

A woman with dark hair, wearing a blue tunic with rainbow-colored stripes on the sleeves and a white beaded necklace, is playing an acoustic guitar and singing into a microphone. The background is a plain wall with some faint writing.

Khabr-o-Nazar

(News & Views)

June 2008

Published by the U.S. Embassy, Islamabad

Native American Storyteller visits Pakistan ◀

Photography Contest to Mark Earth Day ◀

'Building Islam in Detroit' Exhibit ◀



U.S. Consul General Karachi Kay L. Anske dancing with Sindhi folk singer Shazia Khushk at a charity event organized by the American Women's Club at Consul General's residence. The event included an art exhibition and performances to raise money for local charities.

U. S. Consul General, American Women's Club Hold Charity Show



Public Affairs Officer Karen Waltz-Davis, Pakistani folk singer Shazia Khushk and the American Women's Club President Kim Gillani.



Folk dancers performing at the charity event, organized at the residence of U.S. Consul General Kay L. Anske in Karachi.

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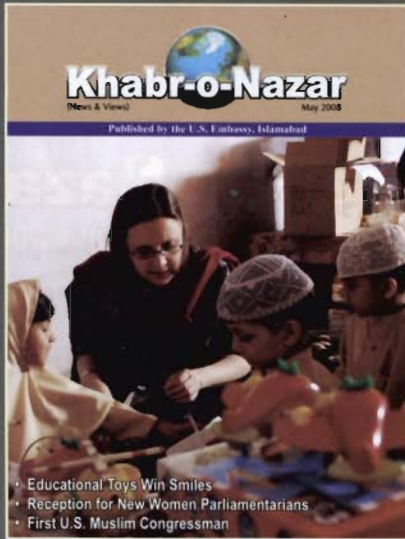
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Cover

American story-teller Red Rose Elk performing at the National Art Gallery, Pakistan National Council of the Arts in Islamabad.

Letters to the Editor



Genuinely Impressed

It was a pleasant surprise to receive the latest issue of "Khabr-o-Nazar" published by the U.S. Embassy. After going through the contents of the issue, I was genuinely impressed by the efforts put in by your editorial team. The most pleasing thing in the issue is that it is bilingual which manifests the U.S. efforts to promote understanding and harmony between Pakistan and the United States of America. The issue contains significant highlights of the multi-faceted activities of U.S. Embassy in Pakistan in the fields of arts, education, health, and human rights. It is an impressive effort full of revealing and informative contents.

Khurram Khiraam, Islamabad.

Enchanting

Thanks for sending me the link to the "Khabr-o-Nazar" magazine. This was the first time that I checked it out. Please convey my compliments to the editorial and production staff of the magazine. Both in terms of contents and layout, it is a first rate magazine. The picture of young school children on the title was simply enchanting.

Professor Mumtaz Ahmad, Hampton, VA

U.S. Elections

My focus is the November 2008 U.S. Elections. I would welcome if your magazine can touch upon the party conventions, names of principal presidential candidates, electoral procedure etc., and other relevant details.

Rahmat Ali Mujahid, Lahore

Beautiful Issue

What a beautiful issue of April, 2008! I very much appreciate the holding of American History course by the U.S. Embassy. As we are working on the project of modification of Madrassa curriculum and intend to include the world history course in it, therefore the AHC would serve as a mentor.

Dr. Zeenat Haroon Bint-e-Rashid, University of Karachi

Great Attempt

No doubt "Khabr-o-Nazar" is an excellent magazine, comprehensively covering each and every aspect of Pak-U.S. relationship. After going through the magazine I cannot but congratulate you and your team for making such a great attempt to bring the two nations together.

MPA Engr. Qamar-ul-Islam Raja, Rawalpindi



Moving the Cause of Equal Justice for Women Beyond Rhetoric

Secretary Responsible for Women's Justice in Washington

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice underlined the need for women's empowerment and noted that "this should be a policy priority for every country in the world," that was delivering her keynote address at the Senior Responsible for Women's Justice, hosted by the Department of State in Washington, D.C., on March 12. The conference concluded with International Women's Month.

"When we talk about the empowerment of women, what we're really talking about is the empowerment of societies. For in today's modern world, no country can expect to succeed with half its population sitting on the sidelines, unable to participate politically and economically," Secretary Rice said.

Approximately 20 cabinet, state, and international judges and legal practitioners participated in the event, which was aimed at bringing experienced legal practitioners together to address the growing global trend of violence against women and lack of women's access to justice. Participants from 17 countries, including Deputy Attorney General of Pakistan Nadeem-ul-Haq, took part in the deliberations. Secretary Rice pointed out that in today's world, violence against women is rampant, and this violence is often shared during war situations. This violence, and this climate of perpetual fear that it creates, is particularly pervasive in areas of conflict - where the wrongs are often repeated, where the rule of law is not enforced, and where it is women who are often the most affected.

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"In addressing the challenge of domestic violence and women's access to justice, we realize that ensuring our women the equal rights and equal treatment under the law is essential, but not sufficient, to reach the goals we seek," Secretary Rice said. "We realize that passing laws is not enough. Laws must be enforced by effective and responsible governments."

She called upon the participants, not only to influence law laws are made, but to help ensure that they are enforced fairly.

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Bagh Health Staff Efforts Honored

Public Health Improved Through \$20 Million USAID Project

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) recognized health department staff of Bagh District, Arad District and Kaduna (ARD) for their efforts to improve public health services in the area through the agency's \$20 million health care project.

"USAID works with local health officials and citizens to improve, expand and expand the network of health services for the residents of the earthquake-affected areas of Pakistan," said USAID/Pakistan Earthquake Reconstruction Deputy Team Leader Marilee Katz at a ceremony in Bagh on March 19. "Those who are receiving certificates today have helped local health facilities serve their communities better."

