

PAKISTAN BELGIUM LUXEMBOURG BUSINESS FORUM



Celebrating

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& PAKISTAN DAY, MARCH 2026

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ABOUT PBLBF

The Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum (PBLBF) was formally incorporated in 2017 as a Section 42 company under the Companies Act 2017. Its distinguished legacy, however, dates back to April 1997, when it was established as the Pakistan-Belgium Business Forum (PBBF) with 14 founding members under the patronage of the Royal Belgian Embassy in Pakistan.

His Excellency the Ambassador of Belgium graciously serves as our Patron-in-Chief, underscoring the Forum's enduring diplomatic and strategic importance.

PBLBF holds official accreditation from the Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce Luxembourg, as part of the prestigious Belgian-Luxembourg Chambers of Commerce Abroad (BLCCA) network.

Our diverse membership spans key sectors—including shipping and freight forwarding, textiles, oil and gas, manufacturing of building materials, cement, and glass—all featuring active collaboration with partners in Belgium and Luxembourg.

Renowned for its credibility and effectiveness, PBLBF commands strong respect within business communities, other bilateral fora, and official circles in Pakistan, Belgium, and Luxembourg.



MESSAGE FROM H.E. MR CHARLES-IDESBALD VAN DER GRACHT

AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM TO
THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN



Dear Members and Friends of the Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum,

It is a privilege and a personal pleasure to address you as Patron in Chief of this distinguished Forum, which the Embassy of Belgium has proudly supported since its inception.

Our bilateral relationship is grounded in real and tangible cooperation. Belgian families use Pakistani textiles with complete confidence; Belgian hospitals benefit from the precision and quality of surgical instruments that bear the hallmark “Made in Pakistan”; and more Belgian businesses are recognising the talent, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit that drive Pakistan’s private sector. As Ambassador, I remain committed to transforming our longstanding goodwill into concrete, sustainable opportunities. Belgium offers expertise in sustainable technologies, circular economy approaches, advanced food processing, port logistics, digital innovation, and emerging green energy – sectors in which Pakistani dynamism and Belgian know-how can create genuine and mutual win-win outcomes.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the leadership and members of the Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum for your dedication to deepening our economic and human connections. Your work is essential to building trust, expanding partnerships, and writing the success stories that define our bilateral relations. As your Patron in Chief, I look forward to continuing this journey with you and to celebrating the achievements that will bring prosperity, innovation, and friendship to both nations.

MESSAGE FROM H.E. MR. RAHIM HAYAT QURESHI PAKISTAN'S AMBASSADOR TO BELGIUM, LUXEMBOURG AND THE EUROPEAN UNION



On the historic occasion of King's Day, I extend heartfelt congratulations and warm wishes to the business communities of Pakistan, Belgium, and Luxembourg. This day offers us an opportunity not only to celebrate the Belgian monarchy's legacy of unity, service, and progress, but also to reflect on the enduring economic and diplomatic ties that bind our nations together.

The business relationship between Pakistan and the Benelux region continues to evolve with promise, driven by shared values of cooperation, innovation, and mutual prosperity. Belgium and Luxembourg have long served as gateways to Europe for Pakistani exporters, while Pakistan's dynamic and emerging market provides vast opportunities for Belgian and Luxembourgish companies seeking new partnerships and sustainable growth. The resilience and vision demonstrated by our business communities remain pivotal to strengthening these connections.

As we honor King's Day, we also celebrate the spirit of collaboration that fuels economic advancement. This is a moment to reaffirm our commitment to fostering trade relations, encouraging investment, and embracing technological and cultural exchange. By working together, our business communities can unlock new sectors of opportunity—whether in sustainable energy, logistics, information technology, agriculture, or manufacturing.

Let this day inspire renewed dedication to building bridges of trust and enterprise. The global economic landscape is undergoing rapid transformation, and our collective ability to innovate, adapt, and cooperate will determine the future of our commercial partnerships. Through shared effort and continued dialogue, we can pave the way toward a more prosperous and interconnected future.

