MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR JILANI

March has a special significance in our history. On March 23rd, we celebrated Pakistan Day at the Embassy in a befitting manner and a delegation from the US-Pakistan Business Council. The US side pledged its commitment to further expand trade and investment relations. Islamabad also hosted the 3rd Pak-US Business Opportunities Conference in Pakistan which was aimed at bringing together executives from international companies, industry leaders and public officials from Pakistan and the United States to discuss the economic opportunities that Pakistan offers, its favorable investment regime and growing markets.

Islamabad was a high mark in the economic relations between Pakistan and US. It was attended by the US Secretary of Commerce and a delegation from the US-Pakistan Business Council. The US side pledged its commitment to further expand trade and investment relations. Islamabad also hosted the 3rd Pak-US Business Opportunities Conference in Pakistan which was aimed at bringing together executives from international companies, industry leaders and public officials from Pakistan and the United States to discuss the economic opportunities that Pakistan offers, its favorable investment regime and growing markets.

It is with great pleasure that I share with you IMF’s acknowledgement of continued improvement in Pakistan’s economy attributed to the Government’s prudent economic policies and reforms. At the same time Moody’s Investors Service also raised Pakistan’s credit rating to ‘positive’ from ‘stable’ with indications of a potential upgrade as the economy steadily improves.

We look forward to the months ahead, which offer prospects for strengthening bilateral relations. It is our sincere hope that the ties between Pakistan and the United States continue to deepen and that our recent progress endures.

IN THIS ISSUE...

Pakistan Day ................................................................. 2
Economy ................................................................. 3-4
Congressional Outreach .............................................. 5
Embassy Outreach ..................................................... 5-6
Embassy Events ......................................................... 6
Also Pakistan ............................................................ 7

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MAMNOON HUSSAIN ON PAKISTAN DAY

To mark this historic occasion I would like to urge all citizens of Pakistan to renew their resolve to bring their country to the forefront of the comity of nations. We are confronted with formidable threats and challenges. This day brings us together to remind us of the great struggle and commitment that accomplished the state of Pakistan. Today Pakistan needs the same efforts and commitment from its citizens to unite against evil forces.
http://embassyofpakistanusa.org/news709A_03232015_Pakistan%20Day_.php

MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD NAWAZ SHARIF ON PAKISTAN DAY

The Quaid bequeathed to his people the Promised Land with the exhortation to preserve and protect it for future generations. ... I am confident that Pakistan has turned a new leaf in its existence and will soon be able to overcome all odds. My government has embarked upon a vast portfolio of institutional and development ventures that will bear fruit in near future. I wish to reiterate my resolve to the nation that under my watch no effort will be spared to bring tolerance and harmony in Pakistan. I am committed to ensure that Pakistanis are provided with every opportunity to live freely, seek education, gain employment and practice their faith without hindrance, fear and favour.
http://embassyofpakistanusa.org/news709_03232015_Pakistan%20Day_.php
On 23rd March, the Embassy celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Pakistan Resolution. In a morning flag hoisting ceremony, Ambassador Jilani read out messages from the President and Prime Minister. A reception held at the embassy was attended by U.S. State Department's Under Secretary of State for Management, Patrick F. Kennedy, Maryland Secretary of State, John C. Wobensmith, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Richard Olson and Ambassador Marc Grossman along with several members of the US administration, the USAID, congressional aides and think tank experts, as well as members of the Pakistani-American community. Ambassador Jilani and Patrick F Kennedy spoke at the reception, emphasizing the “positive energy and momentum” in the key bilateral partnership.

Ambassador Jilani noted that the regular sessions of the Strategic Dialogue in wide-ranging areas, implementation of cooperative measures in various sectors, and high-level exchange of visits including Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s official visit to Washington in 2013 signify the strength of the bilateral relationship.

Undersecretary Kennedy remarked that the Pakistan Resolution did more than just set forth the principle of self-governance as it also established essential protections for the freedom of the people of all faiths and rights of all minorities. These values, he said, unite the two nations, provide foundations for cooperation to reduce causes of extremism, advance opportunity and promote peace. The undersecretary said there is no way to overstate the importance of the bilateral cooperation or the potential to improve the security and prosperity of American and Pakistani citizens through actions that are based on mutual respect and mutual interest.

Maryland Secretary of State Mr. John C. Wobensmith read out a proclamation by the Governor of Maryland on Pakistan Day and greeted Ambassador Jilani on the occasion.
PAK-US ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP WEEK

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the first-ever Pakistan-US Economic Partnership Week to boost bilateral trade and investments. The Prime Minister said Pakistan had achieved economic gains despite energy shortages and extremism. “The government attaches the highest priority to the energy sector. The United States is a valuable partner in Pakistan’s quest for energy security.” Speaking on this occasion, US Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker said Washington was committed to work with Islamabad as a partner and as a friend in different sectors. Pakistan had been a strong ally of the United States in the fight against terrorism and had rendered matchless sacrifices in this regard, she said.

