Ambassador Rehman’s Message

I am pleased to announce the launch of the Embassy of Pakistan’s Newsletter. This monthly publication will cover a broad range of topics from political headlines and embassy events to compelling coverage of Pakistani culture and society, highlighting important developments with the goal of presenting an accessible window into Pakistan as a people and as a nation.

President Zardari Attends NATO Summit

President Zardari met with his American and Afghan counterparts on the sidelines of NATO’s summit in Chicago.

Shad Begum Receives International Women of Courage Award

The US Department of State recognized Shad Begum for her work on female education, health, and development. She was recognized at the Embassy of Pakistan’s event honoring International Women’s Day.

President Zardari Visits India, Meets with Prime Minister Singh

Both nations hailed the President’s April trip as a positive step. It was the first visit by a Pakistani head-of-state to India in seven years.

National Commission on Status of Women Bill, 2012 Becomes Law

In March, President Zardari signed the bill into law on International Women’s Day. The commission will serve as a watchdog for women’s rights.

Pakistan, India Improve Trade Ties and Upgrade Attari Check Post

After achieving mutually recognized Most-Favored-Nation trading status, Pakistan and India inaugurated a $30 million “Integrated Trade Check Post” on their border.
PAKISTAN-US RELATIONS

PRESIDENT ZARDARI MEETS WITH WORLD LEADERS AT CHICAGO NATO SUMMIT

President Zardari met with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and his American and Afghan counterparts on the sidelines of NATO’s summit in Chicago. While his conversation with President Obama and President Hamid Karzai dominated headlines, his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton proved more substantive. Zardari and Clinton discussed NATO supply lines through Pakistan, asking the US to apologize for the ‘Salala Incident’ and review its policy of drone attacks.
AMBASSADOR REHMAN EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PAKISTAN-U.S. RELATIONSHIP AT THE UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

In her first speaking event for the American public, Ambassador Rehman spoke at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP).

She presented an overview of the way Pakistan’s government addresses its challenges and stressed the importance of improving the Pakistan-US relationship. Ambassador Rehman explained that gaps in trust and mutual expectations can be overcome by addressing issues of disconnect between institutions with greater honesty. She stressed that people on both sides should build a relationship based on mutual respect.

PAKISTAN’S PARLIAMENT UNANIMOUSLY PASSES RESOLUTION ON PAKISTAN-US RELATIONS

On April 3, 2012, Pakistan’s Parliament unanimously approved new recommendations on U.S.-Pakistan relations. In its recommendations, Parliament specified that NATO supply routes could not be used to transport arms and ammunition and called for an end to U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan. The resolution also called for a public apology from the U.S. for the NATO air strikes that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers in November 2011 at Salala. Pakistani policy institutes welcomed the move as it showed the Pakistani parliament’s unified stance on relations with the United States, a country whose friendship Pakistan deeply values.

AMBASSADOR GROSSMAN VISITS PAKISTAN

On April 27, 2012, U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Marc Grossman met with senior Pakistani officials, including then Prime Minister Gilani and Army Chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani. The meeting in Islamabad marked the first time Pakistani and U.S. leaders discussed the relationship between the two countries in over 5 months. At the meeting, Prime Minister Gilani stated that ties between the two states must move forward in line with the parliament’s recommendations. Ambassador Grossman said that the U.S. respects democracy in Pakistan and wants to work with the country on restructuring bilateral relations.
In April, Pakistan’s Finance Minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh traveled to Washington D.C. for the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Spring Meetings 2012.

During his stay, he met the managing director of the World Bank, the USAID administrator, the Asian Development Bank President, and the IMF’s Pakistan Mission Chief. The Finance Minister secured interest from Asian Development Bank and the United States for investing in the Diamer-Bhasha dam, Mangla dam, and Kurram-Tangi dam. The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a part of the World Bank Group, is expected to invest $1 billion in various sectors including energy and finance. Speaking at The Brookings Institute, the Finance Minister emphasized the robustness of Pakistan’s economy. He underscored that remittances to Pakistan have increased by 21%, tax revenue has increased by 24%, and exports are expected to rise by 5.5% over last year’s base of $25 billion. Mr. Shaikh was hosted by the International Community for Business Understanding and the U.S. Pakistan Business Council where he emphasized to the international financial community that Pakistan’s economy, like its people, is resilient and Pakistan continues to provide good opportunities for investment.

