

"Pakistan Recovery Fund" to raise funds for flood victims in Pakistan



LONDON: Pak envoy Wajid Shamsul Hasan discussing "Prince of Wales Pakistan Recovery Fund" with John O'Brien, Senior Representative of the Prince at Pakistan High Commission on Tuesday.

LONDON: John O'Brien, Prince of Wales's Senior Representative called on Pakistan High Commissioner Wajid Shamsul Hasan to brief him on Prince Charles's initiative "The Pakistan Recovery Fund" which aims to raise significant investment in funding and support in-kind and goods in the aftermath of devastating floods in Pakistan. The initiative aims at raising between 2 to 5 million pounds over two

years. In order to achieve this target, a whole set of fundraising activities has been planned by the organisers. In this connection, the Prince would attend a major gala fundraising event in December this year in the UK. The event would be a major showcase, attracting significant individuals from all walks of life who are concerned about the humanitarian plight of the people affected. Similar linked

events overseas would also be arranged.

It was informed that the Fund was convened because the Prince wished to personally respond to an unprecedented humanitarian disaster. The Fund also demonstrates His Royal Highness's wish to help mobilise those around the world to support this vital cause.

Brien, who had visited the flood affected areas recently

said that he had never seen such an enormous calamity anywhere else in the world. He agreed to establish linkages with National Disaster Management Authority of Pakistan for coordinated efforts. He also sought Pakistan High Commission's support in disseminating the information about the Fund's activities.

The High Commissioner expressed his deep gratitude for this benign and humanitarian gesture of the Prince and assured his full support to make the initiative a success so that the sufferings of the affected people could be mitigated. Although Pakistan was doing its best to cope with the situation, yet it needed assistance from the international community, said the High Commissioner. He expressed confidence the Fund would go a long way in rehabilitation of the flood affectees.

Saudi Arabia working on sound footing to make the country economically stable and beneficiary to other nations: Prince Mohammad

Nation special report

LONDON: Prince Mohammed Bin Nawaf Bin 'Abd al-'Aziz Al- Sa'ud, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to the UK, has said that his country is playing very pivotal role not only making the Kingdom economically sound, prosper and stable but also helping other countries as well.

He was addressing on the subject 'Saudi Finance Forum: Growth and Stability' at a seminar hosted by British Chamber of Commerce at Dorchester Hotel here on Thursday. "Saudi Arabia has been able to excel at creating a business environment that is stable and welcoming to growth", he said.

Prince Mohammad bin Nawaf said "I am always pleased to take part in Arab-British Chamber of Commerce events, as its mission is one that is important - to foster more prosperous economic and cultural relations between my homeland, its Arab neighbours, and the UK where I am honoured to serve as the ambassador of our King and people. I am delighted that a senior member of the British Government is taking part in this forum today and I am sure his contribution will be both interesting and beneficial. His presence here today highlights the excellent relations that exist between our two countries".

He said that the Arab British Chamber is one whose work has recently brought new ideas and important commercial connections to both Kingdoms. While, no doubt, we have all heard the joke that a committee is twelve men doing the work of one, this Chamber has, in my opinion, always been a committee whose members do even more work than their numbers would suggest can be done.

"As the subject of today's gathering is growth and stability in Saudi finance, I would like to take a quick look at the financial picture of my country in order to show how responsibly we have managed our resources to assure our stability and security. This also shows how vital a part we therefore continue to play in the global economy.

Unlike some of the regional governments currently facing unrest, the Kingdom has a strong record of fiscal responsibility and economic diversification" he elaborated.



The total of 2011 projected GDP of the entire MENA region is 2.8 trillion dollars generated from a population of over 380 million people. Saudi Arabia's GDP of around 580 billion Dollars therefore represents almost 21% of the total regional GDP and over 25% of the Arab world's economic output. This is from a country with a population of 25 million people, or only 6.5% of the total population of the MENA countries. "And while possession of one quarter of the world's oil reserves and almost the entire spare production capacity on the planet provides Saudi Arabia with a steady and abundant source of revenue, the Kingdom has also become an important provider of petrochemicals and financial services in our region. Revenues from energy exports have been able to fund trading markets and development projects that benefit the Kingdom's fast growing population. Also of major importance are the estimated 600 billion dollars in foreign reserves amassed during King Abdullah's rule. This figure sets Saudi Arabia as the third largest holder of foreign reserves, behind China

and Japan. Though with a population much smaller than these two countries, the Kingdom is the largest foreign reserves holder on a per capita basis within the G20".

