

# BridgeUS – Jan 2016

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**In dedication to Daniel Pearl**

We wish you all a Happy New Year

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**Editor's Note**

On December 23, 2015, the story of 10-month-old ill-fated girl Bisma, who tragically died in Pakistan shocked people around the world. She was in the lap of her father who frenziedly trying to get to the hospital to get his sick daughter treated. Sadly, the poor father had his daughter died in his arms because one of the heirs of The Bhutto dynasty had his self-established VIP protocol in place; that mean the sole traffic artery of the largest city in Pakistan had been taken over by his heavily armed guards supported by the dysfunctional Sindh Government. The whole Sharea Faisal was at the mercy of Bilawal and the commute was paused for CHOTE SAIN (little Mr.). The people had been deprived of the freedom of movement as long as Bilwal wished. The exits and entrances going to the residential areas like Shah Fiasal Colony, Rafah Aam, Green Town, Baloch Colony and Korangi were completely blocked with containers detaining around 10 million residents.

Before clarification or initial investigation of the occurrence, the whole Sindh government and the police were standing by Bilawal to conceal the tragedy and attempting to silence the bereaved family.

Ludicrously, Bilawal also assured mourning family of Bisma that the matter would be investigated. How would he investigate when that was him who caused the child's death? Why Murtaza murder not investigated when his mother was the prime minister and daddy had herculean power? Why his mother murder not investigated when again, his daddy was the president of the country and UNCLE Rehman was the security chief?

Bilawal is the descendant of power, he doesn't live in Pakistan, he didn't attend school in Pakistan, he has no job, he has not worked anywhere in Pakistan, he has never volunteer for charities like Edhi, he has not founded any charity for poor Sindhi from his unknown heaps of money, likewise his parents, he has never asked his henchmen to provide clean water, sanitation and food to the children starved to death in Thar intermittently, he spent billions of rupees on political circumcission (circus) in Karachi, he visits Pakistan only to know when he'll be sworn in as the prime minister of Pakistan, he has octogenarian politicians to pimp him, he is not available for the poor peasants, he is

above the law and a perfect Mini Me of Austin Powers.

Bilawal has a family background that tampered the system to flourish VIP class. This class emerged rapidly in the early 80s when public money added the fanfare of corruption. They supported and established the individuals with questionable or convicted past and let them pounce upon public money.

Unrepentant and spoiled Bhuttos repeated the same opulent pageantry in Nawabshah's LB elections when Bakhtawa Zardari cast her first vote. Again, roads were blocked and the polling station was restricted for general public. Ostentatiously, the vote was not for empowering general public, but to support VIP culture.

There are at least 10 documented deaths caused by the VIP protocol during past decade involving Former President Musharraf and Punjab Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Politicians had long lost their moral credibility in Pakistan, now their safety is causing death and disasters. The longtime abettors of PPP, Khoro and Chandio went off leash by putting Bilawal's security superior than Bisma's life. Undoubtedly, such leaders are intoxicated by power and money that is good enough to influence and intimidate the inquiries even if the mass murders are involved. That was very much the scenario in Lyari during PPP regime and the inquiry into Benazir's murder investigation.

Likewise Bilawal, there are many non-designated VIPs who use their money and position to bully people. Whoever moves around with armed guards act like VIP and they are treated like VIPs. Police only prey on motorcyclists and cheaper cars on road. Police officers as low as Assistant Sub Inspectors - ASI are also rampant to act like VIPs. They move around with high speed, running red lights, turning the siren on and hastily moving their hands with guns drawn to vacate the road for them. Noncompliance of this illegality and hounding results in verbal and physical abuse.

Why Bilawal and most of the politicians with the British connections not seek some schoolings from the British society and Royalty. The British Monarchy setting examples of mixing up with commoners. On Christmas Day, Red Drawing Room gifts are inexpensive. Prince George will be attending a school way off Royalty style.

How sickening is that populous Karachi with 24 million inhabitants has only one major Sharea Faisal that stays cramped and VIP movements stopped the traffic in 40 Celsius, close to 100% humidity, public transport has no air-conditioning and filled with the poor passengers almost 3 times beyond capacity. By the time half dead people reach home, they face power and water outages.

Every day, an average 3 people are dead because of traffic congestions in Karachi. 98% of those caused by the VIPs, politician's rallies and political strikes and almost all of them go unnoticed.

Unfortunately, Pakistan is one of the most divided countries in terms of disparities. The tortuous and hard access to justice, ineffective police and psychopathically paranoid politicians are more lethal for the country than any external threat. The Pope's Christmas message "society drunk on power and wealth" is greatly befitting to the majority of politicians in Pakistan.

Our idea to introduce BismaLaw in the Parliament to eliminate VIP culture enormously supported on social media. The hardest truth is that the VIPs constitute 95 percent of the parliament and like Bilawal inquiry into Bisma's murder, VIPs cannot vote against VIPs.

We must not let go innocent Bisma's death unnoticed and do whatever it takes to Bring justice before another Bisma becomes prey to the menacing VIP culture.

As usual and anticipated, the news of Bisma has completely vanished. Callously, rich Bilawal traded Bisma's life with the promise of job for her father. Until recently, her father was begging Bilawal to fulfill his promise.

We extensively use BridgeUS to draw the US government's attention to the grave problems faced by people. It seems impossible that the corrupt politicians would be punished in Pakistan, people want the US to part ways from the bad politicians and do not let them in the US if they are directly or indirectly involved in loss of lives, corruption, human rights abuse or other crimes against people or the country - this is the much needed step people of the poor countries wished for a long time.

Sincerely

Syed Naeem Uddin

Editor – BridgeUS

## **U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan David Hale Condemns Attack in Mardan** Islamabad, December 29, 2015

"The Embassy of the United States strongly condemns this afternoon's horrific attack in the city of Mardan, outside the regional office of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). We offer our sincerest condolences to the victims and their families. This attack on civilians shows a complete disregard for human life. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families at this time. "

- U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan David Hale

## **American Ambassador: \$250,000 to Rehabilitate Varun Dev Temple**

December 22, 2015

**Karachi – American Ambassador to Pakistan David Hale announced today that the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) will provide \$250,000 in funding to rehabilitate Varun Dev Temple on Manora Island. This is the second AFCP grant in Sindh province. The first — announced in 2014 — is working to restore the tombs of Sultan Ibrahim and Amir Sultan Muhammad at the Makli Hill necropolis in Thatta.**

**“The U.S. Embassy is honored to partner the Sindh Exploration and Adventure Society to protect this temple from further erosion and degradation,” said Ambassador Hale. The grant covers documentation and survey studies, stabilization of temple structures, landscaping, informational displays, and community engagement.**

**“Manora Island is an example of Pakistan’s religious diversity, interfaith harmony, and rich cultural heritage,” the Ambassador said. “The number of temples, churches, mosques and shrines on Manora Island represents a culture of tolerance among people belonging to different religious faiths and ethnic groups.”**

**Ambassador Hale expressed his appreciation for the support of the Pakistan Navy, Manora Cantonment Board, and Karachi Cantonment Board for helping the Sindh Exploration and Adventure Society with logistical support and site maintenance.**

## **Renovated Lincoln Corner Islamabad Opens at International Islamic University Islamabad** December 17, 2015 | Islamabad

**American Ambassador David Hale and Rector of International Islamic University Islamabad Prof. Dr. Masoom Yasinzai joined faculty and students on December 17 to celebrate the opening of the newly renovated and expanded Lincoln Corner Islamabad (LCI) at International Islamic University Islamabad. The renovation more than doubles the size of the space and provides increased access to books, magazines, scholarly databases, and state-of-the-art information technology to students and researchers.**

**"Lincoln Corner Islamabad demonstrates the continued partnership between Pakistan and the United States and our shared commitment to fostering open dialogue through educational opportunities," Ambassador Hale said to the audience of students and faculty.**

**"This is a great opportunity for learning and collaboration between the students of International**

Islamic University and students at American universities," Rector Yasinzai said. "We look forward to seeing the fruits of this continuing collaboration."

LCI was remodeled to create a larger, contemporary, and more comfortable space with added resources for the use of students, faculty, and guests. In addition to library and information resources, the Corner will organize programs focusing on English language learning, college exam resources, U.S. exchange alumni, cultural programs, and information about the United States.

Established in 2006, LCI is a partnership between the International Islamic University and the American Embassy. LCI is part of the U.S. Embassy Islamabad's network of 17 Lincoln Corners throughout Pakistan. Lincoln Corners are resource centers and event spaces hosted in partnership with Pakistani libraries, universities, and cultural centers. They provide a platform for open dialogue between Pakistanis and Americans to promote mutual understanding and strengthen people-to-people ties.

To learn more about Lincoln Corners, visit [http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/lincoln\\_corners.html](http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/lincoln_corners.html).

