

Bridge Communications & Research – BCR

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Voicing against injustice – in memory of those journalists lost in search of truth

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Denmark

Provincial visions presented to promote national peace

04.03.2015: Islamabad, March 04, 2015: “Dialogue is the key to building and promoting peace. We must learn to speak to each other. Most importantly, we must learn to listen and respect differences of opinion. Whatever we disagree on, let us at least agree that we don’t use violence, but that we deal with differences through dialogue and understanding”. This was stated by the Danish Ambassador Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen during his speech at the National Peace Summit, which was held today in Islamabad.

The National Peace Summit, which was organized by Search for Common Ground (SFCG) Pakistan with support from Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) brought diverse groups and communities together from across all provinces. The aim was to find a collective vision of peace with a particular focus on enabling provinces and their communities to engage constructively around conflict issues in the post-18th Amendment Framework.

Speaking as the Chief Guest, Ambassador Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen acknowledged the important work of peace builders who work their way through the most difficult levels within their community by adopting an open, interactive and solution-oriented approach for dialogue. “By seeing and teaching the common ground between one’s own group and another group of people, we can build empathy and tolerance. This is the kind of thinking that leads towards depolarizing, building bridges and eventually peace”, said Ambassador Sorensen.

Ms. Sherry Rehman, Vice President PPP and Former Pakistan Ambassador to USA participated as Guest of Honor. She highlighted that the main building block of peace is provision and existence of security. She encouraged creating and promoting public conversation as inclusive citizenship was at heart of a democratic society. She appreciated the Pakistan Peace Initiative as it represented the democratic model in which public engagement has developed solutions for peace, which includes all provincial perspectives. She encouraged the public to petition their Government and parliamentarians, as the public voice was the cornerstone of any democratic society “Pakistan has become a polarized society where tolerance and respect for diversity is much needed”, she said.

Around 150 participants representing diverse groups such as media, youth, minorities, women, religious leaders, politicians, traders, civil society and government officials sat together and discussed topics related to peace, conflict and public governance in view of the 18th amendment. Participants spoke openly on issues such as devolution of power, social justice, local and provincial level conflicts and how peace can be maintained viewing Pakistan's constitution as a tool for conflict transformation while engaging communities for grassroots action for peace building.

Addressing the audience, Mr. Khurram Masood, Executive Director SFCG Pakistan said that SFCG believes that at the macro level, demand for public dialogue can be generated leading to increased constructive voices of citizens including youth, women and media in particular. He said that SFCG hopes that generation of platforms and healthy dialogue will enable Pakistani population to take an active part in motivating the masses for causing shifts in perspectives and approaches for collaborative actions. "SFCG places a premium on Pakistan's growing youth bulge, women leaders, dynamic media and private sector entrepreneurs to become the change agents that Pakistan needs", said Mr. Masood.

During the Summit, recommendations of the provincial perspectives of Peace were presented in the light of 18th constitutional amendment retrieved from a series of provincial level consultative dialogues held in Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi between May 2014 up-to February 2015. The final outcome and recommendations of all provincial dialogues and the National Summit will be disseminated and shared with Government of Pakistan compiled into a policy paper "Pakistan Vision of Peace".

At the end of the Summit, awards were given to two inspiring youth peace activists for their efforts to promote peace in their communities. The awards were given to Mr. Nooruz Ghani from Liyari and Mr. Farooq Afridi from Khyber Agency, FATA.

Members of Youth Parliament depart for Denmark to study Democratic Society Building 23.02.2015

Islamabad, February 22: A delegation of 6 Members of Youth Parliament Pakistan alongside 2 Members of the National Assembly of Pakistan has departed for Study Visit to Denmark.

The study programme aims to facilitate learning about the democratic and Parliamentary systems, institutional measures of public accountability and transparency of Governments. The program will provide specific learning about the Danish democracy,

electoral, parliamentary and political systems, including local governance, multi-culturalism and youth participation. The young members will also be having interactions with members of the Danish Parliament and discussion on particular issues facing Pakistan and youth of Pakistan.

Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen, Ambassador of Denmark said that this Danish funded study visit will provide the youth parliamentarians with hands-on knowledge about Denmark and the Danish ways of dealing with global challenges. Ambassador Sorensen stated, "Nothing beats democracy. There are many ways to develop a democratic society and culture, but in my opinion youth has to play a key role in the developing, maintaining and strengthening democracy. The youth is not the future – they are the present! That is why the visit to Denmark by the youth parliamentarians is so important - they will get exposure to the Danish society, democracy, and values. They will get inspiration, they will be challenged and they will learn. I really look forward to seeing them upon their return and hearing about their experiences – bon voyage!"

Mr. Aqeel Ahmad, Youth Prime Minister, said "It is an honor representing the Youth Parliament Pakistan on a study visit to Denmark. We are excited about our interactions with Danish MPs, youth and learn about how the Danish democracy works. The Study Visit will also enable us to share the progressive perspective about Pakistan. We are confident that this study visit is going to be an enlightening experience, instilling in us a diverse understanding of democracy and politics."

Prior to the departure, PILDAT organized briefings with the Europe Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Pakistan and with the Danish Embassy where Ms. Darriann Riber, Development Counsellor, provided an overview of the Danish-Pakistani relations and the political system and structure in Denmark.

Mr. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, Secretary General Youth Parliament Pakistan & President PILDAT, speaking on the occasion, said "PILDAT has been working to inculcate democratic culture and practices in Youth of Pakistan from the platform of the Youth Parliament Pakistan since 2007." He further said that the "Study Visit is an excellent opportunity for Members of the Youth Parliament to learn about Denmark's democratic structure and practices. The delegation is designed in a way that Members of Youth Parliament can also learn about Parliamentary practices from the Members of the National Assembly of Pakistan. We are delighted to be facilitating an opportunity of learning and interaction about democratic practices and cultures."

The 6 members of the Youth Parliament Pakistan include Syeda Mizghan Mehboob Kirmani, Chairperson Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Education & Youth Affairs and Ms. Rahy Farooq, Member, Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Education & Youth Affairs, Mr. Aqeel Ahmed, Youth Prime Minister, Mr. Muhammad Shahzar Illahi, Youth Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Ali Shan Khan, Youth Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sohaib Saeed, Chairman Youth Parliament Standing Committee on Finance, Economic Affairs & Planning.

The Delegation includes 2 MNAs – Mr. Omar Ayub Khan, Chairman National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance and Syed Naveed Qamar, Chairman National Assembly Standing Committee on Railways.

The Youth Parliament Pakistan, a PILDAT initiative funded by Danish Embassy under the development programme 2013-2016, is facilitated at inculcating in youth of Pakistan values and spirit for democracy, the importance of dialogue and an understanding of the concept of Parliament and its role in democratic decision-making and oversight.

