

Embassy of Pakistan to France (Press Section)

Newsletter (January – June, 2020)

Pakistan elected President of Asia and Pacific Group of UNESCO

23rd January, 2020



Pakistan assumed the presidency of Asia Pacific Group (ASPAC) in UNESCO for 2020. Mr. Moin-ul-Haque, Ambassador of Pakistan to France and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO will lead the ASPAC Group for the year 2020. Indonesia will be the Vice Chair while Republic of Korea will be the Secretary of the Group. UNESCO has six regional groups, with ASPAC being the second largest with 44 member states.

Pakistani Community to setup a Cultural, Education and Sports Centre

27th January, 2020



A delegation of Pakistan-France Education, Culture and Sports Association in Paris led by its President Mr. Fazal Aleem called on the Ambassador. The delegation briefed the Ambassador on their project to setup a fully equipped educational, cultural and sports centre in Criel city, located in the suburbs of Paris. The centre would provide facilities for teaching languages including French and Urdu and Pakistan studies in addition to providing a platform to the Pakistani community for social and cultural activities.

Seminar and Photo exhibition to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day

5th February, 2020



A Seminar and photo exhibition was held at the Embassy to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day in Paris on the theme of **“Humans without Human Rights”**. The event was addressed by Mr. Jean Bernard Sempastous, President of Pakistan-France Friendship group in the French National Assembly. Professor Annie Krieger-Krynicky, a famous French scholar and recipient of Sitara-e-Pakistan and Ambassador Mr. Moin ul Haque also addressed the audience.



Later, Mr. Jean Bernard Sempastous and the Ambassador jointly inaugurated a photo and art exhibition, in which work of diverse artists was put on display. Artists included Mr. Justin Bishop, Mr. Usman Aziz Tarar, Mr. Masood Akhtar and Ms. Hafsa Nouman. Special artwork by a Kashmiri artist Ms. Muzna Khawaja was also showcased which depicted the sufferings of the Kashmir people.



21 Texworld Exhibition

10th to 13th February, 2020.

21 Pakistani companies dealing in fabric, garments and home textiles participated in *Texworld*, Europe's premier textile B2B exhibition held in Paris. Major textile production houses of Pakistan including Nishat Mills, Kohinoor Mills, Kamal Limited and Master Textile set up their exclusive pavilions to showcase their products ranging from basics to more creative and high-quality fabrics. Trade Development Authority of Pakistan also facilitated participation of a number of companies in fabric, apparel and denim sectors.



ASPAC Cultural Evening 2020

26th February, 2020.



Pakistan actively participated in organizing the Asia Pacific (ASPAC) cultural evening 2020 under the theme “*Celebrating Diversity*” at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. In his address, Ambassador of Pakistan to France, Permanent Delegate to UNESCO and the incumbent chairman of ASPAC, Mr. Moin ul Haque reiterated commitment of ASPAC member states to UNESCO’s mandate. He said the event was aimed at celebrating cultural diversity

to promote global peace and stability for the wellbeing of future generations.

Flag Hoisting on Pakistan Day

23rd March 2020

Respecting the strict restrictions imposed by the French government to slow the spread of Covid-19 virus and to ensure the safety of community members, the Pakistan flag was hoisted by Ambassador Mr. Moin ul Haque at the Pakistan House in a simple ceremony to mark the Pakistan Day.

In his message to the community, the Ambassador said that although we were celebrating Pakistan Day without the presence of patriotic and loyal members of Pakistani community, yet he could feel their enthusiasm, passion and love for Pakistan, while raising the Pakistani flag and could also hear their chanting of Pakistan Zindabad slogan. He requested the Pakistan community to celebrate Pakistan Day with their family members while remaining confined to their homes.



Helping distressed Pakistanis

2nd April, 2020



The Embassy of Pakistan in Paris launched a ration distribution campaign to help those Pakistanis who were facing hardship due to Covid-19 lockdown in France.

Several Pakistani companies, associations and social workers joined hands with the Embassy in this noble cause.

Ambassador sends condolence messages to bereaved families

15th April, 2020

Ambassador of Pakistan to France Mr. Moin ul Haque in his video message to the Pakistani community in France condoled the death of Pakistanis who had lost their lives due to COVID-19. He also prayed for the early recovery of those who had been infected by the virus.



Pakistan presents cultural revival strategy at UNESCO

22nd April, 2020

A virtual meeting organized by the UNESCO Headquarters Paris was attended by over 110 Culture Ministers from around the world to discuss and mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Mr. Shafqat Mahmood represented Pakistan via video link. He outlined Pakistan's strategy to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the cultural sector of Pakistan. He proposed launching of national, regional and international level strategies under the auspices of UNESCO to measure the impact of COVID-19 on this sector, especially in developing countries. He also stressed the need for allocation of enhanced budgetary support for artists and cultural professionals, along with the revival of cultural ecosystem which had been badly affected due to COVID-19 related lockdowns.



Interaction with France-based Pakistani businessmen

27th April, 2020

The Ambassador of Pakistan to France Mr. Moin ul Haque held a virtual meeting with France-based Pakistani businessmen, traders and investors to brief them about government's special economic relief package and social welfare 'Ehsaas' Programme for the underprivileged segments of the society. Challenges for businesses and new opportunities especially in the fields of pharmaceutical, health, IT and food sectors were discussed. He assured them of Pakistan government's full support to resolve issues faced by them due to COVID-19 related lockdown.



AJK President's interaction with French Media Persons and Intellectuals

7th May, 2020

The Embassy organized a virtual seminar where President Azad Jammu & Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan was invited to sensitize prominent French media persons, scholars, intellectuals and civil society representatives on the issue of Kashmir. In his address President AJ&K said that India was using the cover of Covid-19 pandemic to break the will of Kashmiri people by denying them their right to self-determination and by altering the status of the internationally recognized disputed region.



He contrasted the worldwide Covid-19 lockdowns which were meant to save people from the deadly pandemic with the lockdown in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir where 8 million Kashmiris were virtually under siege, without access to food, education, medicine, livelihood and freedom of movement and speech. He also apprised the participants of Indian attempts to change the demography of the disputed region, first by unilaterally and illegally revoking Articles 370 and 35-A of its Constitution and later by introducing a new domicile law. Both were in contravention of several resolutions of the United Nations Security Council which forbade unilateral change of status of the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir. Sardar Masood Khan also called upon the world leaders, intellectuals and media persons to take notice of the atrocities committed by Indian security forces against innocent Kashmiris and raise their voice for the resolution of the dispute in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions and wishes of the people of Kashmir.

Mehfil-e-Seerat

11th May, 2020

The Embassy organized a virtual Mehfil e Seerat to pay tribute to the Holy Prophet S.A.W. The event was organized on 17th Ramadan, the day of the battle of Badr, a turning point in the history of Islam. Tilawat by renowned Qari Syed Sadaqat Ali (SI) was followed by poetry recitation in praise of the Prophet S.A.W by an inspiring poet Waqar Naseem Wamiq and a series of Naat recitations. The Ambassador in his remarks said that the current Covid-19 pandemic was a multi-dimensional challenge to humanity but at the same time offered an opportunity to improve ourselves and come out of this crisis as better human beings. Noted Islamic scholar and expert on Iqbal, Dr. Tahir Tanoli in his keynote speech highlighted the importance of following the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W., to bring peace and harmony to the world.



French Businessmen and Investors invited to invest in SEZs in Pakistan

12th May, 2020

A webinar on investment opportunities in Pakistan was held by MEDEF, the largest business federation in France in cooperation with the Embassy of Pakistan in Paris and French Embassy in Islamabad. The event was attended by a large number of Pakistani and French companies. Mr. Atif R. Bokhari, Minister of State and Chairman Board of Investment of Pakistan, in his key note speech, invited French entrepreneurs, investors and businessmen to invest in Special Economic Zones established by Pakistan, especially in



food processing, information technology, housing and construction, travel and tourism and agriculture sectors and benefit from Pakistan's liberal investment regime and stable political and security situation of the country. He also encouraged the French investors and businesspersons to consider investing in the Information Technology Park being established in Islamabad. Mr. Thierry Pflimlin, President of Pakistan France Business Council and President of Total Global Services, in his remarks said that the French and Pakistani companies should explore the emerging business and investment opportunities as both the countries restart their economies after Covid-19 lockdowns. Ambassador Mr. Moin ul Haque briefed the participants about the economic challenges being faced by Pakistan due to Covid-19 and the government's relief stimulus package aimed at helping businesses and vulnerable segments of the society. He also spoke about the huge potential that exists between Pakistan and France in further strengthening their economic and investment relations.