Supported by USAID, Primary Healthcare Revitalization, Integration, and Decentralization in Earthquake-Affected Areas (PRIDE) project, the Bagh health department members helped to increase the efficacy of child immunization in health centers and improve hygiene practices.

In a related ceremony, USAID, AIC, and Bagh District officials broke ground for a \$100,000 in-service training facility building the health care professionals. The new building will replace a facility destroyed in the October 2005 earthquake.

USAID supports primary health programs in 95 basic health units and 22 rural health centers in Bagh and Mandi Bahauddin. The project is part of USAID's five-year, \$200 million Earthquake Reconstruction Program that is building schools and health facilities, supporting quality health and education services, and improving economic activities in the quake-affected areas of North West Frontier Province and AIC.



USAID officials and health department staff of Bagh District, Arad District and Kaduna (ARD) for their efforts to improve public health services in the area through the agency's \$20 million health care project.



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Native American Story Teller Performs
in Pakistan

Red Feather Woman Enthralls and Educates

During her first ever visit to Pakistan, Native American story-teller and song writer Rose Red Elk, popularly known as Red Feather Woman, performed in Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad. As a U.S. Embassy sponsored performer Rose Red Elk brought local storytellers together to exchange stories. Wherever she performed, the guests were impressed by her singing, dancing, and story-telling, and her with a mission of building bridges of understanding and communication through sharing cultural heritage. She described her experience by saying, "I am simply overwhelmed by the affection, kindness and generosity of the people here. I have fallen in love with Pakistan."

With a guitar in her hands, she narrated stories of the history of the Native Americans, the role of spirits in their culture, the art of herbal medicine and integrity even during war. She has spent 20 years singing and telling traditional stories with the objective of keeping her culture alive and also teaching audiences about the importance of Mother Earth.



American Storyteller Rose Red Elk dancing with students during her performance at the Lok Virsa Museum in Islamabad.

The Red Feather Woman performed at the Pakistan-American Cultural Center (PACC) in Karachi on April 21 with her traditional story-telling and folk songs bearing the message of peace and brotherhood. She shared stories told years ago by her father and grandfather. She composed songs around the stories which then became an elemental feather of her story telling. During her stay in the city she also met with the local performing artist groups and students at Karachi Arts Council.



Rose Red Elk with U.S. Consulate Principal Officer Bryan Hunt and ulema during her visit to Madrassa Jamia Fatmia in Mughalpura.

For the majority of audiences in Lahore, it was their first encounter with a Native American. During her visit, she performed at the Rafi Peer Theater Workshop for a diverse and appreciative audience of 200 invited guests and attended a reception to meet Lahore's art and theater patrons.

Pride of Balochistan, Akhtar Channal and Red Feather Woman presented folk stories of their regions at the Lok Virsa Heritage Museum in Islamabad. The performance by the duo captivated the audience and highlighted the shared traditions of folk songs and dance throughout the world. She also performed at Fatima Jinnah Women's University and National College of Arts in Rawalpindi.

Rose Red Elk made connections between Pashtun and American tribal societies during a series of performances in Peshawar. She discussed her experiences as a storyteller and singer with Peshawar University Fine Arts, English, and Journalism students at the Lincoln Corner. The students were fascinated by her stories and posed a number of questions about Native American culture, society and values. They were amazed to find many parallels between the Pashtun and American tribal societies. She also gave an evening performance for 50 academics, journalists, political leaders, NGO workers at the residence of Consulate Principal Officer Lynne Tracy. A group of guests volunteered to dance with her to the beat of drums. As one participant put it, "She truly is a master storyteller."



Students of the U.S. State Department-funded Access English Micro-scholarship program welcomed Rose Red Elk to the MCL Boys High School in Harbanspura.

Stories to Tell, Songs to Sing

Red Feather Woman talks to Khabr-o-Nazar



My traditional name is Weika Luta Win, which means Red Feather Woman. My English name is Rose Red Elk, my married name is Rose Haywood. So I have many names. I'm originally from a Reservation in Montana. I'm an enrolled member of the Assiniboine Lakota Tribe.

I became a professional storyteller in 1997. But I actually started telling stories and talking about the American-Indian culture in my oldest daughter's school when she was little. So that's when it started. I later started integrating stories into song.

I come from a long line of musicians and entertainers, my mother and father were singers and my grandfather was a jazz musician. But I never thought I would take it to the level I've taken it because I had children to take care of. The whole point was just to get through college and take care of my children.



Acting Consul General Catherine Rodriguez with others dancing to Native American songs as part of the Red Feather Woman performance held at PACC in Karachi.

Finally in 2005, I was able to quit my day job and do storytelling full-time. I've also built up a team to work with me, but it has taken me some years. I have won awards for my work. I will publish my first book of short stories this year.

I like to say that I enlighten, enrich and entertain. My audiences are all ages. I don't do as many schools. But I still like to do those because children are so beautiful. They like to see a 'real Indian.' Several of the stories that I tell have been passed on from my father and grandfather. But the ancient ones are stories that I heard from my elders.

The response to these stories – in whichever culture I tell them -- is always very positive. It makes them feel very connected, especially to the American Indians. But even in the United States, you'll be amazed that many people do not know anything about American Indians. So through my work I get to educate the non-Indians, while to the Indians, I give a sense of pride in their heritage.

The main theme in my stories is that we're all connected, we have a saying that goes "We are all relations." The common theme is that we're keepers of the Earth, how we all have unique gifts. I have some funny stories and some animal stories but I haven't really been able to tell many of them because I have had to pick which stories would be the most appropriate and universal.