## **"Out of APS Attack Comes Hope" by Ambassador David Hale**

December 17, 2015

**On Monday, I visited the Army Public School in Peshawar out of respect for the innocent children and teachers murdered a year ago. It moved me greatly to be there. It was a horrific terrorist attack that cut short their lives. It shocked the world, just as I know it shocked Pakistan. This week, we remember the loss Pakistan suffered. We mourn along with the families and communities of those teachers and students.**

**The unfathomable evil behind the attack respects nothing, least of all human life. It is they, the perpetrators of murder, who have lost their humanity. And what a contrast they are from you, and from me, and from the generous people I met at APS and have met throughout my short time so far in Pakistan.**

**What I saw in the faces, words, and actions of the people I met on Monday in Peshawar was humanity. Humanity grieving the loss of last year, but looking ahead with resilience, resolve, and hope - some of the qualities that make life worthwhile. The classrooms I visited were full of students eager to learn. The teachers were busy engaging young minds. The school administrators were developing curriculum and planning for the future. They were all doing what students, teachers, and administrators do everywhere in the world, but perhaps with a special resolve. I heard from the APS**

**Peshawar community that they would not let what happened there define them.**

**Ten of the students and two of the teachers I met had traveled to the United States earlier this year. They survived the attack. They recounted to me their personal experiences that day, so chilling and sad. But they have also moved on. We talked mostly about their trip to America, and about their career decisions. Last summer, they participated in a science, technology, engineering, and math education exchange sponsored by the Department of State.**

**During their two weeks in the States they served as cultural ambassadors of Pakistan. They taught American students, teachers, and families about their country, the warmth of its people, their challenges and contributions, and even how to play cricket. They made lifelong friends and connections. On Monday, they regaled me with stories of learning about nanotechnology. They told me of their plans to become Pakistan's next generation of scientists, military officers, doctors, and engineers. In short, they are focused on our shared future.**

**This small program and others like it sponsored by my government are about our solidarity and commonality with the people of Pakistan. We strive to connect with Pakistan's future leaders, and give them a chance to be a bridge of understanding between Americans and Pakistanis. If in this way we can increase each country's understanding of the other and build trust, we will have done something worthwhile.**

**America knows of and is humbled by the sacrifices Pakistanis have made in the struggle against terrorism. We know the attack against APS Peshawar galvanized Pakistan. I have already learned first-hand of the resolve of the Pakistani government and military to root out terrorism and extremism, and of the results they have achieved, at a cost. We stand with Pakistan in this fight. We offer with open hands whatever we can to assist Pakistan as it eradicates this scourge.**

**President Obama recently spoke about the hateful ideology that groups like the Taliban promote. He said we must "speak out against not just acts of violence, but also those interpretations of Islam that are incompatible with the values of religious tolerance, mutual respect, and human dignity."**

**And that is what I saw in Peshawar on Monday. Last year's horror is unforgotten, but this year and future years bring hope. Hope not just for the future of the students of Peshawar, but for the future of all of Pakistan, for its prosperity and security. And for the region, and for us in America as well, since none of us is very far away and the fate of all of us is linked. While the young of Peshawar plan to fulfill their dreams and connect to people across the globe, so do the youth in America, with similar goals and aspirations.**

**The attack on APS Peshawar brutally deprived families and communities of their loved ones. It**



tested the resilience and resolve of Pakistan. Pakistan emerged from that test not only intact, but strengthened. That is something that should inspire us all.

**Note:** The following op-ed was published today in English in *The Nation* and in Urdu in *Nawaiwaqt*.

## **Title: American Embassy Observes Moment of Silence for Victims of APS Peshawar Attack** December 16, 2015 | Islamabad

American and Pakistani staff of the American Embassy in Islamabad observed a moment of silence and remembrance in the Raphael Memorial Gardens at the Embassy in honor of the victims of the attack on the Army Public School (APS) in Peshawar on December 16, 2014.

"The brutal murder of innocent children and teachers at the hands of terrorists shocked us all. We stand with the people of Pakistan in mourning this great loss," Chargé d'Affaires Jonathan Pratt said at the ceremony. "But the loss of that day is not forgotten. Today, we remember those lives lost, and recommit to working with Pakistan for a safer, more secure, and hopeful future for all Pakistanis and Americans alike."

America recognizes and deeply appreciates the sacrifices Pakistanis have made in the struggle against terrorism. We strongly condemn this and other attacks and stand with Pakistan in its fight against violence and extremism. The United States remains committed to promoting a secure, stable, and prosperous Pakistan.

## **U.S. Supports Pest Control in Pakistan Rice Supply Chain**

December 16, 2015 | Islamabad

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in conjunction with the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI) and Kansas State University, completed the first in a series of workshops on controlling crop-damaging pests from December 7-11 in Punjab province. One pest the workshop addressed was the invasive khapra beetle, which can cause up to 30% losses in rice crops annually in Pakistan.

The khapra beetle (*Trogoderma granarium*) is one of the most destructive invasive species in the world and poses a threat to food security. Pakistani rice exports are frequently rejected by key trading partners due to the potential risks of accidental khapra beetle infestations. The program was the first in a series of activities that will lead to the development of more comprehensive guidelines for mitigating khapra beetle in the rice value chain in Pakistan. Reducing the pest can lead to more secure food supplies and increase exports.

The workshop consisted of consultations between U.S. experts and Pakistani representatives from the public and private sectors, followed by a survey of rice fields, millers, packing and storage facilities in Punjab province. Based on those observations, the experts focused on improved post-harvest management practices, which could help farmers, processors, and exporters prevent infestations of the khapra beetle. Experts said such practices can prevent the destruction and waste of crops, leading to less waste and improved food security.

"People always say the answer to food security is to grow more crops," said visiting expert Dr. Bhadriraju Subramanyam, Endowed Professor of Postharvest Protection at Kansas State University. "I think it's to save more."

This training was part of the ongoing Phytosanitary Risk Management (PRM) Program between USDA and CABI. The PRM Program engages provincial and federal government officials, universities, farmers, and industry stakeholders in the provinces of Balochistan, Punjab, and Sindh to improve pest management in order to improve farmer incomes and increase agricultural trade opportunities. To date, the PRM Program has focused on developing and implementing low-cost methods for pest control on the farm including the use of biocontrol agents, improving post-harvest pest management practices in key value chains, and building the capacity of the Government of Pakistan to conduct risk assessments and certify exports of agricultural commodities based on international standards.

## **American Ambassador Hale Makes First Visit to Peshawar: Ambassador calls on leaders of the region and pays tribute to victims of terrorism** December 14, 2015 | Peshawar

In his first trip to Peshawar, American Ambassador to Pakistan David Hale met with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's provincial leadership and paid his respects to victims of terrorism in the province, including students and teachers at the Army Public School.

Ambassador Hale called on Governor Sardar Mehtab Ahmed Khan and Chief Minister Pervaiz Khattak to discuss political, economic, and security issues in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). During these meetings, Ambassador Hale commended the province's actions against militancy and reiterated American resolve to help increase stability in the region through cooperation on trade and development.

Ambassador Hale expressed his appreciation for the warm hospitality of the region and his desire for a strong and productive relationship with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the FATA and their

**leaders.**

**“In recent years, the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the FATA have shown remarkable resilience in the face of terrible violence and unimaginable loss,” Ambassador Hale said. “The United States recognizes the many sacrifices Pakistan and its citizens have made in this struggle. America stands with Pakistan in its fight against terrorism and remains committed to promoting a secure, stable, and prosperous Pakistan.”**

**The Ambassador visited the Army Public School to pay his respects in advance of the one-year anniversary of the attack on the school on December 16, 2014, in honor of the memory of the students and teachers killed there. During his visit, Ambassador Hale met with ten APS students who travelled to the United States this past summer on a State Department-funded trip focused on science, technology, engineering, and math education and cross-cultural exchange with American students.**

## **U.S. Embassy Donates \$1.1 Million in Equipment to Enhance Road Safety**

December 11, 2015 | Islamabad

**Parliamentary Secretary for Communication Alam Dad Laleka, U.S. Embassy Islamabad International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Section Director Ramon Chico Negrón, and Inspector General of Police Muhammad Saleem Bhatti inspect newly donated motorcycles.**

**U.S. Embassy Islamabad and Government of Pakistan officials joined senior officers of the National Highways & Motorway Police (NH&MP) on December 11 to formally donate 45 motorcycles, 50 speed recording cameras, and 500 protective vests for men and women police officers. The \$1.1 million-dollar donation by the U.S. Government provides much-needed equipment for National Highways & Motorway Police officers throughout Pakistan.**

**At the handover ceremony at NH&MP headquarters, U.S. Embassy Islamabad International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Section Director Ramon Chico Negrón said the U.S. Government’s continued support aims to enhance the capability of law enforcement agencies across Pakistan to provide higher levels of service to its citizens. Negrón added that the equipment will increase road safety in Pakistan and provide better protection to officers on duty. Parliamentary Secretary for Communication Alam Dad Laleka and Inspector General of Police Muhammad Saleem Bhatti also spoke at the event.**

**The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs works in more than 90 countries to help countries combat crime and corruption, counter drug-related crime, improve police institutions, and promote laws and court systems that are fair and accountable. Find out more about**

INL at: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/>.

