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## Bridge-US July 2015

*Connecting People - Building Bridges – Spreading Tolerance*

**In dedication of Daniel Pearl**

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**Editor's Note**

**We offer an apology to our readers for not publishing BridgeUS on time for the past few months. As we and our readers know that we face many risks and resources issues to move on with our mission to seed harmony and love between Pakistan and the West. We are working without proper supplies, means and budget. During past few months, our site was locked up; relocation and safety were among many things to pass. We are still dicing with death but encouraged by the impact factor of both BridgeUS and BridgeEuropa and also by our readers whose morale support keeps us going.**

**Sincerely**  
**Syed Naeem Uddin**  
**Editor/ Publisher**

## **U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson visits Peshawar**

**July 6, 2015 | Peshawar**

**U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G Olson, met with leaders from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, during his visit to Peshawar on July 4**

**U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G Olson, met with leaders from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, during his visit to Peshawar on July 4 United States Ambassador to Pakistan, Richard Olson, along with U.S. Defense Representative Pakistan Lieutenant General Anthony Rock, Consul General for Peshawar Jon Danilowicz and Minister Counselor for Public Affairs Thomas Leary, visited Peshawar to meet with government and military leaders of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).**

**The visit of the U.S. delegation highlights the ongoing cooperation between the U.S. and Pakistan governments in the region. The trip included a series of high-level meetings with provincial government leadership, as well as an interview with Peshawar journalists, to discuss ongoing efforts to improve the lives of KP and FATA citizens. Since October 2009, the United States has provided over \$1.58 billion in development and humanitarian assistance to the region, which the Ambassador underscored to the press.**

**To conclude the trip, the Ambassador hosted an Iftar dinner at the U.S. Consulate General in Peshawar, attended by local government officials, educators, administrators, and civil society leaders from KP and FATA. In the spirit of Ramadan, Americans and Pakistanis shared the Iftar meal to end the day's fast, as well as to celebrate the 4th of July, which is the date that commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence for the United States.**

**As the Ambassador stated in his Ramadan message, "In the United States, nearly three million Muslims call America their home and enrich our country by sharing the traditions of Ramadan as families gather, friends host Iftars, and meals are shared, much like here in Pakistan. Ramadan's practice of intense devotion, reflection and fasting reminds us to live our faiths fully, lift up humanity and to treat each other with respect. It is because of mutual respect, regardless of one's faith, that we will be able to change our communities, and our world, to make it a more secure and peaceful place."**

**For more information on U.S. assistance to KP/FATA, please visit <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/fact-sheets.html>.**

## **U.S. Department of Agriculture Helps Farmers Convert Waste to Organic Farming Compost**

**Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 53/2015 - June 19, 2015**

**Islamabad, June 19, 2015 - The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) partnered with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) to create a program to train Pakistani banana farmers in the proper methods to turn crop waste into compost.**

**"What farmers are burning as waste is actually a valuable resource," Dr. Shoukat Abro of the Sindh Agricultural Extension Department was quick to point out.**

**Farmers in Sindh produce 90 percent of Pakistan's bananas and have traditionally burned the waste produced by the crop. USDA began the three-year Improving Soil Fertility and Soil Health through Agricultural Extension project in an effort to get farmers to use those waste materials to benefit the land and increase crop production. A USDA team visited a banana farm in the Tando Allahyr district of Sindh to observe the program's progress.**

**ICARDA is directing ten other Pakistani institutions involved in this project to train farmers to properly turn the leaves and stems left over from banana harvest into compost. The compost can then be used to enrich their soil. There are currently 43 sites throughout Pakistan for farmers to learn about the process of mixing organic matter like the banana harvest waste with manure in order to create compost. The project looks to expand into other crop production areas to identify more organic materials that can be converted into compost.**

**USDA, through funding provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has provided technical expertise and guidance to farmers throughout the country. Their focus has been on using the established method of applying compost to nutrient depleted soil to enrich it with organic matter and improve its water holding capacity.**

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

**For more information on USDA programs in Pakistan, please visit:  
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/regions/south-and-central-asia/pakistan>**

## **Deputy Chief of Mission Welcomes Returning Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Students**

Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 52/2015

**Islamabad, June 18, 2015 - U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Thomas Williams greeted 108 returning scholars of the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program who spent an academic year in the United States.**

**DCM Williams underscored the importance of strong, direct ties between the people of the United States and Pakistan. "The United States and Pakistan are working together to secure a safe and prosperous future for both of our great nations. As YES program alumni, you are now part of this effort. I encourage you all to stay connected and devote your time to your studies, but also to making**

**your communities and your country a better place to live and thrive."**

**This U.S. government sponsored program brings Pakistani youth, ages 15-17, to live with American host families and to study in American high schools across the country for an academic year. This group was the twelfth cohort of Pakistani students sent to the United States through this program.**

**Since 2003, 7,700 youth from more than 40 countries have benefitted from the YES program. In Pakistan alone, more than 900 students have participated in the YES program since 2003, accounting for more than 10% of all YES participants worldwide. During their year in the United States, these young people attended classes, labs, and extracurricular programs alongside their American classmates. They also participated in special enrichment activities like community service, youth leadership training, civics education programs, and sports to develop a well-rounded, firsthand understanding of American culture. The students served as cultural ambassadors for Pakistan, delivering presentations on Pakistani culture at their schools and other institutions in their American host communities.**

**As DCM Williams welcomed home the alumni, a new group of 108 Pakistani students are preparing to leave for their academic year in the United States for the 2015-2016 academic year.**