The tradition of storytelling around the world is fading. It is important that story-tellers remain, especially the oral tradition. Because I come from an oral culture. My people didn't have written language, it was orally that information was transferred.

We live in a different time now. As long as we continue to have storytellers, the tradition will live on. A storyteller has to educate, enrich entertain and enlighten – all of those things.

U.S. Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs Kay Webb Mayfield presents a certificate to one of the winners of a nationwide "Earth, My Home" photography contest for school children organized by the U.S. Embassy and PIEDAR to observe Earth Day.



U.S. Embassy Holds Photography Contest to Mark Earth Day

The U.S. Embassy, in association with Pakistan Institute for Environmental Development and Research (PIEDAR), opened in Islamabad an exhibit of selected photographs from a nationwide photography contest for school children to observe Earth Day with the theme of "Earth, My Home."

"In the United States, children who learned in school about preserving the environment have become leaders in the promotion of recycling, planting trees, saving water, and other conservation measures," the U.S. Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs Kay Webb Mayfield said while addressing the participants. "Students can still lead the way, teaching their families about what each of us can do to protect our natural resources."

Earth Day began in the United States on April 22, 1970. The idea came from U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, who was concerned about protecting the environment. In the 38 years since then, Earth Day has become a global celebration and is currently observed in more than 140 countries around the world. The day aims to inspire awareness of and appreciation of the earth's environment.

Some 60 schools from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Kabirwala, and the FATA participated in the competition held on the topic of "Conservation of Environment."

The U.S. Embassy's Counselor for Public Affairs, Kay Webb Mayfield, presented prizes and certificates to the winning student photographers.



Students and other visitors at Sir Syed Memorial Hall view winning photographs captured by students for the nationwide "Earth, My Home" photography contest to observe Earth Day.

Fulbright Program is Significant Investment by Both Countries: Ambassador Patterson

The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne W. Patterson, declared the Fulbright Program in Pakistan “a significant investment by both countries” while speaking at the 5th annual Fulbright Alumni Conference at the National University of Modern Languages in Islamabad on April 26.

“The Fulbright program in Pakistan is the largest in the world with the U.S. Government contribution of \$19.5 million per year,” Ambassador Patterson said “The other major funding source is Pakistan’s Higher Education Commission, which contributes \$10.5 million per year.”

The American Ambassador, who is also the honorary co-chair of the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP), said that some 175 outstanding Pakistani students travel to the United States each year with full scholarships to begin work on a master’s degree or a doctorate. Dozens more receive scholarships to take part in Fulbright affiliated programs that range from community college training to teaching Urdu or Pashto at U.S. universities, she added.

“Among the highest priorities for the United States in our partnership with Pakistan are these: to encourage this country’s continued economic growth, and to support programs that will distribute the benefits of that growth as widely as possible,” Ambassador Patterson remarked.

She said that the challenge will be to move forward with development and democratization in tandem so that people not only have economic opportunity, but also have the ability to participate politically. “Sharing the benefits of Pakistan’s growth among all its citizens” will be strong defenses against the dangerous forces of disillusionment and alienation.”

Ambassador Patterson lauded the USEFP for “reaching out to young people from all over Pakistan” to offer student advising. “Pakistan now ranks 23rd among countries sending their students to U.S. colleges and universities,” she added.

“More Pakistani students on U.S. campuses means more people from this country come to know and understand the United States; and it means more opportunities for people in American communities to learn about Pakistan and its people,” the American Ambassador said.



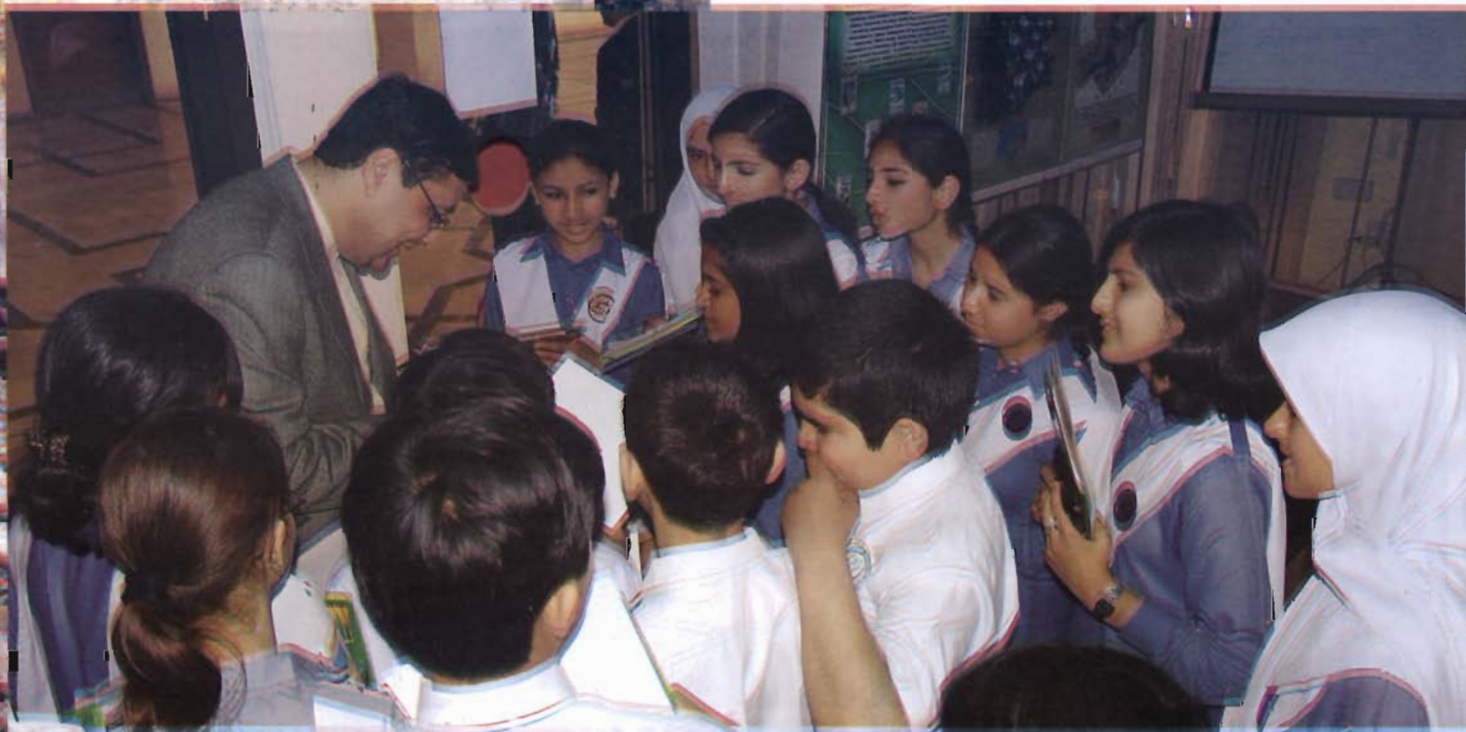
U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson speaking at the Fulbright Alumni Conference. Also seen in the picture are U.S. Embassy’s Counselor for Public Affairs Kay Webb Mayfield and the Director of U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan, Dr. Grace Clark.

No Single Country Can Resolve Environmental Issues Alone: Dr. Adil Najam

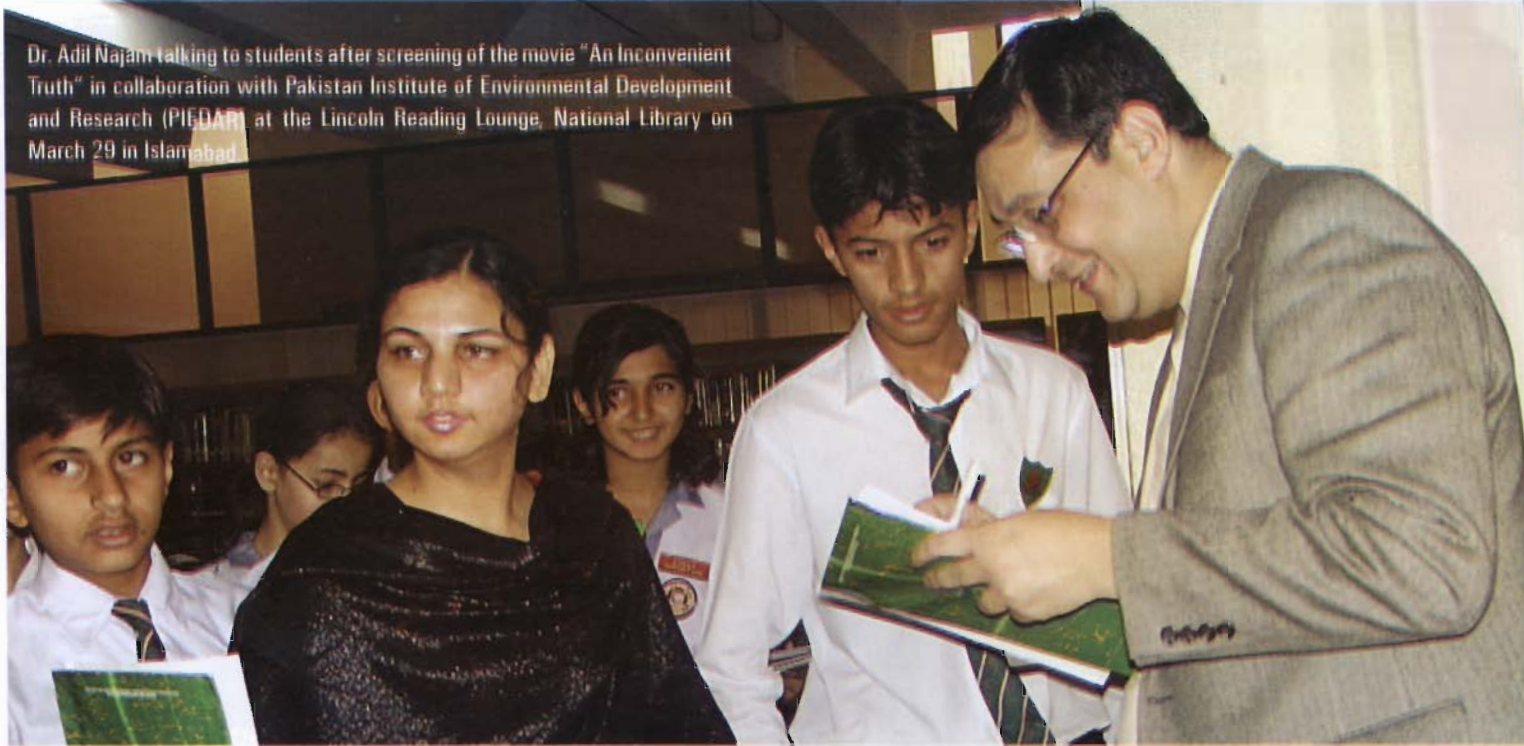
Dr. Adil Najam is an Associate Professor of International Negotiation and Diplomacy at Tufts University. His current areas of research and writing include: international environmental policy with a particular focus on developing countries; environmental security; global climate change negotiation and policy. He is a member of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change that shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with former U.S. Vice President Al Gore. He is author of more than a dozen books. He recently visited Pakistan and "Khabr-o-Nazar" had an opportunity to speak with him. Following are excerpts from the interview:

Q: You earned your bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. What made you change your field and opt for Environmental Studies?

