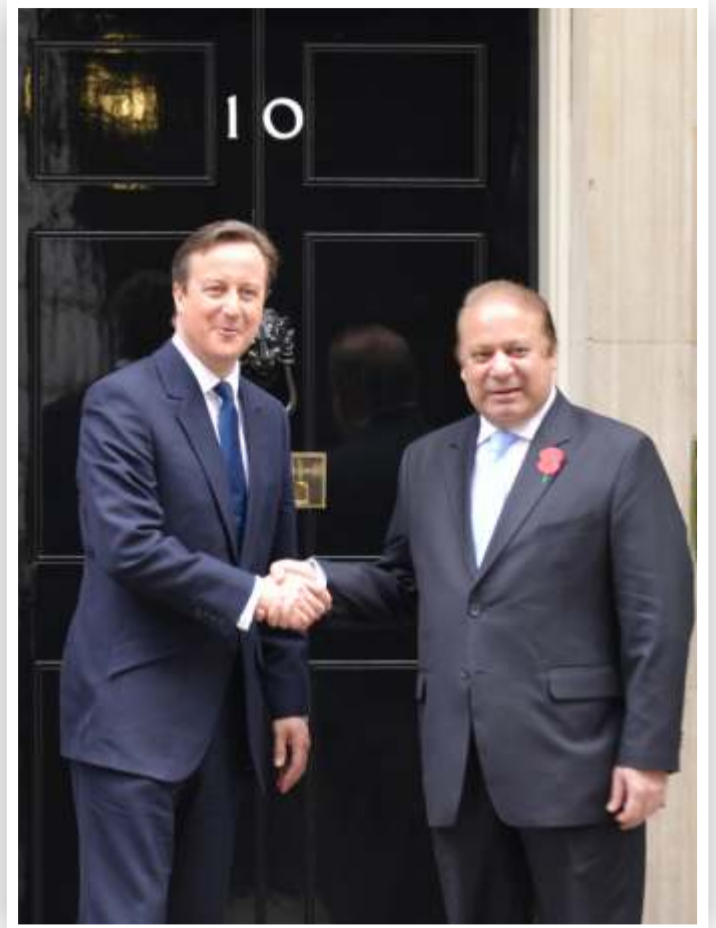




PRIME MINISTER MUHAMMAD NAWAZ SHARIF MEETS PRIME MINISTER DAVID CAMERON

Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif met British Prime Minister David Cameron at 10 Downing Street on 25 April 2015. During their meeting, the two leaders discussed a wide range of issues pertaining to bilateral cooperation as well as regional and international situation, including the current situation in the Middle East. The two leaders expressed satisfaction that relations between the two countries had substantially strengthened in recent years. They expressed confidence that bilateral ties between the two countries would see further enhancement especially in the area of trade and economy.

Prime Minister David Cameron, while acknowledging the sacrifices rendered by Pakistan, appreciated Pakistan's efforts to eradicate extremism and terrorism from its soil and said UK would continue to assist and extend cooperation to Pakistan in this regard. The Prime Minister also appreciated UK's cooperation and assistance in the areas of security and counter-terrorism. Special Assistant to PM, Mr. Tariq Fatemi and Pakistan's High Commissioner, Syed Ibne Abbas accompanied the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister visited the UK at the invitation of the British Prime Minister.



INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS CALL ON FINANCE MINISTER ISHAQ DAR IN LONDON

Representatives from the top financial companies in London met with Finance Minister Ishaq Dar at Pakistan High Commission London on 15 April 2015. Leading investment funds including Jefferies, Aberdeen Asset Management, Ashmore Group, Renaissance Capital,

Pakistan would continue its presence in the international market during the next fiscal year. Pakistan has successfully completed six reviews under an IMF programme for the first time ever, while the 7th review was also ready for 1st week of May

GDP growth rate has exceeded 4% after a period of 6 years while inflation has come down to 2.5% in March 2015 after a period of 12 years while the core inflation is around 5%; government has made concerted efforts to minimize the fiscal deficit to 4%; government has substantially decreased its dependence on borrowing from domestic banks making the capital available for private sector; Stock Market and Forex market are also doing well; Pakistani currency has been recently reported as one of the best performing currencies in the world by Bloomberg; and Moody's has just upgraded Pakistan's economic outlook from stable to positive. The Minister hoped that the CAA rating would be improved keeping in view the recent positive economic outlook of Pakistan. He was confident that Pakistan would be able to join the league of emerging markets. The Finance Minister stated that the government was looking to increase the forex reserves to record high of 18.2 billion USD. Talking about energy issue, he said by the end of 2017, Pakistan would have additional 10,000 MW of electricity in the

national grid. The Minister assured the investors that the country would soon get rid of the menace of terrorism and extremism as a result of National Action Plan (NAP). Minister Dar said under the social safety net programs, around 5 million of the poorest families had benefited. He said, from economic point of view, the government was looking to promote sustainable and inclusive growth by increasing GDP to around 7%, decreasing fiscal deficit to 4%, increasing investment to GDP ratio to 22%, and increasing exports to 32 billion USD. Chief of Staff and Head of Business Development at London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG) Mr Nikhil Rathi, along with Senior Advisor, Primary Markets at LSEG Ms Gavin Sullivan, also called on Finance Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar in London and discussed issues of mutual interest. Responding to questions raised by the investors, Minister said that the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor would not only benefit Pakistan but the entire region.



and Spinnaker were represented at the meeting. Giving an overview of the Pakistan economy, the Minister highlighted the successful issuance of Euro and Sukuk bonds and recent divestment of Government shares in Habib Bank. He said that investors' interest in Pakistan was reassuring and said that

2015, the Minister added. He further said that the response Pakistan received in the London financial market had surpassed all expectations and hence London remains very relevant for the Pakistan capital markets. Minister Dar underscored some of the major economic achievements of the present government that are as follows:

PRIME MINISTER ATTENDS GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN CENTENARY COMMEMORATION



Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif attended the Gallipoli Campaign Centenary commemoration at White Hall on 25 April 2015 together with Queen, Elizabeth II; Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip; Prime Minister, David Cameron; Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg and Labour Party leader Ed Miliband along with several leaders and representatives of Commonwealth countries as well as Turkey.

Later, during his interaction with world leaders the Prime Minister acknowledged the courage and

sacrifices of valiant soldiers of the Gallipoli campaign, including soldiers from areas that now form part of Pakistan. He said that this event would serve to reinvigorate global desire for resolution of differences through dialogue.

The Prime Minister underscored the important role that the Commonwealth has played under the Leadership of Her Majesty the Queen and promoted a sense of unity among the member states.

The year 2015 marks the 100th anniversary of the battle in the

Dardanelles Strait in Canakkale province's peninsula of Gallipoli, at which there was a turnaround in favour of the Turks and other Ottoman citizens fighting in World War I against the Allied Forces.

The Prime Minister also laid a floral wreath at the Cenotaph in memory of those soldiers who laid down their lives during the Gallipoli campaign. Special Assistant to PM, Mr. Tariq Fatemi and Pakistan's High Commissioner, Syed Ibne Abbas accompanied the Prime Minister.

FINANCE MINISTER ISHAQ DAR ADDRESSES PAKISTANI COMMUNITY IN LONDON



Finance Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar addressed the Pakistani community and the business persons over a luncheon organised by Pakistan High Commission London on 15 April 2015. Senator Dar highlighted the improved and stable outlook in the country's ratings ever since the issuing of Euro Bond and said that Pakistan

was moving forward. He also shared his government's vision of the roadmap for continued economic prosperity and efforts to overcome the challenges to economy.

Minister Dar explained that Government's reforms agenda was based on 4Es, i.e. economy, energy, extremism and education/health (social sector).

Ever since the current Government came into power under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the above-mentioned four sectors were being addressed on priority, he added. As a result, the Minister said, the growth rate was improving, the inflation was coming down, capital market was performing better and the currency gained stability.

