



Khabr-o-Nazar

(News & Views)

May 2008

Published by the U.S. Embassy, Islamabad



- Educational Toys Win Smiles
- Reception for New Women Parliamentarians
- First U.S. Muslim Congressman

Ambassador Patterson Calls on New Government Officials



U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson shaking hands with Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi at Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad.



U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson meeting with National Assembly Speaker Dr. Fahmida Mirza at the Parliament House.

U.S. Congressional Delegation Meets Prime Minister Gilani



Ambassador Patterson with a U.S. Congressional delegation led by Representative Michael Capuano (D) of Massachusetts meeting with Prime Minister Yousef Raza Gilani at Prime Minister House in Islamabad.

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Editor-in-Chief
 Elizabeth O. Colton
 Press Attaché
 U.S. Embassy Islamabad



Managing Editor
 Megan Ellis
 Assistant Press Attaché
 U.S. Embassy Islamabad



Published by
 Public Affairs Section
 Embassy of the United States of America,
 Ramna-5, Diplomatic Enclave,
 Islamabad, Pakistan
 Ph: 051-2080000
 Fax: 051-2278607
 Email: infoisb@state.gov
 www.islamabad.usembassy.gov



Designed by
 Syed Shoab Bukhari



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Cover
 U.S. Consulate Public Affairs Officer Traci Mell helping students of Iqra Madinatul Ilm assemble toys sent to the school by American educational toy company Action Products International. Lahore Principal Officer Bryan Hunt presented the colorful wooden toys that promote imaginative play



Letters to the Editor

Most Beautiful

I am a regular reader of "Khabr-o-Nazar." The contents and photographs of the March issue were most beautiful. The magazine is a symbol of good relationship between the two countries.

Ali Nawaz Kalhoro, Khairpur Mirs

Well Known

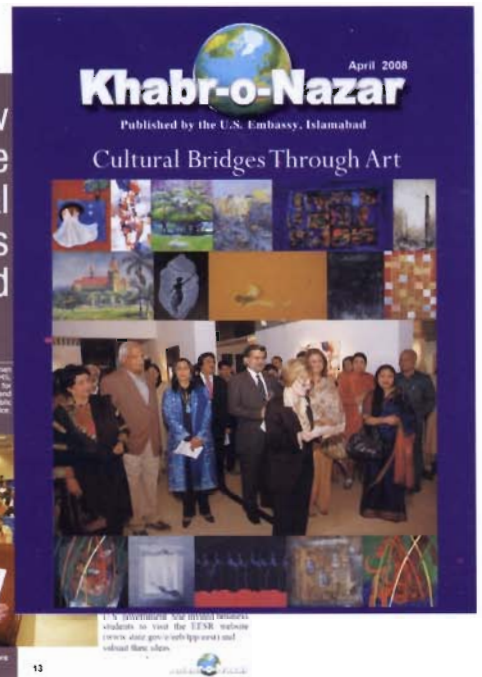
It is a great honor for me to write to your popular and well-known magazine. Pakistan is enjoying good relations with the United States which is providing financial aid to various social up-gradation projects in Pakistan. Your magazine highlighted the USAID assistance in a very comprehensive and good manner. I would also like to suggest that the magazine should also have information on the rules and regulations regarding various visa categories which would help the prospective applicants.

Mehboob A. Khan, Via e-mail

More Pages

I am a regular reader of monthly "Khabr-o-Nazar" for the last three years. The magazine is very interesting and informative, bridging the gap between the two countries. The magazine is very much helpful to present the soft image of Pakistan. Every new issue of the magazine ignites the desire for the next issue. I will like to suggest adding a few more pages on literature in the magazine.

Advocate Muhammad Waseem Elahi, Gujranwala



Concern

I have been reading regularly your "monthly" magazine since long. But it is a matter of concern that the latest issue of the magazine reached me after a comprehensive break. The reasons are not known to me. I hope that from now onward, its copy would be sent regularly so that I may not be deprived of the latest situation with regards to Pak-America relations.

Ehsan Burki, Toba Tek Singh

Very Useful

I have been receiving magazine "Khabr-o-Nazar" in the capacity of Provincial Election Commissioner, Peshawar. The magazine is very useful and informative. It highlights relationship between Pakistan and the United States of America and financial assistance being rendered to Pakistan in education, health and other sectors. I would like to request to kindly continue sending the magazine to me.

Akhtar Hussain Sabir, Islamabad.

Much Appreciated

I am reader of "Khabr-o-Nazar" for the last one year. I love to read it since it is a useful and informative magazine. U.S. Ambassador Patterson's special interest in the preservation of cultural heritage of Pakistan and her visit to Mohatta Palace in Karachi is reflective of her deep interest in social, economic and political development of Pakistan. U.S. support in the conservation efforts in Taxila is much appreciated.

Nusrat Lashari, Karachi

Ambassador Patterson Lauds U.S. - Pakistan Collaboration on Anti-Terrorism Training Programs



U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson, Secretary Interior Syed Kamal Shah, and Commandant PPC Dr. Wasim Kausar reviewing the guard of honor at the Punjab Police College.

The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne W. Patterson, lauded the “successful counter-terrorism partnership between Pakistan and the United States” and noted that “there is no more important task in Pakistan today than to stop the scourge of terrorism.”

She was speaking at the graduation ceremony of the “VIP Protection Course” jointly organized by the U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Security Service Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) Program and the Punjab Police College.