VESTAS WIND SYSTEMS TO PARTNER SINDH GOVERNMENT WIND ENERGY PROJECT

18.02.2015

6th February 2015, Karachi - The future of wind energy in the Sindh province received a major boost today, as leading representatives from the Government of Sindh and Vestas Wind Systems signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on wind power development in the region.

A delegation of senior Vestas officials travelled to Pakistan to sign the MoU with high ranking representatives from the Government of Sindh. The signing ceremony took place at the Chief Minister's House in Karachi and was attended by Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Qaim Ali Shah, and H.E. Jesper Moller Sorensen, Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan.

Vestas, a Denmark-based wind turbine manufacturer internationally recognised as the global leader in wind energy, has been a first mover in Pakistan, having supplied turbines to one of the first commercial wind farms now in operation. In 2014, a Vestas delegation met with the Government of Sindh during a week-long visit to Pakistan facilitated by the Embassy of Denmark in Pakistan. Speaking at the event today, Gerard Carew, Vestas' Vice President of Sales in Asia Pacific, explained that Pakistan is an emerging wind energy market where the company is ready to grow its presence:

“This MOU signing follows our initial meetings with the Government of Sindh in 2014 and subsequent discussions that have now cemented our shared ambition to have wind energy play a major role in overcoming the energy crisis in Pakistan. The Sindh province is blessed with excellent wind resources, and Vestas has the experience, knowledge, and products & services to deliver highly productive and reliable wind power plants in the region. We are delighted to be working with the Government of Sindh to assist in the development of wind power in the region.”

The Embassy of Denmark in Islamabad has supported Vestas in implementing its market growth plan, following on from two conferences on wind energy in Pakistan it helped arrange in 2014. Also at the ceremony, H.E. Jesper Moller Sorensen, *Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan*, commented:

“Pakistan has a huge potential for wind energy, and Denmark is a market leader, when it comes to technology for production of energy from wind. In 2014, 40 percent of all electricity in Denmark was generated by wind power. Denmark’s success story, technology and experience can play an important role in the further expansion of wind in Sindh. I am happy to witness that active steps are being taken to bring environmentally sustainable solutions to bridge the energy gap in Pakistan. I am confident that Vestas’ technical expertise and experience in realizing large scale wind farms could be a great contribution to the development of the Pakistani energy sector.”

Under the MOU, Vestas will provide wind & site engineering and associated technical services to the Government of Sindh as it undertakes project development activities for an initial 100 MW wind farm with future potential to expand up to 300 MW. Through its network and interactions with renewable energy investors and financial institutions, Vestas will also help to facilitate project equity and debt financing for the project with assistance from the Embassy of Denmark.

Speaking on the occasion, Syed Qaim Ali Shah, Chief Minister Sindh said that the province has a huge potential for wind energy to contribute in the national grid. Pakistan’s energy crisis can be overcome by exploiting wind energy resource.

Government of Sindh has taken concrete steps to facilitate local and foreign investors to invest in the wind energy resource of the province.

Empowering women and youth: Oxfam Novib launches new project in Pakistan supported by Denmark.

2nd December 2014: "Early marriage is a major challenge in Pakistan. 40 percent of girls are married before the age of 18. Early marriage often denies children their basic right to good health, education and freedom from violence, abuse and exploitation. Most fundamentally, it deprives a child the basic right of simply being a child." This was stated by the Ambassador of Denmark, Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen, who was the chief guest at the launching ceremony of the new project 'Gender Empowerment and Institutional Development Program.'

The nationwide project is being implemented by Oxfam Novib and its Pakistani partners. It is supported by the Government of Denmark with a donation of 15 million Danish kroner (\$2.5million). It will be implemented in all four provinces, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Bajaur Agency of Pakistan.

Opening the ceremony, Mr. Arif Jabbar Khan, Country Director of Oxfam in Pakistan, highlighted Oxfam's vision of a society where everyone, also youth and women, are valued and treated equally, able to influence the decisions that affect their lives while assuming their responsibilities as active citizens. "Human development is driven by empowered women. Oxfam continues to place the highest priority on supporting women and girls to become leaders and to ensure that their roles in society and the economy are properly valued and recognized," said Mr. Khan.

The project will work across Pakistan with young people especially young women and girls to enable them to claim, practice and support adherence of their reproductive health rights in a more favorable policy environment and without any discrimination. The project will focus on life skill education, reproductive health rights and advocate for prevention of early child marriages.

Ambassador Sorensen reflected on Denmark's support to gender equality. "Promoting gender equality is a consistent feature in all Denmark's development and humanitarian assistance programs. Our support to work on gender equality is based on a rights-based approach. This approach focuses on improving women's access to fundamental rights, to resources and to influence."

The Ambassador also highlighted that the project will engage parents and teachers, local and national governments, parliamentarians, media, religious scholars and civil society across Pakistan. "By also including these groups, the initiative aims to create an environment for effective citizenship and responsive governance, where people - especially youth and women - can exercise their reproductive health rights without any

discrimination of gender,” said the Ambassador.

During the launch, the audience was engaged in a dialogue on gender and youth rights through an interactive play performance by members from the Interactive Resource Centre. The audience was asked to decide what the ending of the story play should be, endorsing that any decision to be made needs to be based on information and knowledge.

Guest of Honor, Ms. Maiza Hameed, Member National Assembly of Pakistan and Chief Coordinator of Prime Minister Youth Skills Development Scheme affirmed the government’s commitment to empower youth in the country and highlighted various initiatives taken by the government to lift young people out of poverty, discrimination and marginalization.

Mr. Arie Schuurmans, Associate Country Director of Oxfam Novib in Pakistan thanked in his closing remarks all participants and specifically the Danish government for providing the funding support together with Oxfam Novib.

The event was well attended by representatives from the governments of Pakistan and AJK, public sector officials, religious scholars, donor agencies, NGOs, civil society organizations, academia, students and the media.

Oxfam Novib will implement the project with its partners across Pakistan. Oxfam Novib is part of Oxfam international confederation of 17 independent non-governmental organizations across the globe and works with local groups, civil society and government to promote social justice and equal rights for all in Pakistan. For more information on Oxfam Novib, please log on to www.oxfamnovib.nl

Denmark and UN Women launch program on Women Leadership in social reconstruction

28.11.2014

Peshawar, 27th November 2014 – As Pakistan continues to face the effects of complex emergencies and natural disasters, very little importance has been given to the role of women in the process of social reconstruction. This was highlighted by several speakers during the launch of UN Women program on “Women Leadership in Social Reconstruction”, which is being financially supported by the Government of Denmark.

launching ceremony was hosted by the Social Welfare and Women’s Empowerment

Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with UN Women.

