistan-Pakistan Joint Commission on Security which held its first meeting in Islamabad on November 2, 2021.

23. Prime Minister Imran Khan and President Shavkat Mirziyoyev acknowledged the common cultural heritage and centuries-old fraternal ties and reaffirmed their commitment to further expanding cultural ties and relations between the two nations. In this regard, they welcomed the holding of the first Joint Seminar on the life of Zaheeruddin Muhammad Babur in Islamabad. The Leaders reviewed the progress of joint cultural and media projects, including the translation of Pakistani serials into Uzbek language and joint production on Babur.

24. The Leaders agreed to strengthen the cooperation between the leading education institutions of the two countries.

25. The Leaders praised the development of cooperation in the field of tourism and welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on ziyarat tourism.

26. In order to facilitate tourism and business linkages between the two countries, the Leaders agreed to launch regular flights on the routes "Tashkent - Lahore" and "Islamabad - Tashkent".

27. The Leaders expressed deep concern on the continuing trend of Islamophobia. Supporting the efforts of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to mark the International Day against Islamophobia on 15 March, the sides agreed to cooperate in the UN

General Assembly.

28. Uzbekistan expressed its full support for Pakistan's candidacy for non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council for 2025-2026.

29. The Leaders agreed to continue providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and emphasized that peace and stability in Afghanistan is essential to advance connectivity agenda which will lead to regional prosperity.

30. The importance of economic assistance to Afghanistan and un-freezing of Afghan foreign bank reserves was also stressed.

31. Uzbekistan expressed its gratitude to Pakistan for hosting 17th extraordinary session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on Afghanistan on December 19, 2021.

32. Prime Minister Imran Khan briefed the Uzbek side on the latest developments in Jammu & Kashmir, including concerns, position and pressing issues at the moment. The Leaders stressed the importance of cooperation and dialogue to resolve all outstanding regional disputes and achieve the goal of lasting peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond.

33. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev expressed his thanks to the Prime Minister of Imran Khan and the people of Pakistan for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to him personally and the Uzbek delegation and expressed his best wishes for their continued progress and prosperity.

34. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev invited Prime Minister Imran Khan to pay an official visit to Uzbekistan at a convenient time.

35. The Declaration was signed in duplicate on March 3, 2022 in Islamabad in Uzbek and English.



President Mirziyoyev visit to further cement Uzbek-Pak ties, says Furqat

The book launch was attended by approximately 100 participants from Pakistan and Uzbekistan and was moderated by Dr. Fauzia Hadi Ali

D.N.A

ISLAMABAD: Furqat A. Sidiqov, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan has stated that this Book launch is symbolic and very timely as President of Uzbekistan, His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev is visiting Pakistan. He has made massive democratic and social reforms which are similar to what Pakistan is doing right now. The first initiative by Uzbekistan was that we have an open foreign policy and friendly policy. We have solved all problems with Central Asia and have no problems and issues now. We have opened up all the borders. Tourism in Central Asian countries has increased. In this book the next stage of reforms in Uzbekistan are mentioned. Second part is about regional connectivity which is very significant. He expressed these views on the occasion of Book Launch of "SHAVKAT MIRZIYOYEV: NEW UZBEKISTAN STRATEGY" jointly organized by

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of Islamic Republic of Pakistan Embassy of Republic of Uzbekistan to Islamic Republic of Pakistan in collaboration with Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad at Pakistan China Friendship Center, Islamabad. Prof. Bakhrom Abdukhalimov - Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor explained the different parts of the books. He stated that Uzbekistan is planning to develop its economy using innovation and technology. First thing mentioned in this book is climate which is very important for Central Asia as the climate is rapidly changing and Uzbekistan must give priority to this issue including water shortage. This book also highlights the significance of participation of Uzbekistan in International relations. Uzbekistan is an open country and is trying to play an important role in Central Asia. Prof. Dr. Saleem Mazhar, Pro Vice Chancellor, University of the

Punjab, Lahore stated that this book is the compilation of articles about the President of Uzbekistan, His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev. This book includes the speeches/addresses by the President at different forums. The important point mentioned in this book is that countries evolve their policies with the passage of time for betterment. This book addresses the strategies for New Uzbekistan that will be adopted by the President.

Syed Mubashir Tauqir, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan stated that Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoy cordial relationship. Based on common heritage and religion we look forward to further strengthening our relations through joint collaboration in various sectors including art, film and documentaries. The book launch was attended by approximately 100 participants from Pakistan and Uzbekistan and was moderated by Dr. Fauzia Hadi Ali, Director, Regional Integration Center (RIC), University of the Punjab, Lahore.

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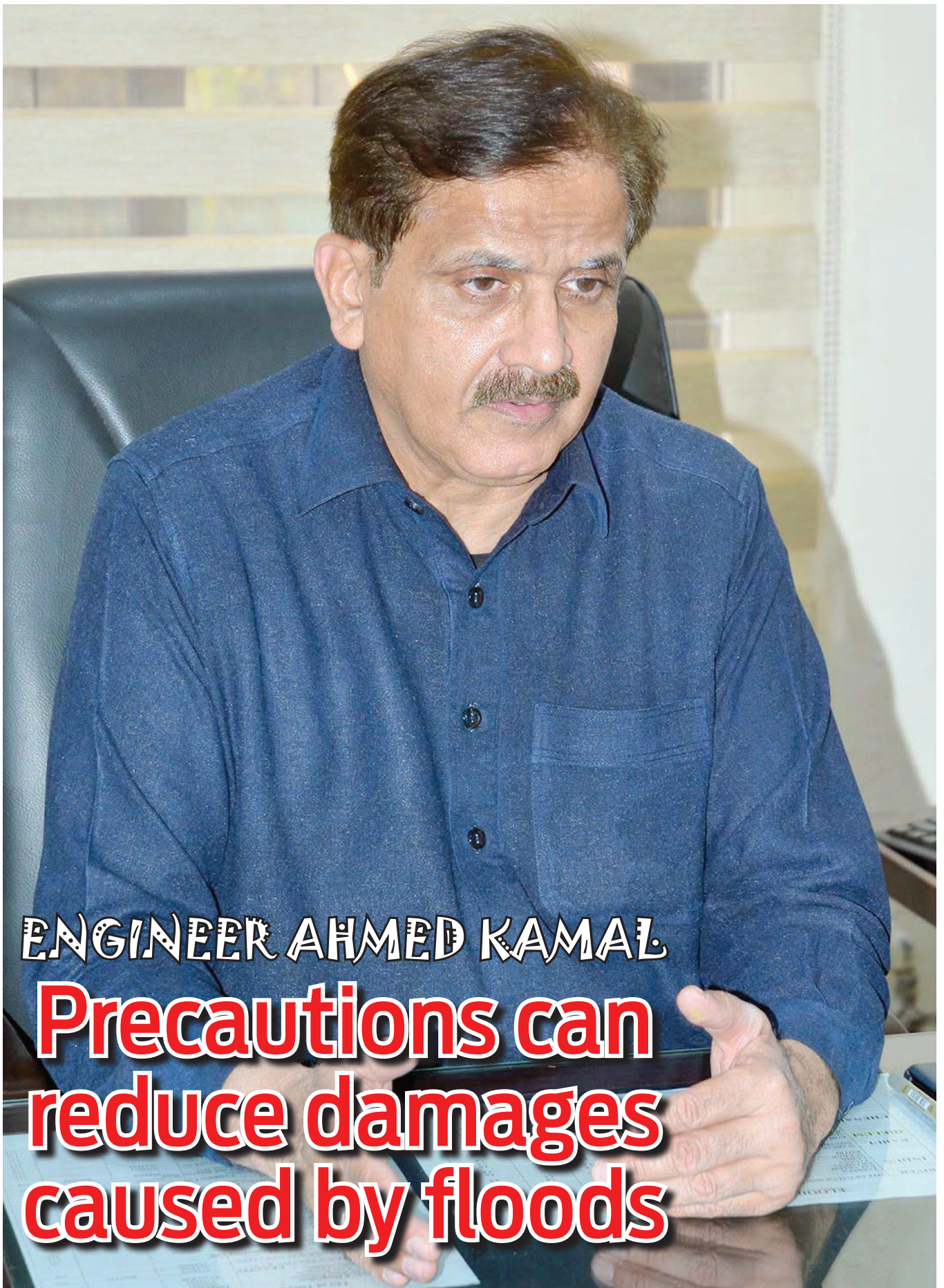
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ENGINEER AHMED KAMAL