The Saudi ambassador said that it is his belief that these excellent figures are in no small part due to the outstanding efforts and diligence of the Saudi Ministry of Finance who is responsible for the stewardship and health of the Saudi economy. It is through their efforts that Saudi Arabia has been able to excel at creating a business environment that is stable and welcoming to growth. Thanks to their management, the World Economic Forum's listing of the most competitive economies ranks Saudi Arabia as number 21 in the world, and the World Bank listed Saudi Arabia as the 11th most business friendly nation in the world. Further, in a recent Bank of America/Merrill Lynch report on the long-term growth outlook for the European, Middle Eastern and African regions, Saudi Arabia was one of three nations listed (along with Turkey and South Africa) as having the greatest growth potential.

Concluding his speech, Prince Mohammad Bin Nawaf Bin 'Abd al-'Aziz Al- Sa'ud said that the Ministry of Finance and SAMA under the guidance of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz have helped assure that the financial state of Saudi Arabia is exceedingly healthy, which has proven integral to assuring our stability for the future.

Yet those of us native to the Kingdom can only take credit for some of this success, as it is also due to the relations we have with our many trading partners, among whom we must count the United Kingdom as one of the most important.

"We are honoured to have with us the acknowledged authority who commands the respect and trust of his peers, to share with us in detail his inspirational thoughts and foresight about growth and prosperity in Saudi Arabia and how this partnership can continue to grow and bring wealth and stability to both our kingdoms" the ambassador stated.

UK to provide flood-resistant home to affectees in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: United Kingdom (UK) will provide emergency shelter and flood resistant new homes to more than 0.25 million people made homeless by this year's devastating monsoon floods in southern Pakistan, UK International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell announced here on Thursday.

According to a press release, this new support from the UK government includes emergency shelter and blankets that will be

shipped in directly from DFID's warehouse in UAE, as well as help to rebuild flood resistant homes for 40,000 people where water has receded. Recent announcement came in response to the United Nations Pakistan Floods Rapid Response Plan 2011.

"I know the suffering caused by the flooding in Sindh, southern Pakistan, is of deep concern to many British people. That's why today I am announcing that the UK

will provide vital shelter to more than 255,000 children and adults who have lost their homes in southern Pakistan.

"UK support for people affected by the floods will continue not only over the coming weeks, but into 2012. This reflects the deep friendship and longstanding bond between the UK and Pakistan - our countries are closely tied through family, business, history and culture, and we will always stand by and support each other."

Bestway continues expansion, opens new branch at Brighton



Sir Anwar Pervez

LONDON: Bestway, the largest independent food wholesaler in the UK is expanding its estate to include a new branch at Brighton in East Sussex. The site, off the A27 at Crowhurst Road, Hollingsbury, provides access to all of the Brighton area, the M23 to Crawley/Gatwick and the south coast in both east (Eastbourne) and the west (Worthing/Bognor) directions. It will open to the independent

retail trade and all Food Service customers on November 4th.

The site is around 85,000 sq ft and is being transformed from a previous books trade warehouse. It will have the full Bestway offering including all fresh departments and a full service butchery. The branch will offer a full delivered service. The Best-one symbol group & Bestway Direct will also operate from the site. This will be the 61st

new jobs are being created with the introduction of this business into the area and the whole development will have cost just over £5 million. Younus Shekhi, managing director of the Bestway Wholesale Group said, "Bestway has been trying for some time to find an appropriate site in Brighton and we are

delighted to now have the opportunity to trade in the city. We are looking forward to bringing our offering to independent retailers and Food Service customers in this region to help them build their business with the provision of some of the very best value prices and product availability and of course service.

"We are also pleased to be able to be in a position to bring the region a significant number of new job opportunities at such a difficult time for a lot of people without work."

A number of new technical features have been built into the development to take advantage of energy saving devices with heating, ventilation, refrigeration and lighting which also reflect considerable savings on the amount



Younus Shekhi

of carbon entering the atmosphere.

The manager is Peter Curtis who joins the Bestway Group for this appointment and brings with him extensive experience in the industry. He said, "What a project to be joining Bestway to run, Brighton is such a vibrant part of the country and new territory for the company with some very good potential customers who I look forward to welcoming to the branch."

