



# The National Assembly of Pakistan Gazette



December 2013 - January 2014



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### Chief Editor's Note

December was a busy month in the Parliament House. The 7th Session of the National Assembly continued from 5th to 20th December in which 5 bills and 7 resolutions were passed while 540 questions were replied. The international scenario remained gloomy due to the death of the great anti-apartheid leader, Nelson Mandela. His successful struggle against South Africa's apartheid system of racial segregation and discrimination made him a global symbol for the cause of human rights and earned him the Nobel Prize. He has been a beacon of hope for all the suppressed masses of the world.

Pakistan Senate hosted Asian Parliamentary Assembly. It was a big event as representatives of all the Asian countries participated and expressed the need to increase cooperation and integration among Asian countries. Some good news for Pakistan came out from Europe. After a long diplomatic struggle, Pakistan succeeded in achieving the GSP Plus status from European Parliament. Thus Pakistani products are now allowed a duty free access to EU markets. It is certainly going to have a healthy impact on Pakistan's textile industry and other exports.

Local body elections are also around the corner. Given the importance of the local bodies system for development on grass root level, all the provincial governments are taking interest in developing new and effective legislations of local body system. It is hoped that the elections will be free and transparent. This is the only way of development and prosperity.

May Allah give us all the courage to stand for the right and resist the evil. Enjoy the cold winter and have a happy reading.

Thank You.

*Ch. Mukhtar Ahmed*



## LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

National Assembly of Pakistan was summoned by the President to meet on Monday, the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013 at 4:00 p.m. The session continued till its prorogation on 20<sup>th</sup> December, hence constituting the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the First Parliamentary Year of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. The important legislative business of the 7<sup>th</sup> session is summarized herewith:

### **A. Bills Introduced**

A total of 5 bills were introduced in the Lower House of the Parliament, out of which 2 were introduced by the Government whereas 3 Private Members' Bills were laid in this session. These bills have been referred to their respective standing committees for further deliberation. A brief overview of these bills is given below:

#### **GOVERNMENT BILLS**

Two bills were introduced by the Government in the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the National Assembly. These are enlisted below:

**1. Cantonment Laws (Amendment) Act, 2013 (Thursday, 5th December 2013)**

SHAIKH AFTAB AHMED, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs laid it in the House. The bill is aimed to make amendments in the Cantonments' Act, 1924 (II of 1924) and the Cantonments Local Government (Elections) Ordinance, 2002 (LXXIX of 2002). The amendment in Cantonment laws is required, *inter alia* to change the composition of the Cantonment Boards to make the representation of public member more inclusive and meaningful and the need for updating the Cantonment laws to hold local bodies elections in the Cantonment areas, in particular the provisions relating to local bodies in the Cantonments.

**2. Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Act, 2013 (Monday, 9th December 2013)**

CH. NISAR ALI KHAN, Minister for Interior & Narcotics Control, laid it in the House. The purpose of introducing Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Act, 2013 is to rationalize and reorganize the local government system in the Federal Capital. It is expedient to establish an elected local government system to devolve political, administrative and financial responsibility and authority to the elected representatives of the local government; to promote good governance, effective delivery of services and transparent decision making through institutionalized participation of the people at local level; and, to deal with ancillary matter.

#### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS**

Three Private Members' Bills were laid in this session.

**1. Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2013 (Tuesday, 10th December 2013)**

This act was laid by Mr. Muhammad Ayaz Soomro on the floor of the House. The purpose of introducing this act is to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Act V of 1898). All the Provincial Governments have already requested the Federal Government to reintroduce the provisions of Executive Magistracy in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898. Therefore, necessary action be taken in the matter as soon as possible.

**2. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2013 (Tuesday, 17th December, 2013)**

This bill was laid by Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani as Private members' bill. This bill serves to amend the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, for election on reserved seats for Non-Muslims and the delimitation of Constituencies to be made on divisional basis by the Election Commission of Pakistan. The number of Divisions included in each constituency shall be on the basis of Non-Muslims population, for both National & Provincial Assemblies.

**3. The Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2013 (Tuesday, 17th December, 2013)**

This bill was laid by Ms. Kishwer Zehra as Private members' bill. The purpose is to amend the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Presently the Parliament is representing all segments of our society except representation from disabled persons due to which the voice of disabled persons is not suitably raised about the problems and other social constraints being faced by them. Therefore, it is necessary & expedient to provide for representation of disabled persons in the Senate and National Assembly.

### **B. Resolutions**

In the 7<sup>th</sup> session, the National Assembly passed 7 resolutions out of which 4 resolutions were moved by Private Members and 3 resolutions was moved by the Government.

#### **RESOLUTIONS BY PRIVATE MEMBERS**

The four resolutions moved by the Private Members and passed by the National Assembly were:

**1. The House strongly condemns the Drone Attacks by the Allied Forces on the Territory of Pakistan (December 10, 2013)**

The House condemned that the Drone Attacks by the Allied Forces on the Territory of Pakistan, which constitute violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international laws and humanitarian norms. Such drone attacks must be stopped forthwith.

**2. Government should establish an agriculture University at Sahiwal (December 10, 2013).**

The House was of the opinion that the Government should take immediate steps to establish an agriculture University at Sahiwal.

**3. Government should take steps to alleviate poverty (December 10, 2013).**

The House was of the opinion that the Government should take steps to alleviate poverty from the country.

**4. Government should set up a University in Hyderabad (December 10, 2013).**

The House was of the opinion that a University may be set up in Hyderabad to cater better educational facilities to the people.

#### **RESOLUTIONS BY GOVERNMENT**

The three resolutions moved by the Government and passed by the National Assembly was:



**1. Resolution on Passing Away of Mr. Nelson Rolihlaha Mandela (December 6, 2013)**

The House expressed its deep sorrow and grief over the passing away of Mr. Nelson Rolihlaha Mandela, a man who stood for the rights of the deprived and oppressed not only in his own country but the world over. This House wished the people and Government of South Africa the courage and fortitude to bear this irreparable loss and the ability to follow his message of compassion, human dignity, equality, freedom and democracy.

**2. Resolution of Condemnation on the Hanging of Abdul Qadir Mulla (December 16, 2013)**

”یہ ایوان بنگلہ دیش حکومت کی طرف سے جماعت اسلامی بنگلہ دیش کے بزرگ رہنما امیر عبدالقادر مولا کو 1971ء میں پاکستان کا ساتھ دینے کی پاداش پہ پھانسی دینے پر تشویش کا اظہار کرتا ہے اور جماعت اسلامی بنگلہ دیش اور عبدالقادر مولا کے خاندان سے تعزیت کا اظہار کرتا ہے۔ یہ ایوان بنگلہ دیش حکومت سے مطالبہ کرتا ہے کہ 1971ء کے معاملات کو دوبارہ زندہ نہ کیا جائے اور جماعت اسلامی بنگلہ دیش کے تمام راہنماؤں پر درج مقدمات افہام و تفہیم کے جذبے کے تحت ختم کیے جائیں۔“

**3. N.A. Appreciates the Efforts of the Government of Pakistan, Culminating in the Adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of a Resolution Against the Use of Drone Strikes (December 20, 2013)**

The House appreciated the efforts of the Government of Pakistan, Government of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, culminating in the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of a resolution against the use of drone strikes and called upon the United States' Government to immediately end the drone attacks in Pakistan, which are against international law.

**Questions**

Each day of the session (except Private Members Day), comprises of a Question hour which is the physical oversight tool the Parliamentarians use to exercise check on the Government performance. Out of the total 1194 questions received, 1085 questions were admitted and 107 were disallowed. During the 7<sup>th</sup> Session, 540 questions were replied.

**CALLS ON**

**Speaker Iraqi Council of Representative Meets Speaker NA**

Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives Mr. Osama Abdul Aziz Al-Nujafi has said that Iraq values high its brotherly relations with Pakistan and wanted to further strengthening the existing relations through enhanced economic and parliamentary cooperation. He expressed these views while talking to Speaker, National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House, on 5<sup>th</sup> December.

He said that both the countries were facing the menace of terrorism which needed joint efforts to eradicate. He further said



Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker NA, shaking hand with Mr. Osama Abdul Aziz Al-Najafi, Speaker Iraqi Council of Representative on 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 at Parliament House.

that both the brotherly countries were rich in natural resources which can be exploited through joint ventures for the benefit of both the nations. He stressed the need for enhanced parliamentary cooperation. He was of the view that the parliamentary cooperation could play an important role in strengthening the relations between the two brotherly countries.

The Speaker, National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, while welcoming the visiting delegation, has said that this visit of Iraqi Parliamentary delegation would prove a landmark in further strengthening existing bilateral relations and to bring both the brotherly countries closer. He said that Pakistan and Iraq were intertwined in eternal bonds of religion, brotherhood and culture and give immense importance to its relations with Iraq. He said that the bonds of brotherhood could further be cemented through parliamentary friendship. He said that Pakistan would certainly like to take part in the development of Iraq by export of skilled and unskilled labour, medical doctors and engineers.

The Speaker said that the visit of Iraqi Parliamentarians after a break of more than two decades was rejuvenation of long outstanding relations between brotherly countries. He was confident that during the meetings between the Pak-Iraqi parliamentarians, both the sides would exchange views, share experiences and explore further possibilities of parliamentary as well as economic cooperation.

The delegation earlier witnessed the proceedings of the House. They were welcomed by the Leader of Opposition and other members of all the political parties in the National assembly.

**Japanese Ambassador Calls on Deputy Speaker National Assembly**

The Ambassador of Japan H.E. Hiroshi Inomata called on Deputy Speaker National Assembly Murtaza Javed Abbasi in the Parliament House, on 6<sup>th</sup> December.

Talking to the Ambassador Deputy Speaker said that Pakistan values high its relations with Japan and desires to further strengthening the existing relations through enhanced economic and parliamentary cooperation. He said that Japan was a country with tremendous expertise and technological advancement that can be of great benefit to Pakistan. He expressed his gratitude to the Japan Government for assisting Pakistan in economic sector. He also thanked the people and government of Japan for their gracious support to Pakistan during the natural calamities



especially during the 2005 earthquake. He stressed the need for enhanced parliamentary cooperation between the Parliaments of both the countries. He said that regular interactions between the



Mr. Hiroshi Inomata, Ambassador of Japan called on Deputy Speaker NA, Murtaza Javed Abbasi at Parliament House on 6.12.2013

parliamentarians would provide the opportunities to share the views and benefit from each other experiences besides, strengthening bilateral cooperation. He also apprised the Ambassador about the ongoing developmental projects with collaboration of government of Japan in district Abbottabad.

H.E. Hiroshi Inomata said that Japan attaches great importance to its relations with Pakistan and wanted Pakistan a strong and prosperous country. He assured the Deputy Speaker of his government's support for socio-economic development of Pakistan. He said that Pakistan was an important country of the region. He appreciated Pakistan's role in promoting peace in the region, curbing terrorism and extremism.