**Precautions can
reduce damages
caused by floods**

Chairman Federal Flood Commission talks to Centreline

ENGINEER Ahmed Kamal, Chief Engineering Advisor and Chairman Federal Flood Commission said in an interview that the engineering body was established by the Government after creation of Pakistan as 'Central Engineering Authority' under the Chief Engineering Adviser. It was re-designated as Chief Engineering Advisor's Office after establishment of WAPDA in 1959. The then Office of Chief Engineering Adviser (O/o CEA) was mandated to mainly deal with the issues related to water, irrigation & power sector. Subsequently, two Wings i.e. Civil Engineering Wing and Power Engineering Wing were established in Office of Chief Engineering Adviser. In 1977, Federal Flood Commission (FFC) was established for the purpose of Integrated Flood Management at National level and it was decided that Chief Engineering Advisor's Office will be the Secretariat of FFC. In 1987, Dam Safety Council was added to the office of CEA in 1981 to review plans for new dams & barrages and to carry out inspections of existing dams with DSO WAPDA. Administration and Accounts Wing of O/o CEA/CFFC provides logistic support to above stated four technical wings.

By means of being an ex-officio member of IRSA, and having pride to represent Pakistan in International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) and in International Commission on Irrigation & Drainage (ICID), the CEA & CFFC has a very strong coordinating role with Commissioner for Indus Water Treaty.

Besides a study on Indus River Regime, O/o CEA & CFFC conducted three seminal studies on environmental flows and sea-water intrusion, known as 'Kotri Barrage Studies', which offered crucial input that went into drafting of IRSA Act and Water Apportionment Accord of 1992.

The office has the following core wings: (i) Civil Engineering Wing who is rendering its services since its creation in 1959.

(ii) Federal Flood Commission- added to the Office of CEA in 1977.

(iii) Power Wing – added to the office of CEA/ CFFC in fifties.

(iv) Dam Safety Council – added to the office of CEA in 1981 (DSC-Wing)

(v) Admin & Finance Wing.

Pakistan is a country with diverse type of land and fluctuating pattern of climate. Climate is usually considered hot and dry in Pakistan but it has shown significant obvious variations in last few years. Many districts and urban centers located along the rivers banks are ever on a great risk to confront with various types of floods i.e. riverine flood, flash flood and urban floods particularly in Punjab & Sindh provinces. The floods cause damages to hundred thousand acres of fertile agricultural lands, standing crops and affect adjoining abadies with monetary loss in billions of rupees. Major direct flood damages are caused to agricultural lands, standing crops, urban and rural abadies, besides, other private & public property.



“

Flooding of the Indus River and its tributaries represents the greatest hazard in Pakistan. Floods occur usually in summer season (July - October).

Therefore, damages to agriculture sector are mainly to the standing Kharif crops. However, in some cases the inundated lands do not dry up in time and ultimately affecting sowing Rabi crops

”

The riverine floods are generally caused due to heavy concentrated rainfall in the rivers catchments, during monsoon season, which is sometimes augmented by snow melt flows. Monsoon currents originating from Bay of Bengal and resultant depressions (weather system) often result in heavy downpour in the Himalayan foothills, which occasionally generate destructive floods in main rivers and their tributaries. Sometimes exceptionally high flood flows in major rivers are generated due to formation of temporary natural dams by landslide or glacier movement and their subsequent collapse.

Flooding of the Indus River and its tributaries represents the greatest hazard in Pakistan. Floods occur usually in summer season (July - October). Therefore, damages to agriculture sector are mainly to the standing Kharif crops. However, in some cases the inundated lands do not dry up in time and ultimately affecting sowing Rabi crops. The major rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej) and secondary rivers (Kabul, Swat etc.) cause flood losses by inundating low lying areas around the rivers bed by damaging irrigation and communication network, besides, land erosion along the rivers banks. In the upper part of the Indus Basin (Punjab & Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), floodwater spilling over the high banks of the rivers generally turns back to the main rivers channel.

He further said, in the lower parts of the country i.e. Lower Indus Basin (Sindh province); River Indus is flowing at ridge i.e. higher elevation than adjoining lands. That is why flood embankments have been provided along both sides of the river. The flood water, if breaches the embankments do not return to the main river channel. This largely extends the area and period of inundation resulting in more damages to abadies, standing crops and other private as well as public infrastructure. Sometimes breaches are occurred in the flood embankments, when the rivers attain the Exceptionally High Flood Level. At times, the flood embankments are breached at predetermined locations to save the main structures across main rivers. The remodelling/rehabilitation works of Barrages, on the basis of 100 years





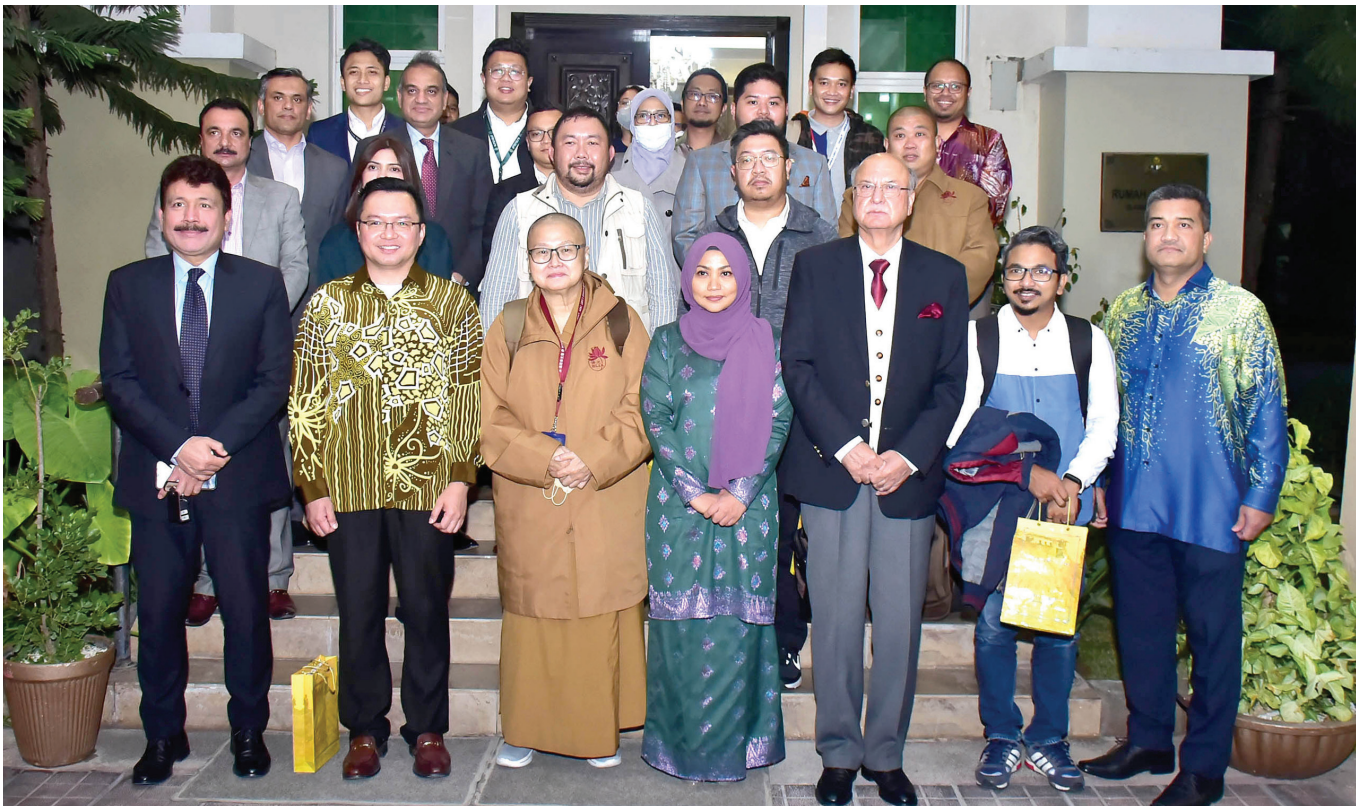
return period, were taken up by the Punjab & Sindh province. The construction of Khanki Barrage on River Chenab, rehabilitation of Jinnah Barrage & Taunsa Barrages on River Indus, Sulemanki Barrage on River Sutlej and Balloki Barrage over Ravi River have been completed. The remodeling work regarding Trimmu and Panjnad Barrages over Chenab River is underway. Remolding works on Guddu & Sukkur Barrages across River Indus is in progress. He told since its creation, Pakistan has faced various severe flood events i.e. 1950, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1959, 1973, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1994, 1995, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019 & 2020, the 2010 floods were worst ever in the country. The floods of various magnitudes affected vast areas in the four provinces including Gilgit-Baltistan, Merged Area, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Ex-FATA) & Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