## **U.S. Embassy Celebrates Human Rights Day and Conclusion of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence** December 10, 2015 | Islamabad

U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Jonathan Pratt joined Pakistani officials at the Islamabad Club to mark Human Rights Day and the final day of the global campaign, 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. National Police Bureau Director General Ihsan Ghani, Federal Investigative Agency Former Director General Mohib Asad, Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy Institutional Development Director Sameena Nazir, and Senior Advisor to Chief Minister Shahbaz Shareef Salman Sufi also attended the event and affirmed their support for policies that address violence against women.

“Ending gender-based violence requires elevating the status of women and freeing their potential to be agents of change in their communities,” Pratt said. “Accomplishing this goal requires a deep commitment to quality education and economic opportunities for all members of society.”

The U.S. Embassy Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and Lok Virsa co-sponsored the event. Lok Virsa Director Dr. Fouzia Saeed moderated a discussion with more than 150 leading women’s rights, government, and civil society leaders. Famed musicians Ali Sethi and Bushra Sadiq sang women’s empowerment songs at the event. The ceremony concluded with a candlelight vigil where participants pledged their continued commitment to fighting gender-based violence.

The Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University launched the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign in 1991. The annual campaign runs from the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25 to International Human Rights Day on December 10. The campaign’s timing symbolically links the prevention of violence against women with broader human rights issues.

**Statement of the Quadrilateral Meeting among Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States** Islamabad, December 10, 2015 – A Quadrilateral (2+2) meeting of Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the United States was held in Islamabad today, on the sidelines of the Fifth Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference. Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken led their respective delegations.

The meeting reiterated its support for Afghanistan’s unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, and

**affirmed full support to the democratically elected National Unity Government of Afghanistan. It was agreed that authority of the Afghan State and the legitimacy of Afghanistan's constitution must be fully respected by the international community.**

**The meeting agreed to work together to enhance mutual trust and confidence between Afghanistan and Pakistan to create an enabling environment for peace talks and broadening political, economic and security cooperation.**

**The meeting expressed full commitment to enabling an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political process that promotes a dialogue between the Afghan Government and Taliban groups, including on reduction and renunciation of violence. It was agreed that reconciliation remains the most viable option to end violence and promote stability in Afghanistan and the region. All four countries agreed to work together to create a conducive atmosphere that encourages Taliban groups to engage in meaningful and sustained negotiations.**

## **U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Blinken Underscores U.S. Commitment to Education in Pakistan**

**Pakistan Higher Education Commission Chairman Ahmed Announces Plans to Fund up to 125 Fulbright Ph.D. Scholarships**

**Islamabad, December 10, 2015 - U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Pakistani students and teachers who participated in educational programs funded by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development on December 10, 2015 at a town hall meeting hosted by the Chairman of the Pakistan Higher Education Commission, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed. During the event, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed announced Pakistani plans to fund up to 125 additional scholarships for Pakistani Ph.D. students to study in the United States through the Fulbright Program over the next five years. Deputy Secretary Blinken and Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed reiterated the commitment to intensify cooperation in the education sphere made by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during their meeting in Washington, D.C., on October 22, 2015.**

**Both Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed and Deputy Secretary Blinken encouraged students and teachers to take full advantage of their educational opportunities and experiences to benefit their communities, especially to create more chances for women to pursue education. The Deputy Secretary also commended Pakistan for its vision to significantly increase the number of Ph.D. students studying in the United States and welcomed the Pakistan Higher Education Commission's new contribution to the Fulbright Program and increased faculty development.**

**"Investments in education are prerequisites for long-term security and sustainable development," Deputy Secretary Blinken said. "By equipping students with a world perspective rooted in respect, social justice, diversity, and critical thinking, we can expand their horizons while allowing Pakistan's economy to grow and its society to flourish."**

**Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed thanked the United States for its collaboration on initiatives supporting the Pakistani education system at every level, from primary to post-graduate. He recalled the idea of the U.S.-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor, a concept laid out in June 2015 in the Strategic Dialogue by both sides to enhance cooperation in education, science, and technology, including academic linkages between many U.S. and Pakistani universities and increasing educational opportunities.**

**"Working together, we have given young women the opportunity to go to university, helped new teachers gain the tools they need to succeed in the classroom, and supported research in areas critical to Pakistan's development," Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed commented. "The United States has been a dedicated, long-term partner for the progress of the Pakistan Higher Education Commission, and I know our joint efforts will continue to support economic prosperity and stability here in Pakistan."**

**Pakistan and the United States have over 20 university partnerships, including three "U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies" in the fields of energy, water, and agriculture. The United States invests more money in the Fulbright program - the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government - in Pakistan than in any other country. The U.S. Mission to Pakistan also provides scholarships to thousands of aspiring teachers and also operates the largest English Access Microscholarship Program worldwide for Pakistani teenagers to learn English. The Pakistan Higher Education Commission and USAID also have collaborated on a national program of teacher education reform designed to improve the quality of basic education in Pakistan.**

## **Statement of the Trilateral Meeting among Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States**

**Islamabad, December 10, 2015 - Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States are fully committed to enabling an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned political process that promotes a dialogue between the Afghan government and groups of Taliban on the future of Afghanistan and the cessation of violence. Peace and reconciliation remains the surest way to end violence and ensure stability in Afghanistan and the region.**

**Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States commit to accelerate diplomatic and political efforts to put an end to the conflict in Afghanistan. The aim of the peace process will be to negotiate in good faith to resolve outstanding issues, build on areas of agreement, and develop a lasting solution that meets the needs of all Afghans. All three countries will work to create conditions that encourage**

participation of Taliban groups in a peace process that demonstrates to them that they have a real option of political engagement.

Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States commit to pursuing the start of peace talks immediately. All efforts for dialogue between the Government of Afghanistan and Taliban groups will be explored and encouraged. All will pursue with urgency confidence building measures that reduce the level of violence in Afghanistan, and allow for full participation and in talks by all participants.

Afghanistan and Pakistan agree that all forms of terrorism present a grave threat to both countries and the region. Both countries commit to preventing their territories to be used by any violent extremist group or third party, and acknowledge that those who refuse to join a political resolution of the conflict in Afghanistan must be opposed with all means available. The United States commits to supporting these efforts.

Safeguarding Afghanistan's sovereignty, unity, independence, territorial integrity, and Islamic character as a democratic republic are fundamental to resolving the current conflict. The legitimacy of the Afghan state and the legitimacy of Afghanistan's constitution must be fully respected. The rights of all Afghans, regardless of ethnicity, gender or religious identity, must be protected in any peace process.

Afghanistan and Pakistan commit to broadening their state to state political, economic, and security cooperation and people to people interactions. Friendly, mutually respectful relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan are necessary to create an enabling environment for the peace process and talks and to ensure the security, stability, prosperity, and national interests of both states.

## **Joint Statement - Trilateral Meeting Afghanistan, United States and the European Union on 9th December 2015** Islamabad, December 9, 2015

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the European Union, and the United States of America met on December 9th 2015, in Islamabad, on the margins of the Heart of Asia Ministerial. Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, and Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service Helga Schmid led the delegations.

Discussions focused on the preparations for the 2016 Warsaw and Brussels Conferences on Afghanistan and the latest regional security and economic developments. The U.S. and Afghanistan welcomed the decision taken by the European Union to host the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan on October 4-5, 2016. The three sides agreed to work together to support preparations for the Brussels Conference, and ensure that the efforts of the Afghan government and the donor

community are closely aligned in the spirit of mutual accountability.

They agreed that the Brussels and Warsaw conferences were important opportunities to support the Afghan government as it advances its reform and governance agenda. Progress on these Afghan reform commitments is crucial to enabling the donor community to extend extraordinary commitments of security and development assistance to Afghanistan at the Warsaw and Brussels Conferences, respectively.

The delegations agreed on the need for strong Afghan ownership in preparing the two conferences and called on all international partners to pledge robust support to Afghanistan in connection with the conferences.

Afghanistan, the EU and the U.S. welcomed the high-level regional participation at the Heart of Asia Ministerial, which provides all partners with an opportunity to address common challenges and reach mutually beneficial solutions.

## **"A Durable Climate Agreement" by Ambassador David Hale**

December 8, 2015: **The signs of climate change are all around us, from rising sea levels across the globe to the melting of the polar ice caps. No country is immune. The decisions we make today will affect the planet we leave to future generations.**

**As a global society, our challenge is to recognise the need to take action to keep pollutants out of our environment, while allowing for people to prosper. We must aim for cleaner air, lower energy costs, and new growth industries all at the same time.**

**These are the stakes at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris, where representatives from almost 200 nations, including Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Barack Obama, are gathering through December 11 to negotiate a comprehensive climate agreement for the post-2020 world. Now more than ever, there is social and political will to take action to combat the rise in global temperatures and its ripple effect through the environment.**

**More than 160 countries, responsible for around 90 percent of global emissions, have announced climate targets ahead of the conference. This is a clear step forward and a departure from the past. Only about 30 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions were addressed under the Kyoto Protocol in 1997.**

**Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, addressing world leaders in Paris on November 30, highlighted Pakistan's efforts to address climate change within the context of Pakistan's development and**



growth objectives. In the months preceding the Paris conference, the United States and Pakistan worked together to address climate change goals, discuss concerns about transition and financing, and develop a constructive path forward. This work culminated in October with the 2015 Joint Statement by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and in the US-Pakistan Clean Energy Partnership launched during Prime Minister Sharif's visit.