**For more information about this educational opportunity, including the application process and highlight stories from YES alumni, please visit <http://www.iearnpk.org/yespk.htm>. International Education and Resource Network (iEARN) Pakistan is the U.S. Embassy's local administrator of the YES program.**

## **Gallery Exhibit and Book Launch Highlight Fourteen Years of the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation in Pakistan - June 17, 2015 | Islamabad**

**U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson attends the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation book launch and photography exhibit at the Satrang Gallery in the Serena Hotel.**

**U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson, along with Dr. Yasmeen Lari of the Heritage Foundation and Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, welcomed artists, architects, archaeologists, and students at the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) book launch and photography exhibit at the Satrang Gallery in the Serena Hotel on June 16, 2015. The event celebrated fourteen years of U.S.-Pakistan cooperation in the field of cultural preservation in Pakistan.**

**"The book and photo exhibit documents eighteen outstanding cultural heritage projects throughout Pakistan and celebrates a fourteen-year commitment between our two countries to preserve the cultural heritage of Pakistan for future generations," said Ambassador Olson. He also stressed the**

importance of celebrating cultural heritage in culturally and religiously diverse countries like Pakistan.

*The Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation: Pakistan* book and photography exhibit feature photographs from the eighteen preservation and rehabilitation projects in Pakistan, including the first-ever project in Taxila to the newest in Sindh, Makli Hill. The exhibit will remain open to the public until Sunday, June 28, 2015.

Since 2001, the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation has assisted more than 125 countries in the restoration, preservation, and revitalization of cultural heritage sites. To learn more about the U.S. government's educational and cultural programs in Pakistan, please visit:

<http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/>

## 2015 Young Leaders Scout Camp Instills Values for a Better Tomorrow June

13, 2015 | Islamabad

Members of the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) joined forces with the Pakistan Boy Scouts Association (PBSA) to host 150 scouts, alumni, and English Access Microscholarship Program participants for the 2015 Young Leaders Scout Camp at the PBSA headquarters in Islamabad's Shakar Parian Park.

During remarks to the camp participants, U.S. Ambassador Richard G. Olson said, "It is encouraging to see so many youth interested and engaged, much like myself when I was your age. The values and skills learned through the scouting experience transcend cultural and national boundaries and it is great to see them in action here today."

The 2015 Young Leaders Scout Camp promotes community involvement and youth development through scouting. During the three-day camp, participants will learn about leadership, teamwork, self-reliance, and other scout core values. Scouting is an international movement that supports the holistic development of the individual – physical, mental, and emotional. For decades, scouting organizations around the world have developed generations of leaders across every sector of society.

Faran Ali, one of the PUAN volunteer organizers, remarked, "The 2015 Young Leaders Scout Camp aims to achieve increased involvement of youth and their communities in scouting activities."

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

Peshawar, Lahore, Multan, and Sukkur. Find out more about PUAN at <http://www.facebook.com/pakalumni>. Check out further information about the 2015 Young Leaders Scout Camp on Facebook by searching YLSC15 and following @YLSC15 on Twitter.

## **U.S.-Funded Technology Upgrades Improve MEPCO's Customer Service and Operational Efficiency**

Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 48/2015 - June 9, 2015

Islamabad, June 9, 2015 – U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson inaugurated a U.S.-government funded information technology lab at the Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) Regional Training Center. The information technology lab will train employees in the latest energy sector technology. Since 2013, MEPCO, with the support of the United States, has adopted new technology that significantly improves customer service and operational efficiency.

“The United States remains committed to working with Pakistan towards the day that Pakistan will have a continuous and stable energy supply which is vital to creating a brighter, more prosperous Pakistan,” said Ambassador Olson.

Through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Power Distribution Program support, MEPCO has overhauled its power flow management system, replaced 252 industrial motors to reduce energy losses incurred by the MEPCO's largest consumers, and automated all office functions and introduced a geographic information system. MEPCO is also updating equipment that will significantly reduce power lost in the distribution process.

Additionally, the United States has assisted MEPCO in the automation of consumer billing systems by upgrading over 65,000 meters. Today, almost 600,000 MEPCO consumers are receiving their power bills through a new, state-of-the-art system. To date, these updates have added \$45 million to MEPCO's net income. These savings will rise as the company continues to modernize, ultimately benefiting MEPCO's customers.

USAID's Power Distribution Program is a five-year initiative, launched in 2010 to strengthen operations of the government-owned power distribution companies. The program's ultimate goal is to eliminate the need for subsidies in the power sector and improve the supply of electricity to consumers.

For more information on USAID's energy programs in Pakistan, please visit:

<http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/energy>

**Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel**

# Commemorates Launch of U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies

Islamabad | June 3, 2015

U.S. Under Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy Richard Stengel and U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson, along with Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Muhammad Asif, officially launched the U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies (CAS), a \$127 million investment from the United States building partnerships in higher education and research, at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST). More than 300 students, faculty, and administrators attended the event.

This initiative is a set of partnerships between world-class U.S. and Pakistani universities that will harness applied research to find innovative and practical solutions for Pakistan's energy, water, agriculture, and food security challenges. Both the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) and the University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar will partner with Arizona State University to create two centers for energy research; the University of Jamshoro and University of Utah will partner to create the center for water; and the University of Agriculture Faisalabad and the University of California at Davis will partner to create the center for agriculture and food security.