May King's Day remind us of the importance of stability, leadership, and unity—values that underpin not only national celebration but also successful international cooperation. I extend my best wishes to all business leaders and professionals across Pakistan, Belgium, and Luxembourg. May our collaboration continue to flourish in the years ahead.

MESSAGE FROM
MR. MURTAZA HASHWANI
HONORARY CONSUL FOR THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
IN KARACHI



King's Day of Belgium – A Reflection of Unity and Tradition

Every year on 15th November Belgium celebrates King's Day a tradition dating back to 1866. This day holds deep symbolic importance as it honors the Belgian monarch as a figure of stability, continuity, and unity across the nation's diverse communities.

As the Honorary Consul, I view the Kings Day as an opportunity to reaffirm Belgium's commitment to bringing communities together, both within the country and abroad. It is a day to reflect on the monarch's role in safeguarding Belgium's constitutional framework while promoting dialogue and cooperation across linguistic, cultural, and international boundaries.

On this auspicious occasion the Honorary Consulate wishes the business communities of Belgium and Pakistan prosperity, and success in their respective ventures.

I would like to extend my best wishes to their Majesties King Philippe, and Queen Mathilde and the friendly people of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Long live Pakistan Belgium friendship.

MESSAGE FROM MR. ABID HUSAIN

ADVISOR ON ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY, ROYAL EMBASSY OF BELGIUM IN PAKISTAN



Bilateral Trade Opportunities between Belgium and Pakistan

As the newly appointed Advisor on Economic Diplomacy to the Belgian Embassy in Pakistan it gives me great pleasure to share my thoughts on Pakistan -Belgium bilateral economic & commercial ties.

Belgium and Pakistan share a cordial and steadily evolving trade & economic relationship rooted in mutual respect, constructive engagement, and a shared commitment to economic development. Over the years, Belgium has emerged as an important economic partner for Pakistan within the European Union, while Pakistan is increasingly recognised as a dynamic and resilient economy with significant untapped potential.

Belgium's advanced industrial base and global expertise in pharmaceuticals, chemicals, engineering, logistics, port management, and renewable energy offer valuable opportunities to support Pakistan's national priorities, including industrial modernisation, healthcare improvement, energy transition, and climate resilience. Belgian technology and know-how can play a meaningful role in enhancing efficiency, sustainability, and value addition across key Pakistani sectors.

At the same time, Pakistan remains a reliable and competitive supplier to the Belgian and wider EU markets. Pakistani exports such as textiles and garments, surgical instruments, sports goods, leather products, rice, and agro-based commodities are well regarded for their quality and competitiveness. Pakistan's continued participation in the EU's GSP+ scheme has further strengthened trade flows, contributing to employment generation, export diversification, and inclusive growth within Pakistan.

There is strong potential to deepen cooperation through increased Belgian investment, joint ventures, and technology transfer, particularly in pharmaceuticals, food processing, logistics, and information technology. Enhanced collaboration in skills development, vocational training, and innovation would further strengthen Pakistan's export capacity and industrial competitiveness.

By promoting closer business-to-business linkages, improving trade facilitation, and fostering a predictable investment climate, both countries can unlock new opportunities for sustainable growth. With complementary strengths and a shared belief in rules-based international trade, Belgium and Pakistan are well positioned to elevate their economic partnership to a new level for the benefit of both nations.

The recently concluded Fourth session of Bilateral Political Consultations held in Pakistan & attended by Ms. Birgit Stevens, Director General Bilateral affairs, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated this commitment to enhancing bilateral relations.

As Advisor, I will be looking forward to working closely with the Embassy's Trade Commissioners' office, the Embassy itself and with all stakeholders including the Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum to stimulate our economic relations.

MESSAGE FROM MR. SHAUKAT NIAZI

**ECONOMIC & COMMERCIAL COUNSELLOR,
ROYAL EMBASSY OF BELGIUM IN PAKISTAN**



I am pleased to have this opportunity to extend my warmest greetings to all the companies and entrepreneurs in Pakistan that are actively engaged in doing business and collaborating with their Belgian counterparts, particularly the members of Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum.

