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Dear Friends,

We have finally come to the end of one of the most difficult years in recent history.

Our hearts go out to those who lost their loved ones to the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. We salute the courage of our medical practitioners, both in the U.S. and in Pakistan, for bravely caring for thousands of patients in critical condition. As we begin a new year, the newly introduced vaccines have injected new hope that humanity can soon overcome this disease.

The Embassy played its part in dealing with the pandemic. We operated 7 special flights to repatriate stranded citizens back to Pakistan at a difficult time. Here, I must thank our diaspora and community organizations for rendering great public service and helping out their compatriots.

The year 2020 was significant for Pakistan-U.S. relations. We witnessed a number of high-level engagements, including Prime Minister Imran Khan’s meeting with President Trump in Davos, Switzerland in January. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi also visited Washington in January while U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross went to Islamabad in February. In August, we held bilateral political consultations at Senior Officials level after a hiatus of four years.

As the U.S. welcomes a new political dispensation next year, Prime Minister Imran Khan has already reached out to President-elect Joseph R. Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and expressed his desire to work together to strengthen bilateral ties between our two great countries.

Pakistan continued to partner with the U.S. in its efforts to facilitate successful intra-Afghan peace talks. The signing of the landmark peace agreement in Doha was a historic moment. Pakistan will continue to play its part in encouraging the Afghans to forge lasting peace in the country. There are significant regional economic dividends that peace in Afghanistan can offer and Pakistan will always be a willing partner for building economic linkages in the region.
Unfortunately, while Pakistan remained committed to building peace in the region, India continued to slip deeper and deeper into the grips of an expansionist Hindutva ideology propagated by Prime Minister Modi and his political party. The plight of innocent Muslims continued unabated across India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, where the draconian laws and repeal of constitutional protection for local residents was intentionally revoked in August 5, 2019. Kashmiris were subjected to greater harm and barbarism at the hands of Indian security forces. Pakistan highlighted the plight of the Kashmiris at every diplomatic forum, including at the Prime Minister’s address to the UN General Assembly in September. Pakistan will continue to lend moral, diplomatic and political support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters till they are given their right to self-determination.

On the business and trade front, Pakistan was among the country’s that was better able to mitigate the economic collapse brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pakistan’s economy only contracted by 0.4% while other economies in the region shrunk by over 10%. This was brought about by a drastic reduction in current account deficit, maintaining a strong forex reserves balance, and prudent fiscal policies. Our economic policy makers remained accessible to U.S. corporate sector, particularly through forums such as the U.S. Pakistan Business Council. Institutionally, we held two sessions at senior officials level under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) consultations between Pakistan and the U.S. where a wide range of issues were discussed to expand bilateral trade from its current level of $ 6.6 billion.

All in all, there is much satisfaction from the work we accomplished this year, despite unprecedented constraints. We are excited that the new year will bring new opportunities for expanding bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and the U.S.

I wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!
PRIME MINISTER IMRAN KHAN WELCOMES
U.S. PRESIDENT-ELECT’S RESOLVE TO CRACKDOWN ON ILLICIT FINANCE
Prime Minister Imran Khan held a telephone conversation today with Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. They exchanged views on the COVID-19 situation and polio eradication.

Mr. Bill Gates acknowledged Pakistan’s efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic while stimulating economic growth.

The Prime Minister and Mr. Gates agreed to continue working together on the shared objectives of eradicating Polio and combating the COVID-19 pandemic.
AMBASSADOR COMMISERATES THE DEATH OF U.S. AIR FORCE OFFICER, GENERAL CHUCK YEAGER

Ambassador Dr. Asad M. Khan commiserated the passing of General Chuck Yeager, a U.S. Air Force Officer, ‘an American hero and a great friend of Pakistan’. General Yeager served as an Advisor to Pakistan Air Force from 1971 to 1973.
Pakistan Minister of Industries, Muhammad Hammad Azhar was featured in U.S-Pakistan Business Council’s webinar titled, ‘Enhancing Business Environment and Promoting Industrial Growth in Pakistan’. The discussion focused on Pakistan’s efforts to enhance its business environment, and revitalise the industrial sector in a post-COVID19 environment.