Owing to adverse impacts of climate change, in the recent years, vulnerabilities of communities to coastal & urban flooding have also increased. Flood damages are caused mainly due to riverine flooding in main rivers and flash floods in Secondary & Tertiary Rivers/Hill Torrents, Coastal flooding due to Cyclone & urban flooding due to torrential rains and inadequate storm drainage facilities, besides, GLOFs in northern parts of the country. According to World Urbanization Prospects (2014 revision), world is experiencing a historically unprecedented transition from predominantly rural to urban living. In 1950, one-third of the world's population lived in cities. Today the number has already reached more than 50% and by 2050, city dwellers are expected to account for more than two-thirds of the world's population. This rapid rise will mainly take place in developing countries. Africa and Asia are likely to be the fastest urbanizing regions with the urban population projected to reach 56% in Africa and 64% in Asia by 2050 (currently at 40% and 48%, respectively). He said that in last Flood damage can be greatly reduced. If people become aware that they should not build houses in river beds and take flood warning seriously. Do not delay in reaching safe places on flood warning.

“ According to World Urbanization Prospects (2014 revision), world is experiencing a historically unprecedented transition from predominantly rural to urban living. In 1950, one-third of the world's population lived in cities. Today the number has already reached more than 50% and by 2050, city dwellers are expected to account for more than two-thirds of the world's population ”

Malaysian envoy hosts dinner for humanitarian relief mission

Venerable Jue Cheng says she was keen to explore cultural and historical heritage of Pakistan



Ansar M Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Venerable Jue Cheng Deputy Secretary General Southeast Asia of Buddha's Light International Association has said by visiting Pakistan her dream has come true because it was her earnest desire to visit this beautiful country at least once. She had heard a lot about Pakistan and its rich cultural heritage and now had a chance to explore it physically. Venerable Jue Cheng expressed these views while speaking at a dinner hosted by Charge d Affaires of the Malaysian High Commission DEDDY FAISAL AHMAD SALLEH. Mr. Aamer Ahmed Atozai Director-General of East Asia Pacific Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lt. General Tahir Mahmud Qazi Former High Commissioner of Pakistan to Malaysia and others also attended the dinner. Venerable Jue Cheng further said, during this trip she, along with her delegation, will have a chance of visiting Afghanistan as well – a country which, like Pakistan also remained at the top of her agenda. She was

all praise for Pakistani government for taking care of Buddhist places in Pakistan.

Amir Ahmed Atozai, Director General Ministry of Foreign Affairs in his speech welcomed the delegation to Pakistan and suggested them explore more and more cultural and historical sites.

He said the relationship between Pakistan and Malaysian has always been outstanding because of unanimity of views on regional as well global issues. This beautiful relationship has been reinvigorated by the recent high level meetings between the leaderships of two countries. He said Malaysia had made tremendous progress in all spheres and Pakistani too feels pride in the fact that our brotherly country is making positive strides towards development and economic growth. He also briefly talked about recently held OIC forum on Afghanistan and termed it a great success.

Afghanistan he said is also a brotherly country and Pakistan earnestly wanted peace to prevail there. Afghans have suffered the most and whatever happens in Afghanistan it has a direct impact on Pakistan as well

therefore it is essential that peace returns to Afghanistan sooner rather than later.

Charge d Affaires of the Malaysian High Commission DEDDY FAISAL AHMAD SALLEH in his extended warmest welcome to all distinguished guests to Rumah Malaysia or Malaysia House for the dinner. He said the dinner was hosted for the Delegation of Malaysia Humanitarian Relief Mission to the People of Afghanistan.

While briefing about the delegation he said, Wisma Putra, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, in collaboration with the private sector – Golden Horses Digital Investment Bank and NGOs including Global Peace Mission and Buddha's Light International Association (BLIA), is undertaking Malaysia's humanitarian relief mission to Afghanistan following the dire humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

'Our Foreign Minister, the Dato' Sri Saifuddin Abdullah this morning sent off the special flight bound for the capital city Kabul, with a night stopover in the beautiful city of Islamabad. The special flight transported 5 tonnes of winter clothing, jackets, blankets,





milk powder and other essentials for the needy people and children of Afghanistan. These items will be distributed by the Global Peace Mission and its Afghan NGO affiliates to the intended recipients. This token contribution by the people of Malaysia is hoped to ease their suffering during the harsh winter season', he added. Deddy Faisal further said, Malaysian NGOs have been actively involved in improving the lives of communities at home and abroad. NGOs such as GPM, Muslim Volunteer Malaysia (MVM), Muslim Care Malaysia (MCM), MERCY Malaysia and Pertubuhan Ikatan Kekeluargaan Rumpun Nusantara (HaRUM) have been undertaking humanitarian relief missions for the Afghan people. BLIA, to be followed by Malaysian Consultative Council for Islamic Organization (MAPIM), will now also provide much needed assistance to Afghanistan. In addition, the Centre for Economic Policy Research

Malaysia is also ready render assistance, especially in establishing Islamic banking and finance based on the Syariah jurisprudence. Malaysian private sector companies and institutions stand ready to offer their expertise and in-depth knowledge to Afghanistan to help rebuild and reconstruct Afghanistan including in the areas of infrastructure development, health, education, mining of mineral resources, telecommunications, and new energy. In the true spirit of Keluarga Malaysia, the humanitarian relief mission demonstrates the solidarity of the people of Malaysia, of different ethnicities and beliefs coming together to render assistance to the Afghan people during their time of need. He said Malaysia will continue with efforts to have a constructive engagement and extend assistance, as well as capacity building to the brotherly people of Afghanistan.