Pakistan’s Commerce Secretary Zafar Mahmood delivered the keynote address during the Pakistan-India trade conference at the Wilson Center for International Scholars. Secretary Mahmood laid out the history of this trade partnership, arguing that it has flourished over time even when political relations have been tense. Dispelling the notion that trade liberalization would cause damage to Pakistani businesses, Zafar Mahmood laid out Pakistan’s case for greater trade with India. He listed the recent meetings between commerce and trade ministers of both countries and Pakistan’s decision to give India Most Favored Nation status as positive developments. Policy changes driven by the business sectors in Pakistan and India are expected to improve the region’s economic outlook and increase its stability. Today, bilateral trade between India and Pakistan stands at $2.7 billion per year. Business chambers in both countries predict that figure can quadruple to $10 billion by 2015.

Clean and Renewable Energy

Pakistan is capitalizing on its potential to provide clean and renewable energy to power its economic growth. The first wind power generation project in Pakistan, developed by the Turkish-based Zorlu Group in partnership with the Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB), recently won international recognition through coverage in Project Finance Magazine. Zorlu Energy, who has invested $136 million in the project, was the first company to take steps towards constructing the first wind turbine in Jhimpir area of Sindh. The AEDB, established in 2003 in an effort to explore alternative energy sources, believes Pakistan to have tremendous potential in wind energy generation.
FROM THE HEADLINES AND BEYOND

 Bhutto Documentary Wins Peabody Award

The critically acclaimed documentary, BHUTTO, a part of PBS’s Independent Lens series, recently won recognition from the Peabody Board for Excellence in Electronic Media. The documentary was among 38 recipients of the 71st Annual Peabody Award, which honors achievements in electronic media. The film has also earned the ABC News Video Source Award from The International Documentary Association as well as an EPIC Award for its support of women’s rights.

Pakistan Wins Oscar and Doctors Commit to Helping Victims of Acid Attacks

Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy became the first Pakistani to win an Oscar for her documentary, Saving Face. The film follows Pakistani survivors of acid attacks, documenting the challenges they encounter during recovery and in achieving justice against their attackers. She dedicated her award to all Pakistani women, asking them to live their dreams. On May 22nd, the United States Institute of Peace hosted a special screening of the film followed by a question and answer session moderated by Kathleen Kuehnast, the director of USIP’s Gender and Peacebuilding Center. At the event Dr. Saima Zafar, President of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America committed to a program that will send teams of surgeons and psychiatrists to Pakistan to work with specialists there as they rehabilitate the survivors.

 Pakistani Teams Win at World Model United Nations Conferences

Pakistani teams from Lyceum School and Karachi Grammar School participated at international Model United Nations (MUN) conferences this year. In January 2012, nine student delegates from the Lyceum school were recognized for their performance at Harvard’s Model UN Conference in Boston. In March, the Karachi Grammar School Model UN team won the Best Large Delegation award at Harvard’s Model UN conference in Beijing.

Photo courtesy of Anders Krusberg, May 21, 2012

Photo courtesy of Beacon Radio @ Flickr

Photo courtesy of Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Washington DC
Pakistan Virtual University Wins Global Award

The Awards Committee of the OpenCourseWare Consortium selected the Virtual University of Pakistan for the 2012 Outstanding New Site Award for OpenCourseWare Excellence. The OpenCourseWare Consortium is a US-based collaboration of higher education institutions and associated organizations from around the world. Virtual Universities are committed to increasing access to education.

14 year-old from Dera Ismail Khan presents at International Conference on Innovation

After breaking four world records, a 14-year-old boy from Dera Ismail Khan, Babar Iqbal, presented his research paper on forensic science at the 8th IEEE International Conference on Innovations in Information. Iqbal became the youngest Microsoft Certified Professional and youngest Certified Internet Web Professional (CIWP) at the age of 9. Iqbal’s current research relates to Apple devices (iPad, iPhone and iPod).

“A Pakistan: The Untold Story”

The World Bank hosted an event to highlight the untold stories of Pakistan’s success. Pakistan’s Finance Minister Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh and Ambassador Sherry Rehman spoke alongside other panel members, including Isabel Guerrero, the World Bank’s Vice President for South Asia; Ambassador Robin Raphel, U.S. coordinator for non-military assistance to Pakistan; Nancy Birdsall, President of Center for Global Development; Mohsin Khan, an economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF); and Anatol Leieven, author of Pakistan: A Hard Country.