Your efforts in fostering these vital economic partnerships are a testament to your vision and hard work. Belgium serves as a significant gateway to the European market, and your success not only benefits your respective organizations but also plays a crucial role in strengthening the overall bilateral trade and friendship between Pakistan and Belgium.

The trade relations between the two nations are robust and long standing, with key cooperation in sectors such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, metals, machinery, and chemicals. Your achievements highlight the vast potential for further growth and diversification in these areas.

I commend the perseverance and resilience of your readers and particularly the Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum in navigating the complexities of international trade and wish you continued success and even greater achievements in the future. I am grateful for your contributions to the nation's economic development and the relations between the two countries. So, let's keep working together for a prosperous and peaceful future.

Long live the King, Pakistan Belgium friendship zindabad !

MESSAGE FROM RENÉ BRANDERS

**PRESIDENT FEDERATION OF
BELGIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE**



Chambers of Commerce are established across the world in a wide variety of forms, yet they all share a common mission: to stimulate economic development and to provide guidance and support to companies throughout every phase of their journey. With almost 10,000 chambers active globally, this network plays an essential role in fostering international cooperation and sustainable entrepreneurship.

This year, the Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce proudly celebrates its 150th anniversary—an exceptional milestone for our organisation and for the broader chamber community. On 25 September 2025, we marked this occasion in the presence of HRH Princess Astrid and HRH Prince Lorenz, together with numerous dignitaries, entrepreneurs, and representatives of chambers from Belgium and abroad. The celebration was not solely dedicated to Belgian Chambers as an institution, but to all Belgian chambers of commerce worldwide. Indeed, it is these chambers—our valued members—that stand on the front lines every day, responding to the needs of companies, identifying new opportunities, and guiding businesses toward growth and internationalisation.

Since its establishment in 1997, the Pakistan–Belgium–Luxembourg Business Forum has been fulfilling this mission with exemplary dedication. We are pleased and honoured to count PBLBF among our members. The Forum has consistently demonstrated strong engagement, actively participating in our initiatives and collaborating closely with other Belgian chambers. In promoting Belgium and Luxembourg in Pakistan, and Pakistan within Belgium and Luxembourg, PBLBF serves as an indispensable bridge—facilitating dialogue, nurturing economic ties, and strengthening mutual understanding between our regions.

As we reflect on 150 years of chamber history and look toward the future, we are confident that our partnership with PBLBF will continue to flourish. We look forward to many more years of constructive collaboration in support of our shared objectives.

MESSAGE FROM MR. PAUL SCHEYNEN

PBLBF'S REPRESENTATIVE IN BELGIUM



Creativity, innovation, and sustainability are today's keywords. Yet, experience, social intelligence, and continuous learning remain the bedrock upon which excellence is built. Navigating the unique opportunities and hurdles of a specific country requires specialized insight—a "diamond" within the stones.

In this complex landscape, bilateral chambers serve as the ideal guides. They offer deep understanding of local mentalities, traditions, and legal environments, helping businesses define priorities and mitigate risks. At PBLBF, we integrate these strategic human assets with modern AI developments to boost efficiency and productivity. Furthermore, our forum fosters a culture of mentorship, where

senior experts share knowledge with the next generation to accelerate the growth of emerging entrepreneurs.

PBLBF is privileged to be led by a Board of Pakistani captains of industry who maintain excellent relationships with Belgian strategic groups, particularly the Port Authorities on both sides. We are also deeply grateful for the warm support of the Belgian Embassy in Islamabad and the Pakistani Embassy in Brussels.

My personal journey with Pakistan began in 1989 during the Gwadar Port upgrade, a project backed by Belgian financing. This was the first of many milestones in a long history of cooperation dating back to 1986. Today, our common ground is vast—spanning textiles, pharmaceuticals, maritime logistics, and high-end fashion. The impressive showcase during Pakistan National Day in Brussels recently highlighted the immense potential for our shared future.