Addressing the participants, Danish Ambassador Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen stated that “every time there is a disaster or conflict, it is the women who immediately come on the frontline to take care of their families – whether it is the young, the elderly, the sick or those living with disabilities. They are the most affected. They need the most support.” The Danish Ambassador also highlighted that in vulnerable countries such as Pakistan, it was even more critical to understand the gender implications during and after natural disasters and crisis “By integrating gender concerns in the mainstream planning of peace, security and humanitarian actions, we do we not only promote women leadership and participation – we also build communities and countries in becoming disaster resilient”, said Ambassador Sorensen.

Ms. Sangeeta Thapa, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Pakistan, highlighted that the programme aims at responding directly to equality principles expressed in Pakistan’s Constitution, CEDAW and others signed by the Government of Pakistan within the framework of Social Reconstruction. “To us, social reconstruction process means to facilitate the reintegration of dislocated persons into their homes and villages and revitalize socio-economic activities in the region. In the context of gender, it means empowering women enough to be able to affectively participate in the decision making process at all levels of relief and rehabilitation”, said Ms. Thapa. She appreciated the Government of Denmark for extending its support, which would give continuity to UN Women’s work in ensuring that peace and security, and humanitarian actions are shaped by the leadership and participation of women, including grass root women.

Dr. Mehar Taj Roghani, Special Advisor to the Chief Minister of KP on Social Welfare and Women’s Empowerment stated that serious gaps existed in emergency preparedness and disaster risk management capacities. She appreciated the collective partnership to overcome these gaps in promoting stabilization, peace and security in the region.

Other eminent speakers also spoke about the important role of women in social reconstruction processes, including Ms. Meiraj Hamayun (Member of Provincial Assembly and Member Women Parliamentarian Caucus of KP), Ms. Nafeesa Khattak (Member of National Assembly), Mr. Munir Azam (Commissioner of Peshawar) and Mr. Syed Hidayat Jan (Secretary, Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department, Government of KP).

Women leaders from the community shared painstaking testimonies from the field with a

request for women representation, participation and leadership to be ensured in social reconstruction processes - and peace initiatives in areas of complex emergencies and disasters.

The funding from the Danish Government will be utilized to support UN Women's program to work with the Government of Pakistan and key partners in enhancing synergies so as to facilitate regional networking and partnerships; support advocacy for in-country and cross regional programming on integrating gender concerns in peace initiatives; undertake Training for Trainers on Gender and Peacekeeping with civil armed forces, as well as strengthen capacity for gender responsive policy frameworks and action plans.

France

Meeting between Mrs. Martine Dorance, Ambassador of France to Pakistan, and Mr. Khurram Dastgir, Federal Minister for Commerce (Islamabad, 8 April 2015)

Her Excellency Mrs. Martine DORANCE, Ambassador of France to Pakistan, met with Mr. Khurram Dastgir, Federal Minister for Commerce, on April 8 in Islamabad. She was accompanied by the Head of the Economic Department of the Embassy, Mr. Eric NOITAKIS. Bilateral issues were raised. In particular, the ambassador highlighted the results of the last joint commission on economic and commercial subjects, held in Paris on 16 March, 2015; the Minister for Commerce expressed his wish to increase our bilateral trade exchanges. As such he was eager to facilitate the arrival of French companies in Pakistan and delegations traveling to France on the occasion of trade exhibitions.

Celebration of French Cuisine "Goût de France/Good France"

Celebrating French Cuisine worldwide

On Thursday, 19 March 2015, in 150 countries around the world, restaurants offered 1300 dinners to celebrate France's gastronomy by inviting the public to share a "French dinner". In each participating restaurant, the event paid tribute to a vibrant, open and innovative cuisine, while remaining true to its values of sharing, pleasure, respect for good food and for the planet.

On 21 January 2015, Mr. Laurent Fabius, French Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development, along with world-renowned 3-Michelin-starred Chef Alain Ducasse, officially launched the "Goût de France/Good France" project. A committee of

international chefs, led by Alain Ducasse, selected and unveiled the final list of restaurants participating in "Goût de France/Good France". They reviewed proposals submitted by restaurants all over the world, which prepared a menu representative of French gastronomy.

Pakistan among the finalists

Among the finalists, one restaurant, Café Flo, is located in Karachi, Pakistan. On the 19th of March, it offered a "French-style" menu with a traditional French aperitif, a cold starter (Chilled cucumber shot), a hot starter (Trio de foie gras/Seafood ravioles), fish or shellfish (Charcoal grilled red snapper with calamari and shrimps), meat (Chateaubriand Rossini), a French cheese (or cheeseboard), a chocolate dessert (Chocolate Fondant on a bed of strawberries).

Her Excellency Mrs. Martine Dorance, Ambassador of France to Pakistan, also hosted a private "French Style" dinner on the same day with seven courses (Cheese Gougères; Duck Foie Gras and Onion Confit Compote; Cream of Pumpink Soup with Black Périgord Truffles; Fish and Seafood Cassolette; Roast Beef Tenderloin, Black Pepper sauce; Gratin dauphinois and Spring vegetables; French Cheese Platter; Black Chocolate Parisian Gourmandises). on the same day.

Sharing a French Tradition

In 1912, Auguste Escoffier started the "Epicurean Diners"- one day, one menu, served in cities around the world. In 2015, "Goût de France/Good France" takes the idea further, bringing all categories of restaurants together, worldwide. This event will mark the first concrete demonstration of French cuisine being listed in UNESCO's "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" category, and will highlight its influence on the world.

► During the project's presentation, Laurent Fabius said: *"France's heritage is its cuisine. The Gastronomic meal of the French has been on the UNESCO World Heritage list since 2010, but it is a heritage that should not simply be contemplated, glorified and savoured; it is a heritage that should be built upon and showcased."*

► In the words of Alain Ducasse: *"French cuisine is the interpreter of a cuisine that has evolved towards lightness in harmony with its environment... The common point of this event is generosity, sharing and the love of what is beautiful and tastes good. It will be a delightful interlude and an opportunity to celebrate French cuisine worldwide."*

To see the list of restaurants participating in Pakistan and the world, [click here](#)

French Development Agency- Proparco invests USD 20 million to support wind energy in Pakistan

PROPARCO, the private sector arm of the French Development Agency, is investing USD 20 million to support a new wind farm in Sindh province, part of efforts to support renewable power generation and drive economic development across Pakistan.

PROPARCO's investment in Gul Ahmed Wind Power, an independent power producer, will help the company build and operate the 50-megawatt facility northeast of Karachi.

The project is expected to bolster electricity supplies in Pakistan, where frequent power cuts hamper social and economic development, and cost the country the equivalent of 2 percent of gross domestic product. An approximate 130 GWh per year is expected to be added to the national grid.

The new plant will create jobs (more than 500 during the construction phase and 50 on a long term basis) and help spur growth. The plant will make its greatest contributions during the high-demand summer months, when wind farms generate most of their electricity. It will provide an environmentally-friendly source of power, helping Pakistan cut back on the use of polluting and expensive fossil fuels by reducing the carbon footprint of the country by an approximate 60,000 tons of CO₂-equivalent per year.