15th anniversary of Romania's accession to EU marked at Lahore

European funds of tens of billions of euros have entered the country. And it continues to come, contributing to investments that raise the level of quality of life and bring closer to us the Western standards to which we relate

News Desk



LAHORE: A special event marking the 15th anniversary of Romania's accession to the European Union was held on Friday, 18th of February 2022 in Lahore, at the Governor's House. The event was organized by the Embassy of Romania with the support of The Friends of Romania organization based in Lahore. The event was honoured by the presence of H.E. Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar, Governor of Punjab and other important Pakistani dignitaries. To mark this occasion, the Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Nicolae Goia addressed the following speech:

"We mark this year 15 years since Romania's accession to the European Union. On January 1, 2007, our country became part of this unique European project, the most formidable political project of the mankind of all times, which ensured and continues to ensure the stability and prosperity of our continent. The entry into the European Union took place through the joint effort of the Romanian people, political class and diplomats. Therefore, Romania's belonging to the EU is not a given but is being built on the grounds of common solutions, solidarity in difficult times and further protection of the European way of life, democracy and rule of law. After being admitted to the European Union, Romania has rep-

resentatives in all the European institutions and Romanian citizens benefit from the rights conferred by the European citizenship. The Romanian language has become one of the official languages of the European Union, and all Community documents have also been translated into Romanian. The measure of the success of our accession to the EU is confirmed both by the maintenance of a wide support of Romanian citizens for the Union and by the well-being brought about in the 15 years of membership of the Union. Romania's Gross Domestic Product tripled after joining the EU reaching 547 billion US \$ (PPP), and the GDP per capita (PPP) became almost four times higher reaching close to 30,000 US \$. Thus, according to the World Bank, Romania has become a high income economy, a status hard even to imagine before our country integration in the EU. European expertise and funding have made their mark in almost all economic fields, whether we are talking about rehabilitation and infrastructure projects at local or regional level, about supporting the development and modernization of Romanian agriculture, about participation in research projects. European funds of tens of billions of euros have entered the country. And it continues to come, contributing to investments that raise the level of quality of life and bring closer to us the Western standards to which we relate. Another more than EUR 90 billion is made available to us by the European Union in the coming years through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan and the multi-annual financial framework. But perhaps the most important gain was that of free movement for people, goods and services. Millions of Romanians work, learn or spend their holidays in other European Union countries. The majority of Romanian exports are in EU Member States. The European Single Market is open to Romanian entrepreneurs, who benefit from free access and support provided through European funding.

All this allowed Romania's integration into the EU in a lasting and profound manner. Projects financed with European funds, the absorption of which must increasingly be streamlined, are undeniably contributing to our economic and social development, supporting reforms and advancing measures at national level that are difficult to achieve alone. Romania is more connected, innovative and prosperous than ever before in its history, constantly being among the fastest growing economies in the EU. The European solidarity, also marked by the historic decision to adopt, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Recovery and Resilience Plan, will allow the support of the reforms necessary for an inclusive development course, which will benefit all Romanians, regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas, in any part of Romania, if they want an education adapted to the innovative requirements of the economy of the future or access to better health services. As solidarity and unity are a two-way course, Romania remains firmly committed to supporting the objective of strengthening the European Union.

Zulfiqar's very first works displayed at Satrang Art Gallery

Asma Rashid Khan Director Satrang Art Gallery briefed the audience about the salient features of the exhibition





DNA

ISLAMABAD: Satrang Gallery on Wednesday organised - a solo exhibition of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at Islamabad Serena Hotel. Asma Rashid Khan Director Satrang Art Gallery briefed the audience about the salient features of the exhibition. Bera Paar is Zulfikar's very first exhibition in Islamabad and the series of multimedia works in the exhibition are a result of the artist's long term research project Bulhan Nameh. Zulfikar's focus is on a particular stretch of the River Indus, in Sukkur, a particularly mystical area with significant shrines and temples. This series of work brings together the nuanced historical and cultural richness of Sindh.

"Bulhan Nameh is a long term research based project that looks at a selection of sites on the River Indus between Sukkur and Rohri in Sindh, Pakistan. Taking its name for the Sindhi word for the Indus River Dolphin, bulhan, this series intends to look at how in this 10 km long stretch of river punctuated at one end by the British era Sukkur Barrage and at the other by the island shrine of Khwaja Khizr, known locally to Hindus and Muslims as Zinda Pir. Here wildlife, history and spirituality collide with colonialism, capitalism, feudalism, as well as the ever more present modern state. Nameh, is a Farsi, Urdu and Sindhi word for diary - this particular diary is written through printmaking and textile. Cyanotypes, analog photographs and archive are paired with traditional Sindhi embroidery as a way to root this project within its current cultural landscape, as well as with memory, nostalgia and a sense of loss. Sukkur is the last

place where the river is still full much like She was before the dams and barrages, it is the last refuge of the Indus River Dolphin and a site that evidences syncretic religious practices that still carry on in modern Sindh. The Indus is personified as Sindhu Mata, a river that not only gave Sindh its name but also India, Hinduism and all derivatives of these words. In my research I do not intend to expose all elements of the river at this location but instead I hope to re-mystify the Indus and in so doing allow us to re-imagine Her as a living and ever changing entity rather than just an exploitable resource."

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (b. Damascus, 1990) is an artist and curator whose work resurrects complex histories in the South Asian, South West Asian and North African region. In the process he unpacks the intersections of religion, storytelling, futurity and environmental degradation through a multi-media practice rooted in printmaking, textile and performance. Bhutto has shown work and curated exhibitions globally, as well as spoken extensively on the intersections of faith, radical thought and futurity at Columbia University, UC Berkeley, NYU, Stanford and the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. Bhutto is currently based in Karachi, Pakistan and received an MAH in History of Art from the University of Edinburgh in 2014 and an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2016.

US, Pakistan Air Force carry out joint exercise

ISLAMABAD: For the first time in three years, the U.S. and Pakistan Air Forces held a joint exercise, Falcon Talon 2022, at a Pakistan Operational Air Force Base from February 26-March 4 to further U.S. and Pakistani security cooperation objectives in the region. Chargé d'affaires Angela P. Aggel-

er and visiting Director of Exercises and Engagements at U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Major General Steven deMilliano participated in a closing ceremony of the joint exercise between the United States and Pakistan Air Forces on March 4. Chargé Aggeler congratulated and thanked the Pakistan Air Force for hosting this important exercise. "It is a real pleasure to welcome so many members of the U.S. Air Force to Pakistan and to see F-16 aircraft operated by both Pakistan and the United States airmen, flying and training side by side," said Chargé Aggeler, who observed part of the final exercise and greeted U.S. and Pakistan airmen and women as well as technical staff of both Air Forces. The Chargé emphasized that "through exercises like Falcon Talon 2022, we are sustaining a part-



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nership that helps build regional peace, security, and stability with a shared understanding of threats and means to mitigate them.” This exercise event was the fourth of its kind, with previous iterations held in 2019, 2011, and 2009. Last week’s training included flying operations, a large-force exercise, and training focused on partner nation integration across multiple capabilities including maintenance, security forces, and other support. “Falcon Talon 2022 comes at a key moment as the United States and Pakistan mark the 75th anniversary of our bilateral relations this year,” noted Chargé Aggeler. The exercise also coincided with 70 years of partnership between US Air Force and Pakistan’s Air Force and aims to strengthen real-world operational efforts against security threats in the region. – DNA

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50 years of bilateral relations UAE embassy, MOFA organize mini marathon

Ambassador Al Zaabi hailed the deep rooted relations between two friendly countries, derived from the depth of Islamic brotherhood and geographical, cultural and historical bonds





Staff Report

Islamabad: The UAE Embassy in Islamabad in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a Mini-Marathon to celebrate the 50 years of bilateral relations between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. A large number of athletes from different nationalities and Ambassadors and representatives of diplomatic community participated in this healthy and family-friendly 5 km. and 2km. run on Saturday 5th March 2022 in Diplomatic Enclave, Islamabad.

Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al Zaabi, the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the occasion said that the Mini Marathon and remark-

able participations from all walks of life reflects the long-standing brotherhood, partnerships, and shared values between the two brotherly countries.

Ambassador Al Zaabi hailed the deep rooted relations between two friendly countries, derived from the depth of Islamic brotherhood and geographical, cultural and historical bonds that evolved into a strategic partnership between the two countries and peoples over recent years. He extended his thanks to the Government of Pakistan for facilitating the Marathon and to Gerry's, Sheikh Zayed International Academy, Bank Al Falah, DP World for sponsoring this event.

The UAE Embassy in Islamabad is organizing number of social and cultural activities to celebrate the golden jubilee of PAK- UAE relations this year.

