

# Bridge Communications & Research – BCR

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## Bridge-Europa - April 2014

**Part of Pakistan Awareness Initiative -PAI**

Connecting People -Building Bridges –Spreading Harmony-Voicing against injustice

### CONTEXT

*Countries and Donor agencies are listed in Alphabetical order*

<b>Editor's Note</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>The objectives and Why Bridge-Europa?</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Denmark: Access to Water is a Human Right</b>	<b>06</b>
Global healthcare company inaugurates diabetic centre in Pakistan	07
Head of Denmark's largest company in Pakistan discusses trade ties	08
Diabetes in Pakistan to double by 2035	09
Danish global water pump leader expands in Pakistan	10
Denmark reconfirms increased focus on Pakistan	11
Denmark supports new USD 3.5 million democracy program for Pakistan increased focus on youth	12
Danish Ambassador meets speaker of parliament stresses support to parliament's role in democracy	13
<b>France: France celebrates International Women's Day</b>	<b>14</b>
Award of the National Order of Merit to Major General Rahmat Khan	15
<b>French Embassy Fiction Prize 2014</b>	<b>16</b>
Access to Safe Blood Transfusion at 59 Public Hospital Based Blood Banks	17
Germany Endorses Balochistan Education Sector Plan	17
GER-NED-EU support to Pakistan's apprenticeship system	18
Debating Good Governance in Marburg and Berlin	19

EIB Vice-President visits German and EU-funded Project in Kohistan	20
DAWN Education Expo in Lahore and Islamabad: DAAD stall highly frequented	21
<b>Two in One: Enhancing Project Monitoring and Journalist's Activities in FATA</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Reducing Vulnerabilities of Communities to the Impacts of Climate Change</b>	<b>22</b>
Maternal and Child Health Interventions to reduce mortality and morbidity	23
Italy: Pakistan National Day (2014-03-23)	25
<b>Ambassador Janjua Participates in Panel Discussion on Closing the Gender Gap in Agriculture</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Norway: Snowy fun in the sun with Norwegian skis</b>	<b>25</b>
Norway supports the rehabilitation of the Vazir-house in Mingora/Swat	26
Political Consultations between Pakistan and Norway	27
Restoration of Khaplu Palace wins UNESCO award of distinction	27
Sweden: Call for applications: Social Innovation in a digital context 2014/2015	28
<b>Call for applications: Young Connectors of the Future 2014</b>	<b>29</b>
Fruitful meetings in Lahore and Karachi	30
<b>Securing Water for Food</b>	<b>30</b>
UK: Strengthening democracy, security and regional stability in Pakistan	31
<b>Update on UK Visa and Immigration in Pakistan</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>British High Commission wishes Pakistani players good luck for Commonwealth Games in the UK</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Changing times: women police officers breaking barriers in Pakistan</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Foreign Secretary meets Pakistan's National Security and Foreign Affairs Adviser</b>	<b>37</b>
The Commonwealth gears up to celebrate team spirit	40
Amateur photographers capture 'Connections' between the UK and Pakistan	42
Diplomats Cricket Blues bowls PCB Whites for Solidarity	43
<b>Third round of Pakistan-UK Bilateral Consultations on Arms Control, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament</b>	<b>44</b>
scholarships for 7,500 of the poorest schoolgirls in south Punjab	44
<b>Celebrating Connections brings the adaptation of British play to the Pakistani stage</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>FCO condemns death sentence of British national in Pakistan</b>	<b>47</b>
New British High Commissioner arrives in Pakistan	49
<b>British High Commission hosts Short Film Competition Awards Ceremony</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Improving business links with Pakistan</b>	<b>50</b>
Editor's Note	



**Pakistan has become a nation lost is the fallacies of religious wrongs. This may not be fixed as long as long as the government let the departments like the Council of Islamic Ideology - CII exist. Instead, the government should form an independent commission to safeguard minorities and women in Pakistan. Through this newsletter, we are urging the government of Pakistan to show that the minorities**

**and women in Pakistan. Through this newsletter, we are urging the government of Pakistan to show that the minorities are protected, gender biased eliminated, sectarian killings and the poverty should be dealt with. The Government of Pakistan is uninterruptedly being poured upon with money, material, training and trips by the donors but the inability of the incumbents has made it all go in vain. There are no signs that the progress is being made in real.**

**Blasphemy law is lynching minorities. Sawan Masih of Lahore and Tahir Ahmed of Tando Allahyar are the two recent known victims of this law**

**A recent report from a US government advisory panel said Pakistan used blasphemy laws more than any other country in the world; listing 14 people on death row and 19 others serving life sentences for insulting Islam.**

**Blasphemy Law has contributed to an alarming number of mob attacks and vigilante violence against minorities. The United Nations has rejected Pakistan's request in the past to recognise this inhumane law.**

**Sectarian killings are still rampant. Recently, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar informed Senate that 1,710 people have been killed since 2008 in incidents of sectarian violence in Pakistan. The data compiled by the SOUTH ASIA TERRORISM PORTAL gives horrifying facts about the inability of the Pakistani government to deal with either the sectarian, targeted or random acts of violence.**

**Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan from 2003 to 2014 reached to the enormous number of 51608, while Suicide Attacks in Pakistan from 2002 to 2014 totalled to 12544**

**These numbers show that the country is entirely at the mercy of killers. If numbers are divided based upon an average size of a family of 5 members, it will come to a whopping figure of 258,040. That's the real number of people effected by the violence in this country but The government of Pakistan has completely neglected the families of the terrorism victims by not raising this issue in bizarre negotiations with Taliban.**

**The unfortunate fact is that the judiciary is also being targeted and the young lawyers are wary of the situation. After the assassination of Razaqat Awan, the additional district and session judge, lawyers feel vulnerable to the terrorists. Awan was the same judge who dismissed a petition last year filed by the son of infamous Lal Masjid cleric.**

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**Women's grievances continue to rise on many fronts. Victims of rape are also the victims of gender biased in this male dominated society.**

**In a grisly incident, Amina Mai self-immolated to protest against the release of the key suspect of her rape just outside the police station of this terrible occurrence. She was Class XI student. Another 13-year-old girl along with her mother caged themselves to protest the release of her kidnapers and rapist. The suspects walked out of the Police Station when MNA Pir Saqlain Shah used his influence in favor of the suspects.**

**In both the incidents, police was reluctant to move swiftly and the influence of the suspects hampered the law to intervene justly.**

**Lawyer and human rights activist Asma Jahangir has confirmed that a large number of women faced harassment at their workplaces in the country. "Even judges stare at young women lawyers and talk with them irrelevantly. So many times during hearings I had to request the judges to listen to me rather than looking at the young lawyers." She put Gender discrimination, judicial bias constant threat to women**

**The Council of Islamic Ideology - CII**

**Ironically, The Council of Islamic Ideology - CII, part of the government of Pakistan, is actively throwing this troubled nation back into Stone Age. The child marriage bill and a support for the underage girl's marriage are the issues where CII has revealed itself openly as an organization which is working to keep women as sexual slaves. CII should be nullified to stop organised women abuse under the umbrella of the government of Pakistan. The next recommendation of CII would be banning laughter, TV and music, as suggested by Taliban. Maulana Mohammad Khan Shirani, chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), seems to be serving Taliban's interest by infiltrating in the government.**

**Council of Islamic Ideology issued edict that rape victims could not use DNA reports as primary evidence, and instead rely on the testimony of four witnesses. This abusive act would expose more women to Karo Kari, honour killings and underreporting of rape.**

**CII suggested that the Pakistani government should amend the national marriage law so that men interested in remarrying, no longer need the written permission of their first wives. This is a licence to keep women as sex slave and disposable commodity.**

**The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has condemned the retrogressive move by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) to roll back the Muslim family laws and called upon the government to stand fast in defence of women's rights.**

**The government of Pakistan is claiming to be a democratic government. But internet is still not free. YouTube has been blocked since 2012. According to a newly released survey by The Pew Research**

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Center, Support is strong across emerging and developing countries except Pakistan for an Internet without government censorship. Pakistan had the lowest percentage of people expressing opposition to censorship – 22 per cent – but 62 per cent of people polled gave no response or were undecided.

The ruling party, came to power in the name of democracy, favors YouTube ban and recently opposed a resolution in the national assembly for restoration of YouTube. Mahatma Gandhi best describes democracy without freedom as “What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or in the holy name of liberty or democracy?”

Health and mortality rates also needs immediate attention from the government as Pakistan has the highest rate of first day deaths, according a recent report by the charity Save the Children, Pakistan has the highest rate of first day deaths and stillbirths in the world at 40.7 per 1,000 births and fewer than half of women had a skilled health worker present at birth.

In this health crisis the news of the closure of the St Joseph's Hospice in Rawalpindi is sad news. Since 1964 St Joseph has helped and treated hundreds of mutilated and sick predominantly Muslim patients. According to Dawn while putting this story in limelight “Despite the discrimination that Pakistan's Christian community often faces, the country has a long history of Christian missionary schools and hospitals providing services to Pakistanis across the country”.

Many of Pakistan's elite attended missionary schools, and the schools and hospitals that the missionaries created are well-respected.

The grave situation in Tharparkar lingers to haunt this dirt poor region. The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Timo Pakkala has mentioned a surge in morbidity and mortality rates as the main cause of deaths among children and adults.

The 2011 National Nutrition Survey states that 44 per cent of under-five children in Pakistan are stunted, 32 per cent underweight and 15 per cent suffer from acute malnutrition. The Chief Minister of Sindh has admitted in the parliament that in the 2011 drought of Thar, 140 people died; in the 2012 drought, 139, and in the 2013 drought 196 deaths were reported

Pakistan needs to address this drought and dry conditions on emergency basis. Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal has warned that Thar-like drought may hit half of the country if new water reservoirs are not built. The Minister has warned “Water shortage may turn out to be a worse crisis than the ongoing energy crisis as a phenomenon of climate change may reduce water availability up to 40 per cent, pushing Pakistan to be a water-starved country.”

The objectives to go through the problems faced by the people of Pakistan to have donors keep a rigid policy intact ensuring the money is really and directly benefitting the people of Pakistan.

Sincerely

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## **The objectives and Why Bridge-Europa?**

Create awareness in general public about the EU/Western support and lifesaving efforts in Pakistan. Promote more cooperation and harmony among citizens of Pakistan and EU/Western through awareness and public diplomacy.

Connect donors and people for the maximum usage of funds and eliminate corruption

Aware Pakistani youths/ professionals and general public about scholarships, professional/ career development opportunities and exchange programs.

