



## Eid-ul-Fitr Open House at High Commissioner's Residence



H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK hosted Eid-ul-Fitr Open House at his official residence in West Hampstead, London on 18 July 2015, to celebrate the auspicious



occasion with the Pakistani community in the UK. More than 500 guests from all walks of society attended the Open House and were served with sumptuous Pakistani cuisine. The guests included Lords, MPs, Mayors, Ambassadors/High Commissioners, Councillors, community leaders, prominent business persons, members of the Pakistani and British society, representatives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Home Office, officials of the High Commission as well as their families and media representatives. The High Commissioner and his spouse Mrs Sadaf Abbas personally received the guests and remained with them the whole day. Their hospitality was much appreciated by the community. The members of the Pakistani community said they "felt so connected with the High Commission and the High Commissioner", as it was the first ever event on such a big scale at the residence of Pakistani High Commissioner in London where all sections of Pakistani community were invited. The guests relished with joy the live appetizing food, with melodious tunes of live music adding to the liveliness of the occasion. Special

attention was paid to the entertainment of children by setting up Bouncy Castle and Candy Corner which they thoroughly enjoyed the whole day. The Open House was attended by guests from outside London as well and provided good opportunity for the High Commission and the



community to connect with each other and meet and greet in an



informal setting. It turned out to be a memorable day!



## Pakistan's 5000-year-old history and culture

So few Pakistanis have visited the UNESCO site of Mohenjo-daro but doing so is a must for anyone who truly wants to appreciate the significance of this archaeological gem.

Mohenjodaro is located in Sindh and was the largest city of the Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) - one of the three early civilisations known to man along with ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. The city was excavated in the 1920s but the first of the IVC sites to be discovered was Harappa in Punjab so the IVC is sometimes referred to as the Harappan Civilisation. But what makes the IVC and in particular, Mohenjo-daro stand out from Egypt and Mesopotamia are the following:

- It had more sophisticated urban planning
- It was the first to develop a system of uniform weights and measures
- Sewerage and drainage was more advanced
- There were no monumental structures built
- There was no evidence of palaces, temples or armies
- No weapons were found at Mohenjo-daro

■ The script remains undeciphered even today. By all accounts it appears that this was a thriving, egalitarian and harmonious society with no overall leader despite there being indications of complex decision-making. Perhaps modern civilization could learn a lot from this? Mystery also surrounds the collapse of the IVC. After almost 1000 years the civilisation started declining and within 100 years most of the cities were abandoned. There are many theories as to what could have happened but the widely accepted view is that drought caused by climate change along with a decline in trade with Egypt and Mesopotamia was the cause. Let Mohenjo-daro not be a mystery anymore to those visiting Pakistan. There are daily flights to Mohenjo-daro from Karachi or it is a six-hour drive. There is a Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) by the site where there is reasonable accommodation or alternatively, one can stay in the city of Larkana, which is only a thirty-minute drive away.



## China-Pakistan Economic Corridor—a harbinger of progress and prosperity

The all-weather friendship between Pakistan and China is based on shared principles and interests, and forms the foundation of cooperation in diverse fields ranging from trade, investment, energy, defence, education and science & technology. Recently both governments have made a conscious effort to focus on expanding the economic dimension of the relationship and bring it at par with the excellent cooperation the two countries enjoy at the strategic level. Both the governments have signed agreements worth \$28 billion to immediately kick-start early harvest projects, while

projects worth \$17 billion, which are in the pipeline, will follow as soon as the required studies, processes and formalities are completed. The groundbreaking and signing of financial agreements has demonstrated that there is a strong will on both sides to implement the portfolio of \$46 billion agreed under the CPEC framework as early as possible to help Pakistan meet its energy needs. Transport infrastructure projects and energy projects under CPEC will generate economic activity and create jobs for the youth. The CPEC, which will link Kashghar with Gwadar, a link that is about 3,200 km long, will

positively impact the economic activity of the adjacent areas and beyond. Western alignment of CPEC is the first and foremost priority of the Government to be operational by December 2016. Gwadar, the gateway of CPEC, will serve multiple domestic and trans-national destinations through network of roads/railways/air/sea. The CPEC takes less developed areas into the folds of active development and all provincial capitals are the agreed nodes of CPEC. The Corridor will integrate all provincial capitals into the economic mesh which would help in consolidation at national

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level and it will also contribute to regional integration, harmony and economic development.