“A small group of misguided individuals must not be allowed to deter the moderate, mainstream majority from building the prosperous and democratic future they envision for Pakistan,” Ambassador Patterson remarked. “Our government shares the Government of Pakistan’s goal to detect, deny, defeat, capture, and prosecute terrorists and their organizations.”



Ambassador Patterson, Secretary Interior Syed Kamal Shah, and Commandant PPC Dr. Wasim Kausar, U.S. Embassy Regional Security Officer Randall Bennett and Mr. Robert Clark of ATA with the instructors and graduates of the training program.

The ATA program provides training, equipment and technology targeted to respond most effectively to the security situation in the host country. The ATA program in Pakistan has operated since 2003. The course emphasized the tactical aspects of dignitary protection. A joint U.S. team and a previously trained Pakistani team acted as instructors.

“You brave men face more of a threat here than your counterparts in almost any other country. We see examples every day of police and security forces of Pakistan sacrificing their lives to prevent suicide bombings and other attacks,” the Ambassador observed.

Ambassador Patterson complimented the “dedicated and courageous front-line officers” for their determination in volunteering for the course.

She commended the role of the Ministry of Interior and Pakistan law enforcement authorities, noting that the training would not have been successful “without their full partnership, logistical assistance, and encouragement.”

On arrival, an honor guard ceremony was conducted for Ambassador Patterson and the Federal Interior Secretary Syed Kamal Shah.

Later, 23 participants received certificates of graduation for completing a three-week intensive VIP protection course concentrating on skills needed to protect national leaders and key facilities from attack.



Consul General Kay Anske and Public Affairs Officer Karen Waltz-Davis dancing with the children



U.S. Consulate Karachi Public Affairs Officer Karen Waltz-Davis grouped together with the children of Don Bosco Home



Ann Stone of Action Products International visits Madinatul Ilm in October 2007.

Educational Toys Win Smiles from

Children in Lahore and Karachi happily played with an assortment of educational toys recently delivered by the U.S. Consulate General in Karachi and the U.S. Consulate in Lahore. Action Products International (API), a Florida-based educational toy company, donated the toys. Civic activist Ann Stone, who visited Pakistan in October 2007 as a U.S. State Department sponsored speaker on community mobilization and women's empowerment, is a member of the API board. Seeking to help the children she had met in Pakistan, she requested the donation from API.

On April 5, U.S. Consul General Kay Anske, Public Affairs Officer Karen Waltz-Davis, and U.S. Marines gave a collection of toys, clothing, and school supplies to children at Don Bosco Home in Karachi. Consulate Lahore Principal Officer Bryan Hunt and Public Affairs Officer Traci Mell presented toys to students of the Madina-tul-Ilm Madrassah on April 10. The children were excited to receive the toys, and performed a welcome dance in honor of their guests. One of the journalists covering the event in Lahore commented that this was "the sort of event that should be placed on the front pages of the paper."



U.S. Consulate Principal Officer Bryan D. Hunt addressing students of Iqra Madinatul Ilm after presenting educational toys to them that "will help develop their imagination and motor skills." The toys are a gift from American educational toy company Action Products International.

Young Pakistanis



Students of Iqra Madinatul Ilm in Lahore playing with the educational toys sent to them by American entrepreneur Ms. Ann Stone who visited the madrasa last October. Ms. Ann Stone owns the company Action Products International that designs, manufactures and markets educational toys.

U.S. Consulate Principal Officer Bryan Hunt hoped that the young students of Iqra Madinatul Ilm “would develop their imagination and motorskills” as he presented the educational toys. “The toys are a gift from Ms. Ann Stone, who visited the madrasa last October and was impressed by the children’s intelligence,” remarked Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Hunt observed that in addition to education, “children must get the chance to enhance their inborn creativity and imagination.” He helped the young children open the boxes and hoped they “would have fun” playing with the toys.

The school administration appreciated the gift, which comprises 45 sets of colorful wooden toys that promote imaginative play and improve color recognition and hand-eye coordination.

The event opened with two of the female students offering a prayer, followed by a welcome dance by six members of the primary class. Principal Officer Hunt then gave his remarks in Urdu to the children, which greatly impressed both the faculty and students.

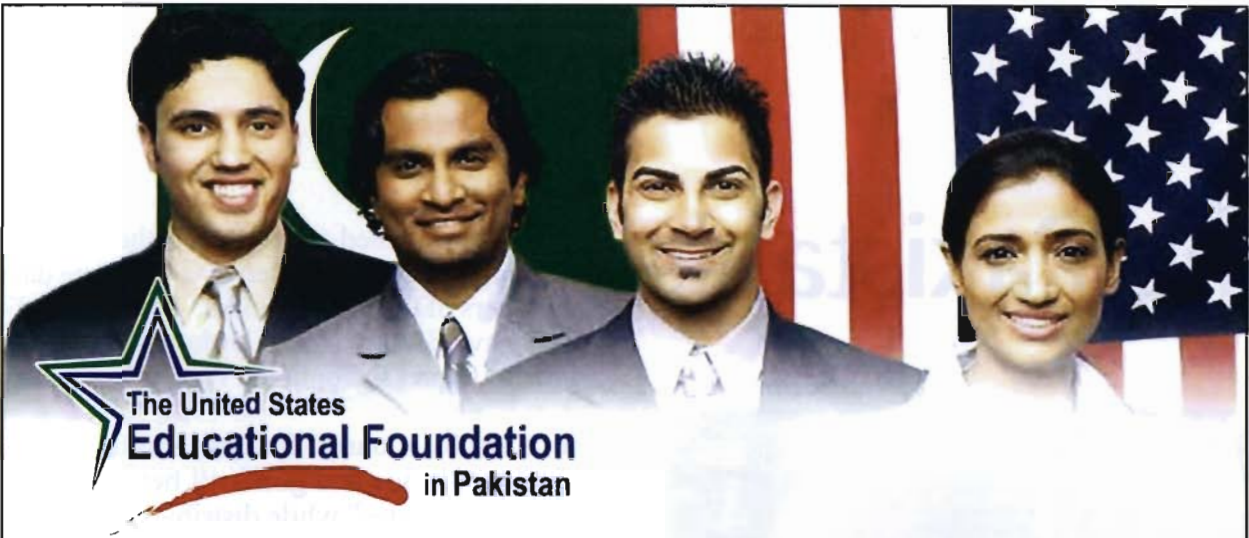
In Karachi, Consul General Anske underlined the need for “peace and goodwill between Pakistan and the United States” while distributing clothing, school supplies, and educational toys to the children of Don Bosco Home.