"The future we want to build with Pakistan is inherently university-to-university, business-to-business, people-to-people. Those are the ties that last, that build real understanding and prosperity on both sides, and we have a strong foundation for progress," said Under Secretary Stengel in his keynote address.

Through the U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies, U.S. and Pakistan universities will also partner to build capacity and long-term cooperation, including with the private sector to drive innovation and growth. To this end, the United States will provide graduate-level scholarships through exchange programs and support construction of world-class libraries, laboratories, and additional research facilities.

Since 2009, the United States Government has built or rehabilitated about 1,000 Pakistani schools, provided over 5,000 scholarships for Pakistani students to study English and awarded scholarships to more than 12,000 Pakistani students to study at Pakistani higher education institutions through various USAID educational programs. The United States also currently supports nineteen partnerships between Pakistani and U.S.-based universities.

For more information on U.S. assistance to Pakistan's education sector,



please visit: <http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/education>.

## **United States and Pakistan Advance Economic and Education Cooperation at Inaugural Education, Science, and Technology Working Group Meeting** June 3, 2015 | Islamabad

**U.S. Under Secretary for Public Affairs and Public Diplomacy Richard Stengel and Minister of Planning, Development, and Reform Ahsan Iqbal convened the inaugural meeting of the Education, Science, and Technology Working Group under the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform in Islamabad. U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson and other senior U.S. officials also participated in the bi-lateral talks, which focused on advancing cooperation, partnerships, and exchanges in higher education, science, and technology.**

**“Secretary Kerry has always emphasized that our relationship with Pakistan is not just about the threats we face. Our partnership is about building a deeper, broader, and more long-term engagement with the people of Pakistan. The Pakistan of tomorrow must be a safe and secure society, free of extremism; a strong democracy responsive to the needs of its people; a growing economy that creates jobs and trade opportunities and increased educational opportunities for all,” said Under Secretary Stengel in his opening remarks.**

**The Education, Science, and Technology Working Group is the sixth and newest working group under the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. At the inaugural meeting, Undersecretary Stengel stressed the importance of these key areas to the bilateral relationship. U.S.-Pakistan engagement in this sector is substantial, 19 partnerships already in place between U.S. and Pakistan universities and more U.S. funding going to exchange programs with Pakistan than any other country in the world. The delegations discussed ways to build sustainability into ongoing university linkages and extend the benefits to universities across Pakistan. The U.S. delegation highlighted educational cooperation and exchange programs that support Pakistan’s development goals. The Working Group also strategized ways to connect higher education and science and technology research with the private sector to promote innovation, trade and investment, including strengthening intellectual property rights and building public-private partnerships.**

**The U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue is the diplomatic framework for sustained engagement between the United States and Pakistan representing the broad-based nature of the relationship. There are six working groups that further the bilateral relationship in areas of joint interest: Education, Science, and Technology; Energy; Economics and Finance; Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism; Strategic Security, Strategic Stability and Non-proliferation; and the Defense Consultative Group.**

## **Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network Conducts Nationwide Campaign in Support of Peace** Islamabad | May 30, 2015

With the support of U.S. Mission in Pakistan, members of the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) led a week of peace-themed activities for thousands of youth, young professionals, and senior citizens from May 25-31, 2015. From Azad Jammu and Kashmir in the north to Gwadar in the south, the twelve chapters of PUAN organized community service activities that engaged more than 3,000 people in events ranging from interfaith seminars and debating competitions to art and theater programs at orphanages and schools.

"Congratulations to our alumni for their work to improve their community across the country," said Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network Country President Faisal Malik, who led the country-wide project. "With our peace project, we see what's possible when people take the lead as change-makers."

The Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network is one of the largest U.S. alumni networks in the world. It consists of more than 13,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. PUAN organizes a number of events in Pakistan, including community service projects, leadership trainings, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities.

Learn more at [www.pakusalumninetwork.com](http://www.pakusalumninetwork.com). For pictures and updates about PUAN Peace Project 2015, follow at #PUANPeaceWeek.

## **American Film Showcase Arrives in Pakistan** Islamabad | May 23, 2015

U.S. Ambassador Richard G. Olson spoke at the opening of the second American Film Showcase in Pakistan, an Embassy-sponsored film festival being held this year at Fatima Jinnah Park's Aiwan-e-Quaid auditorium. From May 23 to June 3, American filmmakers will participate in a series of film festivals, host workshops to share best practices with Pakistani filmmakers, and chair roundtable discussions with their counterparts in the Pakistani film industry. The visit is being conducted in partnership with Hunerkada College of Visual and Performing Arts and the 60 Second International Film Festival, a project by Morango Films.

In his remarks, Ambassador Olson noted, "Beyond sharing information about our societies, the entertainment industries of both our countries mean real dollars and cents for our respective economies. To compete in the global entertainment market, a strong foundation of filmmakers and experts is a necessity. The American Film Showcase will have a lasting, positive impact on Pakistan's economy and cultural heritage."

The American Film Showcase is the U.S. government's premier American film diplomacy program, which organizes film screenings and workshops with American filmmakers around the world. Based at the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts, the program has visited 67 countries, screened 117 films, and reached more than 10,000 participants over the past three years.

The U.S. government invests more than \$30 million each year in cultural programs that promote the visual and performing arts, women's empowerment, and entrepreneurship.

For more information about the American Film Showcase and similar U.S. government-sponsored programs, please visit <http://americanfilmshowcase.usc.edu/> and <http://exchanges.state.gov/us/program/american-film-showcase>.