U.S. SECRETARY COMMERCE PENNY PRITZKER CALLS ON PRIME MINISTER NAWAZ SHARIF

U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Penny Pritzker called upon Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and discussed various issues for enhancing bilateral trade and investments. Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said that Pakistan and the U.S. have a long standing mutually beneficial economic and strategic relationship, which has withstood the vagaries of time and weather. Prime Minister Sharif said that Pakistan greatly values its relations with the U.S., which constitute an important element of the country’s foreign policy. He expressed the confidence that Ms. Pritzker’s visit will further strengthen economic ties between Pakistan and the United States. Talking about the holding of Pakistan-US Economic Partnership Week, he said it truly reflects on the commitment of leadership of both the governments towards further expansion of trade and investment relations. The Prime Minister said promoting international trade and investment is the pivot around which his government seeks to devise its economic development and poverty reduction strategies. Ms. Pritzker said it is a good sign that Pakistan is opening up for business. She appreciated Pakistan’s consistent approach to the IMF Program. She also extended condolences on the tragic incident of Army Public School, Peshawar. US Secretary for Commerce said that U.S. administration is deeply impressed by the fact that during its tenure the government has been giving very positive signals to the international community.

THIRD PAK-US BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES CONFERENCE

The Third Pak-US Business Opportunities Conference was held in Islamabad. Federal Minister for Finance Senator Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Commerce Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, and US Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker attended the inaugural session of the Conference. Minister for Finance, Muhammad Ishaq Dar called upon the US investors for taking optimum benefits from the lucrative and investment friendly policies of the government and explore investment opportunities available in different sectors of national economy to further enhance bilateral trade and investment between Pakistan and United States. In his welcome speech Minister for Commerce, Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan highlighted the Commerce Ministry’s plans of making Pakistan’s export sector an engine of growth by introducing regulatory amendments in the trade regulations, strengthening institutions, improving governance and introducing measures to enhance export competitiveness. The minister said US programs can play a key role in disseminating their good stories and business experiences in Pakistan to potential investors from United States. US Secretary Commerce, Penny Pritzker remarked that the US wants to engage Pakistan in positive commercial diplomacy which is mutually beneficial for the two nations. She said that the conference was intended to engage the private sectors from both the countries to strengthen business to business ties and boost bilateral trade and investment. She applauded the work done by the private sectors of both countries and called upon them to continue their efforts to expend trade and investment relations. She urged the government to improve the business climate by implementing measures to increase transparency, enforce contracts and streamline the civil services structure.
US SECRETARY COMMERCE, MS. PENNY PRITZKER CALLED ON FEDERAL MINISTER FOR COMMERCE ENGR. KHURRAM DASTGIR KHAN

U.S. Secretary Commerce, Ms. Penny Pritzker called on Federal Minister for Commerce Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan and discussed plans to expand bilateral trade and investment flows in Pakistan. Mr. Dastgir apprised the US delegation about the conducive environment for profitable trade and investment in the emerging economy of Pakistan. He said that the holding of Pak-US Economic Partnership Week truly reflects on the commitment of leadership of both governments towards further expansion of trade and investment relations.

US Secretary of Commerce stressed the importance for the two sides to work together. She said that the Business Opportunities Conference was an important step towards establishing long term economic relationship with Pakistan. She praised the efforts of the Government to modernize infrastructure and said that these endeavors convinced foreign investors that Pakistan is open to business. She hoped that with the permanent head and Board of Intellectual Property Organization in place there will be greater intellectual property protection in Pakistan.

USPBC WELCOMES EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN U.S.-PAKISTAN BUSINESS TIES

The U.S.-Pakistan Business Council (USPBC) expressed its support for the 3rd Pakistan – United States Business Opportunities Conference held in Islamabad, welcoming efforts to advance trade and investment ties between the U.S. and Pakistan. The Council’s delegation was led by USPBC President Esperanza Jelalian who applauded efforts to create a U.S.-Pakistan Business forum under the auspices of the already established bilateral dialogue on economic and trade issues and reiterated USPBC’s commitment to work with both governments to enhance private sector growth and the investment environment in Pakistan. On the sideline of the business conference, members of the Council met with Minister of Commerce Khurram Dastgir Khan and Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue Tariq Bajwa. The USPBC welcomed working-level Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) discussions between the U.S. and Pakistan and voiced support for the prompt implementation of the five-year joint action plan to expand trade and investment flows. It expressed hope that both governments can reestablish negotiations of a U.S.-Pakistan Bilateral Investment Treaty.

IMF ACKNOWLEDGES CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN PAKISTAN ECONOMY

The International Monetary Fund has appreciated continued improvement in Pakistan’s economy as a result of implementation of prudent policies and strong capital inflows. In a concluding statement issued in Washington, Director of the Fund, Masood Ahmed appreciated that Pakistan made progress with consolidating macroeconomic stability, strengthening public finances, and rebuilding foreign exchange buffers. He said the current improved economic and financial situation presents a unique opportunity to work towards achieving higher, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Masood Ahmed said the IMF remains fully committed to supporting Pakistan’s efforts through financing, policy advice and technical assistance.