“Many children come from difficult family situations, making them less likely to receive quality education,” Consul General Anske remarked. “Community involvement creates a strong bond within and among families and communities.”

The United States Marines from the U.S. Consulate General in Karachi and Consul General Anske enjoyed lunch and play activities with the children throughout the afternoon.



U.S. Consulate Donates Toys to Children



Professional Development Opportunity in the United States 2009 - 2010 Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Competition

Program Summary

The United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan, a bi-national commission, invites applications for the Hubert H. Humphrey Program. This non-degree program brings mid-career professionals to the United States for 10-12 months of graduate-level non-degree academic coursework and an opportunity to work for a short time with a U.S. organization in the same profession. Because a major goal of this program is to increase the mutual understanding between the people of Pakistan and the people of the United States, Humphrey fellows are expected to share their knowledge of Pakistan with colleagues, friends, and community groups in the U.S. and to share their experiences in the U.S. with comparable groups in Pakistan on their return home. A high priority for this program are those involved in the Administration of Science and Technology Education.

Grant Benefits

The grant funds tuition, airfare, a living stipend, and health insurance. USEFP will assist with the visa process.

Eligibility

Successful applicants must be committed to serving Pakistan in the public, NGO or private sector. They must be Pakistani citizens with a minimum of five years progressively responsible professional/work experience following the Master's degree and a guarantee of re-employment upon return to Pakistan. They must possess a high level of fluency in spoken and written English, with a recent iBT TOEFL score of 90 or higher. Applicants should have taken the TOEFL examination by the time they submit their application. Successful candidates should be poised to assume a leadership position in their field and must have a Masters or comparable professional degree. Women, minorities, and people with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Not eligible are university teachers or researchers with no management experience or responsibilities, those who attended graduate school in the U.S. in the last seven years or who have had long-term U.S. experience within the last five years. Also ineligible are persons with a dual U.S./Pakistan nationality or who have a spouse, fiancé,

parent or child over the age of 18 who is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Employees of the Fulbright organization, the U.S. Department of State are also ineligible.

Applications are invited from the public and private sector in the following fields:

- Agricultural Development / Agricultural Economics
- Communications / Journalism
- Substance Abuse Education / Treatment and Prevention
- Economic Development
- Educational Administration, Planning and Policy
- Finance and Banking
- HIV / AIDS Policy and Prevention
- Human Resource Management
- Law and Human Rights
- Natural Resources, Environmental Policy and Climate Change
- Public Health Policy and Management
- Public Policy Analysis and Public Administration
- Technology Policy and Management
- Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and Policy
- Urban and Regional Planning
- Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (Teacher Training or Curriculum Development)

For 2009-2010 special priority fields are:

- o Science and Technology Education
- o Technology Policy and Management Education
- o Administration of Science and Technology Education

All application materials (original and one copy), including references, must be received by USEFP by 4:30 p.m. on June 2, 2008.

For more information or to obtain an application and guidelines, please visit our website: www.usefpakistan.org, e-mail: fulbrightapps@usefpakistan.org, or telephone: 051-11-11-USEFP (051-11-11-87337)

Application Deadline: June 2, 2008



EVERNEWCONCEPTS

USAID Successfully Completes Microfinance Project for Low-Income Clients

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) celebrated the successful completion of its Widening Harmonized Access to Microfinance (WHAM) project, which extended financial services to low-income clients in Pakistan.

“During the past three years, USAID’s WHAM project has identified new trends and anticipated solutions to emerging problems in the microfinance sector of Pakistan,” said USAID/Pakistan Mission Director Anne Aarnes. “Our efforts have contributed to an expansion of financial services that produced a three-fold increase in borrowers from 500,000 in 2005 to 1,500,000 by the end of 2007.”



USAID/Pakistan Mission Director Anne Aarnes congratulates WHAM partners at a ceremony in Islamabad.



With a loan of \$160, Ulfat Bibi has set up a small shop in her small house located in a low-income neighborhood of Quetta, Balochistan. The sole earner for her family, Ulfat’s income has increased from \$35 to \$150 since she began borrowing.

In a ceremony on March 28 in Islamabad, to celebrate the project’s success, the USAID Director and Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, presented awards and certificates of appreciation to WHAM’s key partners for their contributions to the success of the project.

Implemented by ShoreBank International, in coordination with the State Bank of Pakistan and the Pakistan Microfinance Network, USAID’s \$4.9 million WHAM project made it possible for Pakistan’s microfinance sector to extend financial services to three million new borrowers by 2010. The project worked with commercial banks and microfinance institutions to accommodate the needs of micro, small, and medium enterprises and fill the gap between microfinance and commercial banking.

WHAM provided consulting, training, and technology to National Bank of Pakistan, Standard Chartered Bank, Crescent Commercial Bank, Kashf Foundation, Tameer Microfinance, National Rural Support Program, Asasah, First Microfinance Bank, and Khushhali Bank.

Support for WHAM is part of the \$1.5 billion in aid the United States is providing to Pakistan, through USAID, over five years to improve economic growth, education, health, and governance and to reconstruct areas affected by the October 2005 earthquake.

“Pakistan can be an example of what a Muslim democracy looks like.”

First U.S. Muslim Congressman talks to Khabr-o-Nazar

Congressman Keith Ellison represents the District of Minnesota in the United States House of Representatives. He took office on January 4, 2007. Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, Congressman Ellison graduated from Wayne State University in 1986 with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics. He moved to Minnesota in 1987 to attend the University of Minnesota Law School, where he earned his law degree in 1990. He and his wife, Kim, a high school math teacher, have since made Minnesota their home, where they are raising their four children.

Keith Ellison belongs to the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party. He became the first Muslim to be elected to the United States Congress. He is also the first African-American elected to the House from Minnesota. Ellison is also active on a national level in advocacy for Muslims in the United States. Ellison serves on the House Financial Services Committee and the House Judiciary Committee. He was part of a six-member U.S. Congressional delegation that recently visited Pakistan. During his stay in Islamabad he spoke with Khabr-o-Nazar. Here is what he said:



Congressman Keith Ellison

I Have

On Issues In His Election:

Over the last 30 years there has been significant wage stagnation for average people in the United States. About 50 million people don't have health care insurance and I raised these issues, arguing that we need to re-slice the economic pie, much more in favor of middle-class people. And then people liked what I was saying and I ended up winning the endorsement of my party.

On being Muslim:

After I won endorsement of my party, the issue of my religion came up. Some people began to rally my opponents and build hysteria, but most people ignored it and I ended up winning the primary. My color did not come up as much; my religion played much larger than race. One of my Republican opponents sent out flyers saying that I was a **terrorist**. On one occasion, I was **on a national TV** program and the host asked me to prove that I wasn't working with the enemies of America. Finally, the reason so many people voted for me is because I had a track record of working towards the common good.

On being a leader:

Well, the truth is that I am not a Muslim leader. I have never given a Juma Khutba in my life. I pray, I go to Juma every week, I fast in Ramadan and hope to make it to Haj one day. But I'm not a religious leader, I am a political leader who is Muslim. But specifically, I was the original co-sponsor for a resolution honoring and recognizing Ramadan. This is the first time in the history of U.S. Congress. That has never happened before. I organized an Iftar at Capitol Hill, which was so well-attended that we will have to get a bigger room next year. And most of the people there were not Muslims, but we did deliver outreach to non Muslims - Christians and Jews - to build a better relationship. And I think my election victory is signaling to American Muslims (about eight million of us) that politics are open and available for you to participate in it. And I think this is signaling the non-Muslims in America that Muslims are just like everybody else - people who care about their kids, care about their parents, want peace.



U.S. Congressman Keith Ellison with Speaker Nancy Pelosi at his swearing-in ceremony. He swore his oath of office on the Quran that belonged to Thomas Jefferson, highlighting the legacy of religious freedom enshrined in the Constitution and the contributions to American society made by people of diverse faiths.

a Track Record of Working Towards Common Good:

Congressman Keith Ellison



Rep. Ellison and members of a U.S. Congressional Delegation with Port Qasim officials during their visit to the joint U.S.-Pakistan International Container Security Project in Karachi.

On the War Against Terror:

I believe that war is almost always avoidable through dialogue and negotiation. There are occasions where war is necessary, but I think that if we negotiate with what we call the world community together, if we insist on non-military acts, we can usually get to a solution that doesn't cause massive loss of life.

On his visit to Pakistan:

I had a wonderful experience here. I'm very impressed. As a matter of fact, my experience with Pakistan started in the United States, because there are a lot of friends who are either born in Pakistan, or whose parents or grandparents were born in Pakistan. And they have a tremendous affection and attachment to Pakistan. They helped me to understand the central nature of Pakistan's role in the world. It is a Muslim nation, 160 million people, a nuclear power, has its own traditions. So this place is vitally important and it is so important for people in the United States and the West to understand Pakistan much better.

On the future of Pakistan:

I think there is reason for optimism, I think that the prospects for Pakistani democracy are good. I think that Pakistan as a Muslim country can be an example of what a Muslim democracy looks like.

His Message to Muslim Youth:

Look at Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). No one had to face harsher adversity than the Prophet when he was giving his message. He was rejected. His life was in danger in a lot of ways yet he showed a lot of patience, prayer, perseverance; did not strike back, did not give in to hate, anger, revenge, always fought fair. This tells us don't give in to anger, don't give in to hate, don't give in to blaming others, invest in yourself, and be patient. Be prayerful, develop your God given talents, work hard, focus on the common good, and you will succeed. But if you allow yourself to blame others or blame America or blame somebody for your situation, you never take responsibility for what you can do to improve your situation. So what I would say to the Muslim youth is to work hard, make friends, and face adversity with an open heart. Inshallah you will succeed.