Ambassador Dr. Asad M. Khan reiterated the Government’s desire to see US corporate presence expand in Pakistan. U.S. Chargé d’affaires Angela Aggeler called for further expanding U.S.-Pakistan commerce.

‘We are committed in our resolve to remove all bottlenecks to unleash tremendous potential of investment and trade opportunities in Pakistan’.

*Pakistan Minister of Industries, Muhammad Hammad Azhar*
‘BRAND PAKISTAN AND THE USA BUSINESS POTENTIAL’ AT AMERICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL OF PAKISTAN

Ambassador Dr. Asad M. Khan interacted with prominent Pakistani business leaders representing the American Business Council and virtually addressed board members during a webinar titled ‘Brand Pakistan and the USA Business Potential’.

Moderated by Adnan Asad, CEO Venus, the CEO Series explored ways to enhance US investments in Pakistan and Business-to-Business linkages between both countries.

Ambassador Khan assured all possible assistance and facilitation from the Mission to the Pakistani business community towards further strengthening US-Pakistan trade and investment ties.
**Prime Minister’s Office, Pakistan** @PakPMO - Dec 22

Despite COVID-19, Pakistan’s economy has witnessed a remarkable turnaround with yet another monthly current account surplus of $447mn, bringing it to $14bn for FY21 so far instead of a $17bn deficit last year. Forex reserves are also at a 3-year high at $13bn.

PM @ImranKhanPTI

MashaAllah! Great news on economy – remarkable turnaround. Current account surplus again in Nov: $447 mn. For fiscal year so far, surplus is $16 bn compared to deficit of $17 bn same period last year. Forex reserves have risen to about $13 bn, highest in 3 yrs.

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**Imran Khan** @ImranKhanPTI - Dec 23

I want to thank our great asset, Overseas Pakistanis, MashaAllah funds sent by them through #RoshanDigitalAccounts created by SBP crossed $200 mn yesterday. The pace is accelerating; first $100 mn came in 76 days & the next $100 mn came in only 28 days.

---

**Abdul Razak Dawood** @razak_dawood

I am glad to share that exports of Pakistan to US during the months of Oct & Nov 2020 stood at USD 430 million & USD 437 million respectively. This is the first time that our exports to the US have crossed US dollar 400 million mark in a month. 1/2

12:04 AM - Dec 8, 2020 - Twitter for Android

329 Retweets 22 Quote Tweets 2.6K Likes

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**Abdul Razak Dawood** @razak_dawood - Dec 8

It is a great achievement by our exporters & I encourage them to market their exports to US aggressively in order to capture a greater share of the market. 2/2

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**Abdul Razak Dawood** @razak_dawood

I congratulate Ali Karam Textile Mills for signing the 6-year license for home textiles with Gap Inc. for North America & Mexico. This makes Ali Karam the first Home Textiles company from Pakistan to have entered the brand licensing space in the international market... 1/3

5:36 AM - Dec 7, 2020 - Twitter for Android

446 Retweets 34 Quote Tweets 3.3K Likes

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**Abdul Razak Dawood** @razak_dawood

...which will go a long way for its integration into the Global Value Chain, supported by focus on R&D to find innovative solutions. Large exporters make such efforts for integration into the Global Value Chain 2/3

---

**Abdul Razak Dawood** @razak_dawood - Dec 7

...which is one of the focus areas in the forthcoming Strategic Trade Policy Framework. 3/2

@ImranKhanPTI @pakistan senate @ITNewsOfficial @RadioPakistan @enpasssocialmedia @dastg_official @OverseasPakistan @EmergingPak

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US-based Cargill has made its first investment in Pakistan by acquiring a minority equity stake in grain terminal Fauji Akbar Portia that handles commodities last week. Cargill is a leading soyabean and palm oil supplier to Pakistan that announced last year to invest $200 million.
PAKISTAN AMONG TOP FIVE COUNTRIES WITH HIGHEST INVESTMENT COMMITMENTS: WORLD BANK REPORT

Pakistan has emerged as one of the top five countries with the most investment commitments in H1 2020, as per the World Bank’s IBRD IDA latest report titled *Private Participation in Infrastructure (PPI) 2020 Half Year Report*.