MOODY’S RAISES PAKISTAN’S OUTLOOK AS ECONOMY IMPROVES UNDER SHARIF

Pakistan’s credit rating outlook was raised to positive from stable by Moody’s Investors Service, signaling the possibility of an upgrade as the economy steadily improves. The new outlook “is based on a strengthening external liquidity position, continued efforts toward fiscal consolidation, and the government’s steady progress in achieving structural reforms under the IMF program,” Moody’s analyst Anushka Shah said in a statement on Thursday. The IMF said that the implementation of more reforms, successful completion of the International Monetary Fund program or better finances could trigger an upgrade. “Fundamentals of the country are improving,” Hedi Ben Mlouka, chief executive officer at hedge fund Duet Mena Ltd., said in a March 18 phone interview from Dubai. Even a “marginal improvement will make a very big difference and make it an attractive investor destination.”
AMBASSADOR JILANI VISITS TEXAS

Ambassador Jilani visited Texas where he participated in “Pakistan Day Celebrations” organized by the Pakistani-American’s Society of Northern Texas, delivered a lecture at the Asian Chamber of Commerce, interacted with the Editorial Board of the daily Dallas Morning News, delivered a keynote speech at the World affairs Council and spoke at the leadership meeting of Pakistani-Americans’ Association of Texas. The Ambassador presented the Flag of Pakistan to Honorable Mike Rawlings, the Mayor of Dallas at an elegant ceremony which was attended by a large number of locals and Pakistanis. The flag will remain displayed at the City Hall permanently. The Ambassador held a fruitful meeting with the Mayor before the ceremony during which bilateral economic and commercial relations came under discussion. The Mayor took keen interest in the political and economic development in Pakistan and expressed his desire to visit Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore at an appropriate time. While in Austin, Ambassador Jilani met with His Excellency Greg Abbot, the Governor of Texas, delivered a keynote speech at the University of Texas, spoke at a dinner hosted by the business community in his honour and interacted with faculty members of the University of Texas. He used the opportunity to educate Americans about positive developments in Pakistan and attracted them for visit to Pakistan with trade and investment project. Cooperation in the field of Oil and gas remained main focus during all the discussions. Ambassador Jilani effectively engaged the political elite, business community, think tanks, opinion makers, intelligentsia, media and Pakistani community in Texas to present Pakistan’s point of view on various bilateral, regional and international issues. He made a good case for strengthening of trade and investment ties between Pakistan and the United States in the mutual interest of our two nations.
EMBASSY OUTREACH

Ambassador Jilani with the Mike Rawlings, Mayor of Dallas in City Hall

Ambassador Jilani addressing the Asian Chamber of Commerce at Crow Museum, Dallas

Ambassador Jilani receiving a shield from the Commissioner of local county at the lunch hosted by Pakistani American Association of Texas

Ambassador Jilani with the Head of Pakistan Studies & South Asia Chair after addressing Scholars and Intellectuals at the University of Texas, Austin

EMBASSY EVENTS

EMBASSY SCREENS "DISCOVERING PAKISTAN"

Ambassador Jilani addressing the audience at the "Discovering Pakistan" screening
is a substantial amount of good news coming out of Pakistan.

We are pleased to share these stories of achievement with you as we redefine a narrative for Pakistan based on the values of equity, democracy, pluralism, rule of law and transparent governance.

**TABASSUM ADNAN, FOUNDER OF KHWENDO JIRGA, RECEIVES THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE AWARD 2015**

Tabassum Adnan, founder of Khwendo Jirga (Sister’s Council) was one of the 10 extraordinary women from 10 countries to receive the 2015 Secretary of State’s International Women of Courage Award. The Secretary of State’s International Women of Courage Award annually recognizes women around the globe who have demonstrated exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for peace, justice, human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment, often at great personal risk. Khwendo Jirga is the first ever women-only Jirga, meeting weekly to address issues of honor killings, acid attacks and swara. Khwendo Jirga is also a staging ground to launch awareness campaigns for local women’s causes and regularly meets with elected representatives to promote women’s interests in the district. First Lady Michelle Obama joined Deputy Secretary Higginbottom and the awardees as a special guest at an afternoon ceremony at the U.S. Department of State.

**PAKISTANIS MAKE THEIR MARK AT THE ICONIC SXSW MUSIC FESTIVAL**

The 2015 SXSW Music Festival hosted its first-ever Pakistani Showcase featuring six artists and groups who made their way to Austin from Pakistan for the festival. The complete line up featured the folk ensemble Sain Tanveer Brothers, Mai Dhai and her traditional Manganiyar singing and dhol, Khumeriyaan from Peshawar and their blended instrumental fusion sound, the Sufi-rock Meekal Hasan Band, pop-singer Haroon and lyric heavy indie group Poor Rich Boy.
The Embassy of Pakistan welcomes your feedback.
Please send your comments to newsletter@embassyofpakistanusa.org
or visit www.embassyofpakistanusa.org