The December 1-2 US-Pakistan Clean Energy Business Opportunities Conference in Washington was a strong step in this growing Partnership, exposing US companies to investment opportunities in clean energy in Pakistan. There is an opportunity for Pakistan to develop the energy resources it needs, to grow its economy, and to take advantage of new technologies. Doing so would be good for Pakistan's economy, good for the health of Pakistan's cities, and good for Pakistanis.

In the joint statement, President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif expressed their commitment to press for an ambitious agreement on climate change at the Paris Climate Conference. The leaders also "underscored the importance of longer-range efforts to transition to low-carbon economies and of continued, robust financial support to help developing countries build low-carbon and climate-resilient societies."

Since Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's visit to Washington, Pakistan, the United States, and many other countries have joined efforts to amend the Montreal Protocol to curb the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons. They addressed this issue most recently at the 27th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol in November in Dubai. Every nation has its own role to play in addressing climate change. We appreciate the contributions of Pakistan to this important cause.

The United States is acting boldly on climate change at home as we work with partner nations to do the same. Since President Obama took office, the United States has reduced carbon emissions, tripled domestic wind energy production, and increased solar power twenty-fold. We've put in place stringent new fuel economy standards so that our cars are using less gas, energy use is more efficient, and an historic amount of land and water has been protected for future generations. At the same time, the US economy has expanded, proving that growth is not inextricably linked to carbon output.

By 2030, President Obama's Clean Power Plan will cut emissions from the US power sector - now producing a third of the nation's carbon emissions - by 32 percent, saving more than \$50 billion in climate and health-related costs in the process.

In Paris, the United States is pushing for an effective agreement that continues to drive ambitious climate action by all countries, while recognising the differences among them. It should provide a

long-term framework - with high standards of transparency and accountability - that calls on nations to ratchet up their targets over time. And it must provide countries in need with financial and technical support for low-carbon development and adaptation to a changing climate.

With leaders and representatives from almost every nation on earth convening in Paris, there is an historic opportunity to strike a far-reaching and durable climate agreement. We have the political will and groundswell of social support to make it work. However, we will need to come together - the United States, Pakistan, and many other nations - and be pragmatic to reach a deal. For brighter skies today and a more secure and prosperous tomorrow, now is the time to act.

## **American Ambassador Hale Inaugurates 12th Annual Fulbright and Humphrey Alumni Conference at NUST** December 7, 2015 | Islamabad

American Ambassador to Pakistan David Hale joined the Rector of National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) Engineer Muhammad Asghar in welcoming more than 200 alumni to the 12th Annual Fulbright and Humphrey Alumni Conference, organized by the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) and hosted by the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST). The conference, held from December 4-6, 2015, consists of a series of twelve seminars with round table discussions chaired by various scholars, Fulbright and Humphrey Fellowship alumni, and special guest speakers from the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan and the Department of State's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs in Washington, D.C.

"The United States is deeply committed to our relationship with Pakistan and we demonstrate this by making investments in Pakistan that foster its prosperity and the welfare of Pakistani society," Ambassador Hale said. "The Fulbright and Humphrey Fellowship exchanges contribute to increased mutual understanding between America and Pakistan."

USEFP was established in 1950 by the governments of Pakistan and the United States. USEFP is a binational commission that promotes increased academic and professional exchange between the United States and Pakistan. The Fulbright program in Pakistan receives the largest amount of U.S. government funding world-wide. Nearly 4,000 Pakistanis alumni have participated in the Fulbright program and 200 in the Humphrey Fellowship.

The Fulbright program was named after the late U.S. Senator J. William Fulbright and funds study and research to "promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries of the world." The Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program honors the memory and accomplishments of the late Senator and Vice President by bringing accomplished mid-career professionals with demonstrated leadership potential to the United States for a year of

graduate-level, non-degree academic coursework and professional development activities.

The United States invests \$40 million annually on exchange programs for Pakistani citizens and sends more than 1,300 Pakistanis to the United States each year to participate in academic and professional programs. For more information on the Fulbright and Humphrey programs, and to learn about other educational opportunities, please visit USEFP's website:

<http://www.usefpakistan.org>. Information can also be found on the official U.S. Embassy Pakistan Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pakistan.usembassy>

## **American Ambassador Hale Celebrates Third Anniversary of the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council** December 7, 2015 | Islamabad

American Ambassador to Pakistan David Hale joined Henna Babar Ali of Packages Limited and friends of the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council in celebrating the organization's third anniversary. The Council, which promotes women's economic participation in Pakistan through education, entrepreneurship, and employment, brings together experts in business and academia to develop opportunities for women and girls.

"I applaud the women of the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council and the many men who share their goals, for helping to create an enabling environment for women in the Pakistani economy, building bridges from schools to jobs, creating a women-friendly workforce, and helping women entrepreneurs develop and grow their businesses," Ambassador Hale said. "Coming from diverse backgrounds across Pakistan, together they form a powerful instrument for creating opportunities for greater women's participation in the Pakistani economy."

The reception included a series of presentations on women in business, economics, and education by representatives of Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and Procter & Gamble; the Women's Entrepreneurial Centers of Resources, Education, Access, and Training for Economic Empowerment (WECREATE) Center; the American University-Lahore University of Management Sciences Partnership, and others.

The U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council is a public-private partnership between the U.S. Department of State and American University, and was introduced by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the UN General Assembly in 2012. The Council supports study abroad opportunities for young women, including the annual Summer Sisters Exchange program, which sends high school and college women to participate in month-long intensive entrepreneurship, leadership, and science and engineering study programs throughout the United States. The Council also encourages continuing education for female entrepreneurs through hosting regular training sessions for businesswomen. In addition, the Council regularly brings together members of the private business community to

discuss issues facing women in the economy.

For more information on the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council, and to learn about other opportunities, visit:

[www.facebook.com/uspakistanwomenscouncil](http://www.facebook.com/uspakistanwomenscouncil)

[www.american.edu/sis/us-pakistanwomenscouncil](http://www.american.edu/sis/us-pakistanwomenscouncil)

## **Ambassador David Hale Presents Credentials to President Mamnoon Hussain** December 3, 2015 | Islamabad

American Ambassador David Hale presented his credentials to President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mamnoon Hussain, today, December 3, 2015, in Islamabad.

Ambassador Hale thanked President Mamnoon for today's ceremony and said, "I am honored to present my credentials as Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan." He expressed his desire to work with President Mamnoon, Pakistani counterparts, and the Pakistani people to further strengthen American-Pakistani relations, increase trade and people-to-people ties between the two countries, further enhance our security partnership, and advance the broad agenda laid out by President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif when they met in Washington on October 22, 2015.

David Hale is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Career Minister. He served as Ambassador to the Lebanese Republic from 2013 to 2015. He was the Special Envoy for Middle East Peace (2011-2013), Deputy Special Envoy for Middle East Peace (2009-11), and Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (2005-8). He has also served in Tunisia, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, and multiple tours in Lebanon and Jordan. In Washington, Hale was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Israel, Egypt and the Levant, Director for Israel and Palestinian Affairs, and Executive Assistant to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

In 2013 Secretary Clinton presented Hale with the Distinguished Service Award. He speaks Arabic. Hale is a graduate of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and was born in the U.S. state of New Jersey.

**Senator Sherry Rehman and Deputy Chief of Mission Jonathan Pratt Praise Regional Integration Initiatives at Alumni Peace Conference**

November 30, 2015 | Islamabad **Senator Sherry Rehman, former Pakistani Ambassador to the United States, and U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Jonathan Pratt addressed more than 150 alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchanged programs gathered at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad for the opening ceremony of a three-day International Peace and Conflict Resolution Conference on November 27. The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) co-sponsored the event, which brought together alumni from across Pakistan and South Asia to share strategies for local and regional peace building.**

**Chief Guest Senator Rehman, an alumna of the International Visitors Leadership Program, spoke about the importance of cooperation between people and governments to fight terrorism and encourage peace. "We need now, more than ever, to privilege dialogue and diplomacy over distrust and denial," she said. "Foreign policy is an instrument that people and societies can impact and influence."**

**DCM Pratt reaffirmed U.S. support for Pakistani and South Asian initiatives to enhance regional connectivity, including the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000). Pratt emphasized the importance of building networks and relationships throughout South Asia, and praised PUAN for its work in this regard by holding the conference. "PUAN is a vibrant community that helps in building a peaceful Pakistan," he said. "To establish a better-connected, more secure region, people-to-people connections are vital."**

**The opening ceremony kicked off three days of workshops, panels, community service activities, and cultural events on the theme of peace and conflict resolution. U.S. government exchange alumni and outside experts from a range of fields exchanged best practices on building peaceful communities through dialogue, economic integration, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, the arts, and other mediums.**

**The United States invests \$40 million annually on exchange programs for Pakistani citizens and sends more than 1,300 Pakistanis to the United States each year to participate in academic and professional programs. PUAN is an alumni network of individuals who have participated in such exchange programs. With more than 15,000 alumni across Pakistan, PUAN is one of the largest alumni networks in the world.**

**PUAN regularly organizes events across Pakistan, including service projects, leadership training, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities. To find out more about PUAN and the conference, visit: <http://www.facebook.com/pakalumni> and follow the conference using the hashtag #PUAN4Peace.**

**American Embassy Pakistan Announces the Arrival of Ambassador**

**David Hale** *Islamabad*, November 18, 2015 – Ambassador David Hale arrived today, November 18, 2015, in Islamabad. He will present his credentials to President of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain at the earliest opportunity. After presenting his credentials, he will begin working with his Pakistani counterparts and the Pakistani people to strengthen American-Pakistani relations, increase trade between the two countries, further enhance our security partnership, and advance the broad agenda laid out by President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif when they met in Washington on October 22, 2015.