### Deputy Speakers of Sri Lanka and Kuwait Meet Speaker NA

Deputy Speaker of Sri Lanka Parliament Chandima Weerakkody called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in Parliament House, on 10th December. Various issues of mutual interest and strengthening of bilateral parliamentary relations came under discussion.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq praised the active participation of Sri Lankan Parliamentary delegation in Asian Parliamentary Assembly meeting. He said that Sri Lanka could play an important role in bringing Asian Nations together for devising common strategy for problems commonly by Asian countries. He praised sagacity Sri Lankan leadership in tackling terrorism and bringing the country back to development and prosperity. He expressed the desire to further deepen the relations through enhancing parliamentary cooperation with Sri Lankan Parliament.

Sri Lankan Deputy Speaker Chandima Weerakkody said that his country also greatly values its friendship with Pakistan and desires to consolidate and deepen its deep-rooted, all-weather friendship. He said that holding of Asian Parliamentary Assembly in Islamabad was a step forward in forging unity amongst Asian nations to tackle issues confronting stability and prosperity in the region.

Later, Deputy Speaker of Kuwaiti National Assembly Mr. Mubarak Al-Khurainej met Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on sidelines of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly being held in Islamabad. He said that Pakistan and Kuwait were intertwined in bonds of religion, history and culture and these bonds could be further strengthened by parliamentary cooperation. He called for greater interaction between business communities of both the countries to tap the immense economic potential especially in the trade and manufacturing sectors.

Reciprocating good gesture of Speaker, the Kuwaiti Deputy Speaker said that Kuwait also considers Pakistan its closest friend who has always been a friend in need and stood by Kuwait in turbulent times. He agreed with Speaker and said that Kuwaiti Parliament would be delighted to enhance its relations with Pakistani Parliament so that understanding and cooperation between both the countries could be further pursued. He said that Kuwait strongly desires to see a prosperous, stable and economically vibrant Pakistan. He also extended invitation to the Speaker to visit Kuwait which he accepted.

### Ambassador of Lebanon Meets Speaker NA

The Ambassador of Lebanon called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in Parliament House Islamabad, on 12th December. Wide range of issues including enhancing parliamentary and economic ties between Pakistan and their respective countries came under discussion.

Talking to the Ambassador of Lebanon Mrs. Mona El Tannir, the Speaker said that Pakistan attaches immense importance to Lebanon and wants to take the existing warm relations between the two countries to new heights through parliamentary and economic cooperation. He said that Pak-Lebanon Parliamentary Friendship Group in National Assembly has been established which will give an upward momentum to the existing bilateral



H.E. Mrs. Mona El Tannir, Ambassador Republic of Lebanon called on Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in Parliament House on 12.12.2013

parliamentary relations.

Ambassador Mrs. Mona El Tannir expressed her country's desire to utilize huge economic and human resource potential in Pakistan for mutual benefit. She agreed that Parliamentary Friendship Groups could play a vital role in enhancing bilateral relations. She said that there are numbers of best universities in Lebanon and she wants the Pakistani students to come for study.

### Ambassador of Bulgaria Meets Speaker NA

The Ambassador of Bulgaria called on Speaker, National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in Parliament House Islamabad, on 12th December. Wide range of issues including enhancing parliamentary and economic ties between Pakistan and their respective countries came under discussion.

While talking to the Bulgarian Ambassador Mr. Roumen Pirocchev, the Speaker underlined the need for further enhancing parliamentary ties between parliaments of both the countries. He said that Pak-Bulgarian parliamentarians could build bridges of friendship and understanding between two states. The Speaker said that present government has created conducive environment for foreign investment by introducing various incentives and reforms in the economic sector. He said that energy generation, oil exploration, trade and manufacturing sectors have huge scope, therefore; Bulgarian investors should invest in these sectors. He



asked the Ambassador to energize the engagement between business communities of both the countries.

Ambassador Mr. Roumen Pirocchev said that Bulgaria also values high its relations with Pakistan and desires to further strengthen it through people-to-people and parliamentary contacts. He said that Pakistan is an important country in region and it is a strong



H.E. Mr. Roumen Pirocchev, Ambassador Republic of Bulgaria called on Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in Parliament House on 12.12.2013

desire of his country to see Pakistan as a prosperous and stable country. He agreed for enhancing relations between parliamentarians of both the countries.

### Pakistan to Continue Its Unequivocal and Unwavering Support to Palestine: Says NA Speaker

Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that Pakistan will continue to extend its unequivocal and unwavering support to the Palestinian cause. He said that Palestinian issue should be resolved in a just and fair manner, which is acceptable to the people of Palestine. He was talking to Mr. Walid A.M. Abu Ali, Ambassador of State of Palestine who called on Speaker in Parliament House, on 16th December.

The Speaker said that continued denial of inalienable right of Palestinians and perpetual atrocities against innocent citizens was creating unrest in the Middle East region. He stressed the need for achievement of a global consensus on the goals and means to resolve the conflict, which would reflect the wisdom and maturity of the international community. He further added that these goals would remain elusive with no engagement and practical steps taken towards their realization by the oppressor.

The Speaker said that Pakistan and Palestine have a close, strong and historical affinity which was founded on the aspirations and heartfelt sentiments of the people of the two countries. He said that these affinities should further be cemented through interaction of parliamentarians from either side. He assured the Palestinian envoy that Pakistan would continue extending its support to Palestinian students studying in educational institutions in Pakistan.

Palestinian Envoy Mr. Walid A.M. Abu Ali, while appreciating the support of Pakistan during its six decade long struggle for freedom, said that Palestinians greatly admired and deeply respected dedication of Government and People of Pakistan. He said that Palestinian leadership is indebted to the Prime Minister of Pakistan for raising the Palestine issue in his address to the UN General Assembly. He said that diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Palestine would further grow with the engagement of political leadership of both sides. He congratulated Speaker National Assembly on successful holding of Asian Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Islamabad.

### Ambassador of Azerbaijan Calls on NA Speaker

Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that Pakistan values its close brotherly relations with Azerbaijan which were based on historic, cultural and religious commonalities. He said that Pakistan intends to further cement those relations through parliamentary and economic cooperation. He was talking to the Ambassador of Azerbaijan Mr. Dashgin Mazi Oglu Shikarov, who called on the Speaker in Parliament House, on 17th December. The Speaker said that the support, both the countries extend to each other on different issues and forums was a manifestation of strong ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He said that both the countries have commonalities of views and perceptions on various regional and international issues. He appreciated Azerbaijani support to Pakistan on the principled stand of Kashmir. The Speaker asked the Ambassador to facilitate Azerbaijani business community to visit Pakistan for exploring further avenues of cooperation in diverse fields.

The Speaker stressed the need for enhancing cooperation between the legislatures of brotherly countries. He said that parliamentarians could play a vital role in building bridges of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He



H. E. Mr. Dashgin Mazi Oglu Shikarov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan called on Speaker NA, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in Parliament House on 17.12.2013

informed the Ambassador about the reactivation of Pakistan-Azerbaijan Parliamentary Friendship Group in National Assembly. He invited Azerbaijani Parliamentarians to visit Pakistan to dispel the negative perceptions against Pakistan. The Ambassador agreed with the Speaker and said that government and people of Azerbaijan greatly value their friendship with Pakistan. He said that his government was thankful to Pakistan for its unwavering support on the issue of Nagorno Karabakh. He said that Azerbaijan and Pakistan share same views on various matter including Kashmir issue and would continue extending its support on regional and internal forums. He agreed for enhancing parliamentary and economic ties with Pakistan. He said that political leadership of Azerbaijan was committed to strengthen its ties with Pakistan. He apprised the Speaker about the engagement of Azerbaijani business community with Board of Investment in Pakistan for investment in Pakistan.

### Ambassador of Netherlands Calls on NA Speaker

Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that Pakistan attaches immense importance to its existing bilateral relations with Netherlands and desires to further strengthen them through enhancing parliamentary and economic cooperation. The Speaker said this while talking to the Ambassador of Netherlands, Mr. Marcel de Vink, who called on him in Parliament House, on 18th December afternoon.



The Speaker said that enhanced parliamentary cooperation between National Assembly of Pakistan and Dutch Parliament



Mr. Marcel de Vink, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands called on Speaker NA, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House on December 18, 2013.

would add substance to the existing bilateral relations between

the two countries. He said that interaction between parliamentarians from both sides, especially the women legislators, would be a befitting way for exchanging views, sharing experiences and the legislation done for public good.

He also called for enhancing interaction between business communities of both the countries to accelerate economic activity in Pakistan. The Speaker appreciated the Dutch support to Pakistan on award of GSP plus status by EU Parliament. He was confident that after the award of GSP plus status, Pakistani exports to EU would increase and lead the country towards self-reliance.

Ambassador of Netherlands Mr. Marcel de Vink, acknowledged the kind remarks of the Speaker and said that his Government also values its long association with Pakistan. He reiterated his government's support for strengthening of democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan. He said that Netherlands would extend all out support to the Speaker for his initiatives for making National Assembly more vibrant. He agreed for active engagement of parliamentarians and business communities of both the countries for mutual benefit.

## ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES

### Syed Khurshid Shah Elected PAC Chairman

Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, Syed Khurshid Shah has been elected as chairman Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on 11th December.

A meeting of PAC was held on Wednesday to elect Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Syed Khurshid Shah as its chairman.



Chairman PAC, Syed Khurshid Shah addressing the committee after his election as chairman of Public Accounts Committee

Shah, who is also a central leader of Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), became member of the committee which is a powerful body which examines the spending of national exchequer to ensure transparency and accountability.

Under the previous government, the coveted PAC chairman's slot was initially given to then leader of opposition, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan.

During Nisar's tenure, the committee managed to recover over Rs 115 billion from different government departments. However, Nisar eventually stepped down from the post following his party's concerns over the appointment of Akhtar Buland Rana as the auditor general of Pakistan.

### NA Business Advisory Committee Discusses Agenda for the Seventh Session of the National Assembly

The House Business Advisory Committee of the National Assembly met in Parliament House, on 5<sup>th</sup> December with Sardar Ayaz

Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly in the chair to discuss the business for the 7th Session of the National Assembly.

After discussion, it was decided that the current session of the National Assembly will continue till 20th December, 2013 and sittings of the National Assembly will be held in morning except Monday. It was further decided that National Assembly would discuss price hike and prevailing law and order situation in the country apart from other matters of public importance during the current session.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Zahid Hamid, Minister for Science & Technology, Ch. Muhammad Barjees Tahir, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, MNAs; Ms. Shaista Pervez, Dr. Tariq Fazal Ch., Ch. Muhammad Ashraf, Mr. Shahab-ud-Din Khan, Syed Naveed Qamar, Mir Aijaz Hussain Jakhri, Mr. Iqbal Muhammad Ali Khan, Sheikh Salahuddin, Maulana Muhammad Khan Sherani and Syed Ghazi Gulab Jamal.