Chief Executive Officer of PROPARCO, Claude Périou welcomed "this joint operation with the Infracore Asia, IFC and local Pakistani banks, which is fully in line with AFD Group's strategy against climate change. This project will contribute not only to reducing pressure on the country's power grid, but also to encouraging the development of strong, reliable and clean energy in the region. It is the third investment of PROPARCO in the energy sector in Pakistan."

ABOUT PROPARCO is a Development Finance Institution jointly held by [Agence Française de Développement \(AFD\)](#) and public and private shareholders from the North and South. Its mission is to catalyze private investment in emerging and developing countries with the aim of supporting growth, sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). PROPARCO is one of the main bilateral development finance institutions in the world. It invests on four continents encompassing the major emerging countries and the poorest countries, particularly in Africa, and has a high level of requirements in terms of social and environmental responsibility. For more

information, visit: www.proparco.fr

French Embassy holds Event for International Women's Day (Islamabad, 3rd March 2015)

The Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Mrs. Martine Dorance, hosted an event on the 3rd of March, 2015 in advance of International Women's Day celebrated on the 8th of March. This celebration gathered prominent Pakistani women, including human rights activists, artists, scholars and independent workers, media representative, students from Peshawar and women from Hunza communities. H.E. Dr. Brigitta Blaha, the Ambassador of Austria also participated in the event.

The event focused on women's empowerment and was held to honour and acknowledge the courage and the continuous efforts of the women and men working in Pakistan to protect women's rights, to raise awareness and campaign for new laws.

Some of the outstanding Pakistani women, Ms. Kishwar Naheed, Mrs. Tahira Abdullah, shared their testimonies on these issues. A special emphasis was given to education and skill development in Pakistan, by Mrs. Jamil Baela Raza Coordinator of ASER Report on Education and Mrs Farzana Bari, renowned social activist and Director for the Centre of Excellence in Gender Studies.

The event was also the opportunity to raise the specific theme of climate change and its effects on women. Speaking about this, Mrs Aisha Khan, CEO of the Mountain and Glaciers Protection Organization, said that mountain women are managers of resources and yet ignored in decision-making.

Young women who have been trained in a skill development project (carpentry, masonry, electricity) developed in Hunza and Chitral by the Aga Khan Cultural Service (AKCS) with the support of the Embassy of France in Pakistan, also participated in the event. Ms. Aqeela Bano, Surveyor of the project spoke about the challenges and success of young entrepreneurs from her area and how they changed their role from dependent to bread-earners for their families. She said women can achieve anything they want and requested outstanding Pakistani women to keep helping them by supporting and encouraging them. Three students from the Peshawar University Shahid Benazir Bhutto, who benefitted from the needs-based scholarship program supported by the Embassy of France in cooperation with HEC, also participated. Among them, Mrs. Uruba Wahid Ali, student of BSCS Computer Science stressed the need to be at the very top of her profession as a woman

and thanked the Embassy of France for the support to achieve her goals.

At the end of meeting the renowned poet of Pakistan Kishwar Naheed recited her poems in honour of the women who struggled for their rights.

Speaking at the event, renowned poetess Mrs Kishwar Naheed appreciated the French Embassy for celebrating International Women's Day and inviting girls from disadvantaged areas like Hunza and Peshawar in the event. She appreciated the young carpenters from Hunza and said that it is very good that young Pakistani girls are adopting non-professional skills also.

Mrs Tahira Abdullah said "it was commendable that the Embassy of France conceptualized and organized such an informative and educative event to observe International Women's Day 2015. It was especially wonderful to meet and hear the pioneer women carpenters of Gilgit-Baltistan and the scholarship awardees from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa."

Mrs. Jamil Baela Raza, Coordinator of ASER Report on Education said that "women and young girls are already making headlines with their dedicated work in Pakistan. Government has to ensure the compulsory education for everyone especially girls according to Article 24A of the constitution so that they are not only empowered but child marriages are also countered. People of Pakistan should know their rights in order to get them from their government at Federal, provincial and local level."

Mrs. Farzana Bari, Director for the Centre of Excellence in Gender Studies of Quaid e Azam University and renowned activist emphasized that "gender equality is a political issue. Gender inequality cannot be removed without removing and changing the unequal socio-cultural economic and political frameworks. Women's rights movement needs to build alliances with other social movements domestically and globally."

Mrs. Aisha Khan, CEO of the Mountain and Glaciers Protection Organization, said that "climate change will have a widespread impact on population centres and the way society interacts with the natural environment. The role of women in eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns and management of natural resources is critical but has not found traction with mountain communities in Pakistan due to socio cultural traditions of male domination. Climate risk management can never be successful without social equity, equitable distribution of resources and proportionate representation of women in decision making. Institutional mechanisms to remove social discrimination and economic inequalities need to be embedded in climate risk management policy and planning so that human needs and environmental protection

evolve in tandem and become interdependent in an inclusive rather than an exclusive way.”

The Ambassador of France met the Finance Minister of Pakistan (Islamabad, 19 February 2015)

Her Excellency Martine Dorance, Ambassador of France to Pakistan, met Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Finance, on 19 February 2015.

During the meeting, the Ambassador and the Federal Minister discussed the possibilities to enhance the bilateral trade and the investments between France and Pakistan, as well as the preparations made by France to host in Paris next December the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21/CMP11).

Launching of the “Hello Tomorrow Challenge” in Pakistan at the French Embassy: an international start-up competition promoting innovation (Islamabad, 12 February 2015)

The Embassy of France in Pakistan has hosted the launching of the “Hello Tomorrow Challenge in Pakistan”, a global start-up competition covering all major fields of technology.

This international start-up competition aims to promote projects based on scientific and technological innovations with high potential. The competition is open to young researchers and entrepreneurs. It reflects the mobilization in France in support of creativity and entrepreneurship.

This is the second edition of the competition, which will grant more than 170 000 € to the best innovating start-up projects developed in one of the six following fields: energy and environment, food and agriculture, transport and mobility, materials and manufacturing, healthcare and information technologies.

The Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Her Excellency Martine Dorance, launched the competition on Thursday 12th February 2015 at the Embassy of France in Islamabad in presence of the CEOs of Nayatel and Somerset Capital Holding, more than 60 entrepreneurs and academics, and managers from French companies in Pakistan. This

event was the opportunity to highlight all the initiatives taken by France during the last few years to support start-ups and to gather young Pakistani entrepreneurs, researchers and investors in Islamabad.

The 30 best startups of the Hello Tomorrow Challenge will be invited at the “Grande Finale” and Award Ceremony will be organized on June 26th, 2015 in Paris.