David Hale is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Career Minister. He served as Ambassador to the Lebanese Republic from 2013 to 2015. Previously, he was the Special Envoy for Middle East Peace (2011-2013), Deputy Special Envoy for Middle East Peace (2009-11), and American Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (2005-8). He has also served in Tunisia, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, and multiple tours in Lebanon and Jordan. In Washington, Hale was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Israel, Egypt and the Levant, Director for Israel and Palestinian Affairs, and Executive Assistant to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

In 2013 Secretary Clinton presented Hale with the Distinguished Service Award. He speaks Arabic. Hale is a graduate of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and was born in the U.S. state of New Jersey.

## **Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for South Asian Affairs Peter Lavoy and Acting Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Laurel Miller Visit Pakistan** November 11, 2015 | Islamabad

Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for South Asian Affairs Peter Lavoy and Acting Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Laurel Miller visited Pakistan on November 10 and 11, where they engaged in productive meetings with senior Pakistani officials.

Dr. Lavoy and Ms. Miller reiterated the United States' deep appreciation for the sacrifices Pakistan has made in the fight against terrorism.

The United States and Pakistan have a long-term bilateral partnership marked by shared interests, including the advancement of democracy, peace, security, and economic development.

## **USAID Agribusiness Project Helped 27,000 Farmers Transition from Traditional Farming to Market-Oriented Agribusinesses** November 6, 2015 |

Islamabad **The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) held a ceremony Friday showcasing a successful agricultural program that shared modern techniques with 27,000 farmers and helped to increase agricultural exports by \$34 million.**

**USAID's Agribusiness Project worked with both small farmers and larger producers to increase productivity and quality while reaching new domestic and international markets. The four-year program, which ends this month, created jobs for 14,000 Pakistanis.**

**"The farmers of Pakistan have tremendous potential, and USAID is committed to supporting farmers in adopting modern best practices and technologies," USAID Mission Director John Groarke said at the ceremony.**

**Some of the program's achievements include a 300-percent increase in income for 800 women who process apricots in Gilgit-Baltistan, an improvement in the quality of chilies from Pakistan, and improvements in cuts of meat for the international export market.**

**USAID is continuing to support market-led growth in the horticulture and livestock value chains through a recently launched U.S.-Pakistan Partnership for Agriculture Market Development.**

**U.S. assistance has reached more than 800,000 rural households and financed irrigation initiatives for more than 480,000 acres of farmland in Pakistan. The United States helps Pakistani agribusinesses access financing, form partnerships, and tap into more lucrative markets, with the goal of linking thousands of local producers nationwide to major commercial firms by the end of 2016. More than 26,000 new jobs can be attributed to USAID programming in the last four years. Through USAID efforts, the incremental sales for Pakistani businesses in the past five years have increased by more than \$144 million, and the revenue generated by the exports for the targeted commodities, a large part of which is agricultural produce, has increased by \$57 million.**

**For more information on USAID economic growth and agriculture programs in Pakistan, please visit: <http://1.usa.gov/1kUsuds>**

## **United States Announces \$30 million for Returning FATA Populations**

November 4, 2015 – Peshawar **The United States government announced it will provide \$30 million to support the return of displaced families to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).**

**U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funds will support school reconstruction, provide job training, improve farming techniques, and distribute food stipends. Three United Nations**

agencies will implement the programs.

"People here are resilient, and with their determination and our support, we look forward to a thriving and peaceful FATA," USAID Mission Director John Groarke said at a ceremony attended by representatives from the Government of Pakistan and United Nations.

USAID's support is aligned with the FATA Secretariat's Return and Rehabilitation Strategy, whose goal is the progressive return of all displaced residents. Approximately two million people have fled insurgency and violence in the region since 2008.

The United States has provided more than \$1 billion in development assistance to the FATA since 2009, making it the largest bilateral donor to date.

## **U.S. and Pakistani Academics Meet to Promote Higher Education Linkages in Washington, D.C.** October 30, 2015 | Washington, D.C.

Senior Pakistani academics from 33 universities met with 21 U.S. partner institutions in Washington, D.C. for a four-day workshop from October 26 to 30. The workshop allowed participants to promote community engagement, interactive teaching methods, collaborative research, and academic regional integration in Pakistan and the United States. The event was organized through the University Partnerships Program, an educational initiative sponsored by the U.S. Mission to Pakistan with support by the U.S. Department of State in Washington D.C.

Senior-level representatives from the U.S. Department of State, the Embassy of Pakistan in Washington, and the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) joined the delegation to highlight the importance of higher-education linkages between both countries. The U.S. Department of State's Director of the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Angela Aggeler, opened the workshop. Aggeler highlighted the importance of international education and global exchanges and thanked both the U.S. and Pakistani partners for their continued collaboration.

Higher Education Commission Chairman Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed addressed the 55 participants in a videotaped message saying, "The United States-Pakistan University Partnerships Program forges a spirit of academic collaboration between our countries' higher education communities and contributes to the overall quality of higher education. Regular and meaningful discourse among scholars, students, and faculty has supported the Higher Education Commission's goals to promote social sciences and humanities in Pakistan. Further, it has helped align research priorities and needs throughout the country."



The University Partnerships Program is a flagship higher-education program sponsored by the U.S. Mission to Pakistan. It provides over \$25 million dollars in funding to 44 universities in Pakistan and the United States to create three-year partnerships that foster collaboration, curriculum reform, and joint research. Since 2012, approximately 500 faculty members, administrators, and students from both countries have participated in this exchange program. The first University Partnerships Best Practices Workshop was held in 2013 at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

## **Pakistani Agricultural Institutions, USDA, and ICARDA Demonstrate How to Improve Soil Health** October 30, 2015 | Islamabad

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) technical specialists held their second annual meeting with local partners October 29 and 30 as part of an ongoing 2 1/2 year, \$1.4 million project to improve soil health and fertility in Pakistan.

This collaboration among USDA, the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), and 10 Pakistani institutions spreads awareness about how Pakistani farmers can improve soil health and fertility to provide more nutrients and water for their crops.

USDA Agronomist Mike Kucera said Pakistan's soil resources can be maintained and improved through the use of the "four Rs:" the right nutrients, applied at the right rate, at the right time, and in the right place. "Keeping soils covered with crop residue, utilizing cover crops, limiting soil disturbance, providing a living root throughout the year, and using crop rotations are other key measures to maintain healthy, productive soils for Pakistan's future generations," Kucera added.

Innovative practices being demonstrated and disseminated to farmers through this project include: composting old banana leaves and stems to add organic matter to soil, using biofertilizer to enhance the efficiency of conventional fertilizer, planting seeds directly through crop residue with no tillage, using green manure, and using the University of Agriculture - Faisalabad fertilizer prediction model to reduce the over-application of nitrogen fertilizer and get better economic returns.

Dr. Muhammad Aslam, the soil fertility expert leading the project at ICARDA, commented, "adding organic manures and compost to the soil is very important."