## **USDA Leads Review of Wheat Productivity Enhancement Program**

Islamabad | May 22, 2015

A top wheat scientist from the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Dr. Yue Jin, is in Islamabad this week to review the U.S.-Pakistan Wheat Productivity Enhancement Program (WPEP).

WPEP is an international collaboration with Pakistani government and university research facilities, USDA, the International Center for Maize and Wheat Improvement (CIMMYT) and the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dryland Areas (ICARDA). The primary goal of the program is to protect and enhance the productivity of wheat in Pakistan, with particular attention to wheat rusts. The study of wheat rusts, especially Ug99, is crucial in Pakistan since wheat is the most important crop in Pakistan. Wheat accounts for 60% of the daily caloric intake of the average Pakistani, and is grown on over 9 million hectares of land throughout Pakistan.

"Wheat rusts cause significant losses to farmers in both the U.S. and Pakistan, so it is important that Dr. Yue Jin, a USDA wheat disease expert, collaborates with wheat disease experts in Pakistan" says Dr. Kay Simmons, Deputy Administrator, USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS). "Dr. Jin's visit to Pakistan will be a valuable exchange of wheat rust characterization and crop protection strategies," he observed.

Wheat rusts have caused hundreds of millions of dollars in crop losses during the past 50 years in Pakistan, and large scale epidemics continue to threaten the food security of the country. Therefore, USDA is supporting Pakistani institutions to strengthen wheat rust surveillance efforts, improve breeding methods and testing, and increase the availability of new varieties. The project is also addressing agronomic management practices to encourage the application of best practices for

## **Pakistan.**

**Dr. Javed Mirza, Principal Scientific Officer at the Crop Disease Research Laboratory in Murree, said "the collaboration with USDA has been very valuable in accelerating the pace of rust research. Developing seeds that resist wheat rust will help to raise wheat yields and improve the incomes of farmers."**

**Agriculture is Pakistan's second largest sector, accounting for over 21 percent of GDP and 46 percent of the labor force. USDA supports Pakistani scientists and farmers to enhance agricultural productivity in Pakistan, support economic objectives and meet food security needs, particularly through improved irrigation, technology, and sharing best practices.**

**For more information about the program:**

**[http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/projects/projects.htm?ACCN\\_NO=420458](http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/projects/projects.htm?ACCN_NO=420458)**

## **U.S. Helps to Improve Food Storage and Preservation in Balochistan**

**May 21, 2015**

**U.S. Ambassador Richard G. Olson and Balochistan Additional Secretary of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Mr. Imran Khan, commemorated the conclusion of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Pakistan Agriculture and Cold Chain Development Project in a ceremony highlighting the project's accomplishments. A joint effort between the USDA, Winrock International, and a number of agricultural organizations in Balochistan, the project funded the construction of 78 physical structures such as cold storage, banana ripening units, and drying tunnels throughout the province.**

**The five-year project was funded under USDA's Food for Peace Program by selling 21,000 metric tons of U.S. soybean oil and using the proceeds to fund capacity building initiatives and the construction of cold storage and other food preservation tools in Balochistan. Reflecting on Balochistan's position as a top producer of many fruits, nuts, and vegetables in Pakistan, Ambassador Olson commented that "Balochistan is the province that adds variety to Pakistan's diet. Our project helps to connect Balochistan with consumers in the rest of Pakistan." He noted that at the start of the project, U.S. and Pakistani officials realized that finding a way to "help Balochistan's perishable crops reach consumers throughout Pakistan in the best and safest condition possible would help to reduce losses, improve returns to farmers, and meet the demands of consumers."**

**The project also supported the seafood sector by providing over 30 flake ice units to enhance fishermen's ability to safely store and prolong the life of their catches. So far, over 220,000 Pakistanis have benefited from the Project and report a 20-25 percent reduction in losses and a corresponding**

increase in income. Mr. Haji Ghousullah a trader from Chaman and a beneficiary of the project remarked, "I see my cold storage facility developing into a major hub for fresh fruits and vegetables storage in the area."

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), through the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), links U.S. agriculture to the world to enhance export opportunities and global food security. Recognizing its importance to economic growth, the United States is helping to boost Pakistan's agricultural productivity, particularly through improved irrigation, technology, and sharing best practices. The United States also helps Pakistani agribusinesses expand their sales and operations, with the goal of linking thousands of local producers nationwide to major commercial firms.

For more information about USDA initiatives, please visit: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/regions/south-and-central-asia/pakistan>

## **United States Announces Additional \$27 million to Feed Temporarily Displaced People in Pakistan** May 20, 2015

The United States government is providing an additional \$27 million in food assistance to the people of Pakistan this year through the United Nations World Food Program (WFP). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Pakistan Mission Director Greg Gottlieb announced the additional funding, which supplements the \$34 million that the United States has already provided in food assistance to Pakistan since October 2014, at a press conference and photo exhibition opening on Wednesday.

"This money will help buy food for struggling families, especially those from the FATA region. For many, the food that the United States provides serves as their main source of food supply," Gottlieb said. "Food support is a foundation upon which people can rebuild their livelihoods and communities."

During the event, USAID Pakistan Mission Director Gottlieb, Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan, and WFP Regional Director for Asia David Kaatrud also inaugurated a photo exhibit which highlights the collaboration by the U.S. government, the Government of Pakistan, and WFP to feed the country's vulnerable populations, including the 1.6 million temporarily displaced people from FATA.