You can find more information about the Hello Tomorrow Challenge on the website: <http://hello-tomorrow.org/>

The Karachi Literature Festival – Second edition of the French Embassy Fiction Prize 2015

The second edition of the French Embassy Fiction Prize has been awarded to Shandana Minhas for her book *Survival topics for lunatics*. The Prize was announced during the opening ceremony of the Karachi Literature Festival 2015 on Friday, February 6 at the Beach Luxury Hotel.

Shandana Minhas is a Karachi-born playwright, screenwriter and actor. She was a nominee for the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for Best First Book for the novel *Tunnel Vision*, published in 2007. *Survival topics for lunatics* is her second novel.

The decision to award the Prize to Shandana Minhas was reached by a 4-member jury comprised of writers, journalists, critics, and professors. After long and hard deliberation, the jury came to the conclusion that *Survival topics for lunatics* deserved the honor for breaking considerable new ground in children’s fiction thanks to the sheer lunacy, sustained ventriloquism, and brilliant inventions of character and plot. It is a book that has shades of both Rudyard Kipling and Georges Remi. It is a book in which animals speak and remind their human counterparts of what they are lacking: respect for others and respect for life. Thanks to its intelligent humor and the themes it deals with, it can not only be read by children but also by adults. Shandana Minhas has written a work of moral illumination, of what is important, what is not, and why.

Launched in 2014, the Prize aims to promote excellence in fiction written by Pakistani writers. It strives to highlight the creative talents of Pakistani fiction writers and honors, each year, some of the best works in this genre. The Prize also seeks to promote Pakistani fiction writers in France.

The winner of the Prize is awarded with a fully sponsored visit to Paris “Salon du Livre” (Paris Book Fair) in March 2015, where she will meet authors, publishers, and journalists as part of the invitation. The French book fair hosts every year around 45,000 authors and 1200 publishers from 25 countries.

Thank you

The Embassy of France in Pakistan warmly thanks everyone who has joined the people of France in mourning following the terrorist attacks in France; your show of solidarity and expressions of condolence have been deeply moving.

Ambassador’s letters of credence

The Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Mrs Martine Dorance, presented on December 11th 2014 her letters of credence to His Excellency Mr Mamnoon Hussain, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The ceremony took place at the Presidential palace, Aiwan-e-Sadr.

During her audience with the President, the Ambassador discussed the quality of the bilateral relations between France and Pakistan and mentioned the opportunities to improve the ties between the two countries, especially in the economic sector.

Germany

Pakistan launches first ever TVET policy

On 4 March 2015 the Government of Pakistan launched the first ever National Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policy document and the National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) in Pakistan, which will improve the quality of skills’ training in the country.

Both documents were launched during a one-day National Conference on TVET Reform organised by the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC). The conference was supported by the TVET Reform Support Programme, funded by the European Union, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Royal Norwegian Embassy. The Programme has been commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is being implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in close collaboration with NAVTTTC.

Minister of State for Education and Professional Training Engr. Baligh-ur-Rehman was the chief guest, while European Union ambassador HE Lars- Gunnar Wigemark, the German ambassador HE Dr. Cyrill Nunn, the Dutch ambassador HE Marcel de Vink and the Norwegian ambassador HE Leif Holger Larsen were the guests of honour. More than 300 government officials, TVET experts, employers, office bearers of a number of chambers of commerce and industry and trade associations across the country attended the conference.

Speaking on the occasion, Engr. Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that Pakistan is not only blessed with numerous natural resources but it is also one of the few countries with a population bulge of young people which is 60 %

Minister for Federal Education & Professional Training Eng. Muhammad Balighur Rehman is addressing the National Conference on TVET Reform (© GIZ GmbH) of the population. This indeed is a major demographic dividend if explored to its full potential, he explained. The government of Pakistan, he said, has taken upon the challenge to give its youth the skills for better economic opportunities.

Moreover, the minister explained, that these instruments will provide a basis for recognition of qualifications at national and international levels. Additionally, it provides guidelines for recognition of prior learning since more than 70% of the labour force is trained in the informal sector in Pakistan, he said. He resolved that the government is committed to implement the TVET policy and NVQF in letter and spirit, which will create a paradigm shift in the TVET delivery system. Earlier all the four ambassadors, Executive Director NAVTTC Muhammad Imtiaz Tajwar and Country Director GIZ Pakistan Jürgen Schilling spoke on the occasion as well.

Ambassador Nunn visits Faisalabad and Sialkot to strengthen economic and educational relations

Students gave the Ambassador a ride over the school grounds with the “Veleone”, a car completely constructed by the students themselves. (© Roots Ivy International School Faisalabad) From 11 until 13 February 2015 the German Ambassador, Dr. Cyrill Nunn, and the Head of the Economic Section of the Embassy, Mr. Kai Müller-Berner, travelled to the commercial centers Sialkot and Faisalabad to visit local companies and institutions of education.

In both cities they were received and attended by the Chambers of Commerce and

Industry, who expressed great interest in German initiatives in the German programs on vocational training, the Pakistani-German business fora and Germany's trade fairs.

As Germany is one of Pakistan's most important export destination of the textile industry, Dr. Nunn and Mr. Müller-Berner visited a textile company and the All Pakistan Textile Processing Mills Association in Faisalabad. Compared to last year the textile export from Pakistan to Germany has increased by about 12 %. This is largely due to the EU's trade preference system GSP+, which was granted to Pakistan last year and boosted Pakistan's exports to the EU. GSP+ also foresees implementation of 27 international conventions on human rights, good governance, as well as social and labor standards. Ambassador Nunn argued that this is in the long-term interest of Pakistani companies as it enhanced productivity and competitiveness on the European market

In Sialkot Dr. Nunn and Mr. Müller-Berner were impressed by Forward Sports Group. The Company does not only manufacture the official football for the German Bundesliga (German football league), but also produced the football of last year's world cup in Brazil... which became part of Germany's World Cup victory.

Another highlight of the trip was the visit to the Roots Ivy International School Faisalabad. Students greeted the visitors and showed them their projects "inspired by the German car industry". Students gave the Ambassador a ride over the school grounds with the "Veleone", a car completely constructed by the students themselves. Roots Ivy International School Faisalabad is one of seven PASCH-Schools in Pakistan. The PASCH-initiative is a network of 1700 schools worldwide teaching German language on a very high level.

Before heading back to Islamabad on Friday morning, the German Ambassador used the opportunity to hand over high-tech equipment for the laboratories of the University of Agriculture in Faisalabad. The equipment is funded by the German Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Both sides valued the scientific exchange between the University and German institutions, such as the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the German academic exchange Service (DAAD). Overall, the trip was a success in strengthening the commercial and educational relations between Germany and the Faisalabad and Sialkot region.

Inauguration of Wella Professionals' Academy

The first Wella Professionals' academy in Pakistan was launched on February 12, 2015 in

Karachi.