Pakistan, home to five of the world's highest peaks, is a nation of undiscovered treasures. For the entrepreneur willing to explore beyond the popular path, it offers attractive niches and high potential. Just as climbing a mountain requires great effort, the rewards at the summit are priceless. I encourage investors to give Pakistan the attention it truly merits.

MESSAGE FROM MR. MOHAMMED A. RAJPAR CHIEF EXECUTIVE, PBLBF



As we unveil this magazine, I am profoundly impressed by the remarkable journey of our organization. Founded in 1997 (and evolving into its current trilateral form in 2017), PBLBF has grown from a modest platform for trade connections into a dynamic community grounded in mutual respect, professional excellence, and shared economic aspirations. Today, we serve as a vital strategic gateway, cultivating a unique Pakistan-Belgium-Luxembourg partnership that delivers real, measurable value to our members.

Our recent participation in the Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce's 150th-anniversary celebrations in Antwerp and Brussels reinforced our prominent role within the global BLCCA network. Our delegation engaged in insightful technical briefings at the iconic Antwerp Port House, productive "Chamber Champion" workshops, and—most memorably—an audience with Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid. There, we celebrated the deep cultural ties that continue to strengthen our commercial bonds and position Pakistan as a reliable partner.

Guided by Belgium's ambitious 2030 frameworks—anchored in the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), the European Green Deal, and the Digital Decade—we are boldly expanding beyond traditional sectors. We embrace industrial modernization, green energy solutions, digital innovation, and other high-value opportunities that drive sustainable growth. The powerful synergy between Belgian technological expertise and Pakistani entrepreneurial dynamism represents vast untapped potential—potential we are committed to unlocking together for mutual prosperity.

I would like to acknowledge efforts of Mr. Haider Naqi and Mr. Sameer Hamid Dodhy, Directors of our forum who acted as the Honorary Editor and Editor respectively.

My sincere gratitude goes to our Patron-in-Chief, the Belgian Ambassador in Pakistan, and our dedicated members whose support is the engine of our success. Together, we are writing the next chapter of trilateral cooperation.



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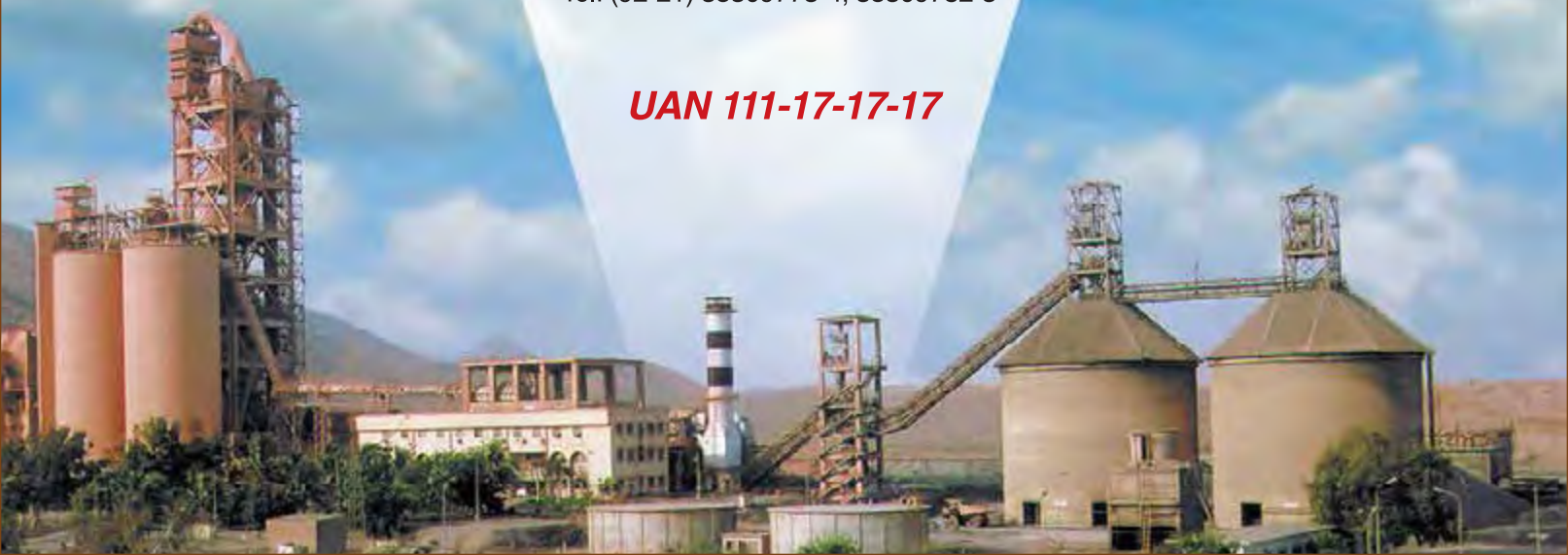
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RECENT MILESTONES, EVENTS & BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