## British Parliamentary delegation visits Pakistan

Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs received a seven-member delegation of the British Parliament at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 28 July 2015. The Adviser stated that Pakistan enjoys friendly and warm relations with the United Kingdom which have been further strengthened during the

last two years. These ties exist in a wide range of cooperation including economic, culture and education. The presence of a large number of Pakistani diaspora in the United Kingdom acts as a bridge between the two countries. The Adviser provided a comprehensive overview of the domestic political situation of Pakistan. He stressed that the democratic process was becoming stronger. He also emphasised that Pakistan is an investor's friendly country and has a vibrant media. He highlighted Pakistan's efforts to fight terrorism and extremism and reiterated the



Government's commitment to take forward the process of constructive engagement with Afghanistan. He highlighted the vision of the Prime Minister for promotion of regional peace and stability. The visiting Parliamentarians

appreciated Pakistan's role in fighting the menace of terrorism. They stressed the importance of enhancing bilateral trade and cooperation in various fields, especially education. There was a frank exchange of views on regional and global issues.

## High Commissioner calls on Mayor of London

H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK called on Boris Johnson MP, Mayor of London at his office in the City Hall on 20 July 2015. The issues of mutual interest pertaining to British Pakistani community, cultural cooperation, and trade & investment were discussed in detail during the meeting. The Mayor expressed interest to work more closely with Pakistan as, according to him, Pakistan is very relevant and important for London due to a number of reasons, the main being the strong presence of vibrant Pakistani diaspora in London. The two sides discussed the

collaboration between tech hubs in London and Pakistan. The Mayor said that Pakistani tech companies could benefit from the global platform offered by the Tech City UK to promote their digital technology businesses and attract international investment in that vital sector of economy. Similarly, it was also discussed as to how Pakistani companies could avail the expertise and guidance provided by London & Partners—an initiative that supports the organisers of mega sports and cultural events. The High Commissioner put forward the idea of promoting cultural cooperation between

London and Pakistan, highlighting the fact that Pakistani diaspora constitutes a significant part of London's population and, thus, could play a productive role in promoting cultural diversity of London. The Mayor noted the suggestion with appreciation. The High Commissioner extended the Mayor an invitation to visit Pakistan so that the cooperation between Pakistan and the institutions in London could be enhanced. The Mayor, appreciating the invitation, expressed his desire to visit Pakistan early next year along with a delegation of the business persons from London



## Pakistan achieves Water and Sanitation MDG Targets

The officials of UNICEF called on Federal Minister for Climate Change and congratulated him for Pakistan achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of sanitation and improved drinking water. "It is a positive story from Pakistan and needs to be celebrated and communicated in these difficult times", said the officials of UNICEF.

The recently launched global report by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the

United Nations Children's Fund joint Monitoring Program 2015 mentioned that Pakistan was among one of the 95 countries that had met Millennium Development Goals target for sanitation aimed at halving the proportion of the population without sustainable access to basic sanitation.

According to the report, 64% of the population has now access to sanitation compared to 24% in 1990. Pakistan is also

placed among 77 countries which have met both the drinking water and the sanitation MDG targets. The number of people defecating in the open has been reduced from 46 to 25 million during the last decade. Pakistan is ranked 5th among those 16 countries which have reduced the open defecation by at least 25%.

Pakistan has also been ranked 5th among all countries that have the least disparities in terms of access to improved

sources of drinking water by wealth quintile in rural areas. Pakistan remained among nine countries which have succeeded in halving the proportion of the population without improved drinking water in both urban and rural areas.

Also, Pakistan has been ranked above average in closing the gap that exists due to inequities between wealth quintiles regarding access to sanitation in urban areas.

## Poet of the East, Allama Iqbal remembered at the House of Commons



H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK said Allama Iqbal had given direction and sense of purpose to the Muslims of the sub-continent due to which Pakistan came into existence. The High Commissioner was speaking as the Chief Guest at "Nazia Hassan Memorial Lecture" on Allama Iqbal held at the House of Commons on 20 July 2015. Dwelling upon the poetry and philosophy of the Poet of the East, the High Commissioner said that Allama Iqbal's vision is very much relevant to the contemporary society and, therefore, we must seek

guidance from his poetic thought and philosophy. He said Iqbal's poetry had been a great source of inspiration for us and there was a need to spread his universal message of hope and human dignity in the world.

Allama Iqbal's grandson Walid Iqbal who was the keynote speaker, gave a lecture on: "Iqbal—Poet Philosopher of the East". Khalid Mehmood MP welcomed the guests while Ms Muniza Baseer Hassan offered vote of thanks. The event was conceived and coordinated by The Literary Circle (TLC), London.