Representative Keith Ellison and his delegation being greeted by Karachi City Nazim Mustafa Kamal.

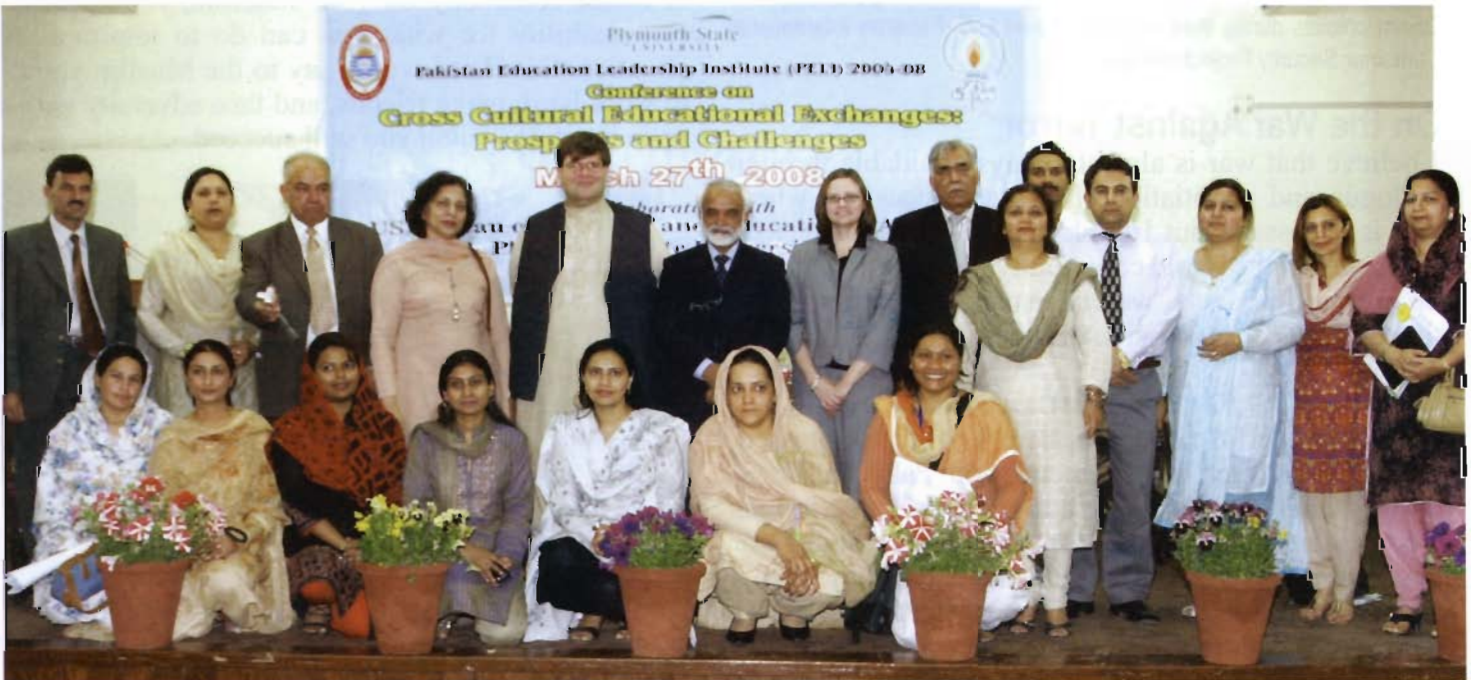
Lahore Photo Gallery



Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Mohammad Ali Mian presenting a souvenir to U.S. Consulate Lahore Principal Officer Bryan Hunt at the LCCI IT IT Fair 2008. LCCI Senior Vice President Mian Muzaffar Ali and Vice President Shafqat Saeed Piracha were also present.



U.S. Consulate Lahore Principal Officer Bryan Hunt at the shrine of Punjabi Sufi poet Hazrat Shah Hussain on the first day of the annual Urs celebration. The celebration is popularly known as Mela Chiraghan or the Festival of Lights; the first day is a local holiday. Shah Hussain pioneered the "kafi" form of Punjabi poetry.



U.S. Consulate Lahore Principal Officer Bryan Hunt and Public Affairs Officer Traci Mell with alumni of the Plymouth State University exchange program for Pakistani educators. Thirty alumni of PSU's Pakistan Education Leadership Institute (PELI) and 35 other educators attended the one-day conference on "Cross-Cultural Exchanges: A Collaboration Between Pakistan and the U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs." The PELI program, initiated in 2004, has produced 80 Pakistani graduates and is administered by Idara Taleem-o-Agha (ITA).



USAID Mission Director Anne Aarnes presents a grant document to a representative of a local NGO in Islamabad for educating communities on clean water and hygiene practices on March 20, 2008.

USAID Supports Access to Clean Drinking Water

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has awarded grants to 20 local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to instruct communities in 10 districts and two Federally Administered Tribal Area agencies on clean water and hygiene practices.



USAID Mission Director, Anne Aarnes along with the representatives of local NGOs who were awarded grants for training communities on clean water and hygiene practices.

“Water- and sanitation-related diseases are responsible for 60 percent of child deaths in Pakistan, with diarrhea estimated to kill 230,000 Pakistani children under the age of five each year,” said Anne Aarnes, Mission Director of USAID/Pakistan in Islamabad on March 20. “USAID is helping Pakistani communities access clean water and adopt sanitary practices that save lives.”