A Royal Distinction: Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar Conferred the Commander of the Order of the Crown

17 May, 2024

KARACHI – In a milestone event for bilateral diplomacy and commerce, Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar, CEO of the PBLBF, was bestowed with one of Belgium's highest honors: the **Commander of the Order of the Crown** (Commandeur de l'Ordre de la Couronne).



The prestigious award was presented on May 17th, 2024, by His Excellency Charles Delogne, the Belgian Ambassador to Pakistan, on behalf of His Majesty the King of the Belgians. This esteemed civilian honor recognizes Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar's extraordinary dedication to fostering business, trade, and cultural synergy between Pakistan and Belgium—a mission he has championed with tireless resolve for over two decades.

The Order of the Crown is awarded to individuals who have distinguished themselves through significant service to the Belgian state. For Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar, the conferment serves as a testament to his pivotal role in bridging the two nations, moving beyond mere trade statistics to build lasting institutional and human bonds.

The investiture ceremony was a "Who's Who" of Pakistan's political, diplomatic, and corporate leadership. The evening reflected the deep respect Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar commands across various sectors, drawing a remarkable assembly of dignitaries, including:

- **Political & State Leadership:** Former Prime Minister and Energy Minister Mr. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi; Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Mr. Ghulam Mustafa Shah; Mayor of Karachi Mr. Murtaza Wahab; and prominent politician Dr. Farooq Sattar.
- **Economic & Financial Luminaries:** Former Finance Ministers Dr. Miftah Ismail and Mr. Syed Naveed Qamar; Former Governor of the State Bank Dr. Ishrat Husain; and Dr. Shamshad Akhtar (Chairman SSGC and former Finance Minister).
- **Diplomatic Corps:** US Consul General Mr. Conrad Tribble and Qatar Consul General Mr. Nayef Shaheen Al-Sulaiti.
- **Maritime & Security Elite:** Chairman Port Qasim Authority (PQA) Rear Admiral (Rtd.) Hasan Nasir Shah; Vice Admiral (Rtd.) Khalid Mir (Former Chairman KPT); Vice Admiral (Rtd.) Tauqir Naqvi (Former Chairman PNSC); and Brig. (Rtd.) Haris Nawaz (Former Provincial Home Minister.)
- **Bureaucratic Excellence:** Mr. Tariq Huda (Former Chairman KPT/Member Customs); Mr. Munir Qureshi (Former Federal Secretary/Member Customs); and Mr. Agha Jan Akhtar (Former Chairman PQA).



In his heartfelt acceptance speech, Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar expressed profound gratitude, stating, "I am deeply humbled and honoured to receive this prestigious award. It serves as a testament to the enduring relationship between Pakistan and Belgium and the immense potential for further cooperation. This recognition is not an endpoint but a powerful motivator to dedicate even greater efforts towards fostering cultural exchange, economic partnerships, and mutual understanding between our two nations."



Forging Maritime Connections: PBLBF Meets Port of Antwerp–Bruges

March 14, 2025

On Friday, March 14, 2025, senior members of PBLBF—including Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar, Mr. Sameer Hamid Dodhy, Mr. Zahid Dada, and Mr. Syed Khurram Bukhari—held a strategic online meeting with Ms. Maartje Driessens, Head of Business Development, and Mr. Achille Sobry, Associate Manager and Regional Lead for the Indian Subcontinent at Port of Antwerp–Bruges International.