### First Meeting of the Standing Committee of NA on Foreign Affairs

1. A first meeting of the Standing Committee of National Assembly on Foreign Affairs was held on

06 December, 2013 at 10:00 am in Committee Room No. 07, Parliament House Islamabad for election of its Chairman. It was attended by MNAs;

- i. Mr. Danial Aziz (Member)
- ii. Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari (Member)
- iii. Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan (Member)
- iv. Mr. Muhammad Khan Daha (Member)
- v. Dr. Shireen Mehruunnisa Mazari (Member)
- vi. Mr. Ghous Bux Khan Mahar (Member)

2. The meeting commenced with recitation from the Holy Quran. Additional Secretary (Committee) National Assembly Secretariat welcomed the Members and briefed them about the procedure of election of Chairman/Chairperson. Thereafter, he invited Members to propose name for the Chairman/ Chairperson.

3. Mr. Ghous Bux Khan Mehar, MNA proposed the name of Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, MNA for Chairman whereas Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan, MNA seconded his



proposal. Consequently Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, MNA was declared as Chairman of the Standing Committee unopposed.

4. Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan, Leghari, MNA/Chairman was invited to chair the meeting. All the members felicitated the Chairman being elected unopposed and extended their full co-operation. The Chairman thanked the members of the Standing Committee for reposing confidence in him and assured them to work in accordance with the aspirations of the Members of the Standing Committee.

5. The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

### **Press Release Regarding Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs**

Wednesday, 18th December 2013

1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was lauded on making efforts to achieve GSP Plus status from the European Union and the Standing Committee opined that this would help to ease out the economic burden. Although the Committee showed its dissatisfaction on the briefing given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and said that in the forthcoming meetings of the Standing Committee, they would like to have more meaningful and focused briefings on different issues, especially Pakistan's relations with US and neighbouring countries. The Chairman National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, MNA, presided over the meeting. Mr. Khurram Dastgir Khan, Minister of State for Commerce was also present in the meeting to give answers to the questions of the Members and said that the Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sartaj Aziz was unable to attend the meeting because of his last minute engagement with the Prime Minister.

2. Earlier, while giving briefing on the working and performance of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Additional Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs apprised the Committee Members about the United States increased focus on Asia-Pacific; especially the Strategic partnership between US and India. Furthermore, China is increasing political and economic influence and the continuing instability in Afghanistan and its repercussions on Pakistan. The Committee was told that Pakistan wants to have friendly relations with all its neighbouring countries and in this context the Prime Minister has visited China and Afghanistan lately. The prime Minister has emphasized on trade not the aid. Pakistan would like to have relationships based on mutual respect and benefit.

3. On relations with India, a three tracks policy has been initiated by Pakistani Government which includes the resumption of composite dialogue, confidence building measures adopted by Pakistan, and back channel diplomacy pursued by Pakistan; although, it was mentioned that the Indian Government's response has not been very positive. It was also told that the UN General Assembly is going to adopt a resolution against the Drone strikes in Pakistan, which is also an achievement of the Ministry and the Government of Pakistan. The Committee vowed

to discuss US-Afghanistan relations vis-à-vis Pakistan in the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

4. The meeting was also attended by MNAs Mr. Danial Aziz, Sahibzada Muhammad Nazeer Sultan, Mian Najeebuddin Awaisi, Muhammad Khan Daha, Ms. Marvi Memon, Makhdom Khusro Bakhtyar, Rana Muhammad Afzal Khan, Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Amir Haider Khan, Makhdom Shah Mahmood Hussain Oureshi, Dr. Shireen Mehrunnisa Mazari, Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan and Senior Officers/ Officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **Meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Water and Power**

1. A meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Water and Power was held on 26-12-2013 at 2:00 pm in Committee Room No. 7, Parliament House Islamabad, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Muhammad Arshad Khan Leghari, MNA. The agenda of the meeting was as under:-

1. Comprehensive briefing on MEPCO.
2. Comprehensive briefing on PESCO.
3. Comprehensive briefing on TESCO.

2. The Standing Committee was briefed about the performance, achievements and initiatives of the Government with regards to power sector (MEPCO, PESCO and TESCO). The Committee was told about the acute shortage of technical and non-technical staff. The Committee recommended lifting the ban on recruitment in Ministry of Water and Power. The Committee directed to accomplish the on-going projects. The Ministry also briefed the Committee that due to pending of financial subsidy by Federal and Provincial Governments, the on-going projects are not to be carried out.

3. The Committee recommended that the issue of procurement of transformers should be resolved on priority basis and government workshops should be established for the maintenance of transformers. The DISCOs should play an active role to minimize the load shedding in the country. The Committee directed the Ministry to adopt a proper mechanism to recover the outstanding dues from consumers and theft of electricity be controlled at all possible levels.

4. The Standing Committee directed the PESCO to distribute the share of electricity to FATA according to their quota. The Committee directed that CEOs of all DISCOs should consult with their respective MNAs regarding completion of on-going incomplete projects.

5. The meeting was attended by MNAs, Malik Ihtebur Khan, Lt. Col.(Retd) Ghulam Rasool Sahi, Sardar Mansab Ali Dogar, Pir Muhammad Aslam Bodla, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, Mr. Junaid Akbar, Syed Waseem Hussain, Moulana Muhammad Gohar Shah, Syed Kazim Ali Shah, Mr. Abdul Rahim Khan Mandokhail, Syed Ghazi Gulab Jamal and Sahibzada Muhammad Yaqub and other officers from the Ministry of Water and Power and its attached departments.

6. The meeting concluded with the vote of thanks to and from the Chair.



Mr. Muhammad Arshad Khan Leghari, Chairman Standing Committee on Water & Power chairing the Committee meeting at Parliament House on 26.12.2013



## OTHER NEWS

### **NA Speaker Expresses Grief over the Death of Nelson Mandela**

Friday, 6th December 2013

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly has expressed his heartfelt grief and sorrow over the death of Nelson Mandela. In his statement the Speaker paid rich tributes to the services of Nelson Mandela for eliminating racism, poverty, inequality and promotion of democracy. He said that late Nelson Mandela was a great revolutionary leader who always fought against discrimination and struggled for uplift of the deprived segment of the society. He said that his death was great loss for world and vacuum created by his death is difficult to fill. He further said that his services will be remembered in the annals of history.

### **NA Speaker Visits South African High Commission, Records Comments in the Condolence Book**

Wednesday, 11th December 2013

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq visited South African High Commission in Islamabad on 11th December to offer condolence on the demise of Former South African President Nelson Mandela. The Speaker also recorded his comments on the condolence book placed in High Commission. South African High Commissioner and other Senior Officials of the High Commission were present on the occasion.

The Speaker wrote "The hearts of my nation are heavy with the sad news of President Mandela's passing away. Very few in the contemporary history can match the stature and acumen of Mr. Mandela, who will be immortalized for his "long walk to human freedoms, equality and dignity of man".

"The people and the Parliament of Pakistan join me in offering our profound grief and condolences to the people and the Parliament of brotherly South Africa. May the legend rest in eternal peace", the Speaker wrote.

### **NA Speaker Congratulates Nation on Award of GSP-PLUS Status to Pakistan**

Thursday, 12th December 2013

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has congratulated the nation on award of GSP-Plus status to Pakistan by the European Union (EU). The Speaker said that by achieving this landmark, Pakistani exports to EU would get a boost steering the country towards development and prosperity. The Speaker said that besides the Government, the Parliament also pleaded a proactive role in this regard.

It may be recalled that Sardar Ayaz Sadiq after assuming the office of the Speaker National Assembly met German Foreign Minister and sought German support in EU Parliament for getting the status. Later, he invited Ambassadors of European Union Member States and briefed them on the need for a meaningful partnership with EU on strengthening of democracy in Pakistan.

The Speaker also pleaded the case when EU delegation on Human Rights had visited Pakistan. Moreover, the Pakistan Parliamentary delegation attending the IPU Conference held in Geneva this October remained active where the Speaker held 28 meetings in two days briefing EU Parliamentarians on the importance of GSP-plus for Pakistan's democracy, resulting in befitting outcome of the joint efforts of the Government and the Parliament.

### **"Dignity and Self Esteem for all of us": Says NA Speaker**

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly has said that we are determined to make Pakistan a place where everyone has the same opportunities to participate in all walks of life with dignity and self-esteem. He said this in his message to the nation on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December) which is being commemorated throughout the World under the auspices of United Nations.

He said that the Day aims to promote a better understanding of disability issues with a focus on the rights of persons with disabilities and gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of the political, social, economic and cultural life of their communities.

In Pakistan, we are committed to build a hopeful future for all segments of our society including the ones with disability. "Our challenge is to provide all people with the equality of access they need and deserve. Ultimately, this will create a better world for all" he urged.

On this International Day, let us recognize that the battles against poverty, disease and discrimination will not be won without targeted laws, policies and programs that empower this group. Let us pledge to keep the promise of the goals alive in the community of persons with disabilities, he added.

### **Capacity Building of Parliamentary Staff is Essential for Better Legislation: Deputy Speaker NA**

Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Deputy Speaker National Assembly has said that proactive and dynamic legislation is necessary for progressive and welfare oriented societies and that could be possible only when legislators are equipped with latest legislative research and knowledge. He expressed these views while addressing the 3rd Annual National Parliamentary Workshop for Parliamentary Researchers at Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) Islamabad on 5th December.

He said that like other Parliaments, we also needed better research and analysis facilities, latest equipment and capacity building of members and staff of legislative assemblies. He said that these areas have remained our priority and various steps have been taken in this regard through initiation of such capacity building workshops in PIPS.

He urged that the Parliamentarians represent will of the people of Pakistan and they needed a strong research based support for better legislation and strengthening of democratic institutions. "Research has no limits, it is quest of knowledge that assists learning and development" he added.

He advised the PIPS team to remain committed to their values of integrity, professionalism, non-partisan, accessibility and anticipation in performing quality oriented services to the parliamentarians and the staff. Later on, Deputy Speaker awarded the certificates to the participants of the workshop. Executive Director PIPS and senior officers of National Assembly, Senate and PIPS were also present on the occasion.

### **Human Rights are the Foundation of Freedom, Peace, Development and Justice: Says NA Speaker**

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly has said that Islam establishes the concept of equality for all human beings and provides an environment of peaceful co-existence, free of any



discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, colour, sex, race and religion. He expressed these views in his message on International Human Rights Day being commemorated on 10 December throughout the world.

The Speaker said that address of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) on "Hijjat-ul-Widah" (The Last Sermon) was the universal declaration of human rights. Therefore respect of human rights is obligatory for every Muslim in light of teaching of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Hence the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees protection of life and liberty of every citizen regardless of religion, race, creed or colour.