The grants are part of USAID’s \$17.9 million Pakistan Safe Drinking Water and Hygiene Promotion Project. The three-year project complements the Government of Pakistan’s Clean Drinking Water Initiative by working with communities to ensure that government-provided water filtration plants are properly maintained.

These grants will help to improve water and sanitation in Sukkur, Jaffarabad, Dera Ghazi Khan, Khanewal, Okara, Bagh, Rawalakot, Neelum, Kohistan, Upper Dir, Bajaur Agency, and Kurrum Agency.

Support for Pakistan Safe Drinking Water and Hygiene Promotion Project is part of the \$1.5 billion in aid the U.S. Government is providing to Pakistan over a five-year period to improve economic growth, education, health, governance, and earthquake reconstruction.

USAID Holds Orientation for New Pakistani Parliamentarians

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) held orientation sessions for the new members of Pakistan's National Assembly in Islamabad and for Provincial Assembly members in Karachi and Lahore during March and April. The orientation is part of USAID's \$7.8 million Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Project (PLSP).

"For more than three years, USAID has worked with the national and provincial assemblies and all parties to support efforts that give legislators the information they need to serve their constituents better," USAID Pakistan Mission Director Anne Aarnes said while welcoming the newly elected members in Islamabad on March 20.

The orientation provided new assembly members with an overview of the functioning of assemblies, including rules of parliamentary procedure and the committee system. The PLSP aims to assist legislators in law-making, oversight, management and infrastructure, and budgetary review skills, tailoring activities to meet their specific needs.



USAID's Project Director Christopher Shields addressing the orientation session held for the new members of National Assembly in Islamabad.

On April 6, U.S. Consul General Kay Anske attended the orientation program for newly elected members of the Sindh Assembly in Karachi. A team of officials from the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services flew in from Islamabad to participate in this event.



Newly elected members of the Sindh Assembly attend the orientation session organized by USAID in Karachi.



U.S. Consulate Principal Officer Bryan Hunt addressing the members of the newly elected Punjab Assembly on April 18, 2008.

U.S. Consul General Kay Anske shaking hands with a member of the newly elected Sindh Assembly in Karachi.



Sindh Assembly Speaker Nisar Khuro with PPP minister Pir Mazhar-ul-Haq.



Sindh Minister for Information Shazia Marri speaking at the session.

In Lahore, U.S. Consulate Principal Officer Bryan Hunt reiterated the United States' support for the "democratic transition in Pakistan" during his address to members of the newly elected Punjab Assembly on April 18.

In August 2007, Ambassador Anne W. Patterson had inaugurated the Parliamentary Information Technology Resource Center (PITRC), situated in the Members Hostel in Lahore, to provide Assembly members with research and information support.

"Following the orientation, PLSP will conduct detailed sessions on areas of interest to the members, particularly the budget process, member-media relations and rules and procedures of the House," remarked USAID Project Director Christopher Shields.

USAID's PLSP is being implemented by partner Development Alternatives Inc.

Ground Breaking Ceremony

In-Service Training School Bagh



USAID/Pakistan Earthquake Reconstruction Deputy Team Leader, Marilee Kane, Director General Health AJK, Dr. Qurban Mir and Chief of Party PRIDE, Bruce Rasmussen break ground for a \$100,000 in-service training facility building for health care professionals in district Bagh of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on March 19, 2008.

Bagh Health Staff Efforts Honored

Public Health Improved through \$28 million USAID Project

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) recognized Health Department staff of Bagh district, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), for their efforts to improve public health services in the area through the agency's \$28 million healthcare project.

“USAID works with local health officials and citizens to integrate, improve, and expand the network of health services for residents of the earthquake-affected areas of Pakistan,” said USAID/Pakistan Earthquake Reconstruction Deputy Team Leader Marilee Kane 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's 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 improved hygiene practices.

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

PRIDE supports primary health programs in 95 basic health units and 22 rural health centers in Bagh and Mansehra districts. The project is part of USAID's four-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 AJK.



USAID/Pakistan Earthquake Reconstruction Deputy Team Leader, Marilee Kane and Director General Health AJK, Dr. Qurban Mir, honor a health official for her efforts in improving public health services in district Bagh of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.



Guests at the USAID awards ceremony in district Bagh.



U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice addresses members of the Senior Roundtable for Women's Justice about the need to enforce laws that protect women.

Moving the Cause of Equal Justice for Women Beyond Rhetoric

Senior Roundtable for Women's Justice in Washington

U.S. 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." She was delivering her keynote address at the Senior Roundtable for Women's Justice, hosted by the Department of State in Washington, D.C., on March 12. The conference coincided 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 70 federal, state, and international judges and legal practitioners participated in the seminar, 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 Nahida Mehboob Ellahi, took part in the deliberations. Secretary Rice pointed out that in today's world one out of every three women is beaten, raped, or otherwise abused during her lifetime. This violence, and this climate of perpetual fear that it creates, is particularly pervasive in areas of conflict – where the strong too often exploit the weak, where no force of law or justice exists to contain the darker demons of human nature and where it is women who too often suffer the most, she said.



Associate Supreme Court Justice (Ret'd) Sandra Day O'Connor addresses the roundtable. Justice O'Connor was the first woman appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court.



Deputy Attorney General Nahida Mehboob Ellahi with fellow members of the Senior Roundtable for Women's Justice in Washington, D.C.