Dr. Najam: There are several issues that don't come under one field. Environmental Studies is a good example of such an issue. You need to simultaneously have scientific know-how, political acumen and policy making powers to deal with this issue. It has economic and legal aspects too. That is why I changed my focus.



Dr. Adil Najam signs autographs for students after his presentation on the environmental challenges being confronted by the world at the National Library.



Dr. Adil Najam talking to students after screening of the movie "An Inconvenient Truth" in collaboration with Pakistan Institute of Environmental Development and Research (PIEDAR) at the Lincoln Reading Lounge, National Library on March 29 in Islamabad

Q: Everyone is talking about the issues of global warming and environment. And you too are working on such issues. Would you like to tell us what kind of work are you doing? What was your role in the Nobel Prize that the former U.S. Vice President Al Gore's group has received?

Dr. Najam: I think the problem of environment is one of those issues that came into the limelight when I was completing my engineering degree. In the beginning, I didn't understand the nature of this issue. In the U.S., I'm doing research about the effects of the global warming on the Third World countries. I've been working with an institution that works voluntarily. Its name is the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and its basic job is to prepare reports about the latest research on global environmental and climatic changes. In 2007 two institutes jointly received the Nobel Prize and one of them was that of Al Gore's and the other was the IPCC. I've been working with the latter as an author for the last eight years.

Q: There is a perception that no practical steps are being taken to address environment issues and global warming. Developed countries are often held responsible for all these problems. What do you think?

Dr. Najam: Yes, that's true. But this issue has two aspects. Undoubtedly, industrialized countries are

responsible for these problems, but Pakistan and other developing countries have a very important role to play in this regard. We are making progress in every field of life; China and India are also making progress very rapidly. Therefore, we have also become a part of this problem, and growing population in the world is also one of the causes of these problems. The other aspect of this issue is the effects of pollution and global warming. Toxic gases damage the environment and cause warming that can result in the melting of glaciers and eventually flooding in different parts of the world. That is why both developed and developing countries must sit together and sort out these issues. In short, it is a global issue, and no single country can resolve this issue alone.

Q: You have played a pivotal role in formulation of Pakistan's first environment policy. What are the main issues with reference to environment in Pakistan?

Dr. Najam: Countries like Pakistan have only one issue and that is development. Up till recently both the environmentalists and development experts were at fault when they said that either you could make progress through development or you could protect environment, as perhaps both are antagonistic to each other. In my opinion, these are two sides of the same coin. We will have to think about how to make progress while the aim of this development must be the betterment of the common man.



Ambassador Patterson cutting the ribbon to mark the opening of iRaffles, Apple Premium Retail Store in Lahore. Also seen in the picture are Managing Director of Apple for South Asia Phillip Chau, Director Operations Raffles System Ibrahim Qureshi and U.S. Consulate Principal Officer Bryan Hunt.

Ambassador Patterson Launches iRaffles Apple Premium Reseller Store in Lahore

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson termed the launch of the Apple Computer store in Lahore on May 2 “a landmark of American investors’ confidence” in Pakistan.

“The partnership between Apple and Raffles Systems -- representing our two countries -- will promote growth and prosperity in Pakistan,” said the Ambassador. “I hope this partnership, and others between American and Pakistani companies, will keep growing.”

Since 1977, Apple Computers has been a global market leader for personal computers, portable media players, cell phones, computer software and other electronic products. Apple’s popular consumer products have moved technology from the corporate world to the public.

“Information technology, especially in the personal computer sector, has grown phenomenally in Pakistan,” stated the Ambassador. “The combination of internationally competitive costs and high-speed connectivity make Pakistan an attractive destination for IT investment.”

More than 80 U.S. firms currently operate in Pakistan, employing more than 41,000 people directly and an additional one million indirectly. The U.S. has also been Pakistan’s largest investor, with more than \$900 million invested in fiscal year 2007.



U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson viewing the facilities at the Apple Premium Retail Store in Lahore.



USAID

Launches \$90 Million Project to Improve Education in Pakistan

The United States Director of Foreign Assistance and Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Henrietta H. Fore, and Federal Minister for Education Ahsan Iqbal launched a \$90 million project to strengthen basic education in Pakistan.

“Pakistan’s basic education system must earn the trust and confidence of the parents that their children will receive quality education,” said Ms. Fore while speaking at the launching in Islamabad on April 24. “We want to help in building a system that delivers on its promises.”

The new project, ED-LINKS, is designed to improve teachers education, increase students learning, better learning environments and strengthen the ability of the public education sector to provide high-quality, effective services to students and teachers. ED-LINKS will operate in Sindh, Balochistan, Islamabad Capital Territory and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

“It is up to the government and people of Pakistan to define the country’s goals for educating its citizens, to create the will to work toward those goals, and to mobilize the resources that will turn the goals into reality,” USAID’s Henrietta H. Fore said while encouraging the Government of Pakistan to address Pakistan’s educational needs in a concentrated, coordinated way that reaches every level of education.



While in Pakistan, Ms. Fore also met with Prime Minister Yousef Raza Gillani and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar. During the meeting, Ms. Fore reviewed U.S. development assistance to Pakistan and reiterated the United States government’s commitment to help Pakistan address its development challenges.

Since 2002, USAID has provided more than a quarter of a billion dollars to reform and revitalize Pakistan’s educational system.



Students welcome the Administrator of USAID and Director of Foreign Assistance, Henrietta H. Fore at a USAID-supported school in Islamabad.