"The strategic partnership between the United States, WFP, and the Government of Pakistan has improved the lives of millions of people in the most vulnerable areas affected by natural and human-induced disasters across the country," WFP Regional Director Kaatrud said. "The generous funding from USAID has provided over the years has improved food and nutrition security, livelihoods,

resilience and response capability to sudden-onset emergencies which in turn contribute to the peace and stability as well as economic development in Pakistan.”

The food assistance provided by the United States through WFP includes donations of flour, oil, salt, and beans. Since 2010, the United States has provided nearly \$700 million in food assistance to the people of Pakistan.

For more information about USAID's humanitarian assistance, please visit:

<http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/agriculture-and-food-security/food-assistance>

## **U.S. Government Commemorates \$55 Million EXIM Financing to Refurbish PIA's GE Engines** Islamabad, May 20, 2015

U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson hosted an event for senior business and government officials today to commemorate \$55 million in financing for a deal between General Electric (GE) and Pakistan International Airlines' (PIA) to refurbish their Boeing aircraft engines. The refurbishment will enhance overall engine performance of PIA's Boeing 777 fleet.

The United States Export-Import Bank (EXIM) will support the financing, representing EXIM's largest financing activity in Pakistan since 2006. Ambassador Olson said, "Today, GE and its joint venture engines power more than 60 percent of PIA's aircraft, and this deal to refurbish many of those engines will power PIA well into the future. Partnerships such as these go a long way towards connecting Pakistan with the rest of the world."

Ambassador Olson was joined by Federal Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar; Chairman Board of Investment, Dr. Miftah Ismail; Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Captain Shujaat Azim; Vice Chairman GE, John G. Rice; Chairman Pakistan International Airlines, Nasser Jaffer; and Managing Director/Country Officer Citibank, Mr. Nadeem Lodhi.

## **Ambassador Olson Extends Condolences to the Families of Karachi Bus Attack Victims** May 13, 2015 | Islamabad

On behalf of the American people, U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson extends his deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims of Wednesday's heinous bus attack in Karachi, and strongly condemns this senseless terrorist act.

The United States remains steadfast in its commitment to the people of Pakistan in their efforts to counter terrorism, and supports the right of every person to worship as they choose, without fear of intimidation, coercion or violence. We support Pakistan's efforts to bring all those involved to justice

**and stand ready to provide any appropriate assistance to authorities investigating this tragic attack.**

**Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136)**

## **U.S. Embassy Prepares Pakistanis Traveling to Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles**

May 11, 2015 - Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 38/2015

**U.S. Embassy Islamabad staff practice with Special Olympics Pakistan delegation in the run up to the 2015 World Games in Los Angeles in July.**

**Islamabad, May 11, 2015 - The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and Special Olympics Pakistan hosted a pre-departure orientation at the Pakistan Sports Complex for athletes, coaches, and support staff who will be competing in the Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles in July. The event is part of the U.S. State Department's Inclusion Diplomacy outreach to promote disability rights around the world. American officers joined volunteers from the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network to participate in friendly matches with the basketball and football teams from Special Olympics Pakistan to prepare the Pakistani athletes for competition.**

**A record 85-member Pakistan contingent will participate in the Special Olympics World Games, the world's largest sporting event that showcases the skills and accomplishments of people with intellectual disabilities. Participants will compete in various events including: aquatics, badminton, cycling, football, basketball, powerlifting, tennis and table tennis. The Special Olympics began in the 1950s as a summer day camp for youth with intellectual disabilities organized by Eunice Kennedy-Shriver, sister of President John F. Kennedy. Kennedy-Shriver's vision and drive for equal opportunity for persons with disabilities eventually grew into the Special Olympics movement.**

**Currently more than 32 Olympic-style individual and team sports provide meaningful training and competition opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities. An important component of the games is the Special Olympics Unified Sports, specific events that join people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team to break stereotypes and build paths to friendship and understanding.**

**2015 also marks the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a ground-breaking civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. While serving as ambassadors of Pakistani culture and society in the United States, the Special Olympics Pakistan delegation will gain firsthand knowledge of how the ADA has transformed**

American culture and society.

For more information about the Special Olympics, visit <http://www.specialolympics.org/>.

For more information about the U.S. State Department's disabilities outreach, visit <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/sadr/>, @IntDisability ([Twitter](#)), or SAHeumann ([Facebook](#))

## **U.S. Ambassador Extends Condolences for Victims of the Helicopter Crash in Gilgit-Baltistan**

Islamabad, May 8, 2015

Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 37/ 2015

**U.S. Ambassador Richard G. Olson extends his deepest condolences for those killed and injured in today's tragic helicopter crash in Gilgit-Baltistan. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families at this difficult time.**

## **U.S. Trade Mission Results in Multimillion Dollar Memorandum of Understanding between Oracle and Government of Balochistan**

Islamabad | May 7, 2015

Today in Balochistan House, American technology company Oracle and the Government of Balochistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) launching a multimillion dollar capacity-building program to train local youth on new software and hardware technologies. The new agreement is the direct result of an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) trade mission to the United States led by U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson and Board of Investment Chairman Miftah Ismail in October 2014. The trade mission has already generated millions of dollars in new business for Pakistani and American ICT companies.

In his remarks during the MOU signing ceremony, Ambassador Olson said, "Today's agreement represents a new area of U.S.-Pakistan ICT collaboration that goes beyond private sector deals to embrace public-private partnerships and leverage tech innovations to improve the lives of people. We salute Oracle for its commitment to the Pakistani ICT sector."