A Pakistani-American artist uses trucks to build a different kind of bridge

After a 2010 trip to his homeland, Kansas City artist Asheer Akram has returned to America to improve cross-cultural understanding. Inspired by traditional truck art, his design will incorporate Midwestern and American motifs, including plants and animals, a buffalo and a bronze cow skull.

Women Working to Deradicalize Pakistani Youth

In April 2011, Sameena Imtiaz and 20 other like-minded women formed Amn-o-Nisa (Women and Peace), a coalition working to promote moderation and fight extremism in Pakistan. These women regularly travel to al-Qaeda and Taliban strongholds on a mission to promote
peace education among Pakistani youth. Two years later, a delegation of women from Aman-o-Nisa traveled to Washington DC for meetings with policy makers and public events. They shared their moving stories with audiences at the United States Institute for Peace and the Meridian International Center.

The Benazir Income Support Program: A Success Story

Named after Pakistan’s former Prime Minister Benazir Shaheed Bhutto, the Benazir Income Support Program is helping Pakistan’s poorest citizens through debit cards rather than cash handouts. Every three months citizens receive enough money to put an extra daily meal on the table, buy a school uniform or pay for medical treatment. Many of the recipients had to get identity cards for the first time to claim the money, meaning they are now eligible to participate in democratic elections as well as put more food on the table. Research has shown women spend welfare money more responsibly.

Sean Penn Visits Pakistan

The Academy Award-winning star visited Pakistan in March. In recent years Penn has devoted a significant portion of his time to rebuilding and aiding the victims of the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti. While in Pakistan he visited with flood victims in Karim Bux Jamali and Dargah Shah Gurio villages in Badin and met with Abdul Sattar Edhi and his wife, Bilquis Edhi, at their home for children in Karachi.

Pakistani Musicians Perform in America

Pakistani sufi singer, Arif Lohar, performed before a large crowd at the Asia Society on Friday, April 30, 2012. Lohar performed classic sufi songs including Alif Allah Chambey di Boti, Jugni-Ji and Dama Dum Mast Qalandar. Fozia, a singer in Lohar’s group, and Arooj Aftab, a Pakistani American singer, also performed. Also in April, famous Pakistani qawwali singer Rahat Fateh Ali Khan toured the US for a week. He performed to audiences in Chicago, Houston, Dallas and Washington DC.
FROM THE HEADLINES AND BEYOND

Continued

Pakistani Teens Earn Prize at the International Science Fair

At the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Pittsburgh, the world’s largest pre-college science fair, Mahnoor Hassan, Shiza Gulab and Bushra Shahed of the Institute of Computer and Management Sciences in Peshawar took fourth place in the Animal Sciences Category as well as a $500 prize. The goal of their project, entitled, “Energy Square for Cattle,” is to develop safeguards for livestock living under challenging conditions.

Impoverished Children Paint T-Shirts to Raise Funds

Up to 100 impoverished children in Islamabad painted T-shirts to help raise funds for a new open-air school. The project, organized by the non-profit organization Revolutionist in collaboration with Boston University, served as a celebration for the Global Day of Service.

Pakistani Students Win Accolades for Film

Two students from Iqra University were recently awarded with the Best Audience Award at the National Film Festival for Talented Youth, held in Washington DC. Their short film focused on the psychological and economic impact of drone attacks. Unfortunately, both filmmakers were unable to attend the award ceremony because they were unable to obtain U.S. visas.

Pakistani Educator Earns Global Educator’s Award

Parveen Kassim, Chairperson of the International School’s Educational Olympiad and Principal of Karachi High School, earned the Global Educator’s Award at the 7th Annual United Nations Conference on Teaching Peace and Human Rights in a multi-cultural world.

Pakistani Student Wins Silver Medal for Environmental Project

Peshawar teen Muhammad bin Qasim won a silver medal at the 6th International Environmental Project Olympiad for his research on an effective plant-based treatment for diabetes. The plant, Tecoma Stans, also known as yellow elder, grows naturally in the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa. The Olympiad, which featured 100 projects from 42 different countries, was held in Baku, Azerbaijan.
OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

For International Women’s Day, Ambassador Sherry Rehman, Ambassador Melanne Verveer, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues, and Khawar Mumtaz of Shirkat Gah spoke at an event organized by the Embassy of Pakistan. The audience included Pakistani women’s rights activists, members of the Pakistani American community, DC-based women’s rights groups, and media organizations. Shad Begum, a Pakistani woman who received an International Women of Courage award was also present.