‘Building Islam in Detroit’:

United States Special Envoy to Organization of Islamic Conference

The U.S. President’s Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), Sada Cumber, inaugurated the exhibition ‘Building Islam in Detroit’ at the National Art Gallery in Islamabad on May 2. The exhibition was jointly organized by the U.S. Embassy and Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA).

“We come from incredibly diverse backgrounds, but our shared faith unites us, and allows us to overcome our differences while retaining our identities. And it also shows how we Muslims and our faith have become woven into the fabric of America,” Sada Cumber said while speaking at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The exhibit revealed some of the incredible diversity that defines Muslim life in America. To capture this diversity, the University of Michigan assembled a team to look at the city landscape from different perspectives.



Architects, historians, sociologists, and anthropologists were just some of the scholars who mapped the Muslim presence in Detroit. They wanted to tell the story of how the community developed from its beginnings in the 1890s, and what it looks like today. Ultimately, the exhibit revealed a truth about Muslims in Detroit, indeed about Muslims across America.

The American envoy said that he was very pleased to be making his first visit to Pakistan as the Special Envoy to the OIC. “I see my appointment as yet another opportunity for our two countries to strengthen the understanding that has marked our friendship.”

“When President Bush appointed me Special Envoy in February, one of the assignments he gave me was to help correct some of the misperceptions of America around the world, and particularly within Muslim communities. This wonderful exhibit helps me do exactly that,” Sada Cumber remarked.



President Bush meets with Sada Cumber, the first U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference.



Exhibit Opens in Islamabad

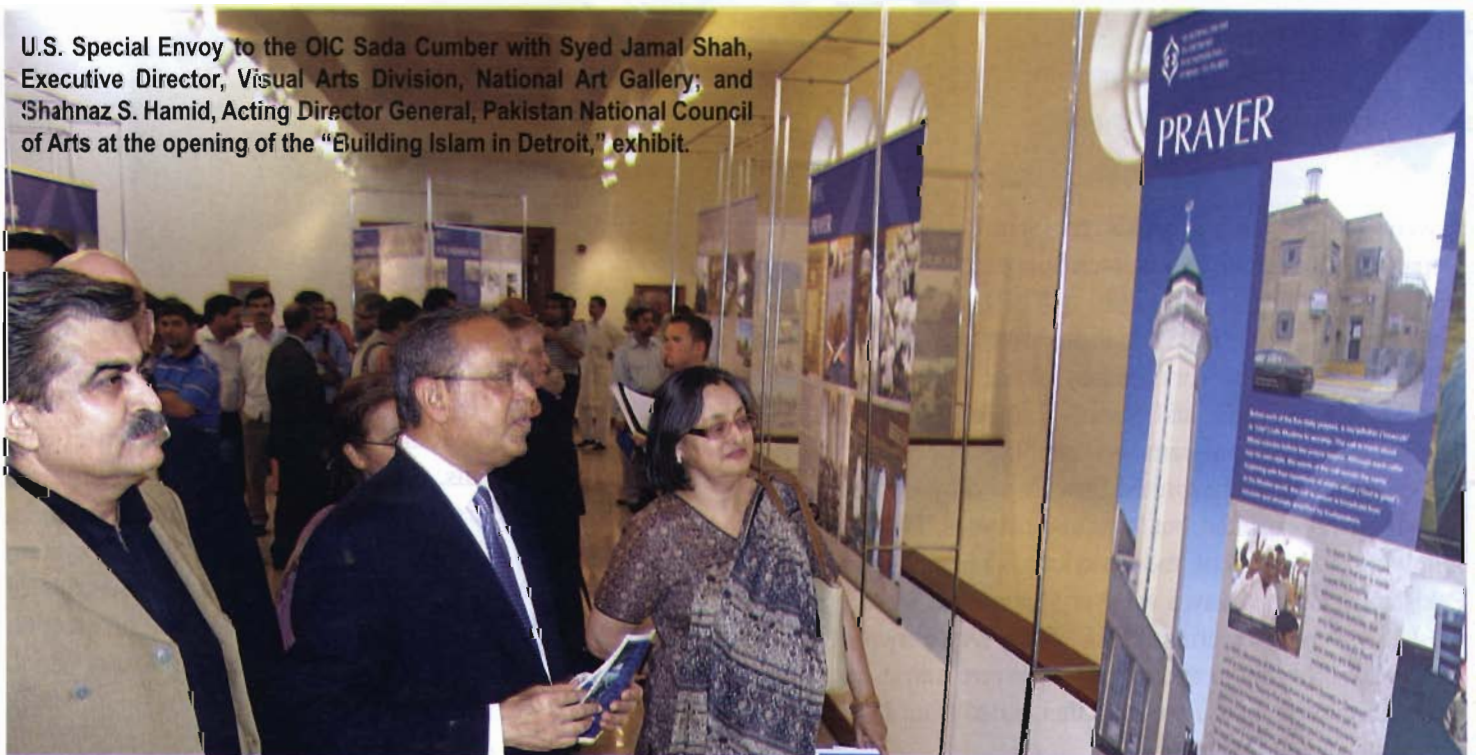
Islamic Conference Sada Cumber Inaugurates

Detroit has been home to Muslim communities for more than a century. Today, large and old mosques can be found throughout Detroit. The exhibit explored ‘building’ as a process that created both physical objects and social identities. The display contains images of places of worship – mosques and Islamic institutions – as ideal examples of this creative process. The pictures also present the social world of mosques where celebrations like fasting, pilgrimage, weddings and Eids are made during these special occasions. As architectural forms, mosques reveal the cultural identities of their builders.

‘Building Islam in Detroit’ is a research project that documents the growth of mosques and Muslim communities in greater Detroit over the last century. Since the project began in May 2004, members of the research team visited over fifty mosques and Islamic associations, photographing them, recording their histories, and interviewing the people who established them.