USDA and ICARDA work in partnership across the provinces of Balochistan, Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with three provincial agricultural research institutes, two Pakistani universities, three institutes of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), one provincial agricultural extension department, and a Pakistani agricultural NGO. USDA technical specialists have provided training to these Pakistani partner institutions about various methods of building and

**monitoring soil health and about how to develop short instructional videos for farmers and agricultural service providers. Through farmer field days, radio and television programs, and other activities conducted by the partner institutions, many farmers are becoming aware of how they can improve their soil health and fertility for better food security.**

## **NYPD Officers Engage with Pakistani Hearing-Impaired Students**

**Islamabad, October 28, 2015 Two New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers, Lieutenant Adeel Rana and Detective Elvis Vukelj, gave a presentation to students about the NYPD's youth programs at the Special Education Center for Hearing Impaired Children in Islamabad this morning. Following the officers' presentation, female students taught the officers to play netball, a new sport for most Americans. The officers also participated in a cricket match alongside the school's male students.**

**"In New York, my colleagues and I organize summer camps and sporting activities, and we play alongside the youth," Vukelj said. "These kinds of activities can help both American and Pakistani police to engage constructively with young women and men in our communities and help them develop leadership and teamwork skills."**

**The Special Education Center for Hearing Impaired Children in Islamabad is dedicated to providing academic and vocational skills to deaf and hard of hearing students. The center provides a wide range of sports programs to students to encourage team building and an active lifestyle. Through interactive community participation, both the Pakistani police and their NYPD counterparts improve their overall ability to address crime proactively. Sports programs are a core component of achieving this objective, allowing the police to engage constructively with youth, women, and other key audiences in Pakistan and the United States. Using sports as a tool, police officers can break down barriers and develop lasting ties with their communities to provide the security necessary to support economic, political, and social prosperity for all.**

**Lt. Rana and Det. Vukelj are in Pakistan representing the NYPD Community Affairs Bureau. Their visit is an opportunity for American and Pakistani law enforcement professionals to exchange knowledge about concrete ways to foster positive and productive relations between the police and the communities they serve. Since arriving in Pakistan on October 25, Rana and Vukelj have met with police counterparts and representatives of various youth organizations.**

**U.S. Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs Christina Tomlinson commented during the school visit, "Lieutenant Rana and Detective Vukelj are members of one of the most diverse police forces in the world. In their jobs, they build bridges between their colleagues in the New York City Police Department and the various communities they serve. They are in Pakistan to share their experiences**

with communities facing similar policing challenges."

The U.S. government invests more than \$30 million each year in programs that promote cultural exchange between the United States and Pakistan through sports, visual and performing arts, women's empowerment, education, entrepreneurship, and a variety of other areas. Additionally, the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has a long history of cooperation with Pakistani police. Since 2002, INL has provided assistance to police in all four of Pakistan's provinces and Islamabad; levies in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA); and federal law enforcement organizations. INL projects have focused on areas such as developing training curricula, enhancing the capacity of female officers, and building operational capabilities.

## **U.S. Department of Agriculture, Pakistani experts, and ICARDA collaborate to help farmers use water more efficiently**

October 28, 2015 | Islamabad **USDA National Conservation Technology Specialist Cheryl Simmons talks with local partners about technologies and practices for capturing, storing, and using water more efficiently.**

As all farmers know, water is precious, and throughout much of Pakistan, this vital resource is in short supply. On October 27 and 28, top Pakistani and U.S. experts in water and agriculture came together to address this serious issue facing Pakistani agriculture. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has partnered with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and 11 Pakistani institutions on a project to demonstrate and disseminate best practices and technologies in watershed rehabilitation and irrigation improvement to help rural Pakistani farmers. The \$3.3 million, 4 ½ year project, begun in 2011, strengthens the capacity of Pakistani agricultural institutions to show farmers ways to better capture and store water, reduce the loss of water or soil, and more efficiently water crops.

"By combining some old and new technologies, Pakistan's farmers can lead the way to wise water use at home and on farmland," said USDA National Conservation Technology Specialist Cheryl Simmons.

The two-day, fourth annual project meeting highlighted technologies and practices such as solar-powered drip irrigation, simple drip bucket irrigation, planting on raised beds and ridges, and on-farm water storage methods. The gathering also focused on innovative ways to share these practices with farmers, such as short instructional videos, farmer field days, and professional trainings.

"The watershed and irrigation improvement project has created a lot of awareness among farmers,

professionals, and policy makers about techniques for efficient water use," commented Dr. Abdul Majid, Country Manager for ICARDA in Pakistan.

USDA and ICARDA work in partnership across the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with two provincial agricultural research institutes, three Pakistani universities, three institutes of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), a provincial agricultural extension department, the Pakistan Council of Research on Water Resources (PCRWR), and a Pakistani agricultural NGO. Through this project, technical experts from USDA visit Pakistan to provide trainings and technical consultations to Pakistani partners, who then conduct demonstration and dissemination activities with local farmers.

## **NYPD Officers, Pakistani Police, and Youth Build Rapport through Cricket**

October 28, 2015 | Islamabad

Representatives from the New York City Police Department (NYPD), Pakistani police, Pakistan Cricket Board, and local youth groups participated in a youth cricket skills camp yesterday at Said Pur Cricket Ground to help build a stronger relationship between police officers and their community.

U.S. Embassy Charge d'Affaires Jonathan Pratt welcomed the camp participants, commenting, "in Pakistan and the United States, young people bear the promise of the future, the police are an integral part of ensuring that we all have the security necessary to work toward that future, and sports unite us across social, economic, and political barriers." More than one hundred students and police then completed cricket drills together, prior to a 10-on-10 match between the police and youth.

"This cricket camp helped show the youth participants that police officers aren't outsiders to be feared, but community members who are here to support them," NYPD Detective Elvis Vukelj said. "These types of sports activities can help both American and Pakistani police to engage constructively with our communities."

Representatives from the Mashal Model School, Pakistan Boy Scouts Association, Pakistan Sweet Home, and the English Access Microscholarship Program participated in the camp.

The ongoing visit of officers from the NYPD Community Affairs Bureau is an opportunity for American and Pakistani law enforcement professionals to exchange knowledge about concrete ways to foster positive and productive relations between the police and the communities they serve. It is only through interactive community participation that both the Pakistani police and their NYPD counterparts improve their overall ability to address crime proactively. Sports programs are a core component of achieving this objective, allowing the police to engage constructively with youth,

women, and other key audiences in Pakistan and the United States. Using sports as a tool, police officers can break down barriers and develop lasting ties with their communities to provide the security necessary to support economic, political, and social prosperity for all.

The U.S. government invests more than \$30 million each year in grant programs that promote cultural exchange between the United States and Pakistan through sports, visual and performing arts, women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, and a variety of other areas. Additionally, the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has a long history of cooperation with Pakistani police. Since 2002, INL has provided assistance to police in all four of Pakistan's provinces and Islamabad; levies in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA); and federal law enforcement organizations. INL projects have focused on areas such as developing training curricula, enhancing the capacity of female officers, and building operational capabilities.

## **Partnership Between Fatima Jinnah Women University and U.S. Embassy Opens Remodeled Susan B. Anthony Reading Room in**

**Rawalpindi** Rawalpindi, October 27, 2015 – Distinguished faculty and students from the Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) welcomed U.S. Embassy Islamabad officials today to celebrate the opening of the newly remodeled Susan B. Anthony Reading Room (SBARR) at FJWU in Rawalpindi. The refurbishment provides additional access to books, magazines, scholarly databases, and state-of-the-art technology for FJWU faculty, students, and visitors to the university. The project was made possible by a newly signed three-year agreement between FJWU and U.S. Embassy Islamabad

Fatima Jinnah Women University Vice Chancellor Dr. Samina Amin Qadir and U.S. Embassy Islamabad Counselor for Public Affairs Christina Tomlinson inaugurated the event. Dr. Qadir said, "Our university is proud to host such a popular place that reflects the sustained collaboration between it and U.S. Embassy Islamabad." Ms. Tomlinson added, "Promoting women's and girls' education and gender equality is a foreign policy priority for the United States. The Susan B. Anthony Reading Room is an element of our rich partnership, providing an ever increasing opportunity for dialogue between the two countries."

First established in 2008, SBARR is a partnership between FJWU and U.S. Embassy Islamabad. The reading room is named after Susan B. Anthony, the nineteenth-century American woman, who was known for her advocacy of education, improved working conditions, voting rights for women, and the abolition of slavery. The reading room will organize monthly programs for university students, faculty, and guests focusing on English language learning, college educational advising and exam resources, U.S. exchange alumni and cultural programs, and information about the United States.

The Susan B. Anthony Reading Room is part of U.S. Embassy Islamabad's network of 17 Lincoln Corners in Pakistan. Lincoln Corners are resource centers and event spaces hosted in partnership with Pakistani libraries, universities, and cultural centers. They provide a platform for open dialogue between Pakistanis and Americans and strengthen people-to-people ties. To learn more about Lincoln Corners, visit [http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/lincoln\\_corners.html](http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/lincoln_corners.html).

## **NYPD Officers Build Ties with Pakistani Communities and Police**

October 27, 2015 | Islamabad **NYPD officers Lieutenant Adeel Rana and Detective Elvis Vukelj met with Pakistani police counterparts in Islamabad on October 26**

Two New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers arrived in Pakistan on October 25 for an eight-day visit funded by the U.S. government to exchange knowledge with Pakistani law enforcement professionals about concrete ways to foster positive and productive relations between the police and the communities they serve.

Lieutenant Adeel Rana and Detective Elvis Vukelj from NYPD's Community Affairs Bureau laid a wreath yesterday at the Pakistan National Police Martyrs' Memorial and spoke at an International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program course sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad.