Dr. Tilo Klinner, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, inaugurated the training centre.

The academy provides an advanced vocational training for hair stylists and beauticians . The maiden-batch began their training in hair aesthetics and coloring on 16 February 2015 . The participants come from hairdressing salons and beauty parlors mushrooming all over Karachi.

Karachi Literature Festival Peace Prize 2015

On Saturday, February 7, the KLF Peace Prize 2015 was awarded during the Karachi Literature Festival.

Jointly initiated by the Consulate General Karachi and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany Islamabad in 2014, the prize aims to reward authors engaged in the field of peace and harmony between different religions, denominations and ethnic groups through their literary work. The prize is intended to create a broad awareness for these ideals.

The response to a public call for nominations was overwhelming. In the end the jury had to select the laureates from 18 books ranging from children's books to sociopolitical essays.

This was not an easy task, jury members admitted, as all the nominations were of solid quality and belonged to the best in their respective genre.

Two books with an equal amount of jury votes were awarded the KLF Peace Prize 2015:

- "The Ahmadis and the politics of religious exclusion" by Ali U. Qasmi.

This groundbreaking scholarly study is a detailed and thorough historical account. The book approaches its sensitive topic, the struggle of the minority of Ahmadis in Pakistan, analyzing in detail documents unknown until now. It is an outstanding and relevant work and, as one of the jury members put it, is "likely to be recognized as the definitive work on the Ahmadis in Pakistan".

- Ziauddin Sardar's "Mecca".

The book is a meticulously and well researched report on and an examination of Mecca, the city representing the heart of Islam like no other. Ziauddin Sardar digs deep into the history of this ancient town, reveals its mysteries and meaning for the Islamic world, but also sheds a harsh light on the recent developments as well as geopolitical issues threatening the cultural and archaeological heritage of this magnificent city.

The runner-up in this year's Peace Prize was Moonis Ahmar's "Conflict management and visions for a secular Pakistan". This comparative study covering political models of secularism in other countries is a bold treatise extraordinarily relevant for those in search of an alternative political vision for the state of Pakistan as perceived by the founders of the country. In his book, the author gives clear directives for the reconstruction of a secular constitutional order in Pakistan.

Third-placed "Delhi by heart" by Raza Rumi is a delightful account of the history of Delhi and offers interesting insights into the common features of contemporary Indian and Pakistani culture. It is written in the style of a travelogue as the author ambles through Delhi. Raza Rumi is exploring the manifold cultural similarities and parallels between his native Pakistan and the former Mughal capital. It is also a book about great personal friendships transcending the borders of the divided Indian subcontinent. This book is an excellent opportunity for young Pakistanis who have in most cases no first-hand experience of India to learn more about and thus better understand the neighboring country as well as their own cultural roots.

The Consulate General and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany congratulate all awarded authors on their outstanding works and their success in the Peace Prize 2015!

Greece

Foreign Ministry announcement regarding the double bombing attack on Christian churches in Pakistan

Sunday, 15 March 2015

We express our abhorrence at the two deadly bombing attacks targeting the faithful of two Christian churches in Lahore, Pakistan.

We condemn any such act that impinges on human rights brutally and without reason, and violates the freedoms of minority religious groups, which are in dire need of protection.

We express our condolences to the families of the victims, to the Christian community of Pakistan, and to the people and government of Pakistan.

Italy

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED BY THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT TO STUDENTS FOREIGN CITIZENS AND IRE

<http://translate.google.com.pk/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=http://www.ambislamabad.esti.it/&prev=search>

**Pakistan Embassy in Rome Holds Pakistan Day Reception
(2014-03-27)**

The Embassy of Pakistan in Rome hosted a reception on 27th March 2014 in connection with Pakistan Day celebrations. Rome's diplomatic community, ambassadors of friendly countries and local dignitaries attended the event. Ambassador Francesco Paolo Fulci, a renowned Italian diplomat and President of Ferraro SpA, spoke at the occasion. Undersecretary of State Ambassador Staffen De Mistura and the Head of Italian Foreign Ministry's Asia Division, Ambassador Andrea Perugini, also made speeches.

In keeping with the tradition, national anthems of the two countries were played on the occasion. A short documentary film celebrating Pakistan's achievements in various fields as well as chronicling the history of Pakistan-Italy relations was also shown.

In her remarks, Ambassador Tehmina Janjua referred to the historic Pakistan Resolution and said that the Pakistani nation, was resolutely forging ahead to realise the vision of the founding fathers in building Pakistan as a prosperous, progressive and forward-looking state. She also spoke about Pakistan-Italy bilateral relations which are expanding into all fields of mutual benefit.

Ambassador Fulci paid tributes to Pakistan-Italy bilateral relations and made a special reference to two countries' close collaboration on the question of United Nations' Security Council Reform which had been underpinned by their shared commitment to the values of democracy, accountability and equity.

Pakistan and Italy have historically enjoyed warm bilateral relations. The two countries have signed a Strategic Engagement Plan in 2012 which provides framework for all-encompassing cooperation.

Pakistani Musicians Perform at the Orientale University of Naples

(2015-03-25) The Embassy of Pakistan in Rome, in collaboration with the Orientale University of Naples, organized a performance by a duo of Pakistani sitar and table players on 25th March 2015.

Ustad Amir Hussain Khan, a famous Pakistani Sitar nawaz, accompanied by Anil Sunny, a young tabla player from Lahore performed classical raags and folk tunes. The audience which consisted largely of the university faculty and students thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Local Pakistani community members were also present. Pakistani refreshments were also served following the concert.

In her welcome remarks, Professor Elda Morlicchio, Rector of the Naples University said that cultural collaboration was the best way to bring two peoples together. Ambassador Tehmina Janjua thanked the Rector for the University's collaboration in making the event possible and added that she looked forward to greater cooperation over cultural and educational initiatives.

March 25, 2015, Rome

Speaker Italian Parliament Laura Boldrini Chief Guest at Pakistan Day Reception

(2015-03-24) Pakistan Embassy Rome organized an impressive reception to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Pakistan Resolution on 23 March 1940. Honourable Laura Boldrini, the President of Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament was the guest of honour at the occasion. Members of Rome's diplomatic corps, representatives of Italian government institutions and armed forces and journalists were among the guests.

The evening's proceedings were set off with Pakistani and Italian national anthems being played by an Italian Army band. This was followed by the screening of a short documentary film about Pakistan specially produced for the occasion by the students of Pakistan National College of Arts under the guidance of Mr Majid Saeed Khan, the head of Films Departments.

Speaking on the occasion, Honorable Luara Boldrini congratulated the people of Pakistan on the National Day and wished Pakistan peace, progress and prosperity. She expressed satisfaction about the friendly and growing bilateral relations between the two countries.

In her remarks, Ambassador Tehmina Janjua paid homage to the leaders of the Pakistan Movement who conducted their struggle through peaceful and democratic means. She referred to strides that Pakistan had made over the past 67 years. Referring to the challenges facing the country, she remarked that the resilient Pakistani nation would overcome all hardships and obstacles to realize its destiny by building Pakistan as a democratic, peace-loving and forward-looking country.

Ambassador Janjua added the Pakistan-Italy bilateral relations, which dated back to the time of Pakistan's independence, continued to gain in strength and vigour with the passage of time. She said that Italy was Pakistan's third largest trade partner in the European Union and also home to a hundred-thousand strong Pakistan community. She added that cultural linkages between the two countries were also flourishing with Italian archaeological missions working in Pakistan and cultural conservation projects and the number of Pakistani students coming to Italian universities every year.

Two Pakistani artists, Ustad Amir Hussain Khan, a sitar-player, and Anil Sunny, a tabla-player, played live music at the reception and also gave a dedicated performance. Classical and folk tunes played by them were greatly appreciated by the audience.

Rome/ 24 March 2015

Pakistani Qawwals Enthral Italian Audience at Ara Pacis, Rome (2015-02-19)

Qawwali performance by Shahbaz & Fayyaz Hussain Qawaals at Ara Pacis auditorium in Rome organized by the Embassy of Pakistan with the patronage of the Mayor of Rome on February 18, 2014, enthralled a packed hall of Italians from all walks of life and members of the diplomatic community.

It is significant that Islam's message of peace, tolerance, love and compassion was sung in Rome at an auditorium of the Ara Pacis Museum which houses the pre-Christian era monument dedicated to the Roman goddess of peace. The venue resonated with this message through the poetry of Sufi saints such as Baba Farid Ganj Shakar, Hazrat Amir Khusru and Baba Bulleh Shah.

In her welcome remarks on the occasion, Ambassador Tehmina Janjua said that Sufism's focus on tolerance and compassion was a panacea for the strife and violence plaguing the world. She added that every chapter of the Holy Quran began with reference to Allah's infinite mercy and eternal kindness. In organizing the performance, the Embassy of

Pakistan in Rome had made an effort to get this message of love and compassion across by “bringing a bit of Pakistan to Rome”, she said. She thanked Mayor of Rome Mr Ignazio Marino for his patronage of the event. This, she said, reflected the city of Rome’s commitment to diversity and integration.

Prior to the performance, Professor Daniela Bredi, an orientalist and expert of Islamic jurisprudence, gave a brief scholarly introduction about Qawwali as a musical genre, its evolution and themes.

Shahbaz & Fayyaz Hussain, who are Qawwals at the shrine of Data Ganj Baksh in Lahore, performed to a packed hall with a seating capacity for 200. Their passionate rendering of some of the most famous Qawwalis evoked an equally enthusiastic response from the audience which joined in as a chorus frequently. The audience were particularly touched by the message of tolerance, love, compassion and humanity.

The Netherlands

Talk Business with us

Every week via Skype

News article | January 26, 2015

The Economic Affairs Section of the Embassy is available for a weekly Skype hour to answer your business and trade queries. We are here to talk business!



Zohaib Amin (Economic Affairs Officer) and Rick Slettenhaar (Head of Economic Affairs)

Have you got questions about doing business between Pakistan and the Netherlands?

Would you like to chat about how Dutch expertise can help your business?

Do you want to brainstorm about innovation, CSR or sustainability in Pakistan?

Then call in on “Talk Business” – the weekly Skype hour of the Trade Section of the

Netherlands Embassy in Islamabad

Every Tuesday at 2-3pm Pakistan time (10-11am Dutch time) on Skype: NLPakTrade

Ambassador Marcel de Vink's visit to North Waziristan

News article | January 20, 2015

A number of Ambassadors were part of the visit and were accompanied by representatives from different UN organisations

Ambassador Marcel de Vink joined Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions Abdul Qadir Baloch, Advisor to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz and Corps Commander Lt General Hidayatur Rehman on a visit to North Waziristan last week. A number of Ambassadors were part of the visit and were accompanied by representatives from different UN organisations.

The delegation was taken around seized and destroyed terrorist hideaways, IEDs making factories, tunnels, suicide bomber training centers and recovered arms and ammunition. The delegation praised the efforts and resolve of Pakistani nation and the army in their fight against terrorism and acknowledged the sacrifices made in order to bring peace and stability in the region.

Dutch Holstein Friesians arrive in Pakistan from the Netherlands

Nishat Farms welcome their first batch.

News article | January 3, 2015

The New Year begins with the arrival of the first Dutch Holstein Friesians in Pakistan from the Netherlands. Nishat farms welcome their first batch earlier this week.

Norway

Vacancy – Programme Adviser at the Embassy of Norway, Islamabad

Last updated: 11.04.2015 //

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad will recruit a new programme adviser for the Development Section from June 2015. The vacancy is a full time temporary position from June 2015 to December 2016, with an initial three (3) month probation period.

The Development section is responsible for the Norwegian development cooperation with

Pakistan and handles a portfolio of approximately 100 million NOK per year covering various sectors. Due to the present team composition, we strongly encourage female candidates to apply.

Qualifications:

Master's degree or higher education, preferably in social sciences, international development or related fields

Good analytical, communication and writing skills

Experience and interest in working with gender mainstreaming

Flexible and a good team player

Fluent in English – written and spoken is an absolute requirement.

Responsibilities and tasks:

Follow up of the assigned projects and programmes

Regular contact and dialogue with partners and other donors

Participate in the identification and reporting on achievements and risks related to women's situation and gender equality in the Embassy's development portfolio

Prepare and participate in project monitoring and visit across Pakistan.

We offer a competitive salary package.

More information regarding the position can be obtained by calling Development Counsellor Nanna Thue or Minister Councillor Lars Nordrum at 051 2077700.

The application included a CV and contact information to at least three reference persons should be forwarded by e-mail to emb.islamabad@mfa.no no later than 27 April 2015. Or sent by regular mail to Royal Norwegian Embassy, Hs. 25, Street 19, F – 6/2, Islamabad

Norwegian Ambassador Visits the Norwegian Honorary Consulate in Karachi

Last updated: 27.02.2015 //

Norwegian Ambassador, Leif Larsen visited the Norwegian Honorary Consulate in Karachi and The Honorary Consul, Mr. M. Moonis, on Tuesday 24 February. Mr. Moonis was appointed as Norway's representative in Karachi in 1976.

During the meeting Ambassador Larsen expressed his gratitude to Mr. Moonis for his 39-year long persistent effort to promote Norway in Karachi.

Norwegian Ambassador visited Karachi Vocational Training Centre

Last updated: 02.03.2015

Norwegian Ambassador, Leif Larsen visited Karachi Vocational Training Centre (KVTC) for the Intellectually Disabled in Karachi on Tuesday 24 February.