The Port of Antwerp–Bruges representatives opened with an impressive presentation showcasing their portfolio and global capabilities. The port, one of Europe's largest and most sophisticated, has been expanding its international footprint and expertise in port development and management.

Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar candidly shared PBLBF's history of casual interaction with the port spanning over a decade, during which there was a perception that Port of Antwerp–Bruges International had been more focused on India than Pakistan. This honest reflection opened the door to a more meaningful dialogue about future opportunities.

Drawing on his extensive experience, Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar explained his past association with both Karachi Port Trust (KPT) and Port Qasim Authority (PQA), providing valuable context about Pakistan's port infrastructure and management structure. He outlined the landlord port policy currently being followed at Pakistani ports, which creates unique opportunities for international partnerships.

As a potential starting point, Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar suggested that Port of Antwerp–Bruges International could offer consultancy services to KPT and PQA. When asked whether Pakistan's Public Procurement Rules requiring tender participation would be a deterrent, Mr. Sobry responded positively, noting that while direct bilateral engagement was preferred, participation in an open competitive tender would not necessarily be a dissuading factor.

The discussion also covered the historical training of KPT officers by APEC, the strategic opening of Pakistani ports to Central Asia, and the prospects of high-level port officials visiting Belgium for further engagement with Port of Antwerp–Bruges International.

Following the meeting, Mr. Sobry shared a draft Memorandum of Understanding that Port of Antwerp–Bruges International would like to sign with KPT and PQA. In response, Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar proposed an alternative approach: a draft MoU between PBLBF and Port of Antwerp–Bruges International, potentially serving as a framework for broader cooperation and facilitating future partnerships with Pakistani ports.

Cultural Diplomacy: Pakistan Embassy Hosts Evening in Brussels

June 23, 2025

The Pakistan Embassy in Belgium organized an elegant dinner and fashion show on Monday, June 23, 2025, at 6:30 PM at the prestigious Autoworld Museum in Brussels. Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar, Chief Executive of PBLBF and Mr. Paul Scheynen attended this distinguished event, which showcased Pakistani culture, fashion, and hospitality to an audience of diplomats, business leaders, and cultural enthusiasts. Such events play a vital role in strengthening people-to-people connections and promoting Pakistan's rich cultural heritage in Europe.

Pakistan Belgium–Luxembourg Business Forum Meets Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium, Luxembourg & the EU

8 September 2025

In a significant move to deepen economic ties between Pakistan and the Benelux region, PBLBF held a strategic virtual meeting with H.E. Rahim Hayat Qureshi, Pakistan's Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg, and the EU. The session brought together diplomatic leaders and business stakeholders to explore fresh avenues for trade and bilateral investment.



A Strategic Dialogue

Ambassador Qureshi was joined by a specialized team, including Economic Minister Mr. Omar Hameed, Trade & Investment Attaché Mr. Muhammad Bilal Khan, and Ms. Sidra Munaf. Representing the PBLBF was a high-level delegation led by Chief Executive Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar, alongside directors Mr. Sameer Hamid Dodhy, Mr. Zahid Dada, Mr. Syed Khurram Bukhari, Mr. Haider Naqi, Mr. Khawaja Jahan Zeb, and Mr. Moiz Arif.

The agenda focused on critical concerns for the business community, including the mobilization of the Pakistani diaspora's expertise and the status of bilateral investment protection and double taxation treaties. Ambassador Qureshi pledged the Embassy's full support in facilitating targeted business-to-business (B2B) connections and coordinating participation in upcoming EU trade fairs.

Concrete Proposals and Sectoral Growth

Several promising initiatives emerged from the discussion:

Trade Delegations: Building on the success of previous Belgian missions during TEXPO Pakistan, the Ambassador expressed strong interest in organizing a new delegation to Pakistan. Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar suggested a strategic approach, coordinating with the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and the Board of Investment (BOI) to identify priority sectors beforehand.