"A progressive, balanced and just society is the one, which ensures that rights of all of its citizens are safeguarded through political, legal, economic, cultural and social instruments and frameworks. For any state to achieve durable peace and foster democracy, it is imperative that it puts in place mechanism aimed at ensuring that rights of the people are protected", he added.

On International Human Rights Day, Speaker urged that the protection of human rights for all is a prerequisite for establishment of a civilized and progressive society. We would leave no stone unturned to make this happen.

### NA Speaker Felicitates Newly-Appointed Parliamentary Secretaries

Wednesday, 11th December 2013

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has congratulated newly appointed Parliamentary Secretaries for the Ministries/Divisions. The Speaker said that their appointment testifies to the great trust and confidence that the Prime Minister of Pakistan has reposed in them. He was confident that they will discharge their responsibilities ably and represent their respective Ministries/Divisions in smooth conduct of the Business of the House.

According to a notification issued by M/o Parliamentary Affairs today, MNAs Mr. Alam Dad Laleka, Raja Muhammad Javed Ikhlas, Ch. Jaffar Iqbal, Syed Sajid Mehdi, Rao Muhammad Ajmal Khan, Mr. Muhammad Tallal Ch., Mr. Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjah, Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb, Ch. Hamid Hameed, Mr. Rajab Ali Khan Baloch, Shahzadi Umarzadi, Mian Imtiaz Ahmad and Syed Muhammad Ashiq Hussain Shah have been appointed Parliamentary Secretaries for Communication, Cabinet Secretariat, Defence, Housing & Works, Industries & Production, Information Tech. & Telecom, Information, Broadcasting & National Heritage, Interior & Narcotics Control, Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan, National Food Security & Research, Petroleum & Natural Resources, Ports & Shipping and Railways, respectively.

### NA Speaker Approves Nomination of MNAs in PIPS Board of Governors

Monday, 16th December 2013

Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has nominated eight Members of the National Assembly as Members of the Board of Governors of the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS). Notification to this effect was issued by the National Assembly Secretariat, on 16th December.

The Speaker National Assembly has nominated these Members in pursuance of sub-section (1) of Section 6 para (f) of the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services Act, 2008.

The MNAs included in the reconstituted BoG are Mr. Zahid Hamid, Mr. Daniyal Aziz, Mr. Muhammad Shahbaz Babar, Ms. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb, Syed Naveed Qamar, Mr. Shafqat Mahmood and Mr. S. A. Iqbal Quadri.

### Sense of Worth and Self Respect for All of Us: Says NA Speaker

Tuesday, 17th December 2013

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly has said that the Parliament and Government are fully aware of the needs of special people and has taken numerous steps to provide equal opportunities to the special persons. He expressed these views while meeting with a group of special persons headed by Syed Sardar Ahmed Piracha, the first blind journalist of Pakistan in Parliament House, on 17th December. Ms. Kishwer Zehra, MNA was also present on the occasion.

Speaker said that we are determined to make Pakistan a place where everyone has the same opportunities to participate in all walks of life with dignity and self-esteem. We aim to promote a better understanding of disability issues with a focus on the rights of persons with disabilities and gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of the political, social, economic and cultural life of their communities" he added.

In Pakistan, we are committed to build a hopeful future for all segments of our society including the ones with disability. "Our challenge is to provide all people with the equality of access they need and deserve. Ultimately, this will create a better world for all" he urged. Earlier he welcomed the entire group in the Parliament House and asked them to provide feedback about their visit.

### All Religions of the World Teach Peace, Respect for Humanity and Love: Speaker National Assembly

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that Pakistan could be steered on the path of progress and prosperity by promotion of inter-faith harmony in the country. He expressed these views while addressing a reception organized for Christian Employees of Parliament House in connection with the Christmas, here on 17th December. It was the first Christmas event of its kind in the history of National Assembly Secretariat.



Speaker NA Sardar Ayaz Sadiq cutting the Cake in connection with Christmas at Parliament House on 17.12.2013

The Speaker said that all religions of the world taught peace, love, tolerance and respect for humanity. He stressed the need for dialogue among different religions and civilizations for promotion of harmony and tranquility. He said that for a better future we should shun our differences and share our grief and rejoice. He said that Jesus Christ was not only the prophet of the Christian community but also equally respectable for Muslim as we believe in all Prophets of Almighty Allah. He said that Jesus preached love, brotherhood, tolerance and non-violence and advocated selfless service for humanity. He said his birthday is a joy for all of us. Speaker appreciated the patriotism of Christian community in



Pakistan and their contributions for progress and prosperity of the country. He also lauded the services of Christian employees working in the Parliament House and wished them Merry Christmas. Later on Speaker cut the Christmas cake and prayed for the prosperity and peace of the country. MNAs belonging to Christian community, Secretary National Assembly and senior officers of the National Assembly & Senate Secretariats were also present on the occasion.

### **NA Speaker and Deputy Speaker condole the death of uncle of Malik Ibrar Ahmad**

Thursday, 12th December 2013

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker and Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Deputy Speaker, National Assembly have condoled the passing away of uncle of Malik Ibrar Ahmad, Chairman, Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan.

In their separate condolence messages to Malik Ibrar Ahmad, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker expressed their heartfelt grief and sorrow over the death of his uncle. They prayed to Almighty Allah to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant strength and courage to him and other members of bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity.

### **Speaker and Deputy Speaker Felicitate Veteran Journalist Mr. Zahid Malik on Conferment of Honorary Degree of Doctorate**

Saturday, 14th December 2013

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker and Mr. Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Deputy Speaker, National Assembly have congratulated Mr. Zahid Malik, Editor-in Chief Daily Pakistan Observer on conferment of an Honorary PhD. Degree by Dadabhoy Institute of Higher Education.

In their separate congratulatory messages to him, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker said that Mr. Zahid Malik is a journalist of high caliber and his writings and vision are always given weightage amongst literary and intellectual circles of the society.

They said that freedom of expression is essential for strengthening democracy in the country and free and independent media serve the interest of the people by acting as an impartial critic of government policies.

### **NA Speaker and Deputy Speaker Condole the Death of Father of Amir Mateen**

Monday, 16th December, 2013

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker and Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Deputy Speaker, National Assembly have condoled the passing away of father of Amir Mateen, Senior Journalist.

In their separate condolence messages to Amir Mateen, the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker expressed their heartfelt grief and sorrow over the death of his father. They prayed to Almighty Allah to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant strength and courage to him and other members of bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity.

### **NA Speaker and Acting Speaker Condole the Death of Sardar Akhtar Rabbani, Minister AJ&K**

Thursday, 26th December 2013

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker and Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Acting Speaker, National Assembly have condoled the death of Sardar Akhtar Rabbani Minister for Agriculture, Azad Jammu and Kashmir,

In their separate condolence messages to the bereaved family, the Speaker and the Acting Speaker expressed their heartfelt grief and

sorrow over the sad demise. They prayed to Almighty Allah to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant strength and courage to members of bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity.

### **Murtaza Javed Abbasi to Act as Speaker National Assembly**

In pursuance of the provisions of clause (3) of Article 53 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr. Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Deputy Speaker National Assembly acted as Speaker National Assembly, with effect from the 19th December 2013 vice Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly who has proceeded on an official visit abroad.

### **National Assembly Session has been prorogued**

In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 54 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the President has been pleased to prorogue the National Assembly session on 20th December, 2013 on the conclusion of its business.

### **NA Speaker Stresses for Following the Principles of Quaid-e-azam in Order to Lead Pakistan to Progress and Prosperity**

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly has said that every Pakistani should follow the golden principles of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to attain a respectable and dignified place for Pakistan in the comity of nations. He said that we should focus on unity, faith and discipline in order to lead Pakistan to steps forward and prosperity. He expressed these views in his message to nation on 137th Birth Anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The Speaker said that Quaid-e-Azam was a great leader of 20th Century and was a symbol of integrity and honesty. He won a free homeland for Muslims of India and defeated colonial powers and Hindu majority with his principled stand and un-tiring struggle, he added.

The Speaker said that Quaid-e-Azam visioned Pakistan as democratic impregnable welfare state where people could live with peace, love, fraternity and harmony. He also desired that every citizen should have equal opportunities of education, health, progress and justice, he said.

The Speaker said that the befitting way to pay tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah is to forge unity among our ranks, work hard for the development and prosperity of the country by following the golden principles of Quaid-e-Azam.

### **NA Speaker Extends Warm Felicitations to the Christian Community on Christmas**

Tuesday, 24th December 2013

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly has extended warm felicitations to the Christian Members of the Parliament and the Christian community on the auspicious occasion of Christmas.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that Prophet Jesus Christ was ordained by Almighty Allah to preach peace, tolerance and love as well as brotherhood who inculcated spiritual values among his followers to work for the divine pleasure. The Muslims deeply revere Prophet Jesus Christ as one of the great messengers of Almighty Allah, he said. He said that Prophet Jesus Christ's eternal message of love for humanity and for the members of all communities and fraternities still holds strength to ensure harmony and peace in the world.

On this happy occasion, the Speaker reiterated the pledge of the government to fully safeguard the rights and privileges enjoyed by



all minorities according to the Constitution of Pakistan and guiding principles of the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He said that in face of the current challenging situation in the country, we should forge unity to counter the nefarious designs of the enemies.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also extended his appreciation to the Christian community for their deep sense of patriotism and dedicated services for the progress and prosperity of the country. Their unmatched contributions for nation building in every spheres of life are a glowing chapter of our national history.

### Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto was Indelibly Imprinted in the National Politics: Says NA Speaker

Thursday, 26th December 2013

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto was a stateswoman and a visionary political leader. She had achieved a unique status in Pakistani politics due to her extraordinary intelligence, tireless efforts and bold style of politics. Paying homage to the former Prime Minister Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto on her 6th death anniversary, he said that she had the courage to challenge the worst dictatorship of the times. Pakistani political leaders remembered her as a leader who gave voice to the downtrodden and worked for the national unity, he added.

The Speaker recalled the day of her assassination as a 'sad chapter in the political history of the country'. He said that Mohtarama strongly believed in reconciliation and forbearance. He called upon all the political forces to rise above party lines to work for the democracy and prosperity of the country.

May Allah Rest the soul of Mohtarama Benazir Bhutto in eternal peace (Ameen), Speaker prayed.

### NA Speaker Congratulates the Newly Elected Office Bearers of Lahore Press Club (LPC)

Friday, 27th December 2013

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly has congratulated the newly elected office bearers of Lahore Press Club (LPC).

In his separate message to the newly elected President of LPC, Mr Arshad Ansari, Secretary General, Mr. Shahbaz Mian and all other office bearers, the Speaker extended his warmest felicitation on their success. He said that their election was an evidence of trust and confidence of Journalist fraternity reposed in them.