Karachi Vocational Training Centre (KVTC) is a rehabilitation centre for intellectually impaired people, preparing them for the challenges in life and enabling them to play a role in the society, regardless of their disabilities. It is particularly important, and in line with Norwegian developments priorities, that they are being trained for normal employment in Pakistani companies.

Ambassador Larsen met several bright students including some who participated in the Special Olympics and won gold medals. Three of the current trainees will represent Pakistan in the Special Olympics in 2015.

The KVTC is one of the components of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Reform Support program. The Reform is funded by Norway, the EU, Germany and the Netherlands, and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The TVET Reform Support program aims at reforming the TVET sector and extends its assistance to all provinces. The objective of the program is to enhance the socio-economic development of Pakistan through investment in human capital. This will be achieved through improved access, equity, relevance and quality of TVET in the country.

Ibsen Awards are announcing The Ibsen Scholarships 2015

Last updated: 02.03.2015 // Funds for professional theatre performances based on Henrik Ibsen's plays are now available.

Funds amounting to NOK 1.000.000,- (approx. Euro 115.000,- /USD 129.000,-) will be awarded to theatre projects worldwide.

Scholarships are applicable to individuals, organizations or institutions within the artistic and cultural community.

Scholarships guidelines:

The Ibsen Scholarships award innovative projects in the field of drama and performing arts.

The projects must act as incentives for critical discourse in regards to existential and society-related subject matters concerning Henrik Ibsen and his plays.

Applications are submitted electronically through www.ibsenawards.com.

Performances already staged are not eligible.

The Scholarships are awarded annually and the applications are subject to scrutiny by an appointed jury.

The Ibsen Scholarships were initiated by the Norwegian government and will be handed out for the 8th time in 2015. Ibsen Awards has until now handed out 26 scholarships to projects in 21 different countries.

The application deadline for The Ibsen Scholarships is April 30th 2015.

The winners of The Ibsen Scholarships 2015 will be presented at Skien International Ibsen Conference at Teater Ibsen on October 14. and 15. in Skien, Norway.

For further information, statutes and application form, kindly visit our website

www.ibsenawards.com.

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Norwegian Embassy sponsors Lahore Literary Festival

Last updated: 26.02.2015 //

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad was one of the sponsors of the 2015 Lahore Literary Festival (LLF). The festival took place at the AlHamra Arts Center from 20-22 February in beautiful sunshine. Journalists, authors, poets and artists from across the globe participated in this year's LLF. Large crowds queued to participate and most sessions were beyond full.

Link to the LLF website: <http://www.lahorelitfest.com/>

Ambassador Larsen visits Gujrat

Last updated: 19.02.2015

On Monday 16 February Ambassador Leif Larsen visited Kharian, Lalamusa and Gujrat. During the visit he met Norwegians with Pakistani roots, Pakistani society, business people and senior politicians.

Mr. Larsen also visited a local school in a village near Kharian. During the visit he emphasized the importance of education while listening to the eager students. He also underscored that Malala was a role model for both male and female pupils.

Furthermore Mr. Larsen met leading business people from Gujrat to discuss the possibility for commercial contacts and business between Norway and Pakistan.

A meeting with senior politicians in Kaira House provided an opportunity to discuss federal and regional politics.

The visit marked the Norwegian Ambassador's first trip to Gujrat district, from where most Norwegians of Pakistani origin roots emigrated during the late 60s and 70s.

Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad visited COMSATS Institute of Information Technology in Abbottabad

Last updated: 23.02.2015

Representatives from the Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad visited COMSATS Institute of Information Technology in Abbottabad on Tuesday 17 February. COMSATS and Norwegian University of Life Sciences are cooperating through a Pakistani-Norwegian institutional cooperation.

Counsellor Nanna Thue and First Secretary Thomas Rem Berdal met staff and students at the Abbottabad campus and learned more about the cooperation. Main topic of the discussions were the political and humanitarian situation in the tribal areas. Many of the COMSATS students are themselves from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

Sweden

09 Feb 2015

Call for applications: Young Connectors of the Future Programme 2015

Are you a young leader with a vision? Do you want to make a change? Then apply to the Swedish Institute leadership programme Young Connectors of the Future (YCF)! Young Connectors of the Future (YCF) is an intercultural leadership programme that aims to lay a foundation for dialogue, mutual understanding and knowledge sharing among young leaders from selected countries in South Asia.

The programme invites young leaders from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, representing different sectors of society, and who are actively working for social change in their respective contexts. Intercultural leadership training is combined with theory and practice in the fields of transparency, democracy and human rights. The programme aims at building a dynamic network of young leaders and connectors of the future in the region, promoting dialogue, knowledge-sharing and openness.

The YCF programme is designed to provide the participants with new skills, networks and innovative tools to strengthen their work to drive social change in their respective contexts. The participants are visionaries who are in a position to make a difference.

Who can apply?

Young (22-32 years old), dynamic and open-minded leaders from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan actively working for democracy, transparency and human rights within the spheres of society, culture, politics, entrepreneurship and media: project managers, youth leaders, youth politicians, government civil servants, lawyers, journalists/bloggers, entrepreneurs, cultural workers etc. The programme will be held in English: proficient command of both written and spoken English is therefore a requirement.

Submit your application by using our Application Portal online and by filling out the YCF

Application Form 2015 together with an updated CV and a Letter of Reference in English (preferably using the SI template provided on the application portal).

You will find the application portal and application instructions at

www.si.se/ycf

There is no fee for the programme. Travel, hotel and food expenses are included in the programme.

Important dates

Application period: 3 February - 3 March, 2015

Deadline for applications: 3 March, 2015

Skype interviews: 4 – 15 May 2015

Accepted applicants will be informed by: 20 May 2015

YCF module 1 in Sweden: 8 – 25 September 2015

YCF module 2 (location not confirmed): 14–21 February 2016 (preliminary dates)

For more information about the leadership programme Young Connectors of the Future, go

to www.si.se/ycf or send an email to ycf@si.se.

27 Jan 2015

Swedish solar energy to Pakistan

Swedish entrepreneur Lars Ling, CEO of Clean Tech Region is visiting Pakistan this week with Pakistani partners to promote solar energy and other environmental and cost-effective innovative concepts, with a particular focus on the needs of the textile industry.

Mr Ling will visit Islamabad, Faisalabad and Lahore this time. Mr Ling and his partners are hoping to arrange a study trip to Sweden for Pakistani entrepreneurs later this year. Ambassador Rosander warmly welcomed this initiative and underlined that green tech energy solutions are high on the Swedish-Pakistani business agenda.

Bridge - Europa is nonpartisan and an effort to share and publish the news of diversity, harmony and mutual understanding to bridge nations and inform people directly about how humanitarian aid is positively changing lives in Pakistan

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