Investment Conference: Mr. Bilal Khan proposed hosting an investment conference in Belgium in collaboration with the Federation of Belgian Chambers to open new capital flow channels.

Tourism & Industry: The meeting explored Pakistan's adventure and heritage tourism potential, with the Embassy requesting detailed packages for Belgian operators. On the industrial front, directors highlighted their ongoing imports of Belgian machinery for the power and fertilizer sectors, with the Ambassador offering to facilitate more targeted partnerships.

As the session concluded, Ambassador Qureshi welcomed the PBLBF's upcoming visit to Belgium for the BLCCA Annual General Meeting. To ensure sustained momentum, both parties agreed to hold quarterly coordination meetings, signaling a new chapter in Pakistan-Belgium relations built on structured dialogue and shared economic prosperity.

PBLBF Delegation Strengthens Sindh's Investment Landscape

Karachi | September 17, 2025

In a significant step toward fostering international investment and collaboration, Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar, CEO of PBLBF, led a distinguished delegation to meet with Mr. Raja Khurram Shahzad Umar, Secretary of the Sindh Board of Investment, on Wednesday, September 17, 2025. The meeting, which included senior representatives from the Sindh Economic Zones Management Company (SEZMC) and the Sindh Enterprise Development Fund (SEDF), marked a pivotal moment in PBLBF's mission to position Sindh as a premier investment destination.

"We are committed to serving as ambassadors for Sindh in Belgium and Luxembourg to attract new partnerships and foreign investment."

Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar shared exciting news about the forum members' upcoming visit to Belgium, where they will participate in the annual conference and AGM of the Federation of Belgian Chambers in Brussels. During this prestigious gathering, he will deliver a comprehensive presentation on Sindh's investment potential, showcasing the province's strategic advantages and growth opportunities to European business leaders.



Secretary Umar warmly welcomed the delegation and commended their tireless efforts to promote Sindh on the international stage. His team highlighted several transformative initiatives that are reshaping Sindh's business landscape:

- Sindh Business One Stop Shop (SBOSS): A cutting-edge digital, blockchain-enabled portal providing integrated services for business registration, permits, and licensing, designed to dramatically enhance ease of doing business in the province.
- Sindh Economic Zones Management Company (SEZMC): The driving force behind Special Economic Zones (SEZs), offering world-class infrastructure, utilities, tax incentives, and streamlined approvals. Key flagship projects include the Dhabeji SEZ and Khairpur SEZ, both positioned to become major industrial hubs.
- Sindh Enterprise Development Fund (SEDF): A forward-thinking government initiative supporting SMEs with financial and technical assistance, mobilizing investment in critical sectors such as agriculture, livestock, green energy, and mining, with a special focus on empowering women-led enterprises.
- Education City Project: An ambitious 8,921-acre development in Karachi's Malir district, envisioned as Pakistan's first Silicon Valley-style innovation hub. This landmark project combines higher education institutions with a €100 million Special Technology Zone, part of an \$800 million master plan to position Karachi as a global center of innovation and technology.

The meeting concluded on a warm note with the PBLBF delegation being presented with traditional Sindhi ajraks, a beautiful symbol of hospitality and cultural pride that underscored the collaborative spirit of the gathering.

A Royal Encounter: PBLBF at the 150th Anniversary of the Federation of Belgian Chambers

September 23–25, 2025 | Brussels & Antwerp

A senior delegation from PBLBF—led by Chief Executive Mohammed A. Rajpar, Mr. Syed Khurram Bukhari, Mr. Mohammad Younus Vayani and Mr. Paul Scheynen—marked a historic milestone at the Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce's 150th anniversary celebrations.



Maritime & Strategic Insights in Antwerp

The mission opened at the Port of Antwerp–Bruges, where the delegation engaged in technical briefings at the iconic Zaha Hadid-designed Port House, followed by a boat tour of Europe's critical maritime gateway. The immersive visit underscored Pakistan's strategic interest in advanced logistics and port management.