"In addressing the challenge of domestic violence and women's access to justice, we realize that raising our voices for 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 how laws are made, but to help ensure that they are enforced fairly.



YES Program: An Enriching Experience

By Muhammad Talha Qureshi

My experience in the United States started when I arrived in Washington, D.C., on June 8, 2006, with other Pakistani Youth Exchange and Study (YES) students. The program started with an orientation session that prepared us for possible “culture shock.” Soon after, I left for Colorado. My host family, the Greenlees, and my local coordinator, Pam Veatch, welcomed me at Colorado Springs Airport. I started getting ready for high school life in America.

I had some problems at first adjusting to the new culture, but within two weeks I was really settled. My favorite class in first semester at Canon City High School was Advanced Computer Applications. I also joined some clubs, including the Environmental Club, Drama Club, Speech and Debate club, Art Club, and International Club. I started playing basketball, but had to discontinue it at the advent of Ramadan. I started studying Spanish, and I liked it so much that I changed my French class in second semester to Spanish.

In September I auditioned for the fall play, and it gave me immense pleasure to be selected. We had daily three- to four-hour rehearsals after school. The name of the play was “M*A*S*H*,” which is an acronym for “Mobile Army Surgical Hospital.” I played the role of a Korean soldier named Ho Jon. The play was a huge success for the school’s drama department. We performed the play again for three days in November. My host family came to see the play and appreciated my performance. In late November, I went to the state capital, Denver, with the Drama Club to attend a three-day Thespian Conference, where I learned about acting, expressions, and communication on the stage.

I did community service projects with the Environmental Club. We went to the river walk, zoo, and other places. We had fun at Halloween, when the International Club took all the foreign exchange students to “trick or treat.” Halloween was a great time, especially with community service. I volunteered for 30 hours at the Prison Museum and at the Boo Bash, entertaining kids by being a clown.

I really looked forward to Christmas, as it was the first Christmas I had ever celebrated. I got a lot of presents. After the Christmas festivities, I went to Aspen, Colorado, with my host family for snowboarding. In my hometown, Karachi, there is no snow, so I was excited about snowboarding.



Talha taking snowboarding classes in Colorado, USA

On the academic front, the new Spanish class was fun, and I learned more of the language. At the end of January, all the foreign exchange students of the Council for International Educational Exchange (CIEE) went on a ski trip to Monarch, Colorado. It was a lot of fun for me, as I got to do snowboarding again.

I was selected for the YES Leadership Summit 2007 in Boulder, Colorado. I learned about leadership abilities and the requirements of being a good leader. During spring break I went to Chicago, Illinois, where I stayed with the Cummings family. I enjoyed seeing the "Windy City" and America's tallest building, the Sears Tower. I went to the top of the John Hancock building and to Navy Piers. In April we visited Denver, where we toured the State Capitol building and the downtown area.

As May started, I realized I had only 47 more days in America. I felt bad to be leaving soon, but really excited about going back home. On the eve of graduation, I really felt proud. When I went on stage to collect my certification of study, my host family and friends cheered for me. I felt like I had succeeded in being a good ambassador of my country, Pakistan. I celebrated my 16th birthday on May 29, 2007. My host mom arranged a party, and my friends, teachers, and people I knew in the community came.

I left my host family and flew to Washington, D.C., on June 10, 2007. The seven days in Washington were amazing. I went to many nice places like Capitol Hill, the White House, and a Senator's office.

After my exchange year in the United States, I feel indebted to my parents; my country coordinator, Ms. Farah Kamal; YES Program in charge Ms. Mary Karam; CIEE grant program manager Kate Dunkerly; local coordinator Pam Veatch; my host family, the Greenlees; my high school principal, Dr. Cindy Compton; my English teacher, Mrs. Krauth; my drama teacher, Ms. Dean; my host aunt, Linda Carlson; and all my friends in America.



After graduation with senior friends at Canon City High School.



The author with basketball team mates at Canon City High School gym.



Talha celebrating Pakistan's Independence Day with American friends.

Pakistan Broke Barriers for Women Leaders:

Ambassador Patterson

Following are excerpts from Ambassador Anne W. Patterson's remarks at a reception she hosted for new women parliamentarians in Islamabad.

"It is a pleasure to welcome such a distinguished group to my home. As you can probably already tell from looking around the room, Pakistan has many female leaders – from political life, from business, from education, and from private voluntary groups. I hope tonight's gathering is only the beginning for all of us to get to know each other better. As we do, I am sure we will discover shared concerns and work together on these issues.

Seventy-five women parliamentarians -- an unprecedented number in Pakistan's history -- were sworn in. Congratulations! Notably, in its first order of business, the National Assembly elected Pakistan's first female Speaker, Dr. Fahmida Mirza. We were all pleased to see a woman elected to lead this august body.

In many ways, and no surprise to those who know the real Pakistan, your country has helped break barriers for women leaders in all fields around the world. In my own country, we only now have the first possible female presidential nominee, and only last year the first female Speaker of the House, and this after 218 years. Unfortunately, it took nearly 150 years to even grant women the right to vote in the U.S.



Ambassador Patterson hosted a reception at her residence in honor of Pakistan's women parliamentarians.



Ambassador Patterson with MNA Khush Bakh Shujaat and Sadia Sher.



U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Peter Bodde and Mrs. Tanya Bodde with MNA Donya Aziz.