"As a Pakistani-American, I am excited to be back in Pakistan and to meet with local police officers to share ideas and experiences relating to community policing," said Rana, who is also the president of the Muslim Officers Society. "Interactive community participation helps all of us address crime proactively."

During the remainder of their time in Pakistan, Rana and Vukelj will meet with other law enforcement counterparts and interact with youth through discussions and sports.

"I have found that sports are a valuable tool for police to break down barriers and develop lasting ties with their communities," Vukelj said. "I look forward to playing cricket alongside Pakistani police officers and students later this week."

The U.S. government invests more than \$30 million each year in grant programs that promote cultural exchange between the United States and Pakistan through sports, visual and performing arts, women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, and a variety of other areas. Additionally, the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has a long history of cooperation with Pakistani police. Since 2002, INL has provided assistance to police in

all four of Pakistan's provinces and Islamabad; levies in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA); and federal law enforcement organizations. INL projects have focused on areas such as developing training curricula, enhancing the capacity of female officers, and building operational capabilities.

## Statement from U.S. Mission Pakistan on the October 26 Earthquake

October 26, 2015 | Islamabad We extend our deepest condolences to the victims and those who lost loved ones as a result of today's earthquake, in Pakistan and throughout the region. Our thoughts and prayers are with all affected by this tragedy. We applaud the efforts of those who are working to bring relief to those in need. The United States stands with the nation and people of Pakistan and we are in touch with the National Disaster Management Authority and we are ready to provide assistance if requested.

At this time we are unaware of any U.S. citizens directly impacted by this earthquake. If you know of any U.S. citizens injured, please contact us at [ACSIslamabad@state.gov](mailto:ACSIslamabad@state.gov).

## Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Official Visit to the United States

October 23, 2015

- **At the invitation of President Obama, Prime Minister Sharif paid an official visit to Washington from October 20 to 23, 2015 reinforcing the commitment of both leaders to an enduring U.S.-Pakistan partnership, a prosperous Pakistan, and a more stable region.**

Please find below, links to the joint statements, readouts, and fact sheets regarding the Sharif Visit:

- **[White House Fact Sheet: "The United States and Pakistan – a Strong and Enduring Relationship"](#)**
- **[Joint Statement By President Obama And Prime Minister Sharif](#)**
- **[President Obama and Prime Minister Sharif's Joint Remarks](#)**
- **[Readout of Vice President Biden's Meeting with Prime Minister Sharif](#)**
- **[Augmented Joint Action Plan on Trade and Investment Fact Sheet](#)**
- **[Clean Energy Partnership Fact Sheet](#)**
- **[Press Release for U.S.-Pakistan Business Council event with PM Sharif](#)**
- **[Webcast of U.S.-Pakistan Business Council event with PM Sharif](#)**
- **[OPIC Press Release for Financing K-Electric](#)**
- **[Remarks by First Lady Michelle Obama on the Let Girls Learn Announcement](#)**
- **[Let Girls Learn Fact Sheet](#)**

- [Let Girls Learn Launch Event](#)

## **U.S. Pakistan Business Council Hosts Prime Minister Sharif**

October 22, 2015 The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's U.S.-Pakistan Business Council (USPBC) hosted Pakistan Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif October 21, spotlighting the bolstered economic relationship between the two nations coming off a reinvigorated U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue earlier this year.

## **U.S. Agriculture Specialists Conduct Training on Plant Pest Risks**

Islamabad, October 20, 2015 A risk analyst and an export coordinator with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service conducted training in plant pest risk analysis, mitigation, and communication for Pakistan's Department of Plant Protection officials and other stakeholders. The training was part of an international collaboration to support the Government of Pakistan's efforts to expand trade in agricultural commodities. The goals were to expand the knowledge of Pakistan's plant health regulatory and scientific officials and to foster collaboration between USDA and Pakistan's plant health officials.

USDA export coordinator Ms. Lottie Erikson remarked, "the Government of Pakistan has made incredible strides in recent years to increase the value and quality of exported agricultural commodities. USDA is pleased to support the Department of Plant Protection's efforts to expand its staff and strengthen its skills."

USDA risk analyst Mr. Walter Gutierrez described the importance of a plant pest risk analysis, saying, "the purpose of phytosanitary regulations is to protect a country's domestic agriculture and that of its trading partners. To accomplish safe trade, imported and exported products must be free of pests and diseases. In Pakistan, the Department of Plant Protection must determine the risk of potential pests and diseases that may be present in traded commodities through plant pest risk analysis. The analysis should be based on sound science, credible, and defensible."

Agriculture is Pakistan's second largest sector, accounting for more than 21 percent of GDP. It remains by far the largest employer, with 46 percent of the labor force working in the sector. For the nearly 62 percent of the Pakistani population in rural areas, agriculture is a vital part of daily life. USDA supports Pakistani scientists and farmers to enhance agricultural productivity in Pakistan, support economic objectives, and meet food security needs.

**Statement by John Kirby, Spokesperson - Special Representative for**



## **Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Olson** October 15, 2015 | Washington, D.C.

Ambassador Richard Olson will succeed Dan Feldman, who concluded his tenure September 18, as U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP). Ambassador Olson will assume his responsibilities as SRAP on November 17, after concluding his service as the U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan. As were his predecessors, Ambassador Olson will be responsible for developing and implementing policies and programs that support U.S. national security interests in promoting stability and increasing prosperity in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Ambassador Olson brings extraordinary experience in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as elsewhere, to his new position. He has served as U.S. Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the last three years. Prior to his experience in Islamabad, Ambassador Olson served as the Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs at U.S. Embassy Kabul, Afghanistan, from 2011 to 2012, during which time he oversaw all U.S. non-military assistance programs and support for the Afghan government. He also served as U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates from 2008 to 2011. He is a member of the Senior Foreign Service, and has served at the U.S. Department of State since 1982.

## **U.S. Exchange Program Alumni Honored for Contributions to Local Communities** Islamabad, October 12, 2015

More than 700 alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs gathered in Islamabad to recognize the extensive contributions members of the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) have made to their communities and the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. The fifth annual reunion of the PUAN Islamabad-Rawalpindi Chapter brought together politicians, parliamentarians, scholars, journalists, businessmen, and students - all of whom are alumni of U.S. exchange programs - to share their experiences and renew their commitment to strengthening ties between the United States and Pakistan. PUAN alumni have led dozens of community service activities in the Islamabad area in the past year, taking active roles in the fields of education, leadership development, counter-narcotics, and women's empowerment.

U.S. Mission Pakistan's Deputy Chief of Mission Jonathan Pratt said, "For those of you who traveled to the United States, you served as cultural ambassadors. You were the bright face of Pakistan to scores of Americans." He also acknowledged PUAN's extensive community service programs and distinguished alumni who made significant contributions to PUAN.

PUAN Country President, Haseeb Kiyani, encouraged participants to volunteer for the network's philanthropic activities to spread the knowledge they gained in the United States throughout

Pakistan. The network also recognized several prominent alumni and volunteer mentors who have given back to their communities with Distinguished Alumni and Emerging Leader awards.

The U.S. government invests more than \$40 million annually on exchange programs for Pakistani citizens. Over 1,200 Pakistanis participate each year in high school, undergraduate, graduate, and professional U.S.-sponsored exchange programs.

Pakistan has one of the largest U.S.-alumni communities in the world, with more than 15,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. PUAN organizes events across Pakistan through 12 regional chapters, including community service projects, leadership training, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities.

Learn more about PUAN at <http://www.facebook.com/pakalumni>.

## **U.S. Embassy and Kuch Khaas Celebrate Daniel Pearl World Music Days with "Harmony for Humanity"** October 4, 2015 - Islamabad

The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and Kuch Khaas commemorated Daniel Pearl World Music Days with an evening of poetry, music, and dance titled "Harmony for Humanity" at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts on Saturday, October 3. The event demonstrated the important role the arts play in promoting peace, tolerance, and mutual understanding. Lahore-based choreographer Nighat Chaodhry and composer Faheem Mazhar melded contemporary and traditional Pakistani music and dance to show how unity and harmony can develop out of conflict.

U.S. Ambassador Richard G. Olson welcomed the crowd of 500 students, educators, cultural representatives, and arts enthusiasts, and highlighted "our shared tradition – Pakistani and American – of using music to spread peace and tolerance."

The concert was part of the fourteenth annual Daniel Pearl World Music Days, held worldwide in October since 2002 to commemorate the life of slain U.S. Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. Daniel Pearl World Music Days is an international network of concerts that uses the power of music to reaffirm a global commitment to tolerance and humanity. Since its inception, Daniel Pearl World Music Days has grown to more than 13,400 performances in 138 countries.

The evening performance followed two days of dance workshops organized around the theme of peace and tolerance led by renowned choreographer Nighat Chaodhry. Chaodhry worked with students across Islamabad to demonstrate the powerful role dance and music play in promoting tolerance and building mutual understanding. Students left the workshops prepared to incorporate

powerful social messages in their own artistic endeavors.

The U.S. Embassy provides over \$1 million annually in support of musical arts programming in Pakistan. Each year, dozens of Pakistani artists participate in musical exchange programs to the United States, collaborations with U.S. musicians, and performances both in Pakistan and abroad with U.S. government support.

Learn more about the event at <http://www.facebook.com/pakistan.usembassy>.

## **Pakistani Law Students Compete in National Moot Court**

Islamabad, October 3, 2015 - **Twenty-four top law students from across Pakistan competed in Pakistan Law Moot's first-ever moot court event, organized in partnership with the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN), with support from U.S. Embassy Islamabad and the U.S. Education Foundation Pakistan (USEFP). The two-day event offered teams from eight universities an opportunity to refine their legal and presentation skills in a simulated court room environment. The final round was judged by senior U.S. and Pakistani legal experts.**

**"Activities like the Pakistan Law Moot competition offer students an unparalleled opportunity to strengthen their legal analytical, writing, and presentation skills. The U.S. Embassy is proud to support the competition, which will help prepare the next generation of lawyers in Pakistan to better serve the Pakistani people," U.S. Embassy Islamabad Deputy Public Affairs Officer Christina Tomlinson said at the event's closing ceremony. Tomlinson also encouraged students to explore avenues to build on their legal skills, including through opportunities to study in the United States.**

**Elaborating on the importance of moot court competitions in Pakistan, USEFP Executive Director Rita Akhtar explained, "The two-day event requires law students to analyze and argue both sides of a hypothetical legal argument using procedures modeled after those employed in state and federal appellate courts. The moot is a great opportunity for law students to discover their potential for legal practice, and USEFP is pleased to be able to support it."**

**Daniyal Hassan, Director of the PUAN Islamabad chapter's youth group, said he dreamt of organizing a national moot court competition after participating in similar competitions throughout law school. "PUAN helped me live my dream... to encourage mooting in Pakistan so that law students in our country are equipped with the most important practical legal skills."**

**The competition's law students hailed from: Azad Jammu & Kashmir University; Indus College of Law, Hyderabad; International Islamic University Islamabad - Female Campus; Pakistan College of Law, Lahore; Federal Urdu University, Karachi; Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan; Islamabad**

School of Law; and Lahore University of Management Sciences.

Pakistan has one of the largest U.S.-alumni communities in the world, with more than 15,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. PUAN organizes events across Pakistan through 12 regional chapters, including community service projects, leadership training, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities. Find out more about PUAN at <http://www.facebook.com/pakalumni>.

## **U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation Supports Conservation of Lahore's 17th Century Chowk Wazir Khan**

October 2, 2015 – Lahore **The U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation will provide USD 1.1 million to conserve Chowk Wazir Khan**

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture-Pakistan and the U.S. Mission Pakistan celebrated the signing of a cooperative agreement supporting the conservation of the Chowk Wazir Khan, a centerpiece of Lahore's historic Walled City. A grant under the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation will provide USD 1.1 million to reclaim the chowk's historic urban square to create a shared, community space. The project includes restoring the eastern façade and hujras of the Wazir Khan Mosque, conserving a historic house, and preserving Dina Nath's Well within the chowk. This project is being carried out in coordination with the Government of Punjab and will complement its urban rehabilitation and infrastructure upgrade project.

Praising the work of the Aga Khan Trust, U.S. Consul General Zachary Harkenrider said, "We are honored to contribute to the conservation of the 17th century Chowk Wazir Khan, an important place in the hearts of all Lahoris. Aga Khan Trust has done excellent work in the Walled City and we are pleased to support their efforts."

This will be the second award under the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation in support of the conservation of the Wazir Khan complex. In 2002, the U.S. Embassy funded the restoration of the brick and plasterwork of the mosque's bazaar arcades.

The U.S. Embassy, through the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation, has supported the cultural preservation of 18 sites throughout the country, including the recent start of restoration at Sultan Ibrahim Bin Mirza and Sultan Muhammad Isa Tarkhan tomb, in Makli Hills in Sindh Province, and the Alamgiri Gate of Lahore Fort.

Learn more about this project at: <http://www.facebook.com/lahore.usconsulate> or <https://www.facebook.com/pakistan.usembassy>

## United States Announces More Than \$300,000 for Chitral Flood Assistance

October 2, 2015 – Islamabad In response to the July 2015 flash floods in the Chitral district, the United States government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is providing \$326,000 this year to help repair the area's drinking water infrastructure and agricultural economy.

"We are working to restore the provision of food and drinking water, and put people's lives back on track as soon as possible," said USAID Mission Director John Groarke. "I want the distressed families to know that the American people stand with them during these trying times."

This week, USAID began helping repair 10 gravity-flow water supply pipelines that provide drinking water to more than 11,000 Pakistanis in the Ayun union council. In addition, the United States government will buy 141 metric tons of wheat seed, enough to support 3,500 farming families, and help nearly 100 small businesses reopen, including 30 water mills which are essential for grinding grains.

Since 2009, the U.S. government has contributed more than \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance to Pakistan. For more information about USAID's work in Pakistan, please visit:

[www.usaid.gov/Pakistan](http://www.usaid.gov/Pakistan)

## 76 Students from FATA Complete Higher Secondary Education

October 1, 2015 | Islamabad **Seventy six students from FATA received their Higher Secondary School Certificate today during a ceremony held in Islamabad. Secretary of Economic Affairs Division Muhammad Sethi and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director John Groarke distributed certificates to the students who completed their studies through the USAID FATA Scholarship Program. The special ceremony was held October 1, 2015 at the Serena Hotel, where several students shared highlights of their life-changing experience and their aspirations for further studies.**

The USAID FATA Scholarship Program, started in 2008, provided scholarships to students exhibiting academic aptitude, a desire to learn in the English medium, interest in a rigorous study program, and were able to attend boarding schools located outside their immediate area.

"I can think of no better example of the United States' long-term commitment to this amazing country, and its shared vision of a secure, vibrant, and prosperous Pakistan. These scholars show what is possible when our two countries work together," Mission Director Groarke said at the ceremony.

Hamid Ullah, a scholarship recipient from Khyber Agency who went on to study at Islamia College, Peshawar, said, "Education has opened up my vision. I want to be a doctor and I am studying hard to get admission in a good medical college. I can never thank the people of America enough for giving me this opportunity."

Another student Zakir Ullah, who hails from Bajaur Agency and also studied at Islamia College said, "We consider ourselves very lucky that we got this scholarship. It provided us the opportunity to study at one of the most prestigious colleges in Pakistan."

To learn more about USAID's work in education and in FATA, go to: [www.usaid.gov/pakistan](http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan)

## **U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson Expresses Condolences over the Loss of Life in Mina, Saudi Arabia** September 30, 2015 | Islamabad

On behalf of the American Embassy in Pakistan, I extend my deepest sympathies and condolences to the Pakistani victims and the families of those who were injured and perished in Mina, Saudi Arabia. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of the deceased and injured.

As Secretary Kerry said, the United States stands in support of Muslims around the world in the wake of this terrible tragedy.

## **WECREATE Center's StartUp Academy program bolsters female entrepreneurship in Pakistan** September 22, 2015 | Islamabad

The Women's Entrepreneurial Center of Resources, Education, Access, and Training for Economic Empowerment (WECREATE) Center held its 'Graduation Celebration of StartUp Academy Flight I' in Islamabad September 21 to mark the completion of a 15-week program that takes aspiring female entrepreneurs from idea to business implementation. The graduates pitched their new businesses to community leaders, potential investors, and the press during the event.

Graduates of the program lauded the efforts of the WECREATE | PAKISTAN Center and said this program helped them develop the necessary skills to start and grow their own businesses. U.S. Embassy Economic Counselor Robert Garverick commented he was very impressed by the graduates' business plans and by the efforts of the WECREATE | PAKISTAN Center to promote female entrepreneurship in Pakistan. "I look forward to seeing these women's businesses grow and prosper. I expect these StartUp Academy graduates soon will be mentoring the next generation of female entrepreneurs in Pakistan."

The StartUp Academy is a 15-week program designed to accelerate the startup process by walking female entrepreneurs through the universal steps required to build a company or to take their early-stage businesses to the next level. The WECREATE | PAKISTAN Center is now accepting applications for Flight 2 of the StartUp Academy; women from all backgrounds are encouraged to apply by the October 15, 2015 deadline. Additional details are available online at <http://pakistan.wecreatecenter.com/>.

The WECREATE | PAKISTAN Center, the first incubator in Pakistan designed specifically for female entrepreneurs, is playing an important role in advancing gender equality in entrepreneurship. The resources, training, and mentorship provided through the center enable Pakistani women to move from the informal sector to the formal sector while generating momentum for measurable economic and societal change. The center is supported by the U.S. Department of State in partnership with StartUp Cup INC, The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) Islamabad, Change Mechanics, and the Hashoo Foundation.

*BridgeUS is nonpartisan and an effort to share and publish news of diversity, harmony and mutual understanding to bridge between nations and inform people directly about how humanitarian aid is positively changing lives in Pakistan.*

Dedicated to



Daniel Pearl

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