India shows concern over Chinese presence in AJK

NEW DELHI: India has conveyed its concern to China over the presence of Chinese personnel in Azad Kashmir and asserted that it was consistently strengthening its capabilities in the eastern sector to meet any challenge.

"We have conveyed our concerns to China, and at the same time we are consistently strengthening our capabilities in the eastern sector to meet any challenge," Defence Minister A K Antony told reporters on the sidelines of Naval Commanders Conference here today. Replied to queries regard-

ing Chinese presence in AJK, he said, "It is there for many years... We are in a phased-manner consistently strengthening our capabilities (in the eastern sector)."

On Chinese objection to Indian presence in South-China sea near Vietnam, Antony said, "We have delegation level talks going on (with Vietnam) now. When Prime Minister is discussing with the Vietnamese President, it is not correct on my part to comment on it."

He said India's interest lies only in uninterrupted passage of ships and trade.

Gilani inaugurates completion of Mangla Dam raising, also bridge

MANGLA: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani Thursday inaugurated the Rs 100 billion Mangla Dam raising project aimed at significantly increasing country's water storage and electricity generation. The event was attended by Minister for Kashmir Affairs Manzoor Wattoo, President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Mohammad Yaqoob Khan and Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhary Abdul Majeed. Prime Minister Gilani also inaugurated the Dhani Gali bridge on River Jhelum, linking the Punjab with AJK and replace the old narrow suspension bridge.

The dam after the upraising would have 2.88 Million Acre Feet (MAF) of additional water storage and 644 Gwh of additional hydel generation, with an estimated annual benefit of Rs 18 billion.

Prime Minister Gilani termed the project vital for national economic development and said it would go a long way in the progress and development of the country.

He said in the past 35 years no such project for storage of water was implemented and said the upraising of dam would increase storage capacity and power generation significantly.

US, Pakistan hold...

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He said that Pakistan and other countries in the region were facing terror threats and that the US wanted better ties with Pakistan.

According to a New York Times report, President Obama's national security adviser met secretly in the Persian Gulf last weekend with Gen Ashfaq Pervez Kayani to deliver a tough message: rein in the Haqqani network, a deadly insurgent group in Afghanistan that the United States says has close ties to Pakistan's main spy agency.

Just a few weeks before, however, American officials held a secret meeting with leaders of the Haqqani network. But then, the purpose was to explore ever so delicately how the group, or at least some of its members, might join talks to end the war in Afghanistan.

The two meetings, held just over a month apart, underscore the Obama administration's complicated and seemingly contradictory policies in Afghanistan and Pakistan as it struggles to end the decade-old conflict in Afghanistan and salvage a deteriorating security relationship with Pakistan.

Mr. Grossman's meetings with senior Pakistani leaders

on Thursday were on the heels of an unpublicized meeting in the United Arab Emirates last weekend between the White House national security adviser, Thomas E. Donilon; Mr. Obama's top adviser on Pakistan, Douglas E. Lute; and Gen. Ashfaq Pervez Kayani. The White House had said that Mr. Donilon took a one-day, over-and-back trip to Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

One senior administration official said that it was "safe to assume that the Haqqani issue came up" at the meetings, and that the American officials stressed to General Kayani the importance of Pakistan's taking more direct action against members of the Haqqani network, who American officials believe plot attacks like the assault on the American Embassy from a safe haven in Pakistan's tribal areas.

Barack Obama US President Barack Obama said on Thursday the United States would not be comfortable in a long-term strategic relationship with Pakistan if it felt that Islamabad was not mindful of US interests.

Obama told a news conference the United States remained committed to helping Pakistan confront its own problems despite concern over ties between some elements of

the Pakistan intelligence services with extremist groups.

"But there's no doubt that we're not going to feel comfortable with a long-term strategic relationship with Pakistan if we don't think that they're mindful of our interests as well," Obama said.

Barack Obama said Pakistan is "hedging its bets" by maintaining ties to militant groups that trying to undermine the government in neighboring Afghanistan, and acknowledged Thursday that the United States has been unable to persuade Pakistan that the U.S. goals of a stable Afghanistan poses no threat to Pakistan.

Obama voiced concern over Pakistan's military and intelligence links with extremists, observing the US finds this "troubling."

Obama also said that Pakistan should realize that a peaceful approach towards India would be in "everybody's interests."

Without naming the Haqqani network with whom Pakistan's spy agency ISI is suspected to be having links, Obama described the extremists as "unsavoury characters. And there is no doubt that there's some connections the Pakistani military and intelligence services have with certain individuals that we find troubling," he told a White House news conference.