Oracle is currently working with the Government of Balochistan to provide the company's "Safe City" products to bring cutting edge IT solutions to increase public safety and security throughout the province.

## **United States Official Commends Pakistan's Commitment to Support Afghan Refugees**

Islamabad, April 30, 2015



**Simon Henshaw, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, who oversees U.S. government humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees and host communities, visited Pakistan from April 27 to 29. Henshaw reviewed U.S.-funded projects and discussed cooperation with officials from the Pakistani government, international agencies, and non-governmental organizations.**

**Henshaw commended the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for their generosity to Afghan refugees and reaffirmed the United States' commitment to assisting refugees remaining in the country. Henshaw also praised Pakistani officials for their contributions to the regional "Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees," implemented jointly by Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the international community to create conditions for voluntary refugee returns to Afghanistan.**

**"The United States deeply appreciates Pakistan's role as a refuge for millions of Afghan refugees over the past four decades," Henshaw said. "The United States remains committed to helping this country meet the needs of both Afghan refugees and host communities."**

**During the visit, Henshaw visited schools for refugee and Pakistani children in Taxila and Rawalpindi which are supported by a U.S. grant of \$8.9 million. The expansion of these schools has helped improve access to education for both Pakistani and Afghan children alike.**

**The United States is the leading donor of humanitarian assistance in response to the Afghan conflict. In fiscal year 2014, PRM provided more than \$107 million to support Afghans displaced in Afghanistan and Afghan refugees across the region, including voluntary refugee returns to Afghanistan. This funding supports international organizations, including the UN Refugee Agency, which support programs to benefit Afghan refugees and host communities.**

## **Clean Energy Challenge - Next Steps for the U.S.-Pakistan Energy Partnership**

**April 29, 2015 - Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 33/ 2015**

**Islamabad, April 29, 2015 - The United States and Pakistan announced today a new effort to facilitate and accelerate private investment in clean energy projects in Pakistan. Under this initiative, the U.S. Government will work with Pakistan to advance reforms that will allow the U.S., Pakistani, and international private sector developers and investors to add at least 3,000 megawatts of clean power to Pakistan's national grid within the next 3-5 years.**

**"This clean energy initiative will help address Pakistan's energy challenges," said U.S. State Department's Special Envoy for Energy Amos Hochstein during the second U.S.-Pakistan Energy Working Group under the broader U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue framework. "It is a partnership to**

help alleviate Pakistan's energy challenges based on a set of goals shared by Pakistan, the United States, multilateral banks, donors, and the private sector."

Special Envoy Hochstein, Deputy Chief of Mission Williams and a high level delegation from Washington met with Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Minister Khawaja Asif, and a range of Pakistani government officials to discuss measures to increase cooperation in the clean energy sector. Energy demand in Pakistan is expected to double by 2020. Addressing this challenge will require significant action by the Government of Pakistan to institute reforms that create space for private sector support, as well as the support of many countries and institutions.

In order to advance the goals of this common initiative, U.S. and Pakistani officials discussed steps to: strengthen regulatory institutions and develop market-based rules to attract private investment; develop an investment strategy for expanding the role of clean energy systems; expand transmission capacity for clean energy projects; and mobilize loans, grants, technical assistance and guarantees needed to manage and reduce private sector risks and leverage private capital into clean power projects.

Helping the energy sector become more market-based is one of the best alternatives to ending the current crisis and ensuring that future demand can be met. Clean power investments in hydroelectric, wind, solar, biomass, and natural gas, combined with an expanded effort to improve the efficiency at all parts of the energy sector, will reduce Pakistan's dependence on foreign fuel sources, help address climate change, improve Pakistan's energy security, and promote innovation and growth.

This initiative marks a new phase of U.S. energy sector assistance to Pakistan, which since 2010 has contributed over 1,500 megawatts of electricity to Pakistan's national grid by refurbishing existing hydropower and thermal generation facilities, completing hydropower projects, and improving the operation and efficiency of Pakistan's transmission and distribution systems.

## **Statement from the U.S. Consulate General in Lahore, Consul General Zachary Harkenrider**

April 28, 2015 | Lahore

We are extremely saddened by the death today of Amjad Iqbal Shah, a local contract guard working at the U.S. Consulate General in Lahore. Mr. Shah suffered serious injuries when his firearm discharged while he was on duty. He was immediately taken to a local hospital, where he unfortunately succumbed to his injuries. Mr. Shah, an employee of Security Management Services (SMS), had been working at the Consulate General for over four years, had an excellent work history, and was a well-respected member of our team. We offer our deepest condolences to Mr. Shah's family.

# **The United States Condemns the Murder of Sabeen Mahmud**

Islamabad | April 25, 2015

**We strongly condemn the murder of Sabeen Mahmud and the wounding of her mother. We extend our deepest condolences to her loved ones and our wishes for her mother's full and speedy recovery. Sabeen was a courageous voice of the Pakistani people and her death represents a great loss.**

## **United States Working with Pakistan and Afghanistan to Expand Women's Participation in Economy: Ambassador Richard Olson**

Islamabad | April 22, 2015

**In his address at the closing ceremony of the first annual Afghanistan and Pakistan Women's Business Conference in Islamabad, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard Olson said, "Women's economic empowerment is vital to the development of both Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the United States is working with both neighboring countries to expand women's participation in the economy through entrepreneurship, employment opportunities and education."**

**The four-day conference, organized by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP), in partnership with USAID, the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council, and the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, aims to strengthen the competitiveness of Afghan and Pakistani business women.**