Of course, Benazir Bhutto blazed trails as one of the first female heads of government, and she earned her position as a Muslim leader. I only had the privilege to know her for a short while. She was an inspirational figure for all young women around the world. Assuming a leadership role came at a heavy price, as we so sadly saw with her assassination. But her example undoubtedly lives on and challenges us here tonight.

If 'democracy is a process, not an event,' then last month's elections represented a notable step in that process. While the perspectives and priorities of women may be different from those of your male counterparts, these differences will strengthen Pakistan's democracy. The presence of women in political life has been key to improving education and health for women -- the greatest driver of social development.

The rest of us have a responsibility to support and encourage these newly elected leaders, as well as women in our respective fields."

پاکستان نے خواتین رہنماؤں کی راہ میں حائل رکاوٹیں توڑ دیں: سفیر پیٹرسن

سفیر امریکہ این ڈبلیو پیٹرسن نے گزشتہ دنوں اسلام آباد میں پاکستان کی پارلیمنٹ کی نئی منتخب ہونے والی خاتون ارکان کے اعزاز میں استقبال دیا۔ اس موقع پر انھوں نے جن خیالات کا اظہار کیا، اس کے اقتباسات پیش خدمت ہیں:

”مجھے اپنے گھر پر ممتاز خواتین کا خیر مقدم کرتے ہوئے نہایت خوشی محسوس ہو رہی ہے۔ اس کمرے پر نگاہ ڈال کر بآسانی اندازہ لگایا جاسکتا ہے کہ پاکستان میں بڑی تعداد میں خاتون لیڈر موجود ہیں، جو سیاست، بزنس، تعلیم اور پرائیویٹ رضا کارگروپوں سے تعلق رکھتی ہیں۔ مجھے امید ہے آج رات کا یہ اجتماع ایک دوسرے کو بہتر طور پر سمجھنے کے لئے ایک آغاز ثابت ہوگا۔ اس طرح ہم سب مشترکہ مسائل معلوم کر سکیں گے اور ان کے حل کے لئے مل کر کام کر سکیں گے۔“

پاکستان میں 75 خاتون ارکان پارلیمنٹ نے حلف اٹھایا، جو ملک کی تاریخ میں ایک غیر معمولی تعداد ہے۔ میں آپ کو مبارکباد دیتی ہوں۔ یہ بات خاص طور پر قابل ذکر ہے کہ قومی اسمبلی نے اپنی کارروائی کے آغاز پر ایک خاتون، ڈاکٹر فہمیدہ مرزا کو اپنا اسپیکر منتخب کیا۔ ایک خاتون کے قومی اسمبلی کے سربراہ مقرر ہونے پر ہم سب کو خوشی ہوئی۔

پاکستان کے لوگوں کے لئے یہ بڑے اعزاز کی بات ہے کہ پاکستان نے کئی لحاظ سے دنیا بھر کی خاتون لیڈروں کی راہ میں حائل رکاوٹیں توڑنے میں قائدانہ کردار ادا کیا ہے۔ اس کی اہمیت کا اندازہ یوں لگایا جاسکتا ہے کہ خود میرے ملک میں اب کہیں جا کر ایک خاتون صدارت کے عہدے کی ممکنہ امیدوار بنی ہیں اور صرف پچھلے سال ایک خاتون ایوان نمائندگان کی اسپیکر مقرر ہوئی ہیں اور یہ امریکہ کی آزادی کے 218 سال گزرنے کے بعد ہوا ہے۔ امریکہ میں خواتین کو ووٹ کا حق دینے میں تقریباً 150 سال کا عرصہ لگا۔



یو ایس ایڈی کی مشن ڈائریکٹر این آر نیوزرکن قومی اسمبلی شہناز علی کے ساتھ۔



امریکی سفارتخانہ کے پولیٹیکل توٹلر کیڈش پنٹم (دائیں) امریکہ ریویو سیمینار ایسی ایسٹن کی ڈائریکٹر شہناز بخاری اور رکن قومی اسمبلی فوزیہ حبیب کے ہمراہ۔

بے نظیر بھٹوان اور لیون خواتین میں شامل ہیں، جو حکومت کی سربراہ بنیں۔ انھوں نے ایک مسلم لیڈر کی حیثیت سے اپنا لوہا منوایا۔ اگرچہ انھیں اس قائدانہ کردار کی بھاری قیمت چکانی پڑی، لیکن ان کی قائم کردہ مثال زندہ ہے اور ہم سب کو دعوت عمل دیتی ہے۔ اگر ”جمہوریت کسی واقعے کا نام نہیں، بلکہ عمل کا نام ہے تو پھر پچھلے ماہ کے الیکشن اس سمت میں ایک نہایت اہم قدم کی حیثیت رکھتے ہیں۔“

خواتین کی سوچ اور ترجیحات اپنے ہم منصب مرد ارکان سے مختلف ہو سکتی ہیں، لیکن یہ اختلافات درحقیقت پاکستان میں جمہوریت کو مضبوط بنائیں گے۔ سیاسی زندگی میں خواتین کی موجودگی، خواتین کی تعلیم اور صحت میں بہتری لانے کے لئے بہت اہم ثابت ہوتی ہے جو کہ سیاسی ترقی کا سب سے بڑا محرک ہے۔ ہم سب باقی خواتین پر ذمہ داری عائد ہوتی ہے کہ ہم نئی منتخب ہونے والی خواتین رہنماؤں کی اور دوسرے مختلف شعبوں میں کام کرنے والی خواتین کی حوصلہ افزائی کریں۔