As per the report, Pakistan had the fourth-highest investment commitments—a new entrant to the top five countries this year—with $1.9 billion of investment commitments, accounting for 0.69 percent of its GDP. This can be attributed to the financial closure of the Thar Block-I Coal-Fired Power Plant, which was the only project to reach financial closure in the country during this time period.
ADVOCACY AND MEDIA OUTREACH

Ambassador Dr. Asad M. Khan held a Zoom meeting with Tom O’Connor, Senior Foreign Policy Writer, Newsweek.

Ambassador Dr. Asad M. Khan met with Asif Ali Bhatti, Senior Correspondent/Anchor at Geo TV Network.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis, Ambassador Dr. Asad M. Khan and Mr. Peter Greenberg, travel journalist, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) during a Zoom meeting.
A ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION ORGANISED BY THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Ambassador participated in a roundtable discussion organized by the Heritage Foundation. The group of experts discussed relevant issues including state of the Afghan Peace talks.

AN ASSESSMENT OF PAKISTAN’S ROLE IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION | THE CENTRE FOR ASIA PACIFIC POLICY, RAND ASSOCIATION

Ambassador Dr. Asad M. Khan while speaking at a board meeting on Assessment of Pakistan’s Role in the Asia Pacific Region organized by Centre for Asia Pacific Policy, RAND Association.
Welcoming a New Ancient Festival in Pakistan

Rebecca Conway renders a beautiful portrayal of the Kailash community in Pakistan. In her pictorial she walks her readers through Chawmos, a festival celebrated in Pakistan’s tiny Kalash community.

Members of the Kalash, a polytheist community of 4,000, dancing and singing during Chawmos, a New Year festival, in Balanguru, a village in Pakistan’s Rumbur Valley.

The village of Grom in the Rumbur Valley. The Kalash live among three valleys high in the Hindu Kush mountains.

The women dance and sing outside the home of villagers, where they are met with food and homemade mulberry wine.

The festival is marked by dance, animal sacrifice and highly prescribed roles for men and women.

The festival culminates with a late-night torch procession through the tiny villages in the Kalash valleys.

READ HERE.
‘ALL NEIGHBORS INTERNATIONAL’ ORGANISES VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Ambassador Dr. Asad M. Khan participated in virtual Christmas celebrations organized by ‘All Neighbour International’. Representatives from different faiths participated and conveyed their messages on the occasion. Besides, Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton (D-CA) and State Senator for Virginia, John Bell also participated in the event.
YEAR IN REVIEW

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION
AT THE EMBASSY

Ambassador celebrates christmas with Embassy staff members of Christian faith
PAKISTANI PROJECT WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR SHIELDING VILLAGES FROM NATURAL DISASTERS

The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) Pakistan project, that combines satellite images, mapping technologies and the local knowledge of villagers to help build climate-proof settlements in disaster-prone areas of Pakistan won the gold prize at the United Nations housing agency (UN-Habitat) “World Habitat Awards”

More than one million people have benefited from the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) Pakistan project, which has trained about 50,000 residents to better protect their villages from disasters in the mountainous northern areas which are vulnerable to earthquakes, floods and environmental degradation, and are home to some of the poorest communities.

READ HERE.

The project enables communities to build in safer areas, and better prepare for and respond to disasters. — Photo courtesy: World Habitat Awards.
A 10 BILLION-TREE PLAN IS RESTORING PAKISTAN’S LOST FORESTS

Pakistan’s arid climate and rocky deserts may seem an unlikely place to look for a green revolution, but the nation of more than 200 million people has begun one of the world’s largest reforestation programs.

The government is in the first phase of planting 3.25 billion trees at an estimated cost of around 105 billion rupees ($650 million), Malik Amin Aslam, minister for climate change said in an interview. Prime Minister Imran Khan wants to extend that to almost 10 billion by the time his term in office ends in 2023.

READ HERE.
CHRISTMAS IN PAKISTAN

Christian women pray during a Christmas mass in Sacred Heart Cathedral in Lahore, Pakistan, Friday, Dec. 25, 2020. (AP/NPR)

People attend Christmas Mass at St. John’s Cathedral in Peshawar, Pakistan. (Muhammad Sajjad/AP)

People celebrate Christmas in Karachi, Pakistan. (WP/Shahzaib Akber/EPA-EFE/REX/Shutterstock)