• We strongly recommend that you have a seasonal influenza vaccination prior to embarking on your trip.

• You should take out fully comprehensive travel insurance in advance.

• Check the Foreign Office travel advice for the latest on the situation in Saudi Arabia.

The Foreign Office will provide the full range of consular services and will be sending a delegation of consular staff. The majority of cases that the delegation handled last year were replacing travel documents. Pilgrims should ensure they look after personal belongings and should take particular care with travel documents, tickets and other valuables.

The delegation will be located at the Elaf Al Khail Hotel, Makkah. You can find contact details and information on what the delegation can and can't do in our travel advice for Hajj pilgrims.

PHC refuted...

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We appreciate our Diaspora's sentiments towards the country of their origin and the diplomatic officials but we would like to advise them to refrain from indulging in such uncalculated debates in public. This is an internal matter and it should be treated as such.

It may be recalled that a London based Urdu daily newspaper published a report under the headline 'Pak diplomat being thrown out of UK for fast driving' reported on Saturday that a senior Pakistani diplomat has become an undeclared persona non-grata for the UK Government, apparently for an alleged minor offence of fast driving.

Rafiq jailed for life over killing countryman Sabir in Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM: Mohammed Rafiq, 45, was found guilty of murdering 22-year-old Mohammed Sabir Aslam in the Handsworth area of Birmingham in 2003.

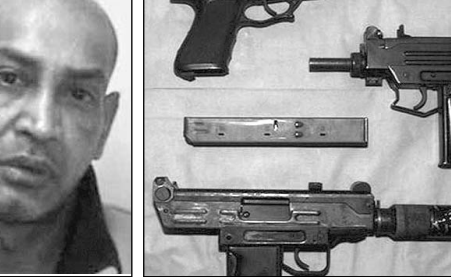
Police discovered the sub-machine gun used in the killing of the father-of-two under Rafiq's pillow during an investigation three years later. Other weapons, including a semi-automatic pistol, were also recovered.

Rafiq was originally convicted in 2008 but was granted a retrial at Birmingham Crown Court which began last month. The rea-

son his victim, a kebab shop worker was targeted is not known.

Senior investigating officer Glen Moss, head of the major

crime review team, said: "To echo the words of the judge, this was a cool and calculated execution. The judge described the



Some of the weapons found under Mohammed Rafiq's pillow

murder as a 'cool and calculated execution' "We have worked very hard on this case and are pleased that Rafiq, who is clearly a very dangerous man, has once again been found guilty of murder.

"I am grateful to all the witnesses and colleagues who have assisted with this investigation and our thoughts now are with the victim's family."

The breakthrough in the investigation came through DNA technology. A cap left at the scene gave police vital evidence. Rafiq was told that he must serve at least 22 years in prison.

Shame on Amir Shah, sentenced for drugs smuggling from Pakistan



Ali Amir Shah

LONDON: A drug smuggler who imported heroin hidden in a consignment of vegetables has been jailed following a joint operation by the Middlemarket Drugs Partnership and the UK Border Agency.

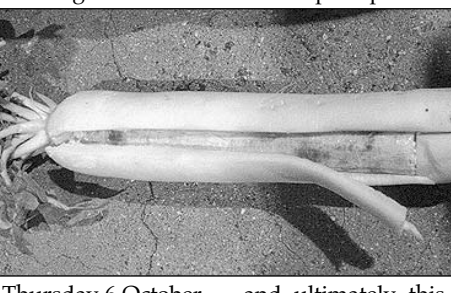
Ali Amir Shah, 44 (17.10.66) of Pillbox Walk, Colchester,

Essex, was sentenced to 11 years in prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy to import two kilograms of heroin with a street value of around £80,000.

The drugs were discovered after UK Border Agency officers examined a shipment of mooli - a variety of East Asian radish - that had arrived from Heathrow Airport on a flight from Pakistan in February 2011.

Officers found the vegetables had been cut open and hollowed out to make space for the drugs which were then stuffed into the cavities before the mooli was glued back together. This resulted in Middle Market Drugs Partnership launching a pro-active policing operation which identified Shah as being involved. Shah was responsible for collection and custody of the drugs within the UK, taking them to a secure location in order for them to be distributed within

London. Shah was arrested on Saturday 19 February. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced at Kingston Crown



Court on Thursday 6 October.