Western Disinformation Campaign: Bye Bye to Journalism



Dr M Ali Hamza

THREE days after Kyiv had asked Ankara to close the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits to Russian ships, Mevlut Cavusoglu; Turkey's foreign minister, said on 1st March that Turkey will activate the Montreux Convention and ban Russian war vessels from entering the Black Sea through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits. Although Turkey has yet to spell out its official statement but France24 reporting confidently saying that Turkish government has invoked the clause of the Montreux Convention, regarding the movement of naval vessels through the straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Let's first understand what this convention is and what the implications of invoking it in the current situation are. This convention was signed on 20th July 1936 at the Montreux Palace in Switzerland and went into effect on November 09, 1936. This convention regulates the traffic in and out of the Black Sea. It provides for completely free access for civilian vessels and gives Turkey the right to restrict the navies of countries not belonging to the Black Sea. You can get further details about this Convention online from open sources. The questions that arise are: 1) Why has Turkey decided to invoke this convention? 2) How will it affect Russia or Ukraine? 3) Does this invocation show Turkish partiality? These are the questions which come to mind right away. The first 2 questions can be best answered by the relevant countries and their representatives. But the third question is open to interpretation. And yes it is "interpretation" that is the base of Western reporting these days. The Western journalists have stopped seeking facts. They utter all the interpretations or narratives that they are provided by their respective handlers. Now the Western Media i.e. France24, is portraying this news as a victory for Ukraine, Turkish partiality in Ukraine's favor, and Turkish declaration of its anti-Russia position. How-

ever, a very quick fact check can tell you that such a decision by Turkey has nothing to do with its "Anti-Russia" stance, and the Russian Navy will not be affected by such controls. The Russian Navy belongs to a Black Sea state so its movement will not be and cannot be hindered. Secondly Ukraine is without a navy right now, so in fact Turkey is effectively blocking any Western nations from embarking on a naval endeavor. So dear France24, it is a blockade against Western warmongers. Turkish decision is indeed a decision made by a sovereign state, according to the current situation in the region, and we hope they must have weighed all outcomes and consequences. But why are the Western media outlets spreading such unfounded information, and spinning it? There could be multiple purposes, for instance convincing other Muslim countries, like Pakistan, to rethink their position. The imperialist Western minds understand that Turkey is among the leading Muslim countries, so an anti-Russia partisan decision by Turkey might fool others into rethinking their positions.

Another example is BBC showing a report, where allegedly Russians are making a mass exodus towards Finland. There are some fundamental flaws in this report. First of all the Finnish embassy and consulate are not issuing visas from Moscow or Saint Petersburg, except for certain special cases, and mind you this restricted visa issuance has nothing to do with the current conflict. These are the restrictions imposed during the COVID19 pandemic.

The fact of the matter is that many Russian citizens, who had arrived in the EU during the days preceding this conflict and air traffic ban imposed by the EU, have no way of returning, so most of them have crossed through Finland to return to Russia. Although there are other border crossings as well, but Estonia has closed its border, so people return through Finland. Unfortunately

BBC decided to flip the video and show it as if people were running away from Russia, but how and why is BBC doing so? Is BBC not afraid of being sued for false reporting? Or is BBC not afraid of losing credibility?

First of all BBC is not a monolithic organization. The part of BBC which is spreading false information, or which is lying, is BBC International or BBC World Service. This organization is not regulated by the Office of Communications (Ofcom), which is the main media regulatory authority in UK. So BBC International can lie with impunity, and it is not that such unregulated right to fake journalism is unintentional. This is by design. The BBC at home, which is regulated, tries to adhere to basic rules of professionalism and decency, hence providing a false umbrella of BBC brand, under which BBC International blatantly lies. We hope one day this world will come to its senses and such shameful display of disregard to human life and intellect will not be practiced. Instead of lying about Russian citizens running away to Finland, BBC might have been better off reporting that last week a death threat was delivered against children at a daycare center in Helsinki, Finland. This daycare center caters for children of Russian parents, who work in Helsinki. But, unfortunately BBC is tasked by its masters to do everything to cover-up all Nazism, fascism, xenophobia, Russo-phobia, and all other growingly negative trends in Europe and the UK. You cannot hide the ugliness of Nazism, by pulling masks of deceit on your Western faces.

What the Western media is doing is continuously lying in an attempt to pump a piece of false information, which could or might create a cascading effect of stirring anti-Russia stances. Let us not take the information provided by these media giants at face-value. Let us do their job and do some research, before debunking this factory of lies, deceit, and hyped up propaganda.



AMBASSADOR OF SWITZERLAND CALLS ON AIR CHIEF

AMBASSADOR of Switzerland H.E Mr. Benedict de Cerjat called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office today. The visiting dignitary lauded the professionalism of PAF personnel and the exceptional progress made by PAF over the years, especially through indigenization. The Air Chief highlighted that both countries enjoy cordial relations and reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral cooperation between the air forces of the two countries. Various matters of mutual interest and professional cooperation also came under discussion during the meeting. – DNA

High Commissioner of Nigeria visits Gujrat chamber

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: High Commissioner of Nigeria met industrialists, international traders and corporate members of Gujrat Chamber of Commerce & Industry here on Tuesday. His Excellency Amb. Mohammed Bello Abioye High Commissioner of Federal Republic of Nigeria in Pakistan visited Gujrat to meet the members of GTCCI on their special invitation. They exchanged ideas to promote economic ties between the two countries. HE Mohammed Bello Abioye had an exhausted discussion with the GTCCI members on different topics. President of GTCCI Mr. Naeem Imtiaz Gondal warmly welcomed the honorable guest and introduced him with the executive body of GTCCI. Later the High Commissioner visited three leading industries including Royal Fans, decent Furnishers and Hameed pottery and learnt about their manufacturing processes. He also expressed his interest in trade between the two countries for products of different industries.

Serena Hotels, EHL collaboration to promote hospitality sector

Ambassador of Switzerland Benedict de Cerjat says this collaboration ensure world class training; Aziz Boolani thanks the Swiss ambassador







Ansar M Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Switzerland Benedict de Cerjat has said EHL was founded in 1893 and is considered as the first hospitality management school in the world. The ambassador termed partnership between Serena Hotels and EHL very important. The ambassador expressed these views on the occasion of a dinner he hosted for the visiting faculty members of the EHL. Ambassador Cerjat said Serena Hotel is one of the best hotels adding he had visited almost all properties country wide. The partnership between Serena Ho-

tels and EHL will not only bring world class standard in hospitality training in Pakistan but it is also in line with the government vision to promote tourism and service sector in Pakistan. Aziz Boolani CEO Serena Hotels South and East Asia while speaking on the occasion thanked the Swiss ambassador hosting the dinner. Aziz Boolani said only a few people knew that Serena Hotels was a Swiss company registered in Switzerland. He said, Serena Hotels Pakistan collaboration with EHL is the right step to develop talents at the middle and senior levels.

Jochen De Peuter, a Consultant at EHL, expressed his gratitude to the Ambassador of Switzerland for hosting him and his colleague. He added, "Today people are using their screens more and more. Be it mobile phones or surfing the Internet, streaming or holding teleconferences on Zoom. So, what we did, we added digitalization in the module of this session hence now e-tourism makes much more sense as compared to two years ago. At EHL we always think from the customer's perspective and this is a part of our philosophy."

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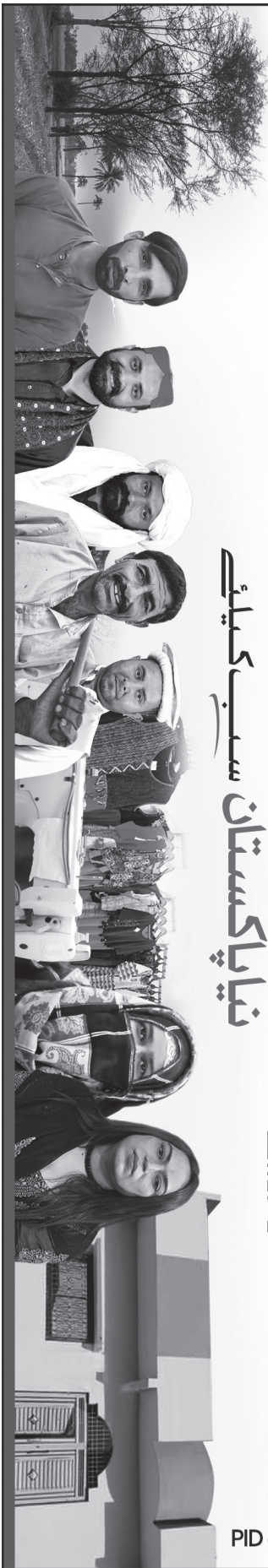
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Promotion of cultural activities govt priority: Shafqat Mahmood

Foundation Art Divvy provides a platform at an institutional level,
locally and internationally to the arts from Pakistan





DNA

ISLAMABAD: It is individuals and organisations like Foundation Art Divvy who keep the cultural scene of Pakistan alive. Your organization has done a fantastic job. The three women who contributed to this event are truly outstanding Shafqat Mahmood, the Federal Minister for Education and Culture said this while speaking as the chief guest. He said, on Foundation Art Divvy's Five-Year Anniversary, we would like to honour our supporters and celebrate the catalogue of the inaugural Pavilion of Pakistan "Manora Field Notes: Naiza Khan" at the Venice Biennale 2019, curated by Zahra Khan and presented by the Pakistan National Council of the Arts & Foundation Art Divvy. The catalogue was published by Mousse Publishing and Foundation Art Divvy in 2019, and it was originally launched in 2019 at the Pakistan High Com-

mission in London.