Institutional Growth in Brussels, the agenda focused on capacity building. Delegates participated in "Chamber Champion" workshops and strategic sessions with Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), exploring frameworks for bilateral trade expansion and institutional development.



A Royal Audience: The Gala Highlight The mission culminated at the BNP Paribas Fortis Auditorium gala event, bringing together industry leaders and dignitaries. In a distinguished moment of cultural diplomacy, Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar presented Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium with a book titled: The Flowering Desert-Textiles from Sindh whilst Mr.Syed Khurram Bukhari presented a beautiful peshmina shawl—a gesture honouring the human and cultural bonds that underpin lasting commercial partnerships. The Princess expressed her gratitude for the kind gesture.



PBLBF Charts Future Course: Highlights from the 2025 Annual General Meeting

KARACHI – November 1, 2025 – PBLBF convened its Annual General Meeting (AGM), bringing together a distinguished assembly of business leaders to review the year’s achievements and deliberate on strategic initiatives for the upcoming term. The meeting was presided over by Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar, Chief Executive of PBLBF, whose leadership continues to steer the Forum toward greater trilateral synergy.

The formal proceedings underscored the Forum’s dedication to institutional stability and transparent governance. The following key administrative milestones were achieved:

- **Minutes of the Seventh AGM:** The minutes from the previous session (September 2024) were officially confirmed, proposed by Mr. Khawaja Jahan Zeb and seconded by Mr. Kalim Farooqui
- **Annual Report & Audited Accounts:** Members reviewed and approved the comprehensive activity report and audited accounts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. These approvals were moved by Mr. Haider Naqi, Mr. Younus Vayani, Mr. Hasanali Abdullah, and Mr. Ahsan Mehanti, reflecting the Forum’s robust financial health.
- **Auditor Appointment:** Looking ahead to 2026, the Forum reaffirmed its commitment to rigorous oversight by appointing auditors for the next cycle, a move supported by Mr. Khawaja Jahan Zeb and Mr. Sohail Mohammadi.

The “Any Other Business” segment of the meeting sparked a dynamic exchange of ideas, highlighting the Forum’s proactive approach to cultural and economic diplomacy.

In a move to celebrate the enduring ties between the three nations, Mr. Kalim Farooqui proposed the publication of a dedicated souvenir to commemorate King’s Day. This publication aiming to highlight the Forum’s recent activities and strategic milestones. Mr. Haider Naqi and Mr. Sameer Hamid Dodhy enthusiastically supported the initiative, volunteering their expertise to serve as the Honorary Editor and Editor respectively for this commemorative project.

Reflecting on the Forum’s recent successes, Mr. Younus Vayani recalled the highly productive visit to the Port of Antwerp. He suggested a strategic alignment between Pakistan’s primary maritime gateways—Karachi Port Trust (KPT) and Port Qasim Authority (PQA)—and the Port of Antwerp, leveraging Belgian expertise to modernize local maritime infrastructure.

Recognizing the shifting global perception of Pakistan, Mr. Khawaja Jahan Zeb highlighted the surge in international tourism. He proposed a targeted initiative to attract Belgian tourists, utilizing PBLBF’s extensive network abroad to showcase Pakistan’s diverse cultural and natural heritage to the Benelux market.

December 2025: The Ambassador's Karachi Tour

December 9-10, 2025 | Karachi

Following the successful engagements in Brussels, the focus shifted back to Karachi in December 2025. H.E. Mr. Charles-Idesbald van der Gracht, the Belgian Ambassador to Pakistan, undertook a high-profile two-day visit to the metropolis, facilitated by PBLBF. The itinerary was a masterclass in multi-dimensional diplomacy, covering maritime economy, elite networking, art, and security infrastructure.

Strategic Networking: The Power Luncheon

December 9, 2025

To kick off the visit, Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar hosted an exclusive luncheon in honor of the Ambassador. The event served as a high-powered platform to reaffirm bilateral ties, drawing a distinguished guest list from the apex of Pakistan's corporate and government sectors.



Prominent attendees included Mr. Muhammad Ali Tabba (CEO, Lucky Cement), Mr. Iