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Dutch parliamentarians and senior officials affirm goodwill for Pakistan:

The Ambassador held a series of meetings with senior government officials, Ministers, and parliamentarians in the last six months to brief them on Pakistan's policy and approach on issues of mutual interest. It is note-worthy that the Dutch greatly appreciate the positive role played by Pakistan in the global fight against terrorism. There is a strong desire at every level to promote relations with Pakistan. Last year, the process of institutionalized annual bilateral consultations started to enable the two governments to review the entire gamut of bilateral relations. The second round will be held in Islamabad this year. Most of the parliamentarians evinced keen interest in Pakistani perspective. Among those that the Ambassador met recently include Minister for International Cooperation Ben Knapen (VVD), Defense Minister Hans Hillen (CDA), President of Senate Mr. van der Linden, Chairperson Foreign Relations Committee Mrs Albayrak (CDA), MPs van Ormel (CDA), Dijkhoff (VVD), Stef Blok (party leader of VVD), Pechtold (party leader of D66), Bart Liefde (VVD), Harry van Bommel (SP), Frans Timmermans (spokesperson PvdA), senior government officials in Foreign and Economic Ministries, and various think-tanks.



Ambassador with Minister for international cooperation Ben Knapen in his office on 28 March 2011 (above)

National Poet Iqbal remembered in an evening with Mustansar Tarar

In November 2010, Iqbal Day was celebrated in The Hague. Holding events to remember Iqbal, our national poet, has now become a regular feature in the Netherlands. Pak-Dutch Forum, in cooperation with the Embassy, organized the event which was in the form of an evening with the well known author, actor, compere, and intellectual,



Mr Mustansar Hussain Tarar, who specially flew in from Lahore to join this event. Mr Tarar shared his appreciation of the work of Iqbal. He also read out some of his most-read literary pieces. Last year Iqbal Day was marked by a mushaira which was attended by poets from several countries in Europe. There are plans to organize another similar event this year to remember Iqbal.

Pakistani surgical goods make inroads into the Dutch market



Pakistan is exporting nearly US\$3.4 million worth of medical, veterinary & dental instruments in the Dutch market. A 16-member delegation of Pakistani surgical instruments exporters visited the Netherlands to participate in the CBI Export Coaching Programme (ECP) on Medical Devices held in Rotterdam in Feb. 2011. ECP is aimed at building capacity of Pakistani companies to export to the EU.

Pakistani surgical instruments at display in PLMA exhibition Amsterdam, May 2010 (above)

A delegation of Pakistani surgical instruments exporters with Commercial Counsellor



Sixth and Seventh Embassy–Community Quarterly Meetings held in Pakistan House

The Embassy-Community Quarterly interaction continued during the past six months, with the sixth ECQM held on 26 November 2010 and seventh ECQM held on 16 January 2011. The meetings provided a useful forum to address the issues of interest and concern to our community. Meetings have become a regular feature. The meetings provided an opportunity to review progress made in raising funds for flood affectees and plan socio-cultural activities for the summer. The highlight of the sixth meeting was the participation of renowned writer Mustansar Hussain Tarar. The participants stayed on to enjoy the company of Mr. Tarar. In a short questions and answers session, Mr. Tarar amused



the participants with his literary anecdotes and light talk. He also narrated one of his short humorous newspaper column to participants.

The community leaders interacting with Mustansar Tarar during ECQM-6, Nov 2011 (above)

ECQM-7 reviewed efforts made by the community to raise funds for flood victims, January 2011(right)



The Dutch public contributes generously to help flood victims



The people of Netherlands raised over 27 million Euros to help victims of devastating floods in Pakistan. The Ambassador visited Utrecht in February to thank and discuss with the representatives of SHO, a consortium of NGOs which had raised funds, the arrangements made to ensure that the funds collected would reach the flood victims in a transparent and accountable manner. The government of the Netherlands also contributed to this humanitarian cause. The Pakistani Dutch community too raised substantial amount for Prime Minister Fund for flood victims as well as contributed through various organizations in Pakistan. The Ambassador was invited to Zeeland province where Mayor of Vlissingen recalled Pakistan help to Netherlands floods of 1953 and urged all to contribute

to flood victims in Pakistan. The picture (above right) shows a scene from PLAIN gathering at Pakistan House, which was one of several fund-raisers organized in the Netherlands.



Pakistani Ladies Association (PLAIN) kicks off its 2011 calendar of activities

Pakistan Ladies Association in the Netherlands (PLAIN) kicked off 2011 with its first event held in January and the second in March. A highly entertaining and fun packed evening was organized which featured the gifts-laden game of 'Tambola'. An age old game dating back to the 1500's, 'Tambola' provided an opportunity for an informal, engaging, and a pleasurable evening for the members of PLAIN. It revealed the spirit of competition and also brought forward some highly talented members with artistic, creative and humorous sides. There were also various other small events during the evening allowing everyone a chance to win something and participate. It is heartening to note that PLAIN is organizing events with consistency and serving as a platform to bring communities together. The second event was a mehfil-e-hamd-o-naat to recite praises for the Creator and the Prophet. Earlier in the summer PLAIN also held a fund raising dinner for

the flood victims, which was attended by all communities, including the diplomatic corps in the Netherlands. The PLAIN also organized a Music Mehfil last summer in The Hague to pay tribute to the living legend Maestro Sohail Rana, who flew in from Canada.



Grand receptions mark Pakistan Day in the Netherlands

This year's Pakistan Day celebrations in the Netherlands commenced with a solemn flag hoisting ceremony at Pakistan House in The Hague on the morning of 23rd March 2011. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry unfurled the Pakistani color. Messages of the President and the Prime Minister were read out and prayers were offered for the peace, development and glory of our beloved country. Two back-to-back grand Receptions were held in the evening at Pakistan House to mark the adoption of the historic Pakistan Resolution.

Around 200 Dutch dignitaries and members of Diplomatic Corps attended the first Reception while around 250 members of Pakistani-Dutch community attended the second Reception. The guests included senior Dutch officials, Hague-based Ambassadors, representatives of Hague-based international organizations, and notable members of Pakistani-Dutch community. The participants enjoyed the evening in the green lawns of Pakistan House with Pakistani national tunes played live on traditional instruments by a notable Pakistani artist in the Netherlands. The Ambassador addressed the Pakistani-community at the conclusion of the second Reception to update them about various efforts of the Embassy to promote Pakistan-Netherlands friendly ties. He appreciated the contribution of Pakistani Diaspora in the Netherlands for promotion of positive image of Pakistan. The community joined in singing together two milli naghmas. The guests were entertained with traditional Pakistani cuisine. The guests particularly the Dutch and the Diplomatic Corps greatly enjoyed Pakistani food with which they are now quite familiar due to our systematic promotion to introduce Pakistani products.



Receiving guests. Ambassador welcoming the Alderman for the city of Hague (above)

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Pakistani-Dutch community reciting milli naghmas with patriotic spirit to conclude the second reception (right)



Pakistan and the Netherlands-based international organizations: Pakistan's interests were protected and promoted in various Netherlands-based organizations through close monitoring of developments and active participation by the Embassy. At the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Pakistan was re-elected to the Executive Council, served as coordinator for Asia group, and elected as vice chairman of Conference of States Parties. The Ambassador participated in the visit to US CW destruction facilities (Feb), Wilton Park conference (March) and Clingendael seminar (Feb) dealing with future priorities of the Organization. The Permanent Court of Arbitration is serving as the venue for an arbitration case for Kishenganga project. A delegation from Pakistan visited the Court for first hearing in January 2011. Common Fund for Commodities also started a regional project in Pakistan.



News in brief

Honour: One of the pioneers of Pakistani-Dutch community, Mr Fasih Shamsi, was awarded "Sitara-e-Khidmat" posthumously, for his untiring efforts to promote Pakistan's good name in Netherlands through sports and cultural interaction.

Medal Award ceremony and Pakistan Day: Pak-Dutch National Forum organized a well-attended evening to celebrate Pakistan Day. The event marked the fifth edition of award of gold medal to academic achiever, business person of the year, and sportsman of the year. The highlight of the event was participation by Mr Sajjad Karim, Member of European Parliament.

Pakistan Day: Pakistan Welfare Association organized a funtion to mark Pakistan Day. The event was attended by a cross-section of Pakistani-Dutch families. A qawwal group from Pakistan presented captivating qawwali.

Young Professionals: A group of young Pakistani-Dutch professionals called Think for Pakistan arranged an evening titled "ek sham sohni dharti ke naam" to mark independence day, eid festivities, and fund-raising for flood affectees. Live telecast with renowned journalist and anchor person Talat Hussain was held.

Clingendael: The program of six weeks training course for groups of young officers of Foreign Sevice of Pakistan at Clingendael institute for international relations has continued for the past five years. Another batch is arriving this month (April 2011).

Kashmir Solidarity Day: Kashmir Centre Holland organized a series of events to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day on 5 February 2011. It staged a protest in front of Dutch parliament to express solidarity with Kashmir causes and submitted memorandums to Dutch parliament and Foreign Ministry. A million signature campaign was launched in front of the ICJ, and a discussion meeting held, which was attended by the Ambassador.

Embassy of Pakistan, The Hague

To see previous issues, of newsletters visit

www.pakembassy.nl

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2nd Annual Kinnoo Exhibition in Amsterdam draws huge response

The juicy kinnoo from Pakistan was on display in the 2nd Annual Exhibition of Pakistani Kinnoo organised in Amsterdam on Friday, February 18th 2011 by the Commercial Wing of the Embassy of Pakistan with the support of Pakistan Horticulture Development & Export Company. The exhibition was aimed at promoting Pakistani citrus in the Netherlands. The exhibition was organised primarily as a B2B event and the first session of the event was open exclusively for the trade visitors. The exhibition attracted huge response from the buyers, traders and consumers and more than 400 visitors participated in the event. Since the first kinnoo exhibition held last year, there has been a ten percent increase in the imports of kinnoo into the Dutch market.



Pakistani kinnoo made an emphatic entry into the Dutch mainstream consumer market when Hanos, one of the largest chain stores of restaurant and catering supplies in Benelux market, started selling Pakistani kinnoo from 25th February 2011 (above and left)

Forthcoming sports and cultural events

Pakistan Sports and Cultural Festival 2011, 5 June 2011
23rd Pakistan Ambassador Hockey Tournament, 24 June
21st Pakistan Ambassador Cricket Cup, 23 July
2nd Pakistan Ambassador Golf Clinic & Tournament, September 2011
PLAIN calendar of activities, see www.plainpk.nl

Forthcoming commercial events

Pakistan Food Festival, 5 June 2011
Pakistan Pavilion at PLMA's World of Private Label, 24-25 May 2011
Soccer ball Promotion, 24-25 May
8th Annual Mango Exhibition, 29 June
Pakistani Textiles Trends Event, October