The exhibit helps viewers appreciate the historical richness, diversity, and influence of Islam in Detroit. Shaped by experiences of discrimination and opportunity, struggle and accomplishment, the building projects on display here are show the groundwork for the future of Muslim America.

U.S. Special Envoy to the OIC Sada Cumber with Syed Jamal Shah, Executive Director, Visual Arts Division, National Art Gallery; and Shahnaz S. Hamid, Acting Director General, Pakistan National Council of Arts at the opening of the “Building Islam in Detroit,” exhibit.



Seeing the REAL America

By Rashida Sial

Rashida Sial is a correspondent with APNA TV Network. She participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) "U.S. Elections" from January 7-25, 2008. The objective of the IVLP program is to develop and strengthen the ties between Pakistani and American professionals and their institutions.

I went to the United States on State Department's three-week International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) from January 7 – 25, 2008 and visited five different states - New York, Pennsylvania, Des Moines, Nevada, and Reno – besides Washington DC. The subject of my program was the "U.S. Elections." As my day of departure to the United States was drawing near, I was becoming more excited, but I was also nervous. I had heard that following 9/11 incident, the Americans don't feel good about Pakistanis. But anyway, I was very happy that I was going to the U.S. When we arrived, U.S. State Department officials received us warmly at the airport. We were introduced to the other participants of the program that hailed from Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

The next morning, which happened to be a Sunday, we gathered at the hotel lobby and met with all other members of the group. Then our travel guides were showed us the city with enthusiasm and letting us know about the best places in the U.S. capital. I noticed that Americans have erected memorials in honor of every one of their presidents and other prominent heroes. They have also built the 'Vietnam Wall' to keep the memories of this war alive in their minds.

Formally our program started Monday, and then we remained engaged in extensive lectures and meetings for several days to come. United States is a democratic country in the true sense of the word. Its legislature, the U.S. Congress, is a very strong and powerful body, and no individual, even the President of the United States, can impose his or her decisions arbitrarily on others. Americans have a long history of democratic institutions compared to Pakistan. The United States essentially has a two-party political system. As the U.S. is a very large country with high inflation, it is not easy for small or regional political parties to survive as issues like fundraising, countrywide extensive election campaigns are vital for political existence.



The author in the observation gallery at the Iowa State Senate.

We got a chance to visit different think-tanks, and meet with American intellectuals, officials and politicians in different cities. I observed the election campaign of some presidential candidates very closely, and how the political system works there. We also visited the campaign headquarters of Democrat and Republican candidates. I covered an election rally of the U.S. presidential hopeful Barack Obama which was really fun.



The program included a visit to the old west town of Virginia City, a gold mining boom town in the mid-1800s.

United States is a very big country with 52 states. All these states enjoy complete autonomy with each state having its own educational and judicial systems. Following Washington, Philadelphia was our next destination. If Washington is a political and VVIP city, Philadelphia's outlook is entirely different. In fact, you can say that we started seeing the real America there.

New York is also an altogether different metropolis, where there are many sky-scrapers. In New York, everyone was in a rush. And perhaps, this is the essence of this city. Our visit included cultural activities and we attended an opera in an extremely beautiful theater. It was a surprise for me to see so many people inside the theater hall. I felt that the Americans knew how to enjoy their lives and that tendency doesn't exist here in Pakistan. I was very happy to see the terrific performance and exquisite costumes of the opera artists.



The author with fellow "U.S. Elections" program participants from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Kazakhstan in Reno, Nevada.

Our next stop was Des Moines, which is the capital city of Iowa. It is a quiet and serene place, and the most surprising but prominent thing about that city was sky-walks. The sky-walks are a three mile system of enclosed, climate-controlled walkways that connect all major buildings of the business district. I realized that the U.S. Government has done so much for its people and perhaps that is why the United States is a superpower today.

I met and interacted with several Americans, and I found them open-minded and very tolerant. Contrary to the popular perception in Pakistan, they are not biased people in general. Another thing that I noted is that America is a very diverse society as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and followers of other religions live there side by side. No one feels insecure or threatened in the presence of other. Life in the U.S. is very busy and people are preoccupied with their day-to-day routine. They have no time to worry about the creed, color or language of others.

Our last stopover was Reno, Nevada which is also known as the "biggest little city in the world." It is exceptionally a beautiful city, full of big casinos, snow-clad mountains and wide roads. During my stay in the U.S., I liked the of taste American steaks, soups, fresh juices, vegetable omelets, and of course American coffee that I miss very much here in Pakistan.

This visit provided me a unique opportunity to learn a lot of new things about the United States and the countries of my fellow program participants. All the members of the group were sad to bid goodbye to their new friends. Several months have passed since my return from the United States, I feel nostalgic about my trip.



Rashida Sial visits a program officer at the U.S. State Department.



U.S. Envoy Underscores Media Professionalism, Integrity on World Press Freedom Day

U.S. Embassy's Press Attaché Elizabeth O. Colton speaking the World Press Freedom Day event at Lincoln Reading Lounge in Islamabad.

The Press Attaché of the U.S. Embassy, Elizabeth O. Colton, called upon the journalists to “exercise the freedom of media with highest standards of professionalism and integrity” while speaking at the World Press Freedom Day function organized at the Lincoln Reading Lounge of the National Library of Pakistan in Islamabad on May 3.

“Journalists must report accurately and fairly all that is of public interest,” Press Attaché Colton emphasized. “The United States values freedom of the press as a key component of democratic governance.”

Elizabeth Colton said that the press is often a target of retaliation by those who feel threatened by freedom of expression and transparency in democratic processes.