Pakistani Community greeted on Eid

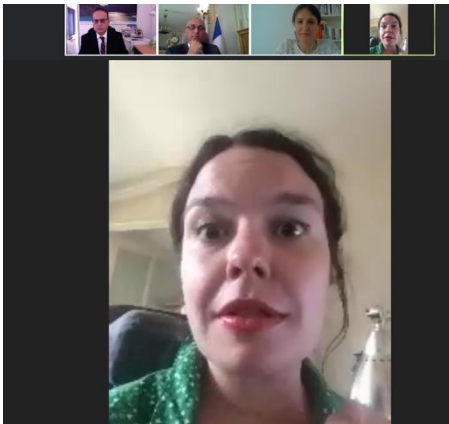
24th May, 2020

Ambassador Mr. Moin ul Haque, on behalf of the Embassy staff and on his own behalf, conveyed warm Eid ul Fitr greetings to the Pakistani Community in France. In his message the Ambassador wished them happiness, religious fulfillment and safety and health on the auspicious day of Eid ul Fitr. He advised them to celebrate this Eid with simplicity when entire humanity was faced with COVID-19 pandemic. He thanked and acknowledged services of generous Pakistani community members for their support to less fortunate compatriots in these difficult times. He advised the community to observe this religious festival by following instructions and safety protocols announced by the French government.



Virtual meeting with French writers

27th May, 2020



The Ambassador held an online meeting with Ms. Berenice Rocfort and Ms. Emilie Brouze, the two French writers and journalists who co-authored the book “*Winter in Himalaya – an ultimate challenge*”. The writers were of the view that French and European alpinists, trekkers, skiers, and adventure sports enthusiasts are choosing Pakistan as their preferred destination. Mr. Moin ul Haque congratulated the two journalists for choosing the unique subject and recounting nail-biting experiences of the six daring and experienced mountaineers in Himalayas and Karakorum ranges. This included the experience of French alpinist Elisabeth Revol who attempted to climb Nanga Parbat, during which she lost her Polish colleague Tomasz Mackiewicz. She herself was saved in a rescue operation conducted by Pakistan Army with the assistance of Polish climbers Denis Urubko and Adam Bielecki.

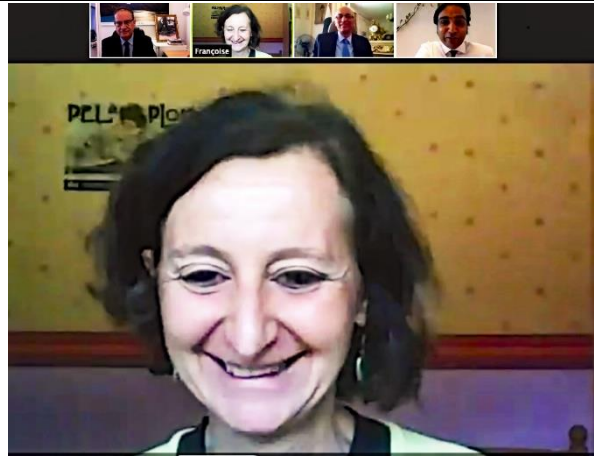
Virtual meeting with French mountaineers

4th June, 2020

Ambassador Mr. Moin ul Haque held a virtual meeting with Ms. Francoise Cadoux, a renowned French mountaineer and traveler who had recently published a book about her travels to Pakistan and China.

He thanked Ms. Francoise for writing an interesting book based on her mountaineering experiences and travels in Pakistan. He also briefed her about government's efforts to promote tourism in Pakistan.

Sharing her experiences, Ms. Francoise Cadoux said that the people of Pakistan are one of the most hospitable and friendly in the world. She said that Pakistan has beautiful natural landscapes and cultural diversity and with appropriate improvement in tourist infrastructure and services, Pakistan has the potential to become a top tourist destination.



Virtual meeting with Kashmiri and Pakistani Community members on Kashmir issue

5th June 2020

The Embassy organized a virtual meeting with Kashmiri and Pakistani diaspora in France on the Kashmir issue. The Ambassador apprised the participants on recent developments in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) including illegal Indian actions to change the demography of the region.

He told them that the Government of Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan stands by the people of Kashmir, and Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has raised the Kashmir issue with the United Nations and with his counterparts in all important capitals. He also informed them of the positive role being played by the various human rights organizations, parliamentarians including members of the European Parliament, and journalists around the world in condemning the Indian excesses in IIOJ&K and raising their voice for the fundamental rights of the people of Kashmir.

While appreciating the efforts made by Kashmiri and Pakistani diaspora in France for the Kashmir cause, the Ambassador said they should not forget their Kashmiri brothers and sisters at a time when world's attention is focused more towards the coronavirus pandemic. The Kashmiri and Pakistani community members shared a number of suggestions with the Ambassador so that they could better project the Kashmir cause with one voice. They also assured of their full support to the Embassy and the Government of Pakistan in highlighting the Kashmir issue at all forums in France.