The Minister stated that the government would end the energy shortage before the completion of its tenure. He reiterated government's commitment to increase education budget from 2% to 4% in next two years. He also stated that the Government was fully committed to asset sale programme.

The Finance Minister appreciated the role of diaspora and said that they were helping

Pakistan economy a great deal through their valuable remittances. He also thanked Pakistan High Commission for arranging his interaction with the community and the investors in London.

In his opening remarks, H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK welcomed the Minister and thanked him for agreeing to share his vision on Pakistan economy with the community and potential investors in the UK. He also welcomed the community and business persons to the High Commission. The event was attended by about 100 people from cross-section of the society, including Members of the House of Lords, Mayors, Councillors, leading business people, community leaders, representatives of the financial institutions and media.

LCCI PAPER DELEGATION CALLS ON THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

A seven-member delegation of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry led by Mr Khamis Saeed Butt, Chairman Paper and Paper Board Traders Standing Committee called on H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK on 16 April 2015. The delegation was representing Paper and Paper Board sector at the London Book Fair.

The delegates apprised the High Commissioner of the opportunities for bilateral trade in paper sector and termed their visit an opportunity to open doors for increasing business with the UK. They said there was huge potential for bilateral

trade in this sector i.e. importing raw material/paper and exporting it back to the United Kingdom as a finished product.

Welcoming the delegation, the High Commissioner appreciated the initiative of the paper companies to visit UK and highlighted that such business visits were very important in terms of identifying business opportunities in the UK. He further added that the present Government was determined to create an investment oriented framework to stimulate the private sector and increase exports of Pakistan. The High Commissioner assured the delegation of all possible facilitation from the High Commission required to do business with the UK.



HIGH COMMISSIONER WELCOMES RELAXING OF PAKISTAN TRAVEL ADVICE BY FCO

The British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), on 14 April 2015, revised its travel advisory on Pakistan, allowing its citizens to travel to the Gilgit-Baltistan area.

Welcoming this development, H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK termed relaxation in travel advisory reflective of the UK Government's growing confidence in the improving security situation in Pakistan. He commented that lifting of travel restrictions for Gilgit-Baltistan would augur well for revival of tourism industry in Pakistan, especially adventure tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan.

It is encouraging to know that

according to the FCO, most visits to Pakistan are trouble-free. The High Commissioner hoped that in view of the rapidly improving security situation in Pakistan, the UK government would keep its travel advisory under review to encourage travel to Pakistan which offers enormous tourism, investment and business opportunities. Gilgit-Baltistan is renowned for some of the world's best scenery, trekking, walking and adventure tourism opportunities. Lifting of the advice means that this area will be more open and accessible to foreign tourists. Presently, over 270,000 British nationals visit Pakistan every year.



IFTIKHAR ARIF CALLS ON THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



Acclaimed Urdu poet and scholar of Pakistan, Iftikhar Arif called on H.E. Syed Ibne Abbas, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK on 2 April 2015. Iftikhar Arif is currently the President of ECO Cultural Institute in Tehran.

The High Commissioner commended Iftikhar Arif's fascinating poetry as well as his tireless efforts in promoting Urdu language and literature. He also discussed with him ideas to preserve and promote Pakistani literature and culture in the UK. Iftikhar Arif said that Urdu literature possesses rich

cultural heritage and promise for our future generations, and assured his cooperation in its promotion.

Iftikhar Arif has headed the Pakistan Academy of Letters and the National Language Authority. He has been decorated with Hilal-e-Imtiaz, Sitara-e-Imtiaz and Presidential Pride of Performance, which are the highest literary awards given by the Government of Pakistan. He has written several books including Mehr-i-Doneem, Harf-i-Baryab, Jahan-e-Maloom, Barhwan Khilari and Kitab-e-Dil-o-Dunya.