Withstand against increasing hate crimes and faith division

## **Why Bridge-Europa?**

Despite the colossal and continuing EU aid, sacrifices of the NATO troops and journalists, EU role to save lives in disaster and help Pakistan from toys to advanced technology, anti-western sentiments are all time high. This is because people do not know about all of it and EU media campaigns worth millions of dollars seem to achieve no results. Bridge-Europa will reach to the underprivileged people where poverty and fanaticism is preying on youth to radicalism. Bridge-Europa is free and our demographic research and email access will deliver Bridge-Europa where it's really needed and also to the places with public access to send out a message of harmony, acceptance and dialogue. A safer Pakistan is a step towards better world. As long as animosities exist nobody can work to improve pathetic conditions to poverty, disease, human rights, corruption, strong democracy climate, Iced Himalaya and wild life in Pakistan.

## **Present & Past Memberships**

- The American Political Science Association - APSA
- International Political Science Association - IPSA
- Institute for Cultural Democracy – ICD
- European Journalism Centre - EJC
- Canadian Association of Journalists – CAJ
- Canadian Journalists for Free Expression – CJFE

## **Access to Water is a Human Right:**

**KARACHI:** Governor Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar called for amendments to constitution declaring people access to clean drinking water as human rights and making government constitutionally bound to ensure clean and safe drinking water to the people.

He was speaking at a seminar on “Water and Energy” organized by Human Rights Group of Pakistan



**(HRGP) in which the Danish Ambassador also participated as Guest of Honor.**

**“Today Pakistan is facing many difficulties – poverty, unemployment, lack of education and health. Millions of people are facing problems in daily life due to load shedding and energy crisis. But we need to find solutions and have to fight to make things better. I believe we, the Pakistanis, will win this fight through joint struggle over and above our political alliance and thought. It will be a privilege to be part of this fight,” Governor Sarwar stated.**

**Addressing the audience, Danish Ambassador Jesper M. Sorensen stated: “Pakistan has done great improvements, when it comes to improving the access to safe drinking-water. The target for 2015 was 93 percent of the population and right now it is 89 – that is the good news . However, in terms of access to sanitation – Pakistan is lagging behind the target of access for 90 percent of the population – right now it is 72 percent.”**

**Ambassador Sorensen said that although there is more than enough water in the world for domestic purposes, for agriculture and for industry, the challenge lie for the poor, who are excluded from access by their poverty, limited legal rights or by public policies that limit access to the infrastructures that provide water for life and for livelihoods.**

**Ambassador Sorensen also said that there was a need to provide financial resources, support capacity-building, innovation, and research as well as technology transfer. The Ambassador shared that the Danish development support to Pakistan focused on improving the livelihood of the people as well as supporting democracy and human rights. Although not directly supporting the water and sanitation sector in Pakistan, Denmark is aiming at engaging in partnerships between Pakistani and Danish companies. Ambassador Sorensen said that Danish competencies in technology and innovation offer highly advanced solutions that can help Pakistan meet its water challenge and help Pakistan use its water resources more efficiently, and thus limiting CO2 emission.**

**On the occasion, Governor Punjab and the Danish Ambassador also gave away HRGP’s annual human rights awards to the winners.**

## **Global healthcare company inaugurates diabetic centre in Pakistan**

**05.03.2014**

**Islamabad, 28 February: To meet the increasing burden of diabetic patients, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) has upgraded its Diabetic Foot Clinic to a full Diabetic centre with the kind support of the Danish global pharma Novo Nordisk. Its facilities has been upgraded with state of the art equipment.**

**Mr. Lars Rebien Sørensen, CEO & President of Novo Nordisk A/S, who is currently on a two-day visit to Pakistan inaugurated the clinic today, while meeting patients and discussing the impact of diabetes. Mr. Sorensen emphasized that diabetes is a disease that can be treated effectively and that it can be**

prevented through awareness and healthy lifestyle. The Diabetic foot clinic was established in 2007 which was first clinic of its type in Northern Pakistan and has up to now treated almost four thousands patients and has avoided hundred of amputations.

The upgraded centre will provide diagnostic and treatment facilities to diabetics' patients according to international guidelines, which will also include care of all complication including diabetic foot problem. Diabetic patient data registration has also been established with latest computer technology.

Professor Dr. Javaid Akram, Vice chancellor and Professor Dr. Jamal Zafar, Head of department of General medicine both stated that all diabetic complications such as cholesterol and high blood pressure could be prevented or delayed by taking proper dietary measures and exercise. They thanked Novo Nordisk for playing an important role in providing quality healthcare solutions for diabetes and appreciated its role for spreading awareness on the treatment and prevention of diabetes.

According to the International Diabetes Federation, there are around 6.7 million people with diagnosed diabetes in Pakistan. It is estimated that this number will rise to 12.8 million by 2035, which puts Pakistan among the top countries with the highest number of population suffering from diabetes.

## **Head of Denmark's largest company in Pakistan discusses trade ties**

**05.03.2014**

**Islamabad, 28 February 2014: "Novo Nordisk is investing in numerous training and education programs to improve diabetes awareness in Pakistan.**

**We have also tripled our work force over the last two years, and we expect to employ more people in the future as we have strong faith in the business potential of Pakistan". This was stated by Mr. Lars Rebien Sørensen, CEO of Denmark's largest company, Novo Nordisk A/S, during his meeting today with Minister for Commerce, Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan and Chairman of Board of Investment, Dr. Miftah Ismail.**

**The meeting took place the day before the Pakistan Diabetes Leadership Forum, which will be gathering high-level dignitaries from Europe, Middle-East and Pakistan to discuss the alarming increase of diabetes in South-Asia and Pakistan in particular. Novo Nordisk is Denmark's largest company by stock valuation and a global leader in diabetes health care products.**

**Mr. Lars Rebien Sorensen was accompanied by the Ambassador of Denmark, Mr. Jesper M. Sorensen. Ambassador Sorensen said that "the visit of CEO Novo Nordisk also sends an important signal about the potential for increased trade ties between Denmark and Pakistan. Pakistan is a country with a**



young, vibrant, and growing population. We see a simmering of interest for Pakistan among Danish businesses. After Pakistan obtained GSP+ status, I am also confident that more Pakistani companies will make inroads into the Danish market”.

## **Diabetes in Pakistan to double by 2035** 05.03.201

Islamabad, 1 March 2014: There are around 6.7 million people with diagnosed diabetes in Pakistan. It is estimated that this number will rise to 12.8 million by 2035, which puts Pakistan among the top countries with the highest number of population suffering from diabetes.

This was stated at the opening session of the Pakistan Diabetes Leadership Forum (PDLF), which is taking place in Islamabad from 1-2 March and includes speakers from Europe, Middle-East and Pakistan.

The inaugural session was addressed by Ms. Saira Afzal Tarar, Minister of State for National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, who highlighted the urgency and the scale of the challenge presented by diabetes in Pakistan. Minister Tarar stated that Pakistan Diabetes Leadership Forum would be addressing not only one of the most critical public health issues in the world – but especially in Pakistan. “Over the next two days, this forum shall seek to identify meaningful changes that can greatly improve the lives of people with diabetes and help more people avoid diabetes through national and international prevention strategies”, said Minister Tarar. She thanked both the national and international participants and the sponsors for joining this important initiative to fight against diabetes. Minister Tarar emphasized that all of the participants attending the PDLF constitute the various stakeholders who need to collaborate to form a resolute response to diabetes through both policy and healthcare. “The challenge is both great in size and complexity and will require the focus of policy makers, healthcare professionals, industry and media alike”, said Ms. Tarar.

The first panel discussion consisted of high-level dignitaries such as Sir Michael Hirst, President of the International Diabetes Federation, Prof. Pierre Lefèbvre, Chairman of the World Diabetes Foundation and Mr. Lars Rebién Sørensen, CEO & President of Novo Nordisk. Concluding the first panel round, Mr. Sorensen stated that “Diabetes is a major challenge to the healthcare system in Pakistan as well as to people’s quality of life. Only around 3-4% of people with diabetes reach their treatment targets. We are here today to discuss concrete solutions for how to tackle diabetes in Pakistan going forward, how to better prevent the disease as well as increasing access to care and treatment. The healthcare sector, the government and the industry need to work together to make this happen.”

Continuing the first day’s discussion, various panel discussions were held to discuss diabetes prevention and sustainable solutions for care including integrated approach to diabetes care and how

to reach the policy actions and targets outlined in the 'WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases 2013-2020'. Both national and international speakers discussed the challenges and interventions needed in the health system to address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases. International speakers also presented the International Diabetes Federation's regional action plan and practical steps to support the development of national diabetes programs in the Middle-East and North African region. Local perspectives on how to build capacity and deliver integrated care to prevent complications in Pakistan were also shared. The desired outcome is to discuss and finalize an action plan for improving diabetes care at both local and national levels. The 'Pakistan Call to Commitment and Action' will be presented tomorrow at the concluding session.

The event is being hosted by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination, Government of Pakistan in joint collaboration with the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), the World Diabetes Foundation (WDF), the Diabetic Association of Pakistan (DAP), the Baqai Institute of Diabetology & Endocrinology (BIDE), the Pakistan Endocrine Society, the Sakina Institute of Diabetes and Endocrine Research (SiDER) and the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) with support from the Danish global healthcare company Novo Nordisk.

**About Novo Nordisk:**

Headquartered in Denmark, Novo Nordisk is a global healthcare company with 90 years of innovation and leadership in diabetes care. The company also has leading positions within haemophilia care, growth hormone therapy and hormone replacement therapy. Novo Nordisk employs approximately 38,000 employees in 75 countries, and markets its products in more than 180 countries.

For more information, visit [novonordisk.com.mx](http://novonordisk.com.mx)

## **Danish global water pump leader expands in Pakistan 24.02.2014**

Karachi, 21st February, Friday - Pak Oasis, a company that utilizes the latest technology in Pakistan and the Middle East to turn saline water into clean drinking water has collaborated with Grundfos Europe, acclaimed worldwide for manufacturing high pressure pumps, to set up a factory in Karachi for assembling high pressure pumps run by solar energy. The Managing Director of Grundfos, the Ambassador of Denmark and Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Qaim Ali Shah along with other Sindh Government officials graced the inaugural ceremony.