Ambassador Rehman outlined the achievements of the Government of Pakistan with regard to women’s rights. She noted that Pakistani women are well represented in the public sphere as writers, artists, film directors, farmers, pilots, entrepreneurs, and prime ministers. She dedicated the night to women all over the world, saying, “This night is for you, for what you are and what you can be.”

PASSPORT DC

In collaboration with Passport DC, the Embassy of Pakistan opened its doors with a feast of color, music, and cuisine. The sights and sounds of Pakistan proved as irresistible as the delicious chicken tikka. As visitors took in the well-decorated embassy and swayed to the “Bhangra” music, Pakistan and American officials lauded the power of people-to-people interaction and its importance in moving the bilateral relationship forward. Pakistani food, music, jewelry, art and clothes were showcased. Georgetown University’s Bhangra Team, GU Jawani, performed traditional folk dances during the show.
PAKISTAN DAY
For Pakistan’s Republic Day, the Embassy of Pakistan hosted a flag hoisting ceremony. The Deputy Chief of Mission, Dr. Asad M. Khan, raised Pakistan’s flag, and read out messages from President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani.

WELCOME EVENT FOR THE COMMUNITY
Two weeks after assuming office, Ambassador Sherry Rehman hosted a dinner for the Pakistani American community. Around 200 members of the community from Washington DC and the tri-state area attended the event.

During her first address to the community, Ambassador Rehman stated

"This embassy is not going to work alone in Washington. It is going to work with many ambassadors, which are yourselves, … As Pakistani Americans, I want you to know that I will rely heavily on you as the extended arm of this embassy and its consulates in getting our message delivered to the American public. Every one of you is our mouth piece. Every one of you is our lobbyist."

KASHMIR EVENT
The Embassy of Pakistan organized a talk on the Kashmir Dispute. Ambassador Touqir Hussain, Pakistan’s former ambassador to Brazil, Spain and Japan (1998-2003) and adjunct professor at Georgetown University and the University of Virginia, addressed the gathering.

In his speech, Ambassador Hussain noted the flawed discourses the word ‘partition’ creates. In his view, empires dissolve; they are not partitioned. The term’s usage helps India’s foreign policy regime depict Pakistan as a break-away part of India, and Kashmir as an integral part of India. Ambassador Hussain advised Pakistan’s government to continue pursuing Kashmir’s cause in its foreign policy for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

NDU DELEGATION
The Embassy hosted a reception for a visiting delegation from the National Defense University (NDU) of Pakistan. Senior officials from the US State Department and US Department of Defense attended the event.
NEW EMBASSY STAFF

Dr. Asad M. Khan
Deputy Chief of Mission

Dr. Asad Majeed Khan is a career Foreign Service Officer from 1988 Batch. Before joining the Embassy as Deputy Chief of Mission, he served as Additional Secretary (Foreign Affairs) at the President’s Secretariat, Islamabad. Earlier, he worked as Director General (United Nations) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad and dealt with the entire range of multilateral issues. Dr. Asad earned his doctorate in International Economic and Business Law (LL.D.) from Kyushu University Japan. He is married and has two kids.

Minister Muhammad Hassan
Head of Chancery

Mr. Muhammad Hassan joined the Pakistan Foreign Service in 1990. He has served as Second Secretary at Pakistan’s Embassy in Tehran, Iran, as First Secretary at the Pakistan Permanent Mission to the United Nations, New York, Counsellor at the Pakistan Embassy in the UAE and has served as Pakistan’s Deputy of Mission in Beijing, China. He has held a number of positions in Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad and his last assignment there, before being posted to Beijing, was as Deputy Chief of Protocol. He speaks fluent Persian and is an expert on international economic matters, having represented Pakistan at the United General Assembly’s Second Committee.

Mr. Mohsin Mushtaq Chandna
Economic Minister

An officer of the Pakistan Administrator Service with a blend of experience in Government service as well as in the Development Sector. He has worked for the Government of Pakistan for over twenty years and also worked for USAID in Pakistan for over a year. He holds a Masters degree Public Policy from the University of Chicago as well as an MBA from IBA, Karachi. Pakistan. He has been teaching Economics to MBA students in IBA Karachi. He is a Bridge player of international repute and earned the rank of life Master from the American Contract Bridge League.