The Speaker hoped that they will work for welfare of Journalist Community and freedom of press. The Speaker said that freedom of expression was essential for strengthening democracy in the country. He expressed the hope that under the new leadership the problems of Journalist's community would be resolved. He prayed for their success during their tenure.

### NA Speaker and Deputy Speaker Congratulate the Newly Elected Office Bearers of National Press Club (NPC)

Friday, 27th December 2013

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker and Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Deputy Speaker National Assembly have congratulated the newly elected office bearers of National Press Club (NPC)

In their separate messages to the newly elected President of NPC Mr Sheryar Khan, Secretary General, Mr. Muhammad Tariq Ch., and all other office bearers, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker extended their warmest felicitation on their success. They said that their election was an evidence of trust and confidence of Journalist fraternity reposed in them.

The Speaker and Deputy Speaker hoped that they will work for welfare of Journalist Community and freedom of press. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker said that freedom of expression was essential for strengthening democracy in the country. They expressed the hope that under the new leadership the problems of Journalist's community would be resolved. They prayed for their success during their tenure.

### ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS

Here is the brief overview of the events and programs where Secretary WPC Senator Nuzhat Sadiq participated to represent WPC.

#### Women Parliamentary Caucus Meets

Second meeting of The General Assembly of Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) was held at Parliament House, Islamabad on 18th December. The General Assembly was chaired by Patron WPC former Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan, Dr. Fehmida Mirza. It was also attended by Honorable Speaker, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and women parliamentarians from all political parties.

Addressing the General Assembly, Honorable Speaker, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq appreciated the contribution of WPC in building the image of Pakistan on national and international forums quoting especially the applause by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and Lord Speaker Baroness D'Souza.

Honorable Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq appreciated former speaker Dr. Fehmida Mirza for her sincere endeavors for WPC. He extended every possible support for Women's Parliamentary Caucus from the Speaker Office and National Assembly Secretariat.

General Assembly was also briefed by Member National Assembly Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb on the status and progress of Pakistan towards Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



Speaker NA, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq chairing the meeting of Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) at Parliament House on December 18, 2013.



## DELEGATIONS

### **Iraqi Parliamentary Delegation Accorded Warmly Welcome**

An Iraqi Parliamentary Delegation led by Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives Mr. Osama Abdul Aziz Al-Nujafi arrived at Nur Khan Airbase on 5<sup>th</sup> December on a three days official visit to Pakistan.

Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Deputy Speaker National Assembly along with Syed Imran Ahmad Shah, Convener of the Pak-Iraq Friendship group and senior officials of the National Assembly Secretariat warmly welcomed the visiting delegation.

While talking to the Speaker of the Iraqi Council, Deputy Speaker said that Iraq and Pakistan are bonded in the eternal ties of religion, culture and history and there is commonality of views and perceptions of both the countries on all regional and global issues. He also expressed the need for increase of contacts between the Parliamentarians and political leadership of the two countries as well as people to people contact.

Speaker of the Iraqi Council said that Pakistan is our second home and we are brethren countries. "Pakistan's strength is Iraq's strength and we want to see Pakistan strong and prosperous", he said. He said that Iraq also values its relations with Pakistan highly and wanted to further strengthen the bilateral relations.

### **Pakistan's Culture Impressive: Iraqi Delegation**

An Iraqi parliamentary delegation headed by Mr. Osama Abdul Aziz Al-Nujafi, Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives visited Lok Virsa (National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage) here at Shakarparian on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2013. On arrival, the distinguished guests were warmly received by Lok Virsa senior officials and briefed them about important aspects of Pakistan's traditional culture and heritage.

Mr. Osama Abdul Aziz Al-Nujafi and the members of delegation took keen interest in the displays on folk tales, Sufis & shrines, wedding rituals in Cholistan desert, silk thread and embroidery. While exchanging their views with Lok Virsa's officers, the delegates said "we are very much impressed to see the culture of Pakistan which has been presented beautifully in this museum". A short live musical performance by folk artists and folk musicians was also presented to entertain the Iraqi delegation at Lok Virsa. The delegates enjoyed the music with great pleasure and enthusiasm.

Earlier, the delegation also paid a visit to the Pakistan National Monument at top of Shakarparian hills, depicting history, struggle for freedom, birth and development of Pakistan as a progressive state. The delegation took keen interest in the displays portraying the national heroes and their contributions.



A Group Photo of Iraqi Parliamentary Delegation at Pakistan Monument, Islamabad on 07.12.13.

### **National Assembly of Pakistan and Iraqi Council of Representatives Enter Into Agreement for Future Cooperation**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between National Assembly of Pakistan and Council of Representatives of Iraq in an impressive ceremony held in Parliament House, on 9<sup>th</sup> December. The MoU was signed by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Mr. Osama Abdul Aziz Al-Nujafi, Speaker Council of Representatives of Iraq, who were accompanied by Parliamentarians and Secretaries from both sides.

The MoU will take effect from 9th December 2013, wherein both the parties have resolved working together to enhance cooperation in all spheres of parliamentary development such as legislative procedures, legislative drafting and legislative research, sharing of laws, committee working and oversight role, secretariat infrastructure and E-parliament.

Both the sides agreed to encourage inter-parliamentary contacts through establishment of friendship groups in the National Assembly and the Iraqi Council, organization of regular parliamentary interactions through sustained exchange of bilateral visits in order to further develop better understanding and networking. Both the Legislative bodies would cooperate, consult and support each other at all multilateral parliamentary forums while respecting each other's stated position on regional and global issues. The MoU also encompasses provision of sustainable platform for women and young parliamentarians for healthy and mutually beneficial joint venture.

The MoU also recommend encouraging and protecting each other's interests in the field of commerce, trade, expatriate communities and other areas of social, culture and economic sectors. Both the bodies would share experiences in capacity building of parliamentarians and officials by organizing joint workshops, seminars and conferences and making dedicated efforts to implement this MoU through consultation which may lead to specific agreements for purpose of realizing this memorandum.

Entering into meaningful collaboration between both the legislative bodies was agreed in a meeting between both the Speakers held on 5th December, 2013 held in Parliament House. Both the leaders agreed that the Pakistan and Iraq were tied in time immemorial historic, religious and cultural relations and those bonds need to be further strengthened. They recognized that the mutual benefits can be drawn from parliamentary cooperation in strengthening democratic governance and rule of law.

They agreed that parliamentary interaction constitute an important part of people-to-people relationships and strengthening parliamentary interaction in bilateral and multilateral



areas that helps to enhance mutual trust, understanding, expanding coordination and promoting cooperation. The Speakers approved that both the nations were facing common and similar challenges such as terrorism, extremism and sectarian and urgently needed to address them through collaborative actions.

**Promoting Parliamentary Role in Friendship: Pakistan Iraq PFG: Pakistan-Iraq to Kick-Start Parliamentary Diplomacy: Discovering the New Horizons of Pak-Iraq Friendship**

The 43-member delegation was led by H.E Osama Abdul Aziz Muhammad Nujaifi, Speaker Iraqi Parliament. The Iraqi dignitaries included honorable members of their parliament who were also the members of many important parliamentary committees including Education, foreign Affairs, Human Rights and others. Honorable Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq warmly welcomed his Iraqi counterpart at the National Assembly Secretariat on 6th December. Both Officials exchanged pleasantries and pledged to cooperate for strengthening bilateral relations between both countries. Currently the bilateral trade between both countries is US\$ 62.6 million which is very low compared to the presence vast trade potential. Both the countries vowed to open up new avenues of collaboration through increasing parliamentary diplomacy. Pak-Iraq Parliamentary Friendship Group meeting was held at the National Assembly and was co-chaired by the PFG convener Syed Imran Shah and his Iranian counterpart Mr. Hamam Baqir Hamoudi. Parliamentary representatives from both sides participated in the meeting and an active exchange of views took place from both sides. Mr. Imran expressed the sentiments of

the people of Pakistan for the Iraqi people. He further mentioned that the presence of two holy cities of Karbala and Najaf has exponentially increased the prominence of Iraq in the eyes of Muslims all over the world. Mr. Imran stressed the need to further cement the ties between both countries especially in the field of health, education, energy, tourism and science and technology. Mr. Hamam Baqir expressed his deepest regards for the Pakistani people and thanked the government for inviting the Iraqi delegation. "Both the countries are facing the common threat of terrorism and sectarian violence." said Mr. Hamam while highlighting the need to defeat the menace of extremism. He declared the current visit really promising and he hoped that it would pave the way for further cementing of bilateral ties. Other parliamentary representatives also expressed their deepest felicitations for hosting such auspicious visit. They hoped that the visit would prove to be a great source of opening new vistas in all the major fields, especially in increasing the parliamentary cooperation between both countries.

**SAARC**

**Pakistan Parliamentary Delegation Visits Maldives to Attend 7th SAARC Speakers Conference**

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly embarked on a three day official visit to Male, Maldives to attend 7th Conference of the Association of SAARC Speaker and Parliamentarians from December 21-23, 2013, on 19<sup>th</sup> December. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq was accompanied by a six-member parliamentary delegation comprising of MNAs Mrs. Tahira Aurangzeb, Makhdoom Syed Mustafa



Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq addressing the Inaugural Ceremony of the SAARC Speakers & Parliamentarians

**SPEAKERS CONFERENCE**

Mehmood, Mrs. Sajida Begum, Mr. Abdul Rashid Godil, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh and Dr. Muhammad Afzal Dhandla. During conference, the Speakers and Parliamentarians will focus to achieve SAARC MDGs by strengthening democracy in the South Asia region through institutional development. Women parliamentarians from SAARC region attending the conference will also hold a meeting to discuss opportunities and challenges for women's political participation and representation in South Asia. During his stay in Maldives, the Speaker National Assembly will meet Maldivian's political leadership apart from other Speakers and Parliamentarians of the SAARC countries.

**7<sup>th</sup> SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians Conference Commence in Male, Maldives**

The 7th Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians was inaugurated in an impressive ceremony held in Male, Maldives, on 22<sup>nd</sup> December. Mr. Yaamin Abdul Gayoom, the President of Maldives was the Chief Guest. The Ceremony was attended by Speakers and parliamentarians from SAARC countries. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly attended the ceremony leading a six-member delegation. In his address to the inaugural session, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that it was his distinct privilege to join the camaraderie of neighbors



with a message of peace and friendship from the people and Parliament of Pakistan.

The Speaker said that the eight nations of South Asia were inter-



Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq addressing the first working session of the 7<sup>th</sup> SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians Conference in Male, Maldives on 23.12.2013

woven in a fine tapestry of common ancestry, joint heritage, similar cultures and inter-linking dialects. He said that the diversity of our lands has a unique cohesiveness, which converges us to a common fate. The Speaker said that SAARC draws strength from this commonality which provided workable vistas for enhancing cooperation and had paved the way for a throbbing South Asian Union during the last three decades.