Speaking at the occasion, the Ambassador of Denmark, Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen, said: "Pakistan is confronted with a major water challenge as the population will continue to grow. It is vital that Pakistan ensures that the available water supply is distributed efficiently, and is using limited amounts

**of energy. Grundfos offers highly advanced solutions that can help us meet this water challenge.”**

**Grundfos is a global leader in advanced pump solutions and a trendsetter in water technology and is now expanding its activities in Pakistan. With its local Pakistani partner, PakOasis, solar pumps will be assembled at the facility. Speaking about water as a global challenge, Ambassador Sorensen said that “It is incredibly important for the future – for our children’s generation and for their children again – that we think carefully about how we use our energy. Water scarcity is fast becoming one of the world’s greatest challenges. Not only for the developing world, but also for developed countries like Denmark”.**

**So Ambassador Sorensen suggested that Pakistan could look to Denmark’s experience in having growth while reducing water consumption: “In Denmark, we have experienced a 78 percent economic growth since the 1970’s, yet energy consumption has remained flat and water usage has actually fallen. Grundfos has been an important part of this story”.**

**Today, Grundfos is a global leader in advanced pump solutions and a trendsetter in water technology. Ambassador Sorensen concluded that “I am exceedingly proud to see more of Grundfos’ solutions here in Pakistan. Thanks to its partnership with PakOasis. Not only will this step create jobs in Pakistan, and generate economic growth. It will also help Pakistan using its water resources more efficiently, and thus limiting CO2 emission levels to the benefit of the environment.”**

## **Denmark reconfirms increased focus on Pakistan. 18.02.2014**

**Karachi, 17th February: The Ambassador of Denmark, Mr. Jesper Moller Sorensen, addressed the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs. The Ambassador was greeted by Chairperson of the Institute, Dr. Masuma Hassan.**

**Ambassador Sorensen informed the participants that Denmark's engagement in Pakistan has expanded considerably during the last years. Denmark is now implementing a USD 50 million development assistance program to Pakistan, with a special emphasis on the conflict affected areas and primary education. The Ambassador said "Most importantly, we are now focusing much more on commercial activities and trade between our two countries. We agree that Pakistan should - in the long run - live by its own resources and the trade it does with its neighbors and other countries".**

**"Denmark is a small and open economy, and our welfare system is entirely dependent on our trade with our countries. Denmark strongly supports open and free market access. That is also the reason why Denmark was a staunch supporter of GSP+ for Pakistan". He continued "Expanding our economic ties is closely linked to our development goals, which is providing opportunities for every citizen, to**

create economic growth, and ultimately assist in poverty reduction".

Speaking about Pakistan's role in the region, Ambassador Sorensen said that he was very conscious that the people of Pakistan have been suffering more from terrorism than almost any other country. He said that "Denmark considers Pakistan a key player in the fight against terrorism. We will never forget the terrible losses terrorism has inflicted on this country. We are very aware of this, and we support Pakistan".

Speaking about the European Union, Ambassador Sorensen said that the EU over the last couple of years has managed to make some very difficult and important reforms. "We now see the first signs of Europe emerging from the crisis. This is good news, but it is not yet time to celebrate - not even to rest. We still have a long way to go to restore acceptable employment levels and regain our competitiveness."

## **Denmark supports new USD 3.5 million democracy program for Pakistan increased focus on youth. 13.02.2014**

Islamabad, February 13th, Thursday: The Government of Denmark today launched a USD 3.5 million program for Pakistan on democratic development and good governance in joint collaboration with the civil society organisation PILDAT (Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency).

The new program was announced during the presentation of Pakistan Report of State of Democracy in South Asia – an event organized by PILDAT with support of the Danish International development agency (Danida). An important feature of the new program is the engagement of youth in democratic processes and dialogue.

During his speech, Ambassador Sorensen shared that around 30 per cent of Pakistan's population is between 15-29 years. "Our program has a special focus on instilling democratic values in the youth through the Youth Parliament program. Under this program, young people from across the country are trained in the values of democracy. This creates understanding, respect and tolerance for other people's opinions - besides being an innovative approach to engage youth in such an important process".

He emphasised that this project should not be seen in isolation. "Our approach and our assistance should be seen in its totality. Denmark is also providing support to primary education in the conflict affected areas. And we are now also more focused on facilitating contacts between Danish and Pakistani businesses so that we can create jobs, growth – and ultimately eliminate poverty".

Mr. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, Executive Director of PILDAT said that "Many Pakistanis are rightly proud

of the elections in 2013, where one democratically elected Government succeeded another. Yet democracy is still fragile, so we must continuously keep an eye on the political development and make demands to our politicians to consolidate democracy. Even more citizens from all parts of society should actively participate in the democratic processes. The citizens need better information about the government's policies and practices to hold them responsible. We are delighted that Denmark supports our work. It is in everyone's interest that we strengthen the democratic progressive forces in Pakistan, so that we do not leave the playing field to the radical forces.

During the ceremony, Joint Director of PILDAT Ms. Aasiya Riaz presented key findings from the State of Democracy in Pakistan Report, which was followed by a presentation on findings from the India Report by Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Director CSDS. Within this framework, a panel discussion was also held, where Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani, Chairman Gallup Pakistan, Dr. Hassan Askari Rizvi, Defence & Political Analyst and Mr. Salman Akram Raja, Advocate Supreme Court of Pakistan also spoke on the matter.

The new PILDAT program is a part of the overall USD 50 million development program for Pakistan, which was launched by the Government of Denmark in November 2013.

**Background:**

Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) will with the support of the Government of Denmark implement a three year program on democracy and good governance.

Through this program, PILDAT will implement five projects: 1) Assessment of the Quality of Democracy 2) Youth Parliament Pakistan 3) Citizens periodic Reports on the performance of state institutions such as the National Assembly, Provincial Assemblies and Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Studies (PIPS) and processes such as the study of Civil-Military Relations and learning from international examples while maintaining close inter-action with national and provincial legislators from various parties. 4) Comparative Assessment and Score Card on Quality of Governance in Federal and Provincial Governments. 5) Development of Political Parties and leadership.

The Youth Parliament Program (YPP) is the key program component of the PILDAT program supported by Denmark. It is patterned after the National Assembly of Pakistan, where around 60 young men and women from across the country are selected as youth parliamentarians each year. The YPP is a platform through which the youth meet to discuss important national and political issues with elected representatives of the Government and other important stakeholders.

**Danish Ambassador meets speaker of parliament stresses support to parliament,s role in democracy 09.01.2014**

**Islamabad, January 9, 2014: The Ambassador of Denmark, Mr. Jesper M. Sorensen, today called upon Mr. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker of National Assembly**

**During the meeting, Ambassador Sorensen stressed that Parliament is not only the very symbol of Pakistan's democracy, but also in keeping government accountable as elected representatives on behalf of the people.**

**The Ambassador welcomed the newly established Pakistan-Denmark Parliamentary Friendship Group which will promote and deepen friendly relations between the two democratic countries.**

**The promotion and awareness of democracy, human rights and gender equality continue to be key elements in the Danish support to Pakistan. Ambassador Sorensen also shared that as part of Denmark's newly launched USD 50 million development programme, assistance will now be provided to provincial assemblies in the areas of legislation, policy and budget oversight, and for the national human rights system and capacities to promote and protect human rights. The Ambassador stressed that the continued commitment and cooperation of the Parliament and assemblies are essential to consolidate the democratic process in Pakistan.**

**Referring to Pakistan's role in the region, Ambassador Sorensen stated that "Pakistan is a key player - also in the global fight against terrorism and extremism. We can never forget the terrible sacrifices terrorism and extremism have inflicted on this country." In addition to its development cooperation programme, Pakistan is also part of Denmark's regional peace and stabilization programme that addresses issues such as border control and counter-IED.**

**Finally, the Ambassador stated that Denmark wants to increase trade relations between Denmark and Pakistan. The Ambassador shared that the Danish Embassy is now actively engaged in creating partnerships between Danish and Pakistani companies. Pakistan can take advantage of the Danish competencies and products in areas such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, life science, and agriculture.**

## **France: France celebrates International Women's Day**

**(Islamabad, 07 March 2014)**

**The French Embassy to Pakistan organized a reception on the 7th of March to celebrate the International Women's Day with prominent Pakistani women, including human rights activists, artists, scholars and independent workers. The event also gathered media representatives and foreign diplomats.**

**The Ambassador of France, HE Philippe Thiébaud, praised the courage and the continuous efforts of the women and men working in Pakistan to protect women's rights, campaign for new laws and raise**



awareness about violence against women.

He also insisted on the importance of education and skill development of women, and reiterated the French Embassy's commitment in the Northern region of Pakistan where vocational training centres are being developed in partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation. He also emphasized the priority of the French cooperation given to women's education through the need-based scholarships programme that enables 200 students per year to pursue their higher education studies in Pakistan.

These activities are in line with the policies conducted by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Ministry for Women Rights to enshrine the principle of gender equality at all policy level. A short presentation was made to illustrate the achievements of the programmes initiated by this newly established Ministry to promote women's rights and combat violence against women in France.

Ambassador Philippe Thiébaud concluded his address by reiterating the importance of gender equality and women empowerment as one of the major Millennium Development Goals established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000.

All the participants to the event acknowledged by their presence the importance of promoting gender mainstreaming across all areas of work. In their remarks, Ms. Khawar Mumtaz, the Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women, Ms. Tahira Abdullah, Human rights activist, Mrs. Valérie Khan, Director of the Acid Survivor Foundation and Dr. Attiya Inayattullah former MNA, highlighted the difficulties, the challenges but also the immediate benefits resulting from women's rights projects in Pakistan.

## **Award of the National Order of Merit to Major General Rahmat Khan**

On Thursday 27th February, his Excellency Philippe Thiébaud, the Ambassador of France in Pakistan hosted a reception at his residence on the occasion of the award of the National Order of Merit to Major General Rahmat Khan, who has been the Managing Director of Lafarge Pakistan since January 2008 and non executive Chairman of Board of Directors of Lafarge Pakistan since January 2013.

The National Order of Merit is an order of the State awarded by the President of the French Republic, which was founded in 1963 by President Charles de Gaulle to reward French and foreign nationals for distinguished achievements.

Major General Rahmat Khan has had a first career in the Pakistan Army until he retired in 2002. He then took the reins of the Fauji Cement Company Limited from 2002 to 2005 before becoming the Deputy Managing Director of the Pakistan Cement Company (ORASCOM) which was acquired by the Lafarge group in 2008.

The Lafarge group specializes in innovative and world class construction solutions and contributes to building better cities in 62 countries, with the help of 64000 employees. It develops value added

products and construction systems to meet some of the greatest challenges of urbanization. The company has also initiated research and development activities and collaborations with engineering departments of universities to develop solutions likely to address Pakistan market needs such as low cost, low-income housing and concrete roads.