The catalogue celebration and talk with Foundation Art Divvy Creative Director Zahra Khan and artist Naiza Khan was followed by a film on Foundation Art Divvy. The guest of honour was Minister of Culture & Heritage Mr. Shafqat Mahmood. Several Ambassadors and senior bureaucrats were in attendance, as well as esteemed artists and art enthusiasts. The catalogue of Manora Field Notes, the inaugural Pavilion of Pakistan, documents the Pavilion through richly printed photographs of the multimedia installations as well as images of archival material and the artistic production process. In addition to a statement by curator Zahra Khan, the catalogue includes reflections by leading scholars Iftikhar Dadi, Aamir R. Mufti and Emilia Terracciano, along with an insightful text by Naiza Khan on

her creative process that offers depth to our understanding of the complex exhibition.

Foundation Art Divvy provides a platform at an institutional level, locally and internationally to the arts from Pakistan. In addition to an annual large scale institutional art exhibition: Pakistan's pavilion to the Venice Biennale in 2019; collaterals to the Lahore Biennale: Sagar Theatre on Queen's Road (2020) and I, too, am a part of this history (2018); and Two Wings To Fly, Not One: Aisha Khalid & Imran Qureshi (2017); and a series of exhibitions at Rossi & Rossi Gallery in London, its latest venture has been Divvy Film Festival, celebrating independent Pakistani cinema which recently completed its second iteration, as well as Art Divvy Conversations, a series of insta-live interviews with artists and filmmakers across South Asia.

Poets all praise for Serena Hotels for hosting such a lively event **Serena Hotels hosts mushaira to mark its 20 years success**

CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani assures to make it a regular feature; President Dr. Arif Alvi appreciates participants; distributes bouquets among the poets



Serena Hotels hosts mushaira to mark its 20 years success



Serena Hotels hosts mushaira to mark its 20 years success



Serena Hotels hosts mushaira to mark its 20 years success



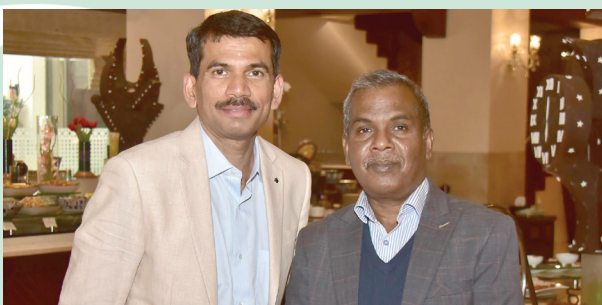
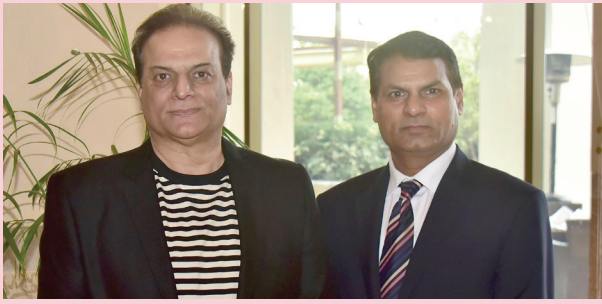
Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD,,: Serena Hotels Islamabad hosted Mushaira Night to celebrate its successful 20 years, featuring 20 renowned poets from across Pakistan. A large number of dignitaries from Corporate, Government and Civil Society attended the event. President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi and the First Lady Begum Samina Alvi graced the occasion. The poets in their distinct styles and having the innate ability to catch the attention of the audience with startling couplets and verses, kept the event a lively and entertaining one. Senior versifiers included Anwar Masood, Iftikhar

Arif, Kishwar Naheed, Khurshid Rizwi and Amjad Islam Amjad, Abbas Tabish, Wasih Shah to name a few. The event was conducted by Rana Shakeel Jazab in a versatile manner, engaging the poets while keeping the audience joyful and upbeat. CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani, speaking at the occasion, said: "Islamabad Serena Hotel is proudly celebrating its 20th Anniversary and plans to host a number of events for the guests, well-wishers, local community and its Associates on the occasion. He thanked all the guests, customers, well-wishers, Government functionaries including local administration and Serena Hotels committed, hospitable and hardworking staff for their continued support in this successful journey.

Shakil Express hosts reception for visiting Ahmed Saleem and his wife former Maldives High Commissioner to Pakistan





ISLAMABAD: Shakil Ahmed of Shakil Express hosted a reception at Islamabad Serena Hotel for the former Maldives High Commissioner to Pakistan Ahmed Salim and his wife who is visiting Pakistan these days . Those who attended the reception included High Commissioner of Maldives Farzana Zahir, High Commissioner of Bangladesh Ruhul Alam Siddique, Ambassador of Vietnam Nguyen Tien Phong, Charge d Affairs of Indian High Commission Dr Suresh, DHM of Nepal Embassy Mr. Paras, Defence Attache of Maldives Col Idress Badeeu, Dr. Abrar ul Hasnain and Editor of Daily Islamabad POST/CENTRELINE and DNA News Agency Ansar Mahmood Bhatti. – Photo Shahid Raju

Speakers stress for Women economic empowerment

Embassies of Muslim majority countries in collaboration with NCSW organize workshop to promote Women Economic Empowerment at the Indonesia embassy





Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: The Embassies of Indonesia, Malaysia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Turkey collaborated with the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) to organize the first hybrid International Workshop session on Muslim Women Pioneers: Leading Economic Growth. The event was a kick start of a series of discussions to share best practices of women's breakthrough leadership in socio-economic affairs, politics, and policymaking in the Islamic world. The opening session was attended by participating embassies, the diplomatic community, Chairperson of the NCSW, Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar, Chairperson of the National Commission for Child Rights, Ms. Afshan Tehseen, Director-General United Nations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Usman Iqbal Jadoon, and featuring the Founder and Managing Director of Kashf Foundation, Ms. Roshanay Zafar and four esteemed panelists who joined the event virtually from Jordan, Ms. Huda Ayesha, Dr. Lana H. Bin Said of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Suryani S.F. Motik of Indonesia and 2015 Nobel Peace Laureate, Ms. Oued Bouchamaoui of Tunisia.