“The multiple deficits of information, communication and goodwill in this age of globalization have hindered the optimum realization of our common dreams”, the Speaker said. He said that it was ironical to note that South Asia does not only represent one-fourth of the total humanity on the globe but also the largest concentration of the world’s poor and impoverished people. He said that despite its tremendous resources and infinite opportunities, it lags far behind on all credible ratings and on most social and human indicators.

The Speaker urged that through enhanced people-to-people contacts, expanded trust base and renewed spirit of partnership; for which Parliaments are best suited to take up this challenge; could achieve the desired goals. He said that as parliamentarians, we must exploit this role for our combined benefit. “It is our duty to build bridges and not create divisions”, he added.

Earlier, he offered his sincere felicitations to Mr. Yaamin Abdul Gayoom on behalf of the people and parliament of Pakistan on his recent election as the President of Maldives. He also felicitated Mr. Abdulla Shahid, the Speaker of the People’s Majlis of the Maldives for making excellent arrangements for the Conference.

### **NA Speaker Stresses for Joint Efforts to Attain MDGs in SAARC Region**

Monday, 23rd December 2013

The Speaker, National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that democracy is a process which envisages a meaningful political representation for ensuring, across-the-board economic redistribution, availability of opportunities and gender mainstreaming. He expressed these views in his keynote address at the 1st session of the 7th Conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians being held in Maldives titled “Democracy and inclusive development—Achieving SAARC MDGs”.

The Speaker said that inclusive, equitable and sustainable development lies at heart of participatory democracy in any country. He said that amidst serious challenges of global terrorism,

economic and political strife, the respective democratic institutions have managed to hold grounds and have in fact given way to fast-maturing political cultures. He said that recent peaceful transitions of power in countries like Pakistan, Bhutan and the Maldives was evidence of the power of ballot, where through an unprecedented number of voters’ turnout, the electorate decided their fate.

He reminded that the SAARC countries further made a commitment to inclusive development at the 13th SAARC Summit in Dhakka in 2005 where political leaderships inked the Twenty-Two SAARC Development Goals regarding livelihood, health, education and environment, however, very little has been heard of these targets during the last seven years. He stressed the need for concerted efforts for narrowing gap between the promise and the performance is anathema to the ideals of a meaningful democracy.

He said that SAARC Member states have shown impressive gains wherein the region has experienced a robust collective economic growth; averaging 6% a year over the past 20 years and the Real GDP growth in the region was recorded at 5.8% in 2012. He said that these are the very indicators, which have a tangible and daily impact on people’s lives and sadly on these accounts we are stumbling. He stressed for joint collaboration through SAARC platform for achieving the identified goals.

The Speaker said that Pakistan was taking strong realization of those commitments, the previous National Assembly made history by enacting the highest number of pro-women bills. He said that soon after his election as Speaker, he ensured reactivation of Women’s Parliamentary Caucus in order to ensure the continuity of the past best practices by rising above any political bias or discrimination. The BISP, which has come out as the largest cash assistance scheme in the world, has not only been fully retained by the new democratic government but was provided with additional resources in the fiscal year 2013-2014, he added. He said that the recently launched Prime Minister’s Youth Programme in Pakistan is a fine example of providing choices to the nation’s future, which aims at building new entrepreneurs by offering soft loans worth Billions of Rupees.

He said that the idea of a parliamentary oversight on the pace of attainment of the MDGs has also been further strengthened in the newly elected House, whereby a national parliamentary task force with a mandate to include and engage all provincial legislatures on this critical subject. He said that we are standing at the cross-roads of a historical transformation, the South Asian democracies must realize that they do not confront “poverty of resources”. Their challenge is “poverty of opportunities.” He called for fighting battles not only as nations but also as a joint regional and global community.

### **Speakers of Pakistan and India agree to enhance Parliamentary Interaction**

Monday, 23rd December 2013

Speakers of India and Pakistan have agreed to continue enhancing the process of engagement at the respective parliamentary levels, enabling the two sides to build better relations and leading up to ever-lasting peace in South Asia. According to the information received from Maldives, a meeting of the two Speakers, Pakistan’s Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and India’s Smt. Meira Kumar took place in the Male, Maldives on the sidelines of the 7th SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians Conference.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the two neighboring countries have multiple challenges of poverty, illiteracy and disease and it is



important to fight these challenges together instead of wasting resources in confronting each other. He stressed on keeping all available channels open to avoid escalation of mistrust and bitterness on both sides. Parliaments, as the real voices of the people, are better placed to engage and seek common solutions to common problems. He stressed for exploring possibilities of joint collaboration between the National Assembly and Lok Sabha in Legislative Drafting, Rules of Business and other Parliamentary Practices.

Speaker Meira Kumar appreciated the vision and thoughts of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq by saying that “you may choose your friends but not your neighbours however, if the choice is ever given to

her or her countrymen, they would all have chosen Pakistan as their neighbour”. She agreed that the elected representatives have a responsibility to build strong and meaningful relations. She praised Pakistan’s role in SAARC. She said that dialogues and efforts of both the countries from all levels must be directed towards peace in the region. She welcomed the suggestions of her counterpart and reiterated her invitation to Speaker Ayaz Sadiq to visit India.

Speaker Sadiq accepted the invitation and hoped that his presence in India would help bring the relationship to another level. The meeting ended with a strong call of peace and friendship between the two neighbouring states.

## ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

### Asian Parliamentary Assembly must unite to identify a path towards mutual progress and prosperity: Speaker NA Says

Tuesday, 10th December 2013

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly has affirmed that under the umbrella of Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), we are united to identify a path towards our mutual progress and jointly



seek a way forward to achieve the landmark of peace, prosperity and development in the region. He expressed these views while presiding an interactive session of APA at Islamabad.

He said that unfortunately the past two decades have seen an unprecedented bloodshed, political turmoil and the consequent denial of opportunities to our people in the Asian Continent. Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan paid the gruesome price of the global war on terror. We could not solve the longest unsettled disputes of Palestine and Kashmir. He admitted that we are lagging behind in eradicating hunger, disease, illiteracy and gender-based deprivation from our respective societies.

“This Assembly can be an ideal platform to create understanding. It can form Contact Groups, assigned with the task to mediate between states, bring them to the negotiating table and resolve differences” he added. The Speaker urged that it is high time that this Assembly should propagate inter-faith harmony and help reform our respective societies to encourage dialogue and respect for each other.

He also acknowledged the role of women in our societies that we cannot progress without the active involvement and responsible role of its women. Asia has given the world its best women

leaders. It’s about time we recognize their potential and involve them in policymaking and policy execution, he added.

The Speaker emphasized that climate change is yet another challenge which we must jointly address. The frequent droughts and massive floods killed millions of people as well as destroyed numbers of towns and cities. The Assembly must form a panel of experts to propose workable plans of disaster mitigation and effective management of water resources.

Speakers, Deputy Speakers, Vice Presidents, Presiding Officers, Parliamentarians of APA countries and the Chairman of the Organizing Committee 6th APA Senator Mushahid Hussain were also present on the occasion.

### Parliamentary Diplomacy to Bring Nations Closer: Says NA Speaker

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly has said that terrorism, extremism, poverty, illiteracy and economic desolation are the major problems of the Asian countries and we will have to counter these problems united. He expressed these views on the occasion of lunch hosted in honour of delegates participating in the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) at Parliament House Islamabad on 9<sup>th</sup> December.

The Speaker said that Pakistan strongly desires to further diversify its existing relations through people-to-people contacts and parliamentary cooperation between National Assembly and the parliaments of the Asian countries. Underlining the need for further enhancing Parliamentary relations, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that boosting the contacts through Parliamentary Friendship Groups would advance better understanding for achieving common goal of development.

He also stressed the need for enhancing investment and economic cooperation between the Asian countries. The Speaker said that huge economic potential exists in our region which needed to be exploited for mutual benefit. He proposed that interaction between business communities of Asian countries should be encouraged. Federal Ministers, Ministers of State, Asian Parliamentarians and Foreign Diplomats were also present on the occasion.



### NA Speaker Receives Chairman Saudi Shura Council at Nur Khan Airbase

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq received Dr. Muhammad Abdullah al-Sheikh, Chairman Saudi Arabia's Shura Council at Nur Khan Airbase, Rawalpindi on 8<sup>th</sup> December. He was accompanied by Senator Mushahid Hussain and Senior Officers of the National Assembly Secretariat. The Chairman Saudi Shura, accompanied by a parliamentary delegation arrived here to attend the Asian Parliamentary Assembly meeting being held in Islamabad.

Talking to the distinguished guest, the Speaker said that it was indeed a matter of immense pleasure to receive his Saudi brothers. He said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy close fraternal relations and close and frequent contacts at the highest level have been the hallmark of these relations. He was convinced that the parliamentary contacts would bring both the brotherly countries closer. He wished him a pleasant stay in Islamabad.

Reciprocating, Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh said that he was touched by the arousing welcome accorded to him upon his arrival in Pakistan. He said that Saudi Arabia

considers Pakistan as its brother and desires to further solidify the fraternal bonds. He agreed that parliamentary interaction between both the countries was a way forward in this regard. He said that the Asian Parliamentary Assembly will prove to be a milestone in forging unity among the Asian Nations to ponder the issues and draw strategies to deal with the issues confronting them.



NA Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq receiving Dr. Muhammad Abdullah Al-Sheikh, Chairman Saudi Majlis-e-Shura on his arrival at Nur Khan Airbase, Rawalpindi on 08-12-13.

## PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

### Pak-South Africa PFG Holds a Condolence Reference in Honour of Late President Nelson Mandela

Wednesday, 11th December, 2013

Rich tributes were paid to legendary leader Mr. Nelson Mandela at a condolence reference organized by Pak-South African Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) at Parliament House, Islamabad. This was the first formal meeting of Pak South African PFG headed by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. Convener of the PFG Dr. Nafisa Shah and other members of the PFG were also present. Speaker opened the meeting by calling a minute's silence to pay tribute to Nelson Mandela.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that Nelson Mandela is one of history's greatest democratic icons. His legacy will continue to serve as a beacon of hope for generations of pro-democracy leaders, lawmakers, activists and people around the world who strive for freedom and equality, he added. "Down to earth is the key of success. We need to create mood restraint," he urged.

Dr. Nafisa Shah said Nelson Mandela's life, struggle and achievements are not only inspiring for our generations that witnessed amazing historical and political transformations, but also our future generations. "He not only made the difference in our lives but he changed the world and renewed our hope for struggle for people's freedoms and rights" she stated.

The participants of the PFG individually recognized that Mr. Mandela was a flagman and an inspiration for millions of people who lived their lives under captivity of racism, poverty and inequality. The day of his demise is a sad day for every human being who has ever fought for freedom, equality, justice and

democracy. He did not seek revenge. Instead he used his charisma, modesty and generosity to help bring about South Africa's transformation from a racially repressive regime to democracy.