Lafarge Pakistan, a subsidiary of the Lafarge Group, is the first and only multinational cement manufacturer in Pakistan. Lafarge Pakistan owns and manages a state-of-the-art plant located at Kallar Kahar, District Chakwal, in the province of Punjab.

Non Executive Chairman of the Board of Directors of Lafarge Pakistan since January 2013, Major General Rahmat Khan has rendered significant services to the cement industry in Pakistan as well as to the Lafarge Group. Today, Lafarge is a leader in Health & Safety amongst the companies operating in the cement sector of Pakistan.

Deeply committed to developing and strengthening trade and business ties between Pakistan and France, Major General Rahmat Khan has been for many years the promoter of a positive image for French companies in Pakistan, notably through the Pakistan-France business alliance (PFBA).

Because of his efforts and his dynamism to promote French business interests in Pakistan, he has been awarded the National Order of Merit, with the rank of Officer on Thursday 27th February 2014.

## **French Embassy Fiction Prize 2014**

The French Embassy Fiction Prize was received by Uzma Aslam Khan on Friday 7th February 2014 for her book « Thinner than skin ». The Ambassador of France Phillippe Thiébaud has awarded the prize to the Pakistani writer during the fifth edition of the Karachi Literature Festival that took place from the 7th until the 9th February.

The jury was composed of three members, professors, writers and literary journalists from Pakistan. In a joint statement, they have explained their choice for Uzma Aslam Khan's book "Thinner than Skin", selected "because of the eloquent and elegant way in which she reveals a myriad of different worlds with masterly restraint. The novel animates mountains, lakes, wind and fire and other elements of nature that echo the complex emotions of her characters. Through the carefully structured plot and the well wrought patterns of recurring images and incidents, emerge insights about homeland, belonging and dislocation, central to contemporary Pakistani life".

Uzma Aslam Khan is from Pakistan, she was born in Lahore and grew up between Karachi, Manila, Tokyo and New York. Thinner than skin is her fourth novel, it deals with the author's favourite themes: nostalgia of the homeland for young overseas Pakistanis, war against terror, social values of the homeland and women's condition.

This is the first edition of the French Embassy Fiction Prize. Its objective is to promote Pakistani

literature and particularly fiction writers. The books competing for this first edition of the prize were English language fiction novels written by Pakistani authors.

## **Access to Safe Blood Transfusion at 59 Public Hospital Based Blood Banks**

On 12 February 2014, the four provinces and AJK signed a contract worth Rs. 251 million (Euro 1.743 million) with M/s Global Marketing Services and M/s Pak Glorious for the supply of equipment to 59 public sector hospital based blood banks of the Departments of Health in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and AJK.

The 59 blood banks supplied through this contract, will be attached to 10 regional blood centres that are being supported in Peshawar, Multan, Bahawalpur, Karachi, Jamshoro, Nawabshah, Sukkur, Quetta, Muzaffarabad and Gilgit under the same project. The selected suppliers will deliver equipment to the selected blood banks by June 2014.

The overall project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development with Euro 15 million (equivalent to about 2 billion PKR) and implemented through KfW Development Bank. The Safe Blood Transfusion project includes the construction of Regional Blood Centres, the supply of equipment to hospital blood banks, the training of blood services personal and voluntary blood donor motivation campaigns.

The new infrastructure will provide the population with a better access to safe blood transfusion services and blood products in all the provinces and AJK by 2015.

## **Germany Endorses Balochistan Education Sector Plan**

Germany, along with representatives of Australia, Canada, EU, UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID and the World Bank, signed an endorsement letter of the Balochistan Education Sector Plan on 4 March 2014. Providing free and compulsory education to enable equitable access to quality education in particular to girls in rural areas, is a joint goal of the Government of Pakistan, the Provincial Government of Balochistan and development partners in Pakistan.

Balochistan has a large number of out of school children, high dropout rates, wide gender disparities in education indicators and poor quality of teaching, resulting in less than satisfactory learning outcomes. These challenges require a strong commitment and joint response of the involved stakeholders. To respond to this need, the Balochistan Education Sector Plan (BESP) has been jointly prepared by the Government of Balochistan and the development partners and is a credible instrument to manage prioritization, planning, execution, monitoring and review of education policies

and strategies. The document covers a five-year period with provisions for periodic revisions based on monitoring of the implementation process.

The Minister of Education of Balochistan, Sardar Raza Muhammad Barrech, highlighted in his remarks during the event that the Balochistan Education Sector Plan provides a fresh start for Balochistan. He underlined, that the Government of Balochistan is committed to implement the new sector plan “aggressively” and in a strategic manner.

With the endorsement of the education sector plan, development partners commit to align their education support in Balochistan to the Balochistan Education Sector Plan (BESP) and thereby support joint implementation. In addition, development partners recommended for the Government of Balochistan to become a beneficiary for funds coming from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

Germany has supported the Government of Balochistan through its Basic Education Programme funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and implemented through GIZ. The focus of the German support has been to support the implementation of the curriculum and textbook reform to improve the quality of education. The methodology used to create the BESP followed the development of the education sector plans in Punjab, KP and ICT, all of which GIZ was the lead agency for respective technical assistance provided.

## **GER-NED-EU support to Pakistan’s apprenticeship system**

At a National Dialogue on Apprenticeship Reforms, held by the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), stakeholders both from public and private sector from all over Pakistan have agreed to modernize the existing apprenticeship system with a view to provide employable skills to the youth of Pakistan.

The National Dialogue on Apprenticeship Reforms took place in the end of January 2014 and was organized in collaboration with the TVET Reform Support Program. The program is co-funded by the European Union, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and is being implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Apprenticeship is a system by which an employer by contract undertakes to employ and train a young person or have him/her trained systematically for a trade. In Pakistan this system is governed in through Apprenticeship Ordinance 1962. Due to rapid changes in the labour market, technological advancement and the emergence of new occupations, the law requires drastic adjustments. For this purpose, the TVET Reform Support Programme had facilitated a number of consultations with relevant

stakeholders to revise this law and adjust it according to the needs of the employers and job market.

More than 90 representatives from the business community, Employers Federation of Pakistan, Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Workers Employers Bilateral Council of Pakistan and renowned industrial representatives participated in this national level consultation session in the end of January 2014.

At the occasion Director General, NAVTTC, Muhammad Yahya highlighted the need to reform the apprenticeship training in line with the new market trends and the changing demand of industry. He further stated that apprenticeship is one of the foremost priority areas of NAVTTC's National Skill Strategy. Syed Nazar Ali from Sindh Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) Sindh and Waheed Asghar from Punjab TEVTA emphasized on the importance of the reforms and discussed the related activities carried out in the past for modernizing the current apprenticeship system.

Mr. Fasih K. Siddiqi, representing the private sector appreciated the role of NAVTTC and the support extended by TVET Reform Support program towards this initiative of understanding employers' needs and requirements. Per Borjegren from the TVET Reform Support Programme appreciated the efforts of the private sector for their initiative towards supporting the dialogue on Pakistan's apprenticeship system. [www.daad.de/ppgg](http://www.daad.de/ppgg)

## Debating Good Governance in Marburg and Berlin

In late January, ten MPhil and PhD students of the National Institute of Pakistan Studies (NIPS) went for an eight days study trip to Marburg and Berlin to meet German students, academics, politicians and members of NGOs and to discuss – sometimes very controversial – aspects of good governance and international politics.

The Pakistani together with ten German students first joined a two days workshop “Reviewing Good Governance in Europe and South Asia” organized by political scientist Layla Distler and Professor Dr. Ursula Birsl at Marburg University. After that, the Pakistani-German group boarded a speed train to Berlin where they spent several days visiting political institutions and meeting parliamentarians.

Ambassador Abdul Basit received the group in the Pakistan Embassy in Berlin and embraced the project in his welcome address.

Another highlight was the panel discussion on “Intervening for Good Governance?” at Humboldt University Berlin, organized by Professor Dr. Ina Kerner. The students used the opportunity to exchange their views with German academics and representatives of the Foreign Office, the German

Foundation of International Cooperation (giz), as well as non-governmental development practitioners.

“Pakistani and German students also presented and discussed their ongoing research projects. That gave me new impulses for my own thesis,” says one of the Pakistani students. “For us, it is very helpful to learn how things are viewed outside Europe. I have learned a lot in these days,” adds a student from Marburg.

When visiting the German parliament, the students were fascinated by the historic “Reichstag” building and its famous glass dome designed by star architect Norman Foster.

The trip was financed by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) from the budget of special funding program “Good Governance Pakistan” allocated to DAAD by the German Federal Foreign Office. The three years’ program is designed to support the capacity building in governance and public policy. Apart from study trips, the program is focused on a scholarship scheme supporting Pakistani graduate students in eight selected Master’s degree courses at German universities. So far, 15 Pakistani graduate students have joined this special program, all of them with a first degree in social sciences and most of them with professional experience in a related field.

More information: [www.daad-magazin.de/25506/index.html](http://www.daad-magazin.de/25506/index.html)

## **EIB Vice-President visits German and EU-funded Project in Kohistan**

On the occasion of the visit of Ms. Magdalena Álvarez Arza, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank, a field visit was organized on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014 to the project site of the Keyal Khwar Hydropower Project in Kohistan district of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The visit was joined by the EU Ambassador Mr. Lars-Gunnar Wiegemark, the Deputy Head of Mission of the German Embassy in Islamabad Mr. Peter Felten, Minister of State for Water and Power Mr. Chaudhry Abid Sher Ali, the Chairman of the Water and Power Development Authority Mr. Syed Raghob Abbas Shah as well as the Country Directors of KfW Development Bank and AfD French Development Bank.

In a mission to increase the power generation capacities of Pakistan, the Keyal Khwar Hydropower project after a construction period of 4 years, will provide 128MW to the national grid of Pakistan. The project has been funded with EUR 97 Mio. through the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) with an additional 100 Mio. EUR. The project is implemented through KfW Development Bank and WAPDA.

Keyal Khwar Hydropower Project is located in Kohistan District of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the northern areas of Pakistan. The Keyal Khwar river is a tributary of the Indus River and



originates from high mountain areas at an elevation of 5,300m. After the completion of the project, 128MW will be generated in an underground power house using the running water of the Keyal Khwar river. Residents of the valley will be directly supplied with electricity from the power house 24 hours a day and in a surge to increase the productivity of land and livestock a productivity improvement program will be implemented by WAPDA and the district Agriculture Department.