**Ambassador Olson reiterated in his address to participants and organizers that the U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Agreement Memorandum of Understanding on Women's Economic Empowerment, signed with the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, will enable both countries to increase cross-border trade and investment and ensure more women's participation in the economy.**

**The Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) led a series of discussions with participants covering a wide range of topics including regulatory issues in Afghanistan-Pakistan cross-border trade, business financing, business-to-business networking, and cyber training. Leading business women from Afghanistan and Pakistan came together to discuss legal and regulatory issues important to women-led small and medium enterprises active in international commerce and had the opportunity to network and form cross-border business-to-business relationships.**

## **U.S. Ambassador Opens Second Annual Music Mela to Celebrate**

# International Jazz Month

April 17, 2015 | Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 29/ 2015

Islamabad – U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson launched the second annual Music Mela at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). The three-day event organized by the United States Embassy, in collaboration with the Foundation for Arts, Culture and Education (FACE) will feature 25 acts from diverse musical genres, attracting thousands of music enthusiasts from across Pakistan as well as international speakers and music promoters.

“Music has a special power to overcome barriers – regardless of language, geography, or culture. This event builds on the tremendous success of last year’s Music Mela and a year of cultural events arranged by the U.S. Embassy and its partners in Pakistan and the United States,” said U.S. Ambassador Richard G. Olson.

U.S. bassist Marcus Miller also addressed the crowd via video message as part of International Jazz Month. He spoke of Jazz as an American art form and its spirit of invention and improvisation that has found a home in countries around the world, including Pakistan.

Pakistani artists headlining performances this year include Hadiqa Kiani, Sanam Marvi, Faiz Ali Qawwal, Ustad Shafqat Ali Khan, Coven, Sketches, Asrar, and many others. Music Mela 2015 showcases several intercultural collaborations, such as American artist Mary McBride singing a translation of a song in Sindhi, and Polish artist Maria Pomianowska performing with Sachu Khan, a Saroz master from Balochistan.

In addition to live performances, Music Mela 2015 will feature workshops and master classes that address the needs of the Pakistani music industry. The workshops will address the need for enhanced protections of intellectual property rights and artist royalties in the lead up to World Intellectual Property Day on April 26. The program also includes master classes and presentations from successful music initiatives such as the National Academy of Performing Arts and Nescafe Basement.

The U.S. Embassy sponsors numerous programs that support the arts and Pakistani musicians every year. This year it sponsored the first-ever Pakistani Showcase at the South-by-Southwest Music Festival in Austin, Texas; and the Dosti Music Project, a collaboration between American, Pakistani, and Indian artists to compose, collaborate, and perform new music in a spirit of international understanding.

To learn more about Music Mela, please visit: [www.musicmela.org](http://www.musicmela.org)

# **The United States and Pakistan Discuss the Role of Agriculture in Economic Development**

April 14, 2014

**U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson and President Mamnoon Hussain opened the Pakistan Strategy Support Agricultural Policy Conference that brought together 300 policymakers from the Government of Pakistan and renowned international and local experts for two days to discuss key policy issues in the agricultural sector. The conference is supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Pakistan Strategy Support Program and organized by USAID's partner, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).**

**"The United States is collaborating with counterparts throughout Pakistan to transfer expertise and technology to increase economic opportunities for farmers and their families," said Ambassador Olson. "We must take account of the policy needs for the country and how emerging global issues such as climate change are impacting farmers and communities so we can prepare coping mechanisms for the future," he added.**

**The conference will examine several key issues in the agricultural sector. Policymakers and experts will review the role of agriculture in economic development of Pakistan and steps necessary for increased agricultural productivity. Participants will also discuss the progress of agricultural policymaking in the context of the 18th Amendment, which devolved power to provincial governments.**

**Supporting economic growth and agricultural development is a top priority for the U.S. Mission in Pakistan and USAID agriculture projects help increase employment and incomes. To boost Pakistan's agricultural productivity, USAID has introduced advanced farming technologies, services, and practices; built additional irrigation infrastructure; and introduced improved water management practices. USAID also assists agribusinesses in Pakistan to form new partnerships and increase their access to financing and more lucrative markets. These programs will augment the expansion of new private sector agriculture investments in Pakistan. Over the past five years, USAID projects have increased exports by \$52 million, increased sales by \$127 million, and leveraged \$11 million in new investments.**

**For more information about USAID's programs in Pakistan, please visit:**

**<http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan>**

**USAID Sponsored Farmers Showcase their Improved Produce at**

## **Vegetable Fair** April 9, 2015 | Public Affairs Section 26/2015 051-208-2911, 051-208-1136

**Islamabad, April 9, 2015 –** The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) helped more than two hundred Pakistani farmers bring off-season vegetables to the second annual Vegetable Fair in Islamabad today.

“The produce we see here today marks the large-scale introduction of greenhouse technology in Pakistan. Through the establishment of high tunnels and the adoption of modern farming practices, USAID is helping farmers increase yields, create more jobs, and earn higher incomes,” said Nancy Estes, Acting Mission Director for USAID Pakistan at vegetable fair’s opening ceremony. Nancy Estes also stated that Pakistani vegetable exports have seen dramatic growth since 2007.