Parliamentary Friendship Group conveyed his deepest condolences to the family of Mr. Nelson Mandela, to members of the National Assembly and to the people of South Africa. They unanimously passed a resolution expressing grief and sorrow over the sad demise of Nelson Mandela. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti, Dr. Nisar Ahmed Jatt, Mian Abdul Mannan, Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Lali, Sh. Rohale Asghar, Mr. Rasheed Ahmed Khan, Mr. Muhammad Khan Daha, Ch. Muhammad Ashraf, Makhdom Syed Ali Hassan Gillani, Mian Najeebuddin Awaisi, Sh. Fayyaz ud Din, Mian Imtiaz Ahmed, Ms. Arifa Khalid Parvez, Ms. Maryam Aurangzeb, Mr. Imran Zaffar Leghari, Ms. Musarat Rafique Mahesar, Mrs. Shahida Rehmani, Dr. Imran Khattak, Engr. Ali Muhammad Khan

Advocate, Mr. Shehryar Afridi, Ms. Sajida Begum, Mr. Akram Khan Durrani, Ms. Naeema Kishwer Khan, Ms. Asiya Nasir, Sahibzada Muhammad Yaqub, Ms. Aisha, Ms. Tahira Asif, Alhaj Shah Jee Afridi and Sahibzada Muhammad Nazir Sultan were also present.

### NA Speaker Inaugurates Website of Pak-Afghan Parliamentary Friendship Group; Interaction Between Parliamentarians to Further Strengthen Pak-Afghan Relations

Speaker National Assembly/President Pak-Afghan Parliamentary Friendship Group (PA-PFG) Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on 12<sup>th</sup> December launched the website of Pak-Afghan Parliamentary Friendship



Speaker, National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq chairing the meeting of Pak-South Africa Parliamentary Friendship Group at Parliament House on 11.12.13



Group in 1st meeting of the Parliamentary group held in Parliament House, this afternoon.

Referring to Pakistan-Afghan relations, the Speaker emphasized the role of parliamentarians in cementing bilateral relations between the two countries. The Speaker said that parliamentarians through PA-PFG can play an important role in bringing the two countries closer. "Peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan is in the interest of Pakistan", the Speaker said. The Speaker also appreciated Former Speaker's initiative for establishing Parliamentary Friendship Groups in the National Assembly.

Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao, Convener of the PA-PFG and Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Former Speaker also spoke about strengthening of Pak-Afghan relations. Dr. Fehmida Mirza apprised the Members about the engagement of Pak-Afghan Women Parliamentarians in dialogue at Women Parliamentary Caucus held in Islamabad where parliamentarians from either side shared views, experiences and pledged for strengthening relations between their respective countries.

Later, the Pakistan-Afghanistan Parliamentary Friendship Group discussed various aspects of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. The group also elected the Executive committee of nine members from amongst the group.

### **Members of Pak-South Africa Parliamentary Friendship Group Visits South African High Commission**

The Members of the Pakistan-South Africa Parliamentary Friendship Group in the National Assembly visited the South African High Commission on 12<sup>th</sup> December to offer condolence on the passing away of Mr. Nelson Mandela, anti-apartheid hero. The delegation was led by Dr. Nafisa Shah, convener of the Pak-South Africa Friendship Group along with other Members of the Group i.e. Dr. Nisar Ahmad Jatt, Mr. Muhammad Khan Daha, Mr. Sheryar Afridi, Mr. Muhammad Imran Khattak, Ms. Tahira Asif and Ms. Aisha, MNAs.

During the meeting with the High Commissioner of South Africa Mr. Mpendulo Kumalo, the Convener conveyed the resolution adopted by Pak-South Africa Friendship Group paying tribute to Mr. Nelson Mandela. The resolution was unanimously adopted during the meeting of the group held on December 11, 2013. Conveying the sentiments of condolence, she said that Mandela not only achieved equality for all through his great personal struggle but also healed a fractured nation. Nelson Mandela will be an inspiration to us and our future generations and our best hope in achieving the universal goal of rights and freedoms for a better world, she added.

Members of Pak-South Africa Parliamentary Friendship Group and High Commissioner agreed to work together for promoting people-to-people contacts.

### **Pak-French Parliamentary Friendship Group to Play an Important Role in Bringing the Two Countries Closer: Says NA Speaker**

Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2013

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Speaker National Assembly has said that awarding of GSP-Plus status to Pakistan by the European Union is

the landmark achieved by the phenomenon of parliamentary diplomacy and government's effort. Pakistan really acknowledges the contribution of French support regarding GSP-Plus status. He expressed these views while attending a reception by French Ambassador Mr. Philippe Thiebaud on the occasion of the formation of Pakistan-France Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) in French Embassy, on 17<sup>th</sup> December. Convener of the Pak-French PFG Muhammad Junaid Anwaar Chaudhry and other



Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq chairing a reception hosted by the French Ambassador in the honour of Members of Pak-France Parliamentary Friendship Group at France Embassy, Islamabad

members were also present.

The Speaker said that Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with France and both the countries have same perceptions on global and regional issues. Pakistan believed that peace and stability is essential for progress and prosperity in the region. Terrorism and extremism are the biggest threats to peace and stability and it can be countered by closer cooperation amongst the stakeholders.

Referring to Pakistan-France relations, the Speaker emphasized the role of parliamentarians in cementing bilateral relations between the two countries. He said that parliamentarians through PFG can play an important role in bringing the two countries more closer.

The Speaker said that the recent smooth transition of power from one elected government to another is a great motivation for strengthening of the democratic institutions in Pakistan. He said that the incumbent parliament consists of progressive and pragmatic representation that was committed to resolve the challenges being confronted by the nation.

French Ambassador Mr. Philippe Thiebaud appreciated the role of Pakistani Parliament and reiterated his country's full support to democratic forces of the country. "France wanted democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan to flourish and strengthen" he said.

He said that France also wanted to enhance cooperation with Pakistan in all sectors of the economy. He said that Pakistan is rendering great sacrifices in the war against terrorism and its role is commendable.

MNAs Rao Muhammad Ajmal Khan, Mian Najeebuddin Awaisi, Mr. Muhammad Arshad Khan Laghari, Syed Kazim Ali Shah, Syed Ali Raza Abidi, Mr. Abdul Rashid Godil, Ms. Kiran Haider, Mrs. Tahira Asif, Ms. Asyia Naz Tanoli, Ms. Ghulam Bibi Bharwana and Belum Hasnain were also present on the occasion.

## FOREIGN VISITS



## Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Arrives in Sri Lanka

Thursday, 19th December 2013

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq called on the Speaker of Sri Lankan Parliament Hon. Chamal Rajapaksa on 20<sup>th</sup>



Sri Lankan President, Mahindra Rajapaksa welcomes Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at a dinner function hosted by Speaker Chamal Rajapaksa on December 20 at his residence

December in Colombo, Sri Lanka. According to a message received from Sri Lanka, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq arrived in Sri Lanka on 19th December, 2013 on a two days official visit, undertaken on the invitation of Sri Lanka's Speaker of Parliament Hon Chamal Rajapaksa while heading towards Male, Maldives to attend the 7th SAARC Speaker Conference.

The invitation was conveyed by the Deputy Speaker of Sri-Lankan Parliament Chandima Weerakkody, during his visit to Pakistan. The visit of Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq will further strengthen the friendship between the two countries.

During his short stay in Colombo, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq held a meeting with members of Sri Lanka-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Association in Sri Lankan Parliament and attended a luncheon hosted by the Association in his honour.

## NA Speaker Meets Sri Lankan President

Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Sardar Ayaz Sadiq paid a courtesy call on Sri Lankan President Hon. Mahinda Rajapaksa in Colombo, on 21<sup>st</sup> December. The Speaker said that Pakistan and Sri Lanka are historically bonded in a relationship of trust, mutual respect and deep friendship which is manifested at all the phases of their histories. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also commended the arrangements made by the Sri Lankan government for successfully organizing the Commonwealth Heads of government meeting (CHoGM) last month in which the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif headed the Pakistani delegation. He further said that the meeting between the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Sri Lankan President has given a boost to the bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Speaker also appreciated the efforts of the Sri Lankan government in defeating the menace of terrorism from Sri Lankan Soil. During the meeting, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq conveyed

appreciation of Pakistani government for the hospitality extended by the people and Government of Sri Lanka towards the Pakistani delegation.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa acknowledged the support extended by the government of Pakistan during Sri Lankan war against terrorism and said that Pakistan's unflinching support during the three decade internal conflict has immensely helped in the elimination of terrorism from Sri Lanka.

He further said that Sri Lanka would not have eliminated the scourge of terrorism without the help and support of Pakistan. He said Pakistan has proved to be a true friend of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan government as well as public has deep affection for Pakistan. President Mahinda Rajapaksa also welcomed Pakistani investment in sugar sector of Sri Lanka and reiterated his governments full support in this regard.

The two sides agreed to further strengthen the bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and stressed upon the need to work closely in the regional and global context.

## NA Speaker Meets UAE Speaker

Thursday, 26th December 2013

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that Pakistan and United Arab Emirates enjoy close fraternal relations which are deep rooted in shared history, culture, and heritage. Pakistani leadership and its people value that bond of fraternity and look forward to expand cooperation with UAE in diverse fields. These views were expressed by the Speaker during a meeting with Mr. Mohammad Ahmad Al Mur, Speaker of Majlis Watani Itihadi, House of the Federal National Council UAE on 26<sup>th</sup> December according to a message received from UAE.

The Speaker said that government of Pakistan strongly desires to promote friendly relations with all the countries particularly neighbouring states. He said that Pakistani leadership and its people acknowledge UAE's contributions and cooperation for the development of Pakistan. He congratulated the UAE Government for winning Expo 2020 bid and viewed that it would be beneficial not only for the UAE but also for the whole region. He stressed upon the need to foster unity among the Muslim Ummah for progress and prosperity.

The Speaker said that interaction between parliamentarians of both the countries could bring both the nations closer. He apprised the UAE Speaker about the formation of Pak-UAE Friendship Group in National Assembly of Pakistan. He also invited the Speaker of Majlis Watani Itihadi to visit Pakistan along with a parliamentary delegation. He viewed that exchanges could provide an opportunity to the parliamentarians from either side to exchange views and experiences.

Speaker of Majlis Watani Itihadi, Mr. Mohammad Ahmad Al Mur said that UAE also values its relations with Pakistan and wants to further enhance the existing pace through parliamentary interaction and economic cooperation. He said that the present government in Pakistan is moving in the right direction and would succeed in restoring peace and tranquility in the country. The Speaker of Majlis Watani Itihadi said that Pakistan holds bright future keeping in view its vast natural and human potential. Paying tribute to the founding father of Pakistan, the UAE Speaker said that Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was a great visionary leader who visioned Pakistan to be a moderate, democratic, peaceful and prosperous country.