Ambassador Adam Tugio of Indonesia in his opening remarks underscored the importance of Education and skill development of women to enhance their productivity and betterment of the future generation. Ambassador Borhene El-Kamel of Tunisia further added the importance of the progressive role of women and their contribution to nation-building and shared to the audience the experience of women empowerment in Tunisia. The Chairperson of NCSW shed the light of the idea behind the launching of international workshops and suggested making a pool of new talented women entrepreneurs and connecting them with successful global Muslim women entrepreneurs as the next step endeavor to facilitate concrete implementation. The workshop focused on promoting the economic conditions of Muslim Women. The esteemed panelists underscored that Muslim Women have made an outstanding contribution to society and on some occasions served as outstanding leaders. They shared their struggle to start a business and gain success at a later stage, including Noble Peace Laureate, Ms. Oued Bou-

chamaoui from Tunisia. Chairperson of the National Commission for Child Rights, Ms. Afshan Tehseen reminded that "If you support a woman, you support an entire nation." Ambassador Ibrahim Al Madani of Jordan concluded the event by emphasizing that, "The inclusion of Women's economic empowerment should be incorporated as a priority in national development plans." Pakistani Women Entrepreneurs also participated in the event and displayed vibrant and colorful works such as handicrafts, handmade jewelry, rugs, painting, and many more interesting items. Their work and dedication were encouraged and admired by the audience. The next event will focus on sharing best practices on the advancement of women's role in politics in Muslim majority countries followed by the role of Ulama in promoting women empowerment. This series of events will bring together eminent Islamic scholars, researchers, and experts from Muslim majority countries to discuss and share their knowledge, experiences, and best practices in promoting women's rights as guaranteed by Islam.

Khojaly genocide is a dark chapter in human history, say Speakers

The conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh is one of the most contentious issues of the twentieth century



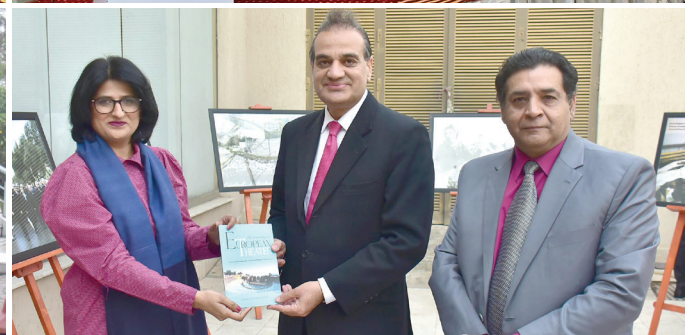
Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Muslim Institute and the Azerbaijani Embassy in Islamabad jointly organized a seminar on “Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing: A Crime against Humanity, the 30th Anniversary of the Khojaly genocide”. Among the speakers were Federal Minister for Food Security and Research, Syed Fakhar Imam, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan, Dewan of Junagadh and Chairman MUSLIM Institute Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali, Ambassador of Turkey Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul, Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov and Vice Chancellor, Quaid-e-Azam University Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah. The conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh is one of the most contentious issues of the twentieth century. Armenian nationalists have been following a policy of ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijani people for the last 200 years. From 1948 to 1953, around 150,000 Azerbaijanis were deported from Armenia. Similarly, in 1988, 250,000 Azerbaijanis were forced out from their historical territories thereby leav-

ing Armenia a mono-ethnic state.

In February 1992, Armenian forces seized the Azeri-populated town of Khojaly. Armenian militants started the massacre of civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Despite the Armenian occupation and genocide, the people of Azerbaijan remained steadfast, and as a result of the 2020 Armenian aggression, war broke out again and Armenia had to concede defeat after 44 days of conflict.

The speakers said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan were two brotherly Islamic countries which were closely related to each other in the spirit of Islam. Pakistan has always supported the principle stance of Azerbaijan on Nagorno-Karabakh, that's why Pakistan has not recognized the Armenia till date. This position of Pakistan is in fact in line with the ideas of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. Speakers further stressed that Pakistan and Azerbaijan have to further strengthen the bilateral relations by cooperating with each other at the regional and international levels and promoting bilateral cooperation in other fields including military, education, trade and other fields while keeping in view the ground realities.



Donald Blome next US envoy to Pakistan

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States Senate has confirmed the appointment of Donald Blome, a career foreign service officer, as the next US Ambassador to Pakistan. Confirming Blome's appointment, the US State Department said: "Partnership with Pakistan is key to progress



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- Incomplete or applications received after the due date will not be entertained.
- Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview.
- No TA/DA is admissible to candidates called for interview.
- The candidates must have to present original documents at the time of interview.
- NTDC reserves the right to withhold the recruitment process at any stage without assigning any reason.
- For detailed information regarding the application, please visit the NTDC website (www.ntdc.com.pk).

General Manager (HR) NTDC
2nd Floor, Shaheen Complex, Egerton Road, Lahore

on regional security, trade and investment, the climate crisis and human rights."

A Middle East expert, Blome is currently the US Ambassador to Tunisia. He has served US diplomatic missions in Kabul, Jerusalem, Cairo, Baghdad and Kuwait.

Blome's appointment comes some four years after Ambassador David Hale completed his three-year term in Islamabad and left for Washington to take over as undersecretary of state for political affairs.

In 2021, Hale joined the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, a Washington-based think-tank, as a Distinguished Diplomatic Fellow on detail from the State Department.

Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Asad Majeed Khan, congratulated Ambassador Blome upon the confirmation of his new stint, saying, "we look forward to working closely with him in further strengthening Pakistan-US partnership."



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- Keep abreast of best global corporate communication practices and accordingly analyze their applicability in the Company;
- Regularly promote the Company vision and mission to internal and external stakeholders using all available avenues;
- Devise, initiate and monitor online and offline media campaigns, including press releases, company website, social media, newsletter and other communication channels etc;
- Serve as the Company media liaison and formal spokesperson by developing harmonious relations with Media and PR agencies;
- To plan, implement and monitor CSR activities of NTDC;
- To supervise event management, branding initiatives including town hall, seminars, workshops & sponsorships.

Accelerate Sustainable Actions to Combat Impact Of Covid-19 on Global Psychological Health



Zahra Ali Khan

THE new Covid SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic has been recorded as extraordinary in late history, leaving a worldwide impact including high paces of mortality and severe psychological deterioration, economic recession, and supported social confinement for billions of individuals. The impact this emergency has had on populace psychological well-being, both in the short-and long term is obscure. There is negligible amount of proof with regards to the intense stage emotional wellness effects of huge scope pandemics across networks. Assembling early proof of the effects of COVID-19 is crucial for illuminating psychological well-being administration conveyance as the pandemic and its lengthy impacts proceed. The long hauling novel corona virus disease emerged as the deadliest and the most unprecedented pandemics in the annals of global crisis, causing worldwide unrest, fear, and expiration of countless human lives. As per the present reports according to WHO, corona virus is affecting more than 219 countries, with a total of 415.5 million confirmed cases, including 5.8million reported deaths across the globe, these may not include unreported cases due to mild symptomatology and 71,640,365 new cases. The US, India and Brazil have seen the highest number of confirmed cases, followed by the UK, Russia and Turkey. Very few places have been left untouched.

The widespread morbidity and fatalities associated with the recurrent waves have led to a mass economic recession, exhaustion of medical equipment and resources, occupational pressure alongside educational distress, and a myriad of psychological implications due to unmet needs and agonizing National and International measures that infringe on personal freedoms to combat the disease are among the key stressors that undeniably augment the widespread emotional distress and run the risk of psychological illnesses associated with Covid-19.

Thereof, the deadly virus marks an unmanageable public health crisis and declared as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, unfamiliar in the last century, the corona virus pandemic

has reported to impact the psychological resilience of an overwhelming majority of individuals across the globe besides being catastrophic for physical health.

The 2019 pandemic has toppled the natural course of existence for practically all the nations in the world. The resultant strategic instructions of social isolation, nationwide lockdowns and stay-in place (mass home confinement) directives have instigated significant effects in terms of mental health including loneliness, stress, anxiety, depression, frustration and uncertainty. The current statistics of COVID-19 show that the psychological effects of contagion and quarantine is not restricted merely to the fear of contracting the virus. Factors such as separation from loved ones, loss of opportunity, vulnerability with regards to the progression of the disease, and pervasive feelings of helplessness have surfaced to cause collective hysteria, panic, and elevated anxiety amongst the populations ranging from mild to severe mental health problems.