## Pakistan Army Cricket Team wins match against British Army Team

The Pakistan Army Cricket Team won a match against the British Army Team by four wickets on 27 July 2015. At the Army Cricket Ground Aldershot, Pakistan Army Team, led by Major Tariq Mehmood, won the toss and elected to field in a 46-over match. The host team made 161 runs, all out, in 40 overs. In response, the Pakistan Team successfully chased the target of 161 runs in 40th over with four wickets remaining. The highlight of the match was unbeaten 77 runs by Pakistan Army opener Shafiqur Rehman.

H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas was introduced to the Pakistan Army team by Brigadier Ghulam Jilani, Chair, Pakistan Army Sports Control Board. On this occasion, the High Commissioner welcomed the initiative of cricket tours between the Pakistan and the



British Army Teams. He said the cricket series between the two Army teams would further strengthen our bilateral relations. Major General Ali Abbas Haider, Director General Military Training and Major General Shaun Burley, Chair

British Army Sports Control Board termed the current tour by Pakistan Army Team very productive and said it would pave way for many more such sporting events in future. Major General Ali Abbas Haider thanked the British Army for

their warm hospitality and facilitation. The cricket tour of England by the Pakistan Army took place at the personal invitation of the Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Nicholas Carter.

## High Commissioner meets All Party Parliamentary Group on Pakistan

H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK held a meeting with the members of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Pakistan at the British Parliament on 15 July 2015. The two sides discussed a range of issues pertaining to bilateral relations, parliamentary cooperation, economy, National Action Plan (NAP) and the British Pakistani community.

The High Commissioner felicitated Rehman Chishti MP on becoming the new Chair of the APPG on Pakistan and hoped that under his dynamic leadership, the group would endeavour to further strengthen the existing friendly relationship between the two countries. He stated that Pakistan-UK relations are a priority area in Pakistan's foreign policy. The High Commissioner commended the services of outgoing Chair of the APPG on Pakistan Andrew Stephenson MP, in promoting ties between the two countries.

The Parliamentarians were briefed that Pakistan had seen significant economic growth in the past couple of years and the country was fast becoming a lucrative investment destination for the international investors. Speaking on security situation of



the country, the High Commissioner informed the British Parliamentarians that Pakistan's armed forces were successfully carrying out Operation Zarb-i-Azb under National Action Plan (NAP), and the situation was fast improving. The Parliamentarians appreciated Pakistan's efforts in

fighting against terrorism and extremism to bring about peace and stability in the region.

The Parliamentarians appreciated the constructive role of the Pakistani diaspora in development and progress of the UK. Both sides had a detailed discussion on the issues faced by the Pakistani

community in various electoral constituencies of the UK.

Besides Rehman Chishti MP and Chair APPG on Pakistan, those who attended the meeting included Andrew Stephenson MP, Sir Gerald Kauffman MP, Catherine West MP, Liam Bryne MP, Ruth Cadbury MP, Kate Green MP and Jo Cox MP.

## High Commissioner calls on Alex Salmond MP

H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK called on Alex Salmond MP, at the British Parliament on 15 July 2015. Mr Salmond is currently Shadow SNP Westminster Group Leader for International Affairs and Europe in the House of Commons. Discussion revolved around Pakistan-UK relations, Scottish development assistance to Pakistan and Pakistani community

in Scotland, amongst other issues of mutual interest. Commending the international development agenda of Scottish Government, the High Commissioner appreciated development assistance and initiatives of the Scottish Government being carried out in Pakistan. He updated Mr Salmond about the investment opportunities in Pakistan and invited the Scottish

companies to invest there, particularly, in the energy sector. The SNP leader appreciated the role of Pakistani community in the development and progress of Scotland and commended their active engagement in the mainstream of the Scottish society. Two sides agreed to continue the mutually beneficial cooperation in days ahead.



## High Commissioner calls on Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary

H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK paid a courtesy call on Rt Hon Hilary Benn, MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary, in his office at the British House of Commons on 2 July 2015. A range of issues of mutual interest came under discussion.

The High Commissioner offered his heartfelt condolences on the killing of 30 British citizens in the terrorist attack in Tunisia. Expressing his gratitude for the thoughtful gesture, Mr Benn briefed the High Commissioner on the steps being considered by the British government to deal with the threats posed by the self-styled ISIS in the Middle East.

The High Commissioner took the opportunity to emphasise on the urgent need to consider using the name Daesh instead of the Islamic State, as the term was a misnomer for a terrorist outfit which is neither Islamic nor State. Mr Benn appreciated the suggestion. The High Commissioner also updated the MP on positive outcomes of Operation Zarb-e-Azb, regional situation and the state of economy which was on a positive trajectory.