## AROUND THE GLOBE

### **Nelson Mandela dies in Johannesburg**

Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first post-apartheid president, died on December 5th at the age of 95. Leaders from around the world attended a memorial service at a football stadium in Soweto. In a speech Barack Obama called Mr. Mandela "a giant of history", who "reminds us that it always seems impossible until it is done". The body of Mr Mandela was taken to Pretoria, South Africa's capital, before his funeral and burial at Qunu, his home village, on December 15th.

### **Mykola Azarov warns protestors as tension escalates**

Mykola Azarov, the prime minister of Ukraine, accused those who are opposed to his government's rejection of closer ties with the European Union of escalating political tensions. He warned protestors at mass rallies to obey the law, or they would be punished. He survived a no-confidence vote in parliament. President Viktor Yanukovich went to China, apparently to forge closer economic ties. Both he and Mr Azarov continue to face calls to step down.

### **France's National Assembly passes bill banning purchase of sex**

In a move by President François Hollande's government toward curbing prostitution, France's National Assembly passed a bill December 4th that criminalizes the purchase of sexual services, along the lines of the Swedish law that has almost totally eliminated prostitution and sex-trade trafficking in the Scandinavian country.

In the National Assembly, 268 deputies voted for the bill, and 138 against it. If the Senate approves the bill, those convicted of buying sex services will be subject to a fine ranging up to 1,500 euros (about \$2000). Repeat offenders could face fines of up to 3,750 euros (about \$5,000). Convicted "johns" would also be required to attend workshops on the harmful effects of prostitution on the women whose services they were trying to buy.

The bill also provides for social and professional support for those seeking to leave prostitution, including counseling and short-term residence permits for foreign prostitutes, and education programs to help former prostitutes obtain new jobs.

### **North Korea executes top leader's 'traitor' uncle**

North Korea said on Friday it had executed the uncle of top leader Kim Jong-Un, branding veteran fixer Jang SongThaek a 'traitor for all ages', as the US and South Korea voiced concern at the shock purge.

In a stunning downfall, Jang who had been seen as Kim's political regent and the country's unofficial number two –was executed on Thursday immediately after a special military trial, state news agency KCNA reported.

In a viciously worded attack it said he committed such a 'hideous crime as attempting to overthrow the state by all sorts of intrigues and despicable methods with a wild ambition to grab the supreme power of our party and state'.

### **Bangkok gets calm**

Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, fell calm before King Bhumibol's 86th birthday. Opposition-led protests to unseat the government of the Prime Minister, Yingluck Shinawatra, had turned violent, killing four people. The army and politicians mediated a temporary truce. The protesters claim the government is a puppet of Thaksin Shinawatra, Ms Yingluck's brother, ousted as prime minister in 2006 and now in Dubai. Ms Yingluck's government was elected in a landslide only two years ago.

### **US Congressmen make budget deal**

Negotiators in Congress, led by Patty Murray for the Democrats and Paul Ryan for the Republicans, crafted a compromise two-year budget deal of modest deficit cuts and spending rises that averts another government shutdown. The deal is funded in part by raising government fees on airlines (the tricky parlance of the budget talks avoided the word "tax") and reducing some payments to providers of Medicare treatment. The approval rating for Congress averaged 14% in 2013, according to Gallup, the lowest annual average in the polling organization's history.

### **Ban on Consecutive terms overturned in Mexico**

Mexico's Senate approved a political reform that would overturn a ban on legislators and mayors standing for consecutive terms and extend the remit of the independent electoral authority to sub-national elections. Meanwhile, a left-of-centre party pulled out of a pact to support reforms brokered last year by President Enrique Peña Nieto.

### **Maduro's Socialist Party wins Venezuela's municipal elections**

Venezuela's ruling socialist party and its allies won almost 50% of the vote in municipal elections. The opposition got 44%, dashing its hopes of turning the vote into a plebiscite on the erratic and increasingly totalitarian rule of President Nicolás Maduro.



Nicolas Maduro celebrating his victory in municipal elections

### **Spain's princess to be investigated for tax fraud**

A far-right group launched a fraud lawsuit on Friday against Spanish King Juan Carlos's

daughter Cristina, the latest twist in a case that has plunged his family into scandal.

The king's youngest daughter Cristina, 48, would be his first direct relative ever to appear in court accused of wrongdoing if the judge investigating the case summoned her as a suspect.

Manos Limpias, a litigious far-right pressure group, lodged a suit against her alleging tax evasion and money laundering, in a court filing.

### **First CM of Aam Aadmi Party sworn in**



Arvind Kejriwal was sworn in as Chief Minister of the Indian Capital, Delhi. He is the leader of a new party, the Aam Aadmi

party, or Common Man's Party, that battles corruption and pledges to end the culture of privileges in Indian politics.

## PERSPECTIVE

### Man Forgets....

Abid Qayyum



It was dawn of 2013, last evening, and the sun was sinking in front of me as if saying the last goodbye. Several cars were lined up across the road, to attend the funeral of someone, unfortunate enough not to witness what New Year brings. I don't know if the deceased was young or old, but would certainly be longing to see the felicitations of the year 2014. He would also have some desires to achieve next year, some pending things to do, some secrets to reveal, some objectives to achieve. But he faced the utmost reality of life, of which man often becomes ignorant amidst the hustle and bustle of this busy life. Death is inevitable and unfortunately, same is the thought of forgetting this.

As the midnight approached, I could hear the gunshots, fireworks and a plethora of other sounds of people cheering and enjoying their hearts out to welcome the coming New Year. Sitting by the fire in that cold winter night and listening outside the window to the cherished voices of merry-making people greatly taught me the two important realities of life; happiness and sorrow. At one place, people were mourning over the death of their loved one who departed moments before the New Year whereas on the other occasion, people were having fun and celebrating the arrival of New Year.

It indeed is good to find happiness in these joyous occasions, but crossing the limits really makes the man forget the real lessons which moments like these bring. The whole world celebrates the occasion and spends millions. Across the globe, from Shanghai to Washington and from Paris to Tokyo, this event is celebrated in a

great manner by millions of people. But no incident of insolence or unrest is reported. Why is it so that we Pakistanis always cross the limits on such occasions? From the blind shelling of AK47s to the extravagant use of Alcohol, from spending lavishly on food to the arrangement of dance parties, all these things reflect our inability to think above our own self. To think that a stray bullet could injure someone or that the loud music being played at the vulgar parties might disturb others. This is not it, on every other occasion, may it be Basant or a mere wedding ceremony, the moment to celebrate the victory or the time of defeat, our behaviors jump out of control. Majority of us have become capricious, resonating between extremes, enjoying or mourning to the core.

As the New Year brings the felicitation and a sense of celebration, it also urges us to reflect our past. To see what discrepancies we had in the previous year and making a true commitment to oneself of remedying things. New Year brings an impetus with itself to ponder upon one's own weaknesses and to correct them as much as possible. Years really pass by and they would continue to do so. The real thing is to take the opportunities and make something positive out of it.

One should always keep questioning whether life should be like the stray bullet lost in the vastness of the sky, or should it be like that of a hunter's bullet that hits the target.

***(The author is a Young Parliamentary Associate at National Assembly of Pakistan)***

### Pak-US Relations: A Tightrope?

Nazish Tariq Rahmani



US Pakistan share a unique relationship based on the needs of time. This relationship can be characterised best by co-dependence and trust-deficit. Since the beginning, US relations have been need based. While US needed allies against the Soviet Union, Pakistan needed military, economic and political support of a super power. Issues like nuclear power acquisition have been an important issue throughout. After 9/11, Pakistan and US became allies against the global war on terror. Us

government has declared its policy regarding Pakistan as based on the following five goals: Winning the global war on terrorism (WGOT), Nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), promoting a peaceful Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship, improving Pakistan India relationship and promoting democracy.

Us Pakistan's interests converge on goals like eradicating global extremism, a peaceful Afghanistan, maintaining balanced relations with each other, Peace in south-Asia on whole, economic development, democracy, drug trafficking, US assistance, human rights issues and threat of Islamisation and extremism.

Somehow the relationship has always been bumpy owing to the divergence of goals like US's suspicions over Pak's efforts regarding extermination of Taliban, Issues on Aid, Drone strikes in FATA, Pakistan's Nuclear Program, Growing US-Led Indian involvement in Afghanistan, Pakistan's strategic/security centric partnership with China, relations with Iran and Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline



project, policy differences, safe havens of Pakistani Taliban in Afghanistan remain points of variance. Other contributing factors or irritants to mutual relations include four main events in the recent past; Raymond Davis Arrest in Lahore, Osama Bin Laden's killing in Abbottabad, Terrorist Attack on the US Embassy in Kabul and Salala Incident. Others include Kerry-Lugar bill, USA's pressing demands and the 'do more' mantra, interference in Baluchistan issue, rising Anti- American Sentiments among the masses and suspicions regarding the role of Pak Military and Intelligence Agencies. Episodes regarding controversial persons like Faisal Shahzad, Shakil Afridi, Ghulam Nai Fai, & Aafia Siddiqui also played their roles. Recent events like Prime Minister's much lauded trip to United States and the NATO supply blockage by the Provincial government best reflect the unsteadiness of this relationship.

The US expectations to grind down the militant groups that pose a threat to its strategy in Afghanistan and, to ensure a stable Pakistan; safeguard its nuclear assets and weapons from unauthorized use, transfer, or theft; form a stable and responsive government; establish friendly relations with its neighbors. Moreover, providing safe passage of NATO supplies, mainstreaming fata and normalizing relations with India with respect to betterment of Afghanistan are also expected. Pakistan on the other hand considers USA an opportunist friend who is not

worthy of showing all the aces. Other factors include the Indian factor in this whole scenario, and the regard of its national sovereignty and presence of Pakistani Taliban safe havens in Afghanistan. The Gap between Pakistan's state policy and public aspirations in the context of Pak-US relations is quite wide. Moreover, public sentiment is hostile about the areas of divergence, and indifferent regarding areas of convergence. Most important issue that America and Pakistan are conjointly seized with at the moment is post 2014 Afghanistan. Contrary to Pakistan's hopes, they seemingly don't provide a way forward to the most controversial aspects like the continuation of drone attacks. Nevertheless, the relations are still swinging between 'tactical convergences' and 'strategic divergences'. Issues like drone, NATO supplies blockade, threat of termination of US aid and US withdrawal scenario from Afghanistan are important for both the countries and their consequences will have a significant effect on the future of both the countries. Meanwhile, Uncle Sam has turned Aunt Sally in Pakistan. Different forces at home are trying to influence state foreign policy regarding US. Let's see where the wind blows.

***(The author is a Young Parliamentary Associate at National Assembly of Pakistan)***

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