## **DAWN Education Expo in Lahore and Islamabad: DAAD stall highly frequented**

Almost 2,000 visitors to the DAWN Education Expo stopped at the stand of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Lahore (22 + 23 January) and Islamabad (25 + 26 January) this year.

Apart from Master's degree programs in Information Technology or Management, Bachelor's degree programs were very much asked for, favorite subjects being Medicine and Engineering. The fact that medical training at German universities – as well as some other undergraduate courses - is offered exclusively in German language and that applicants holding HSSC have to complete a foundation course (Studienkolleg) before getting admitted to their degree course, did not discourage the majority of ambitious intermediate graduates.

Many young researchers inquired about PhD and postdoc programs and showed particular interest in research schools run by the big German research organizations like Max Planck Society, Leibniz Association, Helmholtz Association or German Research Foundation (DFG). Young postdocs also asked for information on the funding programs run by Alexander-von-Humboldt Foundation.

For more information, see: [www.ic.daad.de/islamabad](http://www.ic.daad.de/islamabad), [www.study-in.de](http://www.study-in.de), [www.daad.de/idp](http://www.daad.de/idp), [www.studienkollegs.de](http://www.studienkollegs.de), [www.research-in-germany.de](http://www.research-in-germany.de), [www.helmholtz.de/phd](http://www.helmholtz.de/phd), [www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/graduate-schools](http://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/graduate-schools), [www.imprs.mpg.de](http://www.imprs.mpg.de), [www.dfg.de/sfb/en](http://www.dfg.de/sfb/en), [www.dfg.de/gk/en](http://www.dfg.de/gk/en), [www.avh.de](http://www.avh.de)

## **Two in One: Enhancing Project Monitoring and Journalist's Activities in FATA**

**By Dawood Afridi**

**Deputy Director Projects, Directorate of Projects, FATA Secretariat Peshawar**

“The Independent Project Reporting (IPR) is a unique and innovative tool to include the voices and opinions of the people in the development of FATA. IPR aims at monitoring and evaluating development activities. Thereby IPR bridges the communication gap between the state and citizens

but also acts as eyes and ears of the project management to ensure proper delivery to the people. Adequately monitoring activities through IPR helps in enhancing ownership among the communities as they are involved in the planning and execution of schemes meant to benefit them.

IPR was developed and is an integral part of the FATA Development Programme implemented by the FATA Secretariat and the *Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)*. The program is being funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the French Agency for Development (Afd) as well as the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC).

On 16<sup>th</sup> December 2013, I, Dawood Afridi, was invited by the Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) Department of University of Peshawar and GIZ to help acquaint students with the planning and development process of the government in general and of FATA in particular. Since January 2013, six-day certificate courses are in progress at the Journalism Department of University of Peshawar. So far 48 students have been trained through this program, who are reporting successfully and effectively. The students regard the IPR as a unique tool for independent reporting which would help them to differentiate opinion from information and analysing information thoroughly. They now have a better understanding of development co-operation and have become promoters of responsible journalism. I must say that IPR is a major contributor to the successful implementation of development programs. In this regard I will recommend that IPR should be a regular feature of all projects working in FATA and be utilized as an effective tool for course correction during the implementation of the projects. It will not only ensure efficient and effective implementation of project activities but will also help in promoting FATA within and outside Pakistan.”

## **Reducing Vulnerabilities of Communities to the Impacts of Climate Change**

The ecosystems and their services play a crucial role for the livelihoods of more than 3.5 million people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province. However, these rich natural resources are seriously threatened by natural disasters and impacts of climate change (earthquakes, heavy rainfalls, floods) and by anthropogenic factors (overuse of natural resources by population pressure). Reducing vulnerabilities of communities and their livelihoods to climate change is one of the central objectives of the Project “*Conservation and Sustainable Management of Biodiversity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*”, implemented by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

As a first step, two international experts conducted a Vulnerability Assessment Workshop for adaptation measures to Climate Change for the two target districts Swat and Chitral from December 3-6, 2013 in Islamabad. Participants were relevant stakeholders and decision makers at federal and provincial (KP) level as well as the two implementation teams of different departments of the districts

Swat and Chitral. The workshop served as a platform for mutual exchange of up-to-date information on the various aspects of Vulnerability Assessments.

Vulnerability Assessments serve as a tool to identify vulnerability hotspots at communities, ecosystems and economic activities that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Participants were exposed to information about the latest tool developments in different pilot countries and the need of relevant data for the assessments and their sources. The workshop was completed by a comprehensive planning workshop for the two implementation teams of Chitral and Swat districts. According to the results of their assessments appropriate adaptation measures will be implemented, for example the promotion of local landraces that are adapted to different climatic conditions, promotion of traditional tree species and grass for various purposes (e.g. stabilization of slopes), improved local cropping systems and promotion of soil and water conservation techniques.

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## Maternal and Child Health Interventions to reduce mortality and morbidity

The governments of Pakistan and Germany signed a financing agreement for an additional € 2.5 million grant funded by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW Development Bank.

The agreement was signed by the Joint Secretary Economic Affairs Division Mr. Ali Reza Bhutta, the Director of the KfW Office Pakistan, KfW Development Bank Dr. Ms. Anna-Christine Janke and the Chief Executive Officer of Greenstar Social Marketing Pakistan Mr. Syed Nadeem Husain Abbas in the presence of Dr. Masuma Zaidi, Project Coordinator Health, KfW Office Pakistan.

The economical and financial development cooperation between Pakistan and Germany goes back to 1961, including trade investment exceeding € 2.5 billion. In the health sector, KfW Development Bank invests on behalf of the German Government in health programs to improve mother and child health (MCH), control the spread of communicable diseases like Tuberculosis, reconstruct Health Infrastructure in AJK, supply basic equipment project, support Social Health Protection, Safe Blood Transfusion systems and FATA Health Project.

In Pakistan 25% of married women have an unmet need for family planning. Maternal mortality remains high, at an estimated 276 deaths per 100,000 live births. Infant mortality remains at 78 deaths per 1000 live births. In order to help meeting this gap in provision of health services, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW Development Bank provides

**funding for marketed products and services for family planning, reproductive health, mother and child health, tuberculosis, nutritional supplements for children and safe water.**

**On 20th January 2014 the Government of Pakistan received an additional support of Euro 2.5 million to be utilized under the current Phase of the Reproductive Health Project through the implementing partner Greenstar, who is currently working with German Government's support in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Northern Punjab, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan for expanding the availability of quality reproductive health and maternal & child health services.**

**The 3 year project at a total amount of 12 Mio. EUR is already under implementation and through this additional funds further signature clinics will be developed and managed which will provide quality, affordable services to low income communities, while simultaneously serving as training sites for classroom and hands-on practical trainings. These additional funds will also be used to run a pilot Family Planning and Mother and Child Health Voucher Scheme in selected districts of KP and Punjab.**

## **Italy: Pakistan National Day (2014-03-23)**

On the occasion of Pakistan National Day, a flag hoisting ceremony was held at the Embassy of Pakistan in Rome on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2014. A large gathering of Pakistani community attended the event.

National anthem was played and the messages of the President and the Prime Minister were read out. Pakistani children presented national songs which were greatly appreciated by the audience.

Ambassador Tehmina Janjua also addressed the gathering. She highlighted the historical importance of 23<sup>rd</sup> March and said that the Pakistani nation, with its characteristic courage, determination and fortitude, will overcome all challenges. She prayed for Pakistan's peace, progress and prosperity. She also assured the community that the Embassy will continue to work with diligence in order to provide quality consular services and to resolve their collective problems. She urged the community to focus on the education of their children in Italy which was the best guarantee of their prosperous future.

Community leaders also spoke on the occasion and thanked the Ambassador for her personal interest in the community's well-being.

## **Ambassador Janjua Participates in Panel Discussion on Closing the Gender Gap in Agriculture**

To mark the International Women's Day, Ambassador Tehmina Janjua was invited to participate in a panel discussion on, 'Closing the Gender Gap in Agriculture' on 7th March 2014 at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Headquarters in Rome.

Former Irish President, Mary Robinson, was the Keynote speaker. FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva, WFP Executive Director Ertharin Cousin and IFAD Vice-President Michel Mordasini also addressed the event.

In her intervention, Ambassador Janjua spoke of the challenges faced by women farmers all over the world. She stressed that Pakistan's constitution of 1973 provided the statutory basis for women's rights. Also, in our experience in Pakistan, women parliamentarians had contributed to law making that was gender sensitive and responsive to the needs of women. Participation of more women in parliamentary work should help in closing the gender gap in agriculture. She spoke of measures adopted by Pakistan to improve women's access to easy credit giving them a degree of financial independence, which would also contribute towards this end.

## **Norway: Snowy fun in the sun with Norwegian skis**

18.03.2014 // The Swat Snow Festival finished on Sunday 16th of March, and with the donation of 600

kilograms of skiing equipment from Norwegians, the slope of Malam Jabba was filled with smiles and excitement.

The Swat valley is famous around the world for its snowy peaks, and excellent skiing possibilities, and the area previously employed 20.000 people in tourism related businesses. But tourism and skiing infrastructure and businesses took a beating under Taliban rule from 2006 to 2008, and the following military operation, when the Pakistani government took control over the Swat valley.

Malam Jabba slope starts at 2804 meters, and at the bottom of the 800 meters long slope, the Austrian and Pakistani government had built a beautiful hotel. This hotel was destroyed during the conflict between Taliban and the Pakistani government, and today nothing is left of it. But the Pakistani government has been in control of the Swat valley since 2009, and the skiing resort of Malam Jabba is being rebuilt, step by step.

Last week the Swat Snow Festival was arranged to showcase the beautiful mountains of Malam Jabba, and to remind us that the Swat Valley can still be a place for fun and games.

The Norwegian embassy in Islamabad initiated the collection of skis with an internet advert in Norway in the beginning of February, and Norwegian-Pakistani businessman and politician Aamir Sheikh helped to collect the skis, boots and gloves. The result was 600 kilograms of equipment. The equipment was packed by the SAS Ground Handling staff at Gardermoen, and Pakistan International Airways kindly offered to transport the skis to Pakistan, free of charge.

On the closing ceremony of the Swat Snow Festival, Norway's ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Cecilie Landsverk, visited Malam Jabba to see the skis in action. Both grown-ups and children enjoyed the sun in what could easily have been a beautiful day in the mountains of Norway during springtime. Thousands had come to the festival to see teams from Pakistani Army, Pakistani Airforce and even the Olympic skier Muhammad Karim, who participated in the recent Sochi Olympics, compete in giant slalom and downhill.

The skiing season in Swat is coming to an end, but next winter the snow will back, and hopefully it will bring a few more visitors to enjoy «The Kitzbühel of Pakistan».