For the past two years, USAID has worked to introduce new technologies and agricultural management practices to 118,400 farmers in Pakistan, helping to develop 60,000 hectares of land. USAID programs provide a wide range of support to Pakistani vegetable farmers including: improved seed, toolkits, and greenhouse tunnel technology. USAID has worked extensively with Pakistani farmers to introduce new techniques such as “high-tunnel” farming that enables farmers to produce off-season vegetables, greatly increasing land productivity and profitability.

USAID’s overall agribusiness programs help Pakistani farmers increase productivity of banana, chili, high-value vegetables, seed potato, grapes, apricot, and citrus. The program introduces best practices and technology, while supporting market linkages and international quality certifications to improve agricultural output throughout Pakistan.

Azam Shehzad, a farmer from Banda Sheikhan-Khawjgan, Mansehra, said, “The new high-tunnel farming techniques I learned through USAID have greatly improved the profitability of my farm. Now I have the confidence to brand my produce and sell to quality-conscious retail chains.”

For more information about USAID's economic growth and agriculture assistance programs in Pakistan, please visit: <http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/economic-growth-agriculture>.

## **U.S. Government Supports Women Victims from KP and the FATA**

April 7, 2015

USAID Senior Deputy Mission Director Nancy Estes recognized the courage and determination of women from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) who have suffered from terrorism and conflict in a ceremony at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad commemorating

**the achievements of the USAID-sponsored Civilian Victims Support Program (CVSP).**

**"USAID is providing relief and support to affected families in the form of prosthetics to the injured, job preparation training, and small grants to support entrepreneurs," Ms. Estes stated during her remarks. "The resilience of communities and families affected by acts of terror is truly inspiring. I applaud them for remaining dedicated to rebuilding their lives."**

**Launched in 2012, CVSP is a \$25 million project to assist non-military, non-police, non-combatant, and non-civil service persons in KP and the FATA who have been injured or disabled as a result of terrorism. The program provides medical, psychological, and social support to victims and their dependents, particularly widows and orphans, to assist them in resuming normal lives during and after emergencies brought on by terrorism. Since its launch, CVSP has assisted more than 8,000 families—1,900 of which are headed by women. "I lost my husband to a bomb blast in 2013," said Aalya Shaheen, a 30-year old mother of four from Peshawar. "I was extremely worried for my children. USAID helped me to establish a small business and also provided educational scholarships to my children. Our loss is eternal, but USAID provided us with a respectable livelihood. I am now independent and my children's education continues."**

**USAID's mission in Pakistan is focused on enhancing stabilization for regional peace and stability and does this in partnership with the Government of Pakistan. Through two vocational training institutes, CVSP has provided employable skills to 325 beneficiaries and is working with three major hospitals in Peshawar for the provision of in-kind support to strengthen the capacity of emergency wards.**

**For more information on USAID projects please visit <http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan>.**

## **U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Concludes Visit to Pakistan**

**April 7, 2015 - Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 24/2015**

**Islamabad, April 7, 2015 - United States Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski concluded a two-day visit to Pakistan today, during which he met with senior Pakistani government officials and members of civil society. This was his first visit to Pakistan as Assistant Secretary of State.**

**In meetings with senior government and military officials, he discussed matters of mutual interest, focusing on human rights and governance, and discussed opportunities for bilateral coordination to enhance accountability in governance and security institutions. He expressed solidarity with the people of Pakistan in their struggle against terrorism, and stressed that rule of law and institutions**

that build trust between governments and their citizens are essential to success in that struggle. In his meetings with civil society representatives, Assistant Secretary Malinowski discussed possible measures to improve safety for journalists and the capacity of the judiciary in combating terrorism.

Follow Assistant Secretary Malinowski on Twitter: @Malinowski. For updates on the U.S. Government's human rights work, visit [www.humanrights.gov](http://www.humanrights.gov) or the DRL Twitter account, @State\_DRL.

## USAID Helps to Double Mulberry Sales in Balochistan

April 2, 2015 - Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 23/ 2015

Islamabad, April 2, 2015 - Over the past two years, the Balochistan Agricultural Project sponsored by the U.S. government has helped a group of 12 farmers dramatically increase their income to over \$670,000 from the sale of dried mulberries. In 2013, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) developed the program to work directly with farmers from the Mastung district in Balochistan to research and expand the market for mulberries across Pakistan.

In the past, mulberry trees have served as wind breakers, delineating property boundaries and waterways and were not considered a cash crop in Balochistan. Through the support of USAID, farmers began visiting dried fruit markets and agricultural exhibitions across the country and discovered a renewed demand for the fruit. The project enabled farmers to increase their productivity and ship 240 tons of dried mulberries to dried fruit vendors in Sindh in 2013 and an additional 288 tons in 2014. Overall, this group of farmers was able to improve the quality of the produce and triple their income.

Gregory Gottlieb, USAID Mission Director, commented, "Over the past 5 years, USAID-sponsored projects have helped 800,000 families increase their farms' productivity, which has increasing benefits for all Pakistanis. These projects have generated \$45 million in domestic sales, \$28 million in export sales, and leveraged over \$5 million in private sector investment."

Farmers from the Balochistan Agricultural Project now plan to establish a modern drying facility and will begin packaging the mulberries in cardboard boxes to maintain quality and freshness during shipping. Mohammad Ramzan, head of the Mulberry Farmer Marketing Collective in Mastung thanked USAID and said, "By improving the cleanliness and packaging of the berries, we will be able to dramatically increase our earnings."

For more details on USAID's agriculture assistance in Pakistan, please visit:

<http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/economic-growth-agriculture>

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



***Pakistan.***

Dedicated to



Daniel Pearl

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