EDITH EVELYN WALI MOHAMMAD MEMORIAL TRUST SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PAKISTANI STUDENTS

Three Pakistani students were awarded with Edith Evelyn Wali Mohammad Memorial Trust scholarship on 13 April 2015. Dr. Israr Hussain, Minister (Consular Affairs) at Pakistan High Commission London

handed over the scholarship cheques to the candidates on behalf of the High Commissioner, who is Ex-Officio Chairman of the Trust. The students, namely Ms. Juneda Sarfraz, Mr. Usman Adeel and

Ms. Sajida Nawaz were selected for the award by the Board of Trustees.

Edith Evelyn Wali Mohammad Memorial Trust was created in 1954 by the former Vice Chancellor of Usmania

University Hyderabad and has since grown over the years. Every year it grants scholarships to the Ph.D. students, who are in their final years in natural sciences & Medicine. The next award will be publicized soon.



ENCHANTED BY FAIRIES IN NORTH PAKISTAN



Did you know that there are only 14 mountains in the world that are over 8000m high? You may even dream of one day being able to visit these majestic peaks and be in awe of the sheer beauty and peace that they inspire. What you may not know is that you could leave work on a Friday evening and actually be in front of one of these giants in time for

Sunday lunch. This feat is only possible in Pakistan and we are talking about the 9th highest mountain in the world, Nanga Parbat viewed from the picturesque Fairy Meadows. Fairy Meadows is the name given to a 3300m high grassland and hamlet locally known as Joot. It got its name from early German climbers who initially

described the expanse as 'fairy tale meadows' but the name has since stuck.

It is a popular starting point for trekkers and climbers heading for base camp or higher but in recent years it has become increasingly popular with domestic tourists with a sense of adventure due to the easy access provided by the legendary Karakoram Highway. However, it is not just for trekkers as there are some great day walks amongst stunning alpine forest with magical views of the Raikot face of Nanga Parbat. Accommodation has greatly improved with enterprising locals building wooden huts as well as providing hot water and even electricity via mini hydroelectric units. It is the perfect getaway for anyone who is short on time and yet would still want to experience



the mountains in all their glory. To get to Fairy Meadows, it is a one-day scenic drive from Islamabad followed by a 45-minute white-knuckle jeep ride and then a 3hr gentle trek. Ponies and porters can also be hired for those that need them. Isn't it about time that you got out of the city and spent a magical weekend with the fairies on your next trip?



SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF PAKISTAN

The Consulate General of Pakistan at Manchester arranged an evening on 11th March, 2015 at a local Church to showcase Pakistani culture and society. In the first part of the event, a young talented Pakistani Mr. Moin Khan shared his project of showing the true Pakistani people and society to the world through a very interesting documentary. Mr. Moin undertook a motorcycle journey of the northern areas of Pakistan along with a group of motorcyclists from all over the world.

The film projects the true face of Pakistani culture which is full of hospitality to foreigners and welcoming attitude to all those who come and explore Pakistan

from ordinary cities in the plains of Sindh & Punjab to the highlands of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit Baltistan.

In the second part of the programme, Chand Khan and Suraj Khan, duo of Pakistani brothers, who have been increasingly receiving accolades from music lovers all over the world, gave a masterful performance of Ghazal singing in the classical sense of the genre. They belong to Patiala family and are sons of renowned classical singer, the maestro Ustad Hussain Baksh Gullu.

The duo had performed in Commonwealth Games and Celtic Connections festival and were widely appreciated. They

represent the young and dynamic face of Pakistani music which is deeply connected to its roots and traditions.

The event was well attended by over 200 members of Pakistani and British community. The event was highly appreciated.

The Consul General thanked the performers and the audience who managed to come to the event on a working day. He also thanked the care taker of the Church of Ascension for their cooperation in holding this event.



ONLINE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM AT THE HIGH COMMISSION AND ITS CONSULATES

Pakistan High Commission London and its Consulate in Birmingham, Manchester and Bradford have started Online Appointment System for NADRA Cards. Now the applicants can book, change and cancel their appointments online through Pakistan High Commission's

website: www.phclondon.org. Earlier, the applicants had to book appointments by telephone only. With the launch of this system, they can book and reschedule appointments at their convenience. Moreover, booking through telephone will also remain operational.