## **Norway supports the rehabilitation of the Vazir-house in Mingora/Swat**

23.03.2014 // Saturday 15 March, Ambassador Cecilie Landsverk cut the ribbons and officially open the now rehabilitated Vazir House in the capital of the Swat-valley: Mingora. Norway has funded this restoration of this building as a part of its cultural support program in Pakistan, where rehabilitating valuable buildings from the rich history of the people of Pakistan, is a treasured part of the program.



Vazir House was constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and reflect the colonial architecture of the time and was subsequently used as a state guest house. It is a simple but stately colonial style building with oversize rooms and was originally intended as a residential premises. The total budget for the restoration and reuse of Vazir House Swat was NOK 2.14 Million out of which Embassy contributed NOK 1.53 million as grant for the restoration and re-use of this ancient building. The Agha Khan Foundation has been responsible for the project and done a marvelous job. The Vazir House measures 12,000 sq. ft. (1,115 sq. m). During the earthquake in 2005, it was significantly suffered structural damages.

In order to promote heritage sensitive development, Agha Khan Cultural Services of Pakistan AKCSP submitted a proposal for the conservation and adaptive re-use of a landmark property in Saudu Sharif, the former state capital. This building is known as the Vazir House. The Swat Museum and the Vazir House were both constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and reflect the colonial architecture of the time and was subsequently used as a state guest house. It is a simple but stately colonial style building with oversize rooms and was originally intended as a residential premises. The most remarkable aspect of this building is the way it is sited in a landscaped setting and its elegant deep verandas that respond to the excellently maintained garden premises.

## Political Consultations between Pakistan and Norway

26.02.2014 // The eighth round of bilateral political consultations between Pakistan and Norway was held in Islamabad on the 25th February. Tore Hattrem, Director General, Department for Regional Affairs and Development at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Islamabad and led the consultations from Norway's side. The Pakistani side was led by Mr. Nadeem Riyaz, Additional Secretary for Europe.

During the consultations, the two sides discussed bilateral issues, the development in Pakistan and regional and international topics such as Afghanistan and Syria, in addition to areas for possible increased cooperation.

Director General Hattrem also called on Syed Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs. They discussed the situation in Afghanistan and possible new Norwegian investments in Pakistan.

## Restoration of Khaplu Palace wins UNESCO award of distinction

Khaplu Palace, originally built in 1842, has now been fully restored and is currently being used as a heritage guesthouse facility offering 21 rooms.

The Royal Norwegian Embassy congratulates its partners the Aga Khan Foundation and the Aga Khan Cultural Services Pakistan on winning a 2013 Award of Distinction, as announced by the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

Built in 1842, Khaplu Palace (Yabgo Khar) replaced an earlier fort constructed 600 meters above the present location, of which little now remains. The Palace is a four storey structure using interlaced wooden cribbage with infill of mud blocks and stone. Labyrinth spaces, a richly embellished timber balcony, verandahs screened with latticed screens, and a range of other architectural features and decorative construction details make this building unique in mountainous Gilgit-Baltistan.

Restoration work on Khaplu Palace, including ancillary buildings, started in 2006. Addressing structural concerns and historic landscaping, the palace has been completely restored from a dire state of dilapidation. As part of its development cooperation in the cultural sector in Pakistan, the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad contributed one third of the total projects costs of USD 3 million; the balance being covered by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

The palace has been reintegrated as a vital part of the local community by its use as a small-scale heritage hotel and a Balti Folk Museum. Additionally, the renovation of Khaplu Palace has also brought with it an upgrade of the adjacent village infrastructure and new livelihood opportunities.

Khaplu Palace is currently being used as a heritage hotel offering 21 rooms, a number of lounges, a restaurant, conference rooms, and an exhibition space for Balti crafts. It is operated by Serena Hotels.

## **Sweden: Call for applications: Social Innovation in a digital context**

**2014/2015** 19 Mar 2014

Social Innovation in a Digital Context (SIDC) is a one-year programme, comprising 60 academic credits. Carried out by Lund University on behalf of the Swedish Institute, the SIDC programme supports social and digital innovators from South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa to pursue work in the fields of digital technology, new media, and socio-political change .

SIDC focuses on the relationship between digital technology and socio-political change, and how change makers can harness this relationship to build better societies. The programme is designed to support participants to develop creative and viable individual projects that help strengthen human rights and democracy building in their home countries, as well as boosting understanding of the use of digital tools for sociopolitical change.

The programme combines face-to-face learning during two intensive periods in Sweden (three and five

weeks respectively), online courses and a one week project follow up.

SIDC is primarily aimed at individuals with existing outreach platforms in their home countries wishing to further develop an existing project or bring a project proposal from idea to reality.

Deadline to apply is April 14, 2014! [www.si.se/sidc](http://www.si.se/sidc), [www.facebook.com/sidcprogramme](https://www.facebook.com/sidcprogramme)

## Call for applications: Young Connectors of the Future 2014 26 Feb 2014

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 program 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 (24-32 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 program 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 2014 together with an updated CV and a letter of recommendation. You will find the application portal and application instructions at [www.si.se/ycf](http://www.si.se/ycf)

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

### **Important dates**

**Application period: 3 – 21 March, 2014, Deadline for applications: 21 March, 2014**

**Skype interviews: 5 May-20 May, 2014**

**Accepted applicants will be informed by: 28 May, 2014**

**YCF module1 in Sweden: 26 Aug. – 12 Sep, 2014**

**YCF module 2 in Sweden or other location: 8-14 February, 2015 (preliminary dates for the follow up)**

**For more information about the leadership programme Young Connectors of the Future, go to [www.si.se/ycf](http://www.si.se/ycf) or send an email to [ycf@si.se](mailto:ycf@si.se).**

### **Fruitful meetings in Lahore and Karachi 11 Feb 2014**

**The Swedish Ambassador Tomas Rosander just came back from a trip to Lahore and Karachi where he meet with the Governors of Punjab and Sindh, some prominent actors in the pakistani business community.**

**One of the highlights of the trip was the visit to IKEAs office in Karachi which gave a very nice Swedish-Pakistani atmosphere. IKEA buys textile from Pakistan for more than 150 million Euros per year.**

#### **Securing Water for Food**

**Since water scarcity is one of the most pressing development challenges of the early 21st Century and that it affects nearly 40 percent of the world's population Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in cooperation with USAID is starting up a new program called Securing Water for Food – a grand challenge for development (GCD).**

**The aim is to find and support the best science and technology innovators, entrepreneurs, businesses, students, and other organizations that can help solve this GCD. Innovators can come from anywhere in the world. Implementation must take place in a developing or emerging country. The program will provide financial and technical assistance to support the development, marketing, deployment, and commercialization/growth of water innovations.**

**USAID/Washington currently has over \$25 million (from USAID and Sida) to support innovative approaches to water efficiency and reuse, water capture and storage, and salinity. In its first round of funding, Securing Water for Food will make \$15 million available for approximately 30-40 awards for innovations that focus on one or more of the above areas.**

# **UK: Strengthening democracy, security and regional stability in Pakistan**

**Updated 25 March 2014**

**Worldwide priority**

**FCO**

## **Issues**

**In 2013, Pakistan made an historic first democratic civilian transfer from one full-term elected parliament to another democratically elected Parliament. We continue to work with Pakistan to embed democratic processes.**

## **Actions**

**the UK is working with Pakistan to support a peaceful and stable political settlement in Afghanistan, a stronger relationship with India, and achieve improvements in regional stability and prosperity  
Pakistan and the UK have are committed to work together overcoming violent extremism and organised crime which are shared threats to our countries  
strong defence and security relations between Britain and Pakistan contribute to our mutual security by helping to build regional stability and understanding  
we are supporting constitutional democracy in Pakistan**

## **Exporting to Pakistan**

**Detail**

**A detailed guide on doing business in and with Pakistan. The guide contains information on:**

- challenges of doing business in Pakistan**
- growth potential of the market**
- trade between the UK and Pakistan**
- start-up and market entry considerations**
- legal considerations**
- tax and customs considerations**
- visa requirements**
- who to contact for more help**

## **Update on UK Visa and Immigration in Pakistan**

**Published 19 March 2014**

**World location news article**

**From 24 March 2014, a new commercial contract for the running the British High Commission's Visa Application Centres in Pakistan will take effect.**

**The Visa Application Centres will continue to be run by Gerry's International (Pvt) Ltd, acting as an agent for VFS Global. There will be no major changes to the services provided in Pakistan, including the hours of operation of the Visa Application Centres .**

**Applicants in Pakistan are already required to apply and pay for their applications online. But under current arrangements, applicants need to contact Gerry's by telephone to book an appointment to attend a Visa Application Centre to submit their biometric information: photographs and fingerprints. From 24 March 2014 , Gerry's will no longer be responsible for allocating appointments to customers. Instead, all applicants requesting an appointment to attend a Visa Application Centre in Pakistan, including those wanting to use the Premium Lounge service, will be required to make an appointment via the Visa4UK website. After an appointment is made online, customers' visa applications will be confirmed and a reference number will be issued. The British High Commission will be working closely with Gerry's during the implementation of these changes to ensure our customers continue to experience a high level of service. Customers applying during this transition period should visit our website and social media channels like twitter and Facebook to keep up to date with developments.**

## **British High Commission wishes Pakistani players good luck for Commonwealth Games in the UK**

**Published 18 March 2014**

**Glasgow will be the stage for a fantastic summer of sport, as well as a wonderful range of cultural and arts events for everyone.**

**British Deputy High Commissioner, Alison Blake, sent her best wishes to the Pakistani athletes as they prepare to depart to the UK to compete in the Commonwealth Games this summer. The participating Pakistani athletes from across the country came to Lahore today to provide their biometric data for the UK visas.**

**Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games will take place from 23 July to 3 August. Around 6,500 athletes from 70 countries will compete during the Games which will be a most memorable event. Sending her best wishes, the British Deputy High Commissioner, Alison Blake said: This is Commonwealth Week and the theme for this year, 'Team Commonwealth,' reflects the spirit of friendship and the drive towards achieving shared goals and values across Commonwealth. As two Commonwealth countries, Pakistan and the UK share so many strong connections and sports is one of them.**

**I wish the Pakistani athletes the very best of luck as they will proudly represent their nation at the Commonwealth Games at Glasgow this July. It is a pleasure to host the Pakistani teams, coaches and**



supporting staff in Lahore. The British High Commission worked very closely with many of them in the run up to London Olympic 2012 Games. Glasgow will be the stage for a fantastic summer of sport, as well as a wonderful range of cultural and arts events for everyone. I wish all the Pakistani athletes good luck as they prepare for Glasgow 2014.

Speaking on the occasion, President of Pakistan Olympic Association, Lt. Gen. (R) Syed Arif Hasan said: I am eagerly looking forward to the start of the 20th Commonwealth games at Glasgow as it not only promises thrilling competition, it also provides opportunity for our athletes from across Pakistan to be part of one of the world's largest multi-sport event.

With the countdown already started, the British High Commission's endeavour to celebrate the occasion, as Pakistani players prepare to get their visas and gear up for their travel to the UK, would help generate more interest around the Games."

## Changing times: women police officers breaking barriers in Pakistan

Published 14 March 2014

Case study

DFID

UK support to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is helping the province to improve women's access to justice and become more responsive to women's issues.

Thirty-year-old Sumera Jabeen isn't your average Pakistani young woman. She works as the officer in charge of the new women's complaint unit at a police station in Faqirabad – 1 of 3 in Peshawar. These model police stations are funded by the UK in partnership with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to improve women's access to justice in the province and assist the police in becoming more responsive to women's issues.

### A bold career path

Sumera has been a part of the Peshawar women's police force for over 3 years and was deputed to Faqirabad last year. She believes her bold career was made possible thanks to the support and encouragement of her parents and husband.

"My family's support was crucial in joining the police force and I have also received great guidance and support from my male colleagues, who have assisted me throughout my short career."

Pakistan is ranked as the third most dangerous place in the world for women, and 1 of the most unequal. Violence against women is widespread - 9 out of 10 women have experienced domestic violence, but only 4% of complaints received by the police are from women.

Sumera's primary responsibility at the model unit is being the point of contact for female complainants.

"I listen to female complaints, lodge problems and take appropriate action after consultation with my

male colleagues.”

“I think this is a commendable initiative. Women are more comfortable sharing their grievances with women instead of men. This will allow many more women – women who are otherwise hesitant – to come forward and demand justice,” Sumera said.

## Breaking the mould

But more serious crimes such as kidnappings can also occur, which require input from the female complaint unit.

“Last week we received a complaint regarding a woman who was kidnapped from her home. Our female police officers were closely involved at the initial stages of the search operation as well, as they assisted the investigation staff. The girl was eventually recovered due to our hard work.”

Sumera takes great pride in being 1 of a select number of women in Peshawar’s police force and believes the role offers her a unique opportunity to help other women – and to show that they can succeed in such professions.

“It is an honour for me to be a female police officer in Peshawar. This field has never had too many women, and the female to male ratio is still low. Society, however, has slowly begun to accept our presence. Women are breaking the mould and stepping out of their traditional roles and making their presence felt in society. Nowadays even in a traditionally male-dominated society like Peshawar, women are becoming doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, businesswomen and even joining the police force. Things are beginning to change.”

### Facts & stats

Violence against women is widespread in Pakistan with domestic violence, sexual abuse and harassment, acid attacks, forced marriages, rape and honour killings often being under reported. The UK is working with the government and police in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to create a more accessible security and justice system, so that women have the confidence to report crimes and demand justice. Having women police officers and prosecutors is an essential part of this effort. The UK will help set up similar complaint units in 7 model police stations by 2016.

## Foreign Secretary meets Pakistan’s National Security and Foreign Affairs Adviser

Published 14 March 2014

Press release

FCO

Adviser Sartaj Aziz and Foreign Secretary William Hague met today to further the strategic relations between Pakistan and the UK, which underpins the enduring partnership between both countries. They reviewed progress on bilateral commitments and discussed future plans to develop a deeper

**dialogue between the two countries, strengthening friendship and promoting mutual interests. The dialogue represents a long-term commitment by both countries to work together for greater security and prosperity.**

**Adviser Sartaj Aziz and Foreign Secretary William Hague discussed priority areas of the bilateral relationship including; renewing commitment to increase bilateral trade to £3 billion by 2015; promoting investments; enhancing Pakistan's EU trade access recently secured with significant UK support; the UK's commitment to stand alongside Pakistan to tackle militancy, terrorism and extremism while acknowledging the huge sacrifices the Pakistani nation has made. They also welcomed the positive contribution made by the British Pakistani community to further strengthen the relationship between the two countries. The two sides agreed to review the whole spectrum of the Enhanced Strategic Dialogue during Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's forthcoming visit to the UK. After the meeting the Foreign Secretary William Hague said:**

**Pakistan and the UK share longstanding ties. I was pleased to have this opportunity to discuss plans to reframe the Enhanced Strategic Dialogue into a deeper and more focused agreement between our two countries, which strengthens our partnership and promotes our mutual interests.**

**This dialogue represents a continuing, long-term commitment by both countries to work together to create the conditions necessary for greater security and prosperity.**

**Adviser Sartaj Aziz said:**

**I was delighted to hold substantive discussions with Foreign Secretary William Hague and other key British cabinet members on the progress of bilateral cooperation in areas of common interest. I emphasized the importance of greater international recognition of Pakistan's security concerns. We agreed to intensify efforts to achieve meaningful and mutually beneficial progress in a holistic manner under the framework of the Enhanced Strategic Dialogue.**

**The UK remains, as Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has said, one of Pakistan's closest allies and the leading development partner.**

**The Enhanced Strategic Dialogue was signed in 2011 and sets out the UK and Pakistan's strategic partnership in 5 areas: trade and business relations; financial, macro-economic stabilization and development cooperation; Education and health; consultations on defence and security; and cultural cooperation.**

**Further information**

**Follow the Foreign Secretary on facebook and on twitter: @WilliamJHague**

**Follow the Foreign Office on twitter @foreignoffice**

# The Commonwealth gears up to celebrate team spirit

Published 11 March 2014

World location news article

Today the UK and Pakistan, along with all other Commonwealth countries, will take part in a coordinated global ceremony to celebrate Commonwealth Day.

Recognising the Commonwealth Games starting in Glasgow this July, Commonwealth Week's theme for this year is „Team Commonwealth.“ Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will raise the Commonwealth Flag outside Westminster Abbey later today (Monday), with over 500 flags then raised across the UK. Since 1977, the Commonwealth family has celebrated Commonwealth Day every year on the second Monday in March. It is a day marked by activities around the Commonwealth, including a multi-faith Observance at Westminster Abbey in London attended by the Head of the Commonwealth, HM Queen Elizabeth II.

Inaugurating the Commonwealth Day celebrations in Pakistan, the British High Commissioner to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Philip Barton CMG OBE said:

**The Commonwealth, in its unmatched diversity, shows the power and potential in acting together. Team spirit brings the enormous strength of solidarity, unity and the collective striving for greater achievement. As two Commonwealth countries, Pakistan and the United Kingdom draw inspiration and understanding from one another. Our combined efforts build resilience. Working together, we win.**

Last month, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) from the UK visited Pakistan to meet the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) of Pakistan. The three-day dialogue was organised to enable female parliamentarians from both countries to discuss issues, opportunities and policy-making challenges in their respective countries. They specifically discussed improving governance by assuming greater and meaningful roles as women parliamentarians.

In the run up to Commonwealth Week, the British High Commission, amongst other Commonwealth Missions in Pakistan, supported a Commonwealth cricket match. The match, played in Islamabad, saw the Diplomatic Cricket Association of Commonwealth countries go up against the Pakistan Cricket Board President's All Star Invitation Team, led by its Chairman, Najam Sethi. The event was inaugurated by Pakistan's Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar. I very much enjoyed watching the match. In July, some of the world's finest athletes will be in Glasgow for the 20th Commonwealth Games. I wish all Commonwealth Games participants all the very best as they prepare to compete on the world stage.”

# Amateur photographers capture 'Connections' between the UK and Pakistan

Published 4 March 2014

World location news article

Aspiring photographers from across Pakistan were invited to submit their creative interpretation of the theme in a competition that ran for six weeks on social media.

The British High Commissioner, Mr Philip Barton opened a photography exhibition in Islamabad today (Friday), themed 'Celebrating Connections between the UK and Pakistan'. The exhibition showcased the work of 16 talented amateur photographers.

Aspiring photographers from across Pakistan were invited to submit their creative interpretation of the theme in a competition that ran for six weeks on social media. The very large number of entries was then shortlisted for this exhibition by renowned international and Pakistani judges.

Members of media, artists and diplomats attended the inauguration ceremony. The exhibition will remain open on 2-3 March at the Pakistan National Council of Arts Islamabad, before travelling to Lahore and Karachi during March.

Inaugurating the exhibition, the British High Commissioner Philip Barton CMG OBE said: Today's exhibition is about some of the special moments and connections that link the UK and Pakistan. Our countries are deeply connected. Nevertheless, not many people know about the richness of these connections that form our unbreakable partnership. Our ties are not limited to the contacts between our two governments, but they also encompass our deep family connections, our people to people links, and our shared love of art, music and sports, in particular cricket.

There is a huge amount of talent waiting to be unlocked in Pakistan. I am delighted that our Celebrating Connections events and activities have provided an opportunity for people from across the country to showcase their talents. I have thoroughly enjoyed watching their interpretations of the themes for our various events and competitions.

For all the participating photographers of this competition, this is a great way to go back in time, pick out a handful of images and collaborate in a small but uniquely powerful display of photography, showing some of strong links between our two countries. I thank everyone who contributed in the success of this exhibition and congratulate the winners and all the participants."

## Diplomats Cricket Blues bowls PCB Whites for Solidarity

Roots Millennium Schools, Pakistan supports a cricket match today at Islamabad between the

**Diplomatic Cricket Association, and the Pakistan Cricket Board President's All Star Invitation Team led by its Chairman Najam Sethi.**

**The day was an initiative undertaken by the Pakistan Cricket Board and Islamabad Diplomats, led by the Australian High Commission and the European Union. Heads of Mission from Australia and Canada showed their mettle, along with representatives from the European Union as they challenged a mix of Pakistan's former and present international cricketing heroes. Chief Guest Minister of Interior & Anti Narcotics Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan led the Pakistani team to bat and bowl in a unique show of teamwork and partnership.**

**Cricket is to Pakistan what ice hockey is to Canada, and football to Europe. In addition to being a national pastime bordering on obsession, the game has been one of the few constants in a truly turbulent history of Pakistan, a serene and steady partner. The sport has continued to thrill, entertain and even relieve the nation.**

**The match was a celebration of Pakistan's long history as a major cricketing nation. It was intended to salute the passion, knowledge and skill that the game instills within all players, member countries and millions of fans worldwide. The match was also intended to promote Pakistan as a cricketing destination of choice for 2014.**

**Diplomatic Cricketers Organizing committee lead by the Australian High Commissioner His Excellency Peter Heyward has been an active advocate of promotion of sports, and in particular cricket within Pakistan. Cheered on by students from the Roots Millennium Schools the event showcased the significance of game and sport amongst stakeholders.**

**The cheerful Cricketing Diplomacy is yet another stellar example of the International community's unconditional commitment towards promotion of sports, culture, arts and national pride in Pakistan. The match took place at Said Pur Cricket Ground and attracted dozens of diplomats, families and friends of cricket from all walks of life. All involved had a remarkable day and cherishable memories.**

## **Third round of Pakistan-UK Bilateral Consultations on Arms Control, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament**

**Published 10 February 2014  
World location news article**

**The Pakistani side was led by Ms Tasnim Aslam, Additional Secretary (United Nations & Economic Co-operation) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.**



The third round of Pakistan-UK Bilateral Consultations on Arms Control, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament was held in Islamabad on 7 February 2014. The Pakistani side was led by Ms Tasnim Aslam, Additional Secretary (United Nations & Economic Co-operation) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office delegation was led by Ms Sarah MacIntosh, Director for Defence and International Security.

The talks were held in a cordial and friendly atmosphere. The two sides reviewed developments in the areas of international arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament. The delegations also discussed issues related to the maintenance of regional and strategic stability, as well as relevant areas of cooperation in the bilateral domain and multilateral fora.

The two sides found the talks useful and agreed to hold the fourth meeting in London on a mutually convenient date.

## UK: scholarships for 7,500 of the poorest schoolgirls in south Punjab

Published 4 February 2014

World location news article

This year 7,500 of the poorest but brightest girls across southern Punjab will receive scholarships thanks to the UK, announced the British High Commissioner to Pakistan Philip Barton while in Lahore today.

The girls will receive stipends of up to Rs 3,000 (approx. £17) per month which will be transferred by bi-annual electronic payments to cover fees, books, transport, and other costs.

The two-year scholarships will enable high-performing girls from poor families to continue their education, which they would otherwise not be able to afford.

The British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Mr Philip Barton CMG OBE, said in Lahore:

Education is the single most important factor that can transform Pakistan's future. These scholarships remove financial barriers and provide bright young minds with the opportunity to pursue their dreams and build a future free of poverty.

Investing in girls and women is transformational – for their family, their community, and for the country. Girls who stay in school for longer go on to have healthier children and a more prosperous future.

These students are selected from 11 of the poorest districts in Punjab. A total of 27,500 girls will receive scholarships over the coming six years, thanks to £10.9million (nearly Rs 2 billions) of funding

from the UK Government's Department for International Development.

The scholarships are provided through the Punjab Education Endowment Fund (PEEF), run by the Government of Punjab since 2008. The UK's support allows PEEF to scale up activity and focus on the less developed districts in southern Punjab.

Women and girls remain at the heart of the UK's development work in Pakistan. Education is beneficial for girls since each extra year of schooling can help increase their wages by up to 20 percent – allowing them to get better jobs, earn more money, and help lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

Notes to editors

Across Pakistan, the UK is working closely with federal and provincial governments and partners on ambitious plans which will benefit millions of children and improve the standard of their education. Pakistan is now one of the UK's largest recipients of development investment.

As well as tackling the education emergency, other priorities for the UK in Pakistan include preventing thousands of women dying in childbirth by funding skilled midwives, nurses, or doctors; providing job skills training to tens of thousands of the poorest people; and giving women in deprived households small monthly cash grants to purchase essentials, such as food and medicine.

UK development investment is dependent on continuing to secure value for money and results.

DFID - the Department for International Development

Leading the British Government's fight against world poverty.

[Find out more here](#)

In Pakistan, contact the DFID-Pakistan media team on + 92 (0) 51 201 2516 / 2580.

**Celebrating Connections brings the adaptation of British play to the Pakistani stage**

**Published 27 January 2014**

**World location news article**

The British High Commission's 'Celebrating Connections' project this week supported the production of an original stage play 'A Complete Family' in Islamabad.

The production, which concludes tomorrow after a week long run, is an adaptation of the British play 'A Ready Made Family' and is being staged in Pakistan for the very first time.

The show follows the characters of two families from two different countries, as they go through a shared journey of disappointments, laughs and happiness. The production highlights how despite

**having two different cultures, the UK and Pakistan have so much in common.**

Salma Mir, the show's Director commented:

**All of the cast members did a fantastic job. Our cast was small but mighty, offering a poignant and funny representation of a family connected to both Pakistan and the UK. I'm delighted how the play brilliantly created an atmosphere where the audience followed this fictional family throughout their journey,"**

An audience member said:

**It was great fun...I thought Daisy, Sammie, Zoya and Jamal, were all hysterical!**

Thanking everyone who made this show possible, a British High Commission spokesperson added:  
**The UK and Pakistan are deeply connected. Yet not many people know about the richness of these connections in terms of people, trade, culture, education and development that form our unbreakable partnership. 'A Complete Family' shows that it is not only our political relationship which ties Pakistanis and Britons together, but also our deep family connections, our people to people links, and our shared love of art, music and sports. All make up the vibrancy of this intertwined partnership.**

## FCO condemns death sentence of British national in Pakistan

Published 24 January 2014

Press release

FCO

**Senior Foreign Office Minister Baroness Warsi condemns death sentence of British national in Pakistan**  
Senior Foreign Office Minister Baroness Warsi said:

**We are aware that Mohammed Asghar, a British national, was yesterday sentenced to death by a court in Rawalpindi in Pakistan. It is the longstanding policy of Her Majesty's Government to oppose the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been providing consular support to Mr Asghar, and we will be raising our concerns in the strongest possible terms with the Pakistani government.**

Further information

**Follow Foreign Office Minister Baroness Warsi on twitter [@SayeedaWarsi](#)**

**Follow the Foreign Office on twitter [@foreignoffice](#) [newsdesk@fco.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@fco.gov.uk)**

## New British High Commissioner arrives in Pakistan

Published 15 January 2014

World location news article

**The new British High Commissioner to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr. Philip Barton, arrived in Islamabad this morning. Mr. Barton is replacing Sir Adam Thomson, who left Pakistan last month. Philip Barton has a wealth of experience working on Pakistan, having served as the British Foreign Office's Additional Director for South Asia from 2008-09, and then the Cabinet Office Coordinator for**

Afghanistan and Pakistan from 2009-2011. More recently, Mr. Barton served as the British Deputy Ambassador to Washington.

A ceremony for the High Commissioner Designate to present his Credentials to President Mamnoon Hussain will take place in the coming days.

Speaking upon his arrival in Islamabad, the Mr. Barton said:

I am delighted to become Her Majesty's High Commissioner to Pakistan. The relationship between the UK and Pakistan remains deep and strong. I am committed to strengthening these connections during my time here, building on the excellent work of my predecessor Sir Adam Thomson.

The UK is working closely with Pakistan through extensive cooperation on trade, investment, energy, education and security. Our rich people-to-people and cultural connections help to underpin the deep and unique relationship between our two countries.

I am looking forward immensely to working with all sections of Pakistani society to continue to build a relationship based on partnership, trust and shared understanding.

Further Information:

Contact: Press Attaché, British High Commission, Islamabad. Tel. +92(0)51 201 2884

For the new High Commissioner's detailed CV, [please click here](#),

<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/philip-barton>

Follow the British High Commissioner on Twitter: [@PhilipRBarton](#)

## **British High Commission hosts Short Film Competition Awards Ceremony**

The competition, organised by the British High Commission, invited aspiring filmmakers from across Pakistan to creatively interpret the theme of 'Celebrating Connections between the UK and Pakistan'.

The 'UK-Pakistan Celebrating Connections' Short Film Competition concluded this evening with a red carpet awards ceremony hosted by the Acting British High Commissioner, Alison Blake.

The competition, organised by the British High Commission, invited aspiring filmmakers from across Pakistan to creatively interpret the theme of 'Celebrating Connections between the UK and Pakistan'. Entries were received not only from Pakistan's main metropolises, but also from cities including Haripur, Jacobabad, Jamshoro, Kotri, Muzaffarabad and Faisalabad.

A shortlist of five films were selected by a panel of judges consisting of renowned Pakistani and British media personalities: veteran actor and Chairperson of Hunerkada College of Visual and Performing

Arts, Jamal Shah; and BBC News' Pakistan Correspondent, Aleem Maqbool.

High profile filmmakers, media enthusiasts, artists and diplomats from across the country attended the ceremony to view the screening of all five shortlisted entries.

Congratulating the winners for their hard work and highlighting the re-emergence of Pakistani cinema, the Acting British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Alison Blake said:

I am delighted to host this awards ceremony. This evening's event celebrates the connections which tie the UK and Pakistan together and highlights the budding talent of up-and-coming young Pakistani filmmakers. I have thoroughly enjoyed watching their interpretations of the competition's theme, 'Celebrating Connections'. As this evening's screenings have shown, Britons' and Pakistanis' lives are connected through travel and trade, family and culture, history and food, and beyond.

The overwhelming response we received for this competition is another indicator of the strong resurgence of interest in Pakistani film. My colleagues and I wish this evening's finalists all the very best in achieving their dreams in the film industry. We look forward to seeing their future films, like 'Zinda Baag', shortlisted for the Best Foreign Language category at the Oscars and more Pakistani film makers join Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy in winning an Oscar for Pakis

## Improving business links with Pakistan

### Issue

Over £2 billion worth of trade already flows between the two countries, with more than 100 UK-based companies currently operating in Pakistan with high returns on investment. We are working to increase these numbers between now and 2015.

### Actions

- we are working closely with the Pakistan government to improve our business links
- the Deputy British High Commission in Karachi is working to increase bilateral trade between Pakistan and the UK to £3 billion by 2015
- the British High Commission in Islamabad works to support investment and business

### UK Trade & Investment services

UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) offers expertise and contacts through its extensive network of specialists in the UK and in British Embassies and other diplomatic offices around the world. It

provides companies with the tools they require to be competitive on the world stage.

You can [contact UKTI officials working in Pakistan](#) to find out more about these services.

## Background

The UK's open, transparent and business-friendly system makes it easy to start up a new company and there are no separate rules for foreign business entities. [Read more about the reasons to set up your business in the UK.](#)

The [UKTI Guide to Doing Business in Pakistan](#) provides further detailed information on Pakistan's economy and opportunities.

[Contact: UK Trade & Investment Pakistan](#)

*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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