Detective Inspector Steven Miles, from Middle Market Drugs Partnership, said: "This investigation led to the recovery of a significant quantity of harmful Class A drugs that were destined for the streets of London."

"The concealment of these drugs was unusual and had that been constructed with

metulous care. However, the vigilance of the UK Border Agency (UKBA) led to the discovery of the consignment which prompted our inquiries

and ultimately this successful prosecution."

Assistant Director Pete Avery, from the UK Border Agency's Criminal and Financial Investigation Directorate, said: "This was a sophisticated concealment and demonstrates the lengths that drug smugglers are prepared to go to get contraband into the UK. But that was matched by the vigi-

lance, dedication and determination shown by our officers who uncovered this shipment."

"Working with law enforcement partners like the Metropolitan Police and SOCA we are determined to tackle the criminal gangs responsible for bringing class A drugs into the UK."

Middle Market Drugs Partnership is an equal partnership project between the Metropolitan Police Specialist Crime Directorate (SCD7) and Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA).

Senior Mohammad...

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British official Hajj delegation will embark to Saudi Arabia this year with a woman consular Nagina Akhtar. He said a booklet has also been published for the guidance of the intending pilgrims to save them from any inconvenience during the pilgrimage. It will be available with ATOL registered tour operators, in mosques and on online. The Consular service will be available to the hajjis on telephone for 24 hours.

Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, Cabinet minister and Chairperson of ruling Conservative Party also spoke on the occasion and assured that the government will do its utmost to provide every possible facility to the pilgrims for their noble journey.

She said some 20 to 25 thousand hajjis go to Saudi Arabia from Britain every year

and the role of Consular service is very important in providing them with better facilities.

The ceremony was attended by a number of Ambassadors of Islamic and Arab countries including Pakistan High Commissioner Wajid Shamsul Hassan, and Spokesperson for South Asian Affairs in FCO Natasha Khan.

Advice to pilgrims: Meanwhile, British Foreign Office has advised Britons travelling to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj should prepare carefully and follow travel safety advice. Around 20,000 are expected to make the journey from 4-9 November.

The Foreign Office is urging Hajj pilgrims to get comprehensive travel insurance and essential vaccinations before embarking on their journey:

• It is compulsory for travellers to the Hajj to have a Meningococcal Meningitis vaccination certificate in order to obtain a Hajj visa.

Sarah Hashwani...

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Entrepreneurship and Enterprise, broadcaster and presenter Yasmeeen Khan and leading make-up artist Zaynab Mirza.

Introducing the campaign, Sarah Hashwani said: "We started work on this initiative a few weeks back and I have been amazed, delighted and touched by the level of support that UK women have already given to the idea. We have women from all walks of life coming forward to lend their support and use their networks to engage more women. The simplest proposition can change the lives of so many in Pakistan."

The evening was opened with an address by Mr Sadruddin Hashwani in his

role as Patron-in-Chief of the Foundation, in which he thanked and praised guests for their support and commitment to the work of the Foundation across the world.

Guest of Honour at the event, Sir Mark Lyall Grant, the UK's Permanent Representative to the United Nations closed the evening with a heart-warming speech that highlighted the positive impact and value that must be placed on the work of NGOs in the developing world. He felt that a strong and vibrant organisation such as Hashoo Foundation has to be a welcome addition to the development fraternity. He also acknowledged that addressing issues around the empowerment of women were absolutely critical, saying: "This looks like a remarkable initiative. It will undoubtedly

make a huge difference: not only to the lives of 500 women in Pakistan, but also to their families. If one applies the UN's standard definition of a Pakistani household, you are immediately talking of changing the lives of more than three and a half thousand Pakistanis. Pakistan High Commissioner Wajid Shamsul Hasan and his spouse Mrs. Zarina Wajid and a number of distinguished guests from all walks of life were present on the occasion.

The evening also included an exhibition of photographs and the first screening of a special documentary film created by award-winning film-maker Romaine Lancaster.

A detailed editorial and pictorial coverage would be included in next edition.

SA to hold...

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"The burden of proof is overwhelming ... and clearly shows official Iranian responsibility for this. Somebody in Iran will have to pay the price, whatever the level of these persons is," Prince Turki said.

The prince, who has also served as Saudi ambassador to the United States and Britain, said the alleged plan to kill the Kingdom's current ambassador in Washington was "so criminal, it's beyond description."