Public health emergencies impinge on the health, safety, and welfare of both individuals (causing insecurity, confusion, emotional turmoil, and stigma) and communities (owing to monetary losses, work and school closures, shortage of resources for testing and treatment, and lacking conveyance of necessities). These impacts decipher into a scope of emotional retorts, unhealthy behaviors (such as excessive substance use), and resistance to public health mandates (such as home confinement and vaccination) in individuals who acquire the illness and in the overall population. Broad research in disaster mental health has established that emotional turmoil is omnipresent in affected populations – an inference certain to be reverberating in populations affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Certain groups have been reported to be more vulnerable than others to the psychosocial effects of the pandemic. Particularly, individuals who contract the disease, those are more prone to it (including the elderly, people who are immuno-compromised, and those living or receiving care in foster homes), and individuals with prior history of medi-

cal, or psychiatric complications are at heightened risk for unpleasant mental health consequences.

Children and young adults are especially at risk of psychological sequel as that of difficulty concentrating, boredom, irritability, insomnia, restlessness, nervousness, sense of loneliness, uneasiness, and worries. Health care providers, who are in close contact with COVID-19 positive patients are also predominantly vulnerable to emotional distress in the current pandemic, given their heightened risk of exposure to the virus, constant fear of infecting their loved ones, shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), extended workload, unbearable stress, helplessness and grief seeing infected patients die alone.

Henceforth, emphasis on psychological resilience is imperative during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mutual support from family, friends, and a special caring loved one encourage wellness and enhance coping mechanisms in the midst of dire circumstances. During such a time of globally imposed time & again lockdowns and stay-in orders, it is vital to nurture these relationships and to find ways to stay connected with those we care about.

Day-to-day activities are also crucial. Exposure to the sunlight and outdoors for a few minutes each day and a tad bit of exercise can help improve focus and general feelings of well-being. Taking out a few minutes to reflect what we are grateful for also improves the attitude to cope with stress. Individuals who foster a sense of gratitude have better mental strength and physical well-being. Moreover, one should let alone thoughts of “what if and what not?” as they are fuel to the fire of stress and worry. It will only take us to a place we do not want or need to go.

Another coping mechanism entail discontinuing negative self-talk. The more we ruminate on negative thoughts, the more they have power over us. Most of our negative thoughts are just thoughts, not facts, that are our own skewed perceptions. Recognizing and labeling thoughts as thoughts helps evade the cycle of negativity and turning towards a positive mindset.

BENAZIR INCOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
F-Block, Pak. Secretariat, Islamabad
NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION
PROGRAM REQUEST FOR BIDS (RFB)

Activity Ref.: PK-BISP-268010-GO-RFB

Reference No.: [1-124/Proc/ER & DR/site/BISP/2021]

Project: [NSPP]

Project No: 158643

Credit Number IDA-59730

Procurement of Perimeter & Core Firewall for BISP HQ

Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has received Technical Assistance financing from the World Bank IDA through its National Social Protection Program (NSPP) and intends to apply part of the proceeds for procurement of a turnkey project "**Procurement of Perimeter & Core Firewall for BISP HQ**" with three (03) year's subscription (renewable base).

2. BISP hereby invites Bids in the form of RFB (hereinafter referred to as "the Tender") from original manufacturers/authorized firms or companies for the award of contract for "**Procurement of Perimeter & Core Firewall for BISP HQ**", with three (03) year's subscription (renewable base) as per the following synopsis that shall conform to Schedule of Requirements, Technical Specification Compliance, and other terms and conditions and requirements in the Bidding document: **delivery, deployment, installation, configuration, integration, testing and commissioning**, is the responsibility of the bidder where as it applicable.

Lot. No	Item	Description/Specifications, with three (03) year's subscription (renewable base).	Quantity	Bid Security	Completion period
1	Procurement of Perimeter firewall,	As Per the Bidding document	2	300,000	8-10 weeks
2	Procurement of Core firewall	As Per the Bidding document	2		

3. The complete set of bidding documents are available on the websites of PPRA (www.ppra.org.pk) & BISP (www.bisp.gov.pk) free of cost. The same can also be obtained from Room#236, F-Block, Pak. Secretariat, Islamabad, on submission of a written application on company letterhead, duly supported by a copy of NTN & GST certificates.

4. **Single Stage- One Envelope bidding procedure** shall apply. Bids, duly accompanied by a "Bid Security" i.e. 2% of the bid value or (Rs. 300,000/-), whatsoever is less for each lot, in the shape of a Bank draft/Call Deposit/Demand Draft/Banker's Cheque in the name of Director Procurement, BISP, shall be delivered to the address given below on or before **14th March 2022 at 1100 hours. Bids will be publicly opened at 1130 hours on the same day** at the address given below, in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives, who may choose to attend. Electronic bidding shall not be permitted. Late bids will not be accepted.

5. **A pre-bid meeting shall be held on 4th March 2022 at 1100 hours in Conference Room 2nd floor, BISP, (HQ), F-Block, Pak Secretariat Islamabad. The minutes of the pre-Bid meeting shall be uploaded on BISP website (www.bisp.gov.pk). The bidders are required to go through the minutes of the pre-bid meeting, as information provided in the minutes shall form an integral part of the Bidding Documents, and failure to comply with the pre-bid meeting instructions shall be considered as non-responsiveness, which shall be a valid ground for rejection of the bid.**

6. In case public holiday is announced on pre-bid meeting date or bid submission & opening date the same shall be held on the next working day.

7. The procurement will be carried out in accordance with "**Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and Grants by World Bank Borrowers**" dated January 2011 (revised July 2014). The bidders are requested to give their best and final prices as no negotiations are allowed under the **World Bank Procurement Guidelines**.

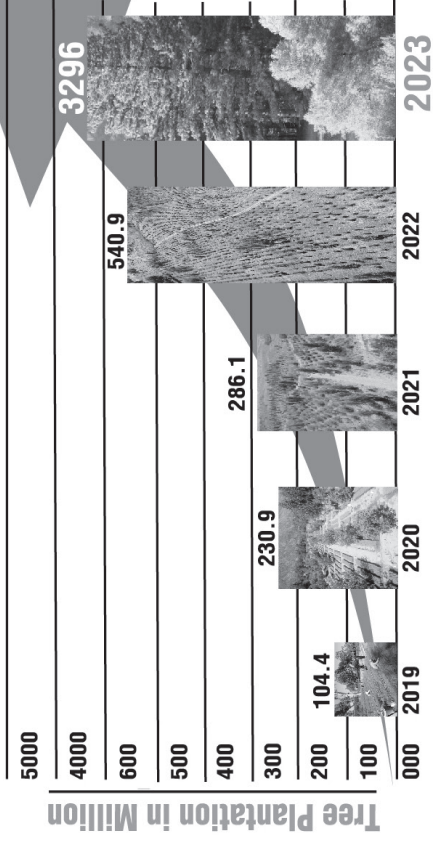
8. Bidder can bid for single or more Lot, with 100 % quantity within the pertinent Lot. Evaluation will be carried out on Lot base. Conditional or incomplete bid will not be accepted.

Director (Procurement)
Benazir Income Support Programme,
(HQ), F-Block, Pak. Secretariat,
Islamabad.
051-9246389

PID 5996/21

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موسم بہار شجرکاری ہم
2022



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- ہم کے دوران ملک کے تمام خطوں میں پودے لگائے جائیں گے
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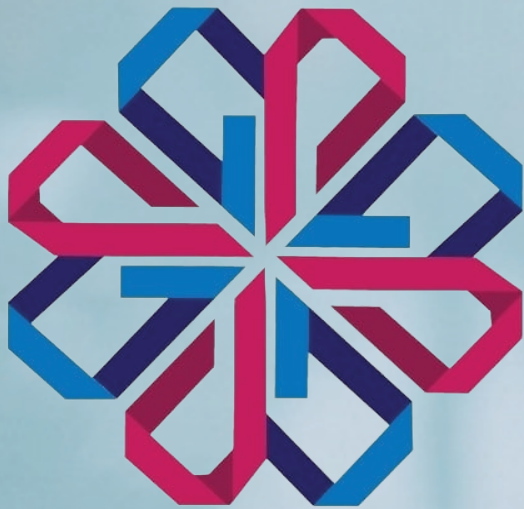
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