“The press fosters active debate, provides investigative reporting, and serves as a forum to express different points of view, particularly on behalf of those who are marginalized in the society,” the American diplomat observed.

Recalling the U.S. government’s active support for press freedom during the Emergency in Pakistan she said that the media must be free to report on events and share their opinions with the public.



Ms. Saadia Naveed, Director Operations, English Biscuit Manufacturers and member of the Management Association of Pakistan presenting a shield to Ambassador Patterson.



Ambassador Patterson addressing members of the Pakistan Management Association (MAP). Also present were MAP President Asif Qadir, Aftab Ahmad of Citibank and Farooq Hassan.

Ambassador Patterson Asks Business Community to Help Build Understanding

The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne W. Patterson, called upon the business community “to help build a better understanding of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship” while addressing the Management Association of Pakistan (MAP) in Karachi.

“One of our very strong priorities in the U.S. relationship with Pakistan is support for private sector development throughout the country,” Ambassador Patterson declared while speaking on the goals and interests of U.S.-Pakistan relations. “Private sector initiative and innovation are the best antidote to the economic stagnation and hopelessness that extremists exploit.”

The Ambassador said that the scope and scale of American investments in Pakistan’s future should serve as indicator that the United States is taking a long-term view of this relationship.

“We want to see Pakistan making progress toward the goals it has set for itself,” she emphasized. “The United States is uniquely positioned to help as the biggest single investor, the largest market, the largest source of remittances, and the largest donor.”

Ambassador Patterson noted that those who oppose American engagement in Pakistan have a very limited understanding of “how our partnerships – the economic assistance and financial interactions - affect the lives of everyday Pakistanis in real and positive ways.”

“We encourage American investors to look to Pakistan as a destination for their franchises and new ventures,” Ambassador Patterson pointed out. “But the violation of intellectual property rights continues to be a major deterrent to local and foreign investment.”

The American Ambassador recounted the various U.S. assistance programs that are under way in Pakistan and noted that Pakistan is now the third-largest recipient of U.S. assistance in the world. “Our objective in providing this assistance is simple and clear: a stable, democratic, and prosperous Pakistan free of militant extremism will make America safer and more prosperous.”

The Ambassador informed the participants that the U.S. also wanted to reopen discussions with the new government on the Bilateral Investment Treaty. “It could be a useful first step toward an eventual free trade agreement with the United States.”



(Photo APP)

Ambassador Patterson Breaks Ground on New U.S. Consulate Building in Karachi

The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne W. Patterson today inaugurated the construction of a new United States Consulate General building in Karachi on May 8 and termed it a “milestone in the long U.S. diplomatic presence” in the city.

“Our ground-breaking for this new facility is a symbol of the strong relationship the United States and Pakistan have enjoyed for more than 60 years,” Ambassador Patterson declared during the ceremony. “We are investing more than 175 million dollars in the new Consulate General, which will contribute to Pakistan’s economy and provide employment for the people of Karachi.”

The new 20.5-acre complex of the United States Consulate General is scheduled for completion in June 2010. The American Consulate in Karachi serves Pakistanis and Americans alike, whether they live in Sindh or Balochistan.

“American and Pakistani companies continue to work together to build profitable businesses here and expand economic opportunities,” the American Ambassador noted.

“Local subcontractors will carry out 12 million dollars in work, and the project will involve 14 million dollars in materials and services from local providers.”

Ambassador Patterson said that Karachi is one of the world’s largest metropolitan areas and “an important contributor to the global economy.”





سفیر پیٹرسن نے کراچی میں امریکی قونصل خانہ کی نئی عمارت کی تعمیر کا افتتاح کیا

امریکی سفیر پیٹرسن نے کہا کہ کراچی دنیا کے بڑے شہروں میں سے ایک شہر ہے اور "عالمی معیشت میں ایک اہم کردار ادا کر رہا ہے۔"

پاکستان میں متعین امریکی سفیر این ڈبلیو پیٹرسن نے 8 مئی 2008ء کو کراچی میں امریکی قونصل خانہ کی نئی عمارت کی تعمیر کے کام کا افتتاح کرتے ہوئے اسے "شہر میں امریکہ کی دیرینہ سفارتی موجودگی کا سنگ میل" قرار دیا۔

سفیر پیٹرسن نے کہا کہ اس نئی عمارت کی تعمیر کا افتتاح امریکہ اور پاکستان کے درمیان 60 سال سے زیادہ قدیم مضبوط تعلقات کی عکاس ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ ہم نئے قونصل خانہ میں 175 ملین ڈالر کی سرمایہ کاری کر رہے ہیں جس سے پاکستان کی معیشت کو تقویت ملے گی اور کراچی کے لوگوں کو روزگار میسر آئے گا۔

انہوں نے کہا کہ سہ ماہی 120 ایکڑ پر مشتمل امریکی قونصل خانہ کی نئی عمارت پروگرام کے مطابق جون 2010ء میں پایہ تکمیل کو پہنچے گی۔ کراچی میں واقع امریکہ قونصل خانہ پاکستانیوں اور امریکیوں کو خدمات فراہم کرتا ہے خواہ وہ سندھ یا بلوچستان میں کہیں بھی رہتے ہوں۔

امریکی سفیر نے کہا کہ امریکی اور پاکستانی کمپنیاں یہاں پر منافع بخش کاروبار کے فروغ اور اقتصادی مواقع میں اضافہ کے لئے مل جل کر کام کرتی رہیں گی۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ مقامی ماتحت ٹھیکیدار 12 ملین ڈالر مالیت کا کام مکمل کریں گے، جبکہ منصوبہ میں 14 ملین ڈالر کا ساز و سامان اور خدمات مقامی طور پر حاصل کی جائیں گی۔



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