Fateha on the demise of Ambassador Iqbal Akhund

5th June 2020

The Ambassador and officers of the Embassy offered Fateha on the sad demise of Ambassador Iqbal Akhund, an accomplished diplomat who represented Pakistan in many countries and at regional and international forums, including as Ambassador of Pakistan to France. May his soul rest in eternal peace.



Special PIA flights repatriate stranded Pakistanis

June, 2020

Special PIA flights took off from Paris for Islamabad on 12th April, 14th May and 5th June 2020 carrying onboard stranded Pakistanis. The flight was arranged by the Government of Pakistan to repatriate Pakistanis stranded in France due to Covid-19 lockdown. Apart from France, a number of stranded Pakistanis from neighboring countries, including Belgium, Italy and Poland also travelled on these flights. In addition to the passengers, dead bodies of Pakistani nationals who had unfortunately passed away in the recent past, were also repatriated.



Meeting with French journalists

In January Ambassador Mr. Moin ul Haque met Ms. Lucie Peytermann, Journalist, Agence France Presse (AFP) based in Paris and Mr. Joris Firioti Journalist, AFP based in Islamabad.



Pakistan France Professional Forum

30th January, 2020



The Ambassador chaired a meeting of Pakistan France Professional Forum to discuss various options to finetune ideas and strategies of the organization in creating an interface to connect Pakistani and French professionals in diverse fields.

Interaction with Pakistani media

28th January, 2020

Ambassador Mr. Moin ul Haque met with Paris based Pakistani journalists and shared with them different initiatives taken by the Embassy to promote bilateral relations between Pakistan and France and to improve soft image of Pakistan.



Students of Sciences Po Paris interacted with the Ambassador

10 Feb 2020



Ambassador Mr. Moin ul Haque, met 22 students of Sciences Po university. He told them that Pakistan's emerging and growing economy is attracting foreign investors, businessmen and traders from many countries including France. Science Po is one of the top educational institutes of France, whose students had been invited as part of Embassy's outreach initiative.

Global Parliamentary Networking Meeting

24th February 2020

Ms. Shandana Gulzar Khan, Member National Assembly of Pakistan and Chairperson Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, visited Paris to represent Pakistan at the Global Parliamentary Network meeting held at the Headquarter of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).



Meeting with Mr. Dedier Chaudet

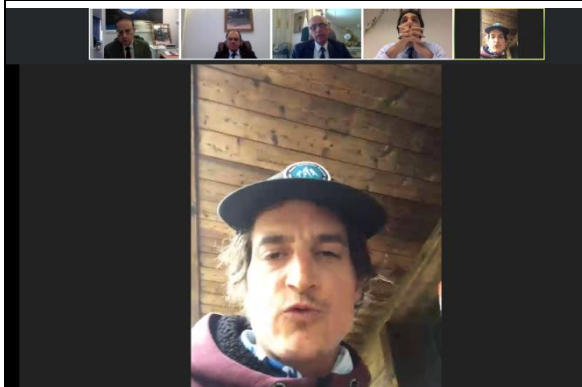
19th May, 2020



A virtual meeting was held with French scholar and researcher, Mr. Dedier Chaudet. A range of issues including Pakistan-France relations and situation in South Asia came under discussion.

Interaction with Mr. Julien Herry

4th June, 2020



Ambassador Mr. Moin ul Haque held an online meeting with Mr. Julien Herry, a travel, sports and tourism writer and an accomplished guide, snow boarder and mountain climber. During the meeting Mr. Julien informed that during one of his skiing expeditions in Pakistan, he was severely wounded and was rescued and taken care of by the kind-hearted people of the area. He said as a payback he has decided to setup training facilities for the local people in mountaineering sports in addition to identifying economic activities in the area, strengthening eco-friendly tourism and setting up a skiing facility in Madakalsht, Chitral mainly through crowd sourcing. The Ambassador assured him of facilitation by the Embassy in pursuance of his endeavors.

Meeting with Mr. George Lefeuvre

5th June, 2020



A meeting was held with Mr. George Lefeuvre, Associate Research Fellow at (IRIS) who specializes in matters related to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. A range of issues including peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan and situation in South Asia were discussed.

French specialist on South Asian affairs discusses China-India standoff in Laddakh

25th June, 2020



A virtual meeting was held with Mr. Gilles Boquerat a French specialist on South Asian affairs.

Several issues related to South Asia were discussed with him including Pakistan-India relations and situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. Boquerat is currently associated with the Foundation for Strategic Research (FRS), Paris. He writes extensively on the internal dynamics and the regional and international outlook of South Asian countries. He is also the author of *Pakistan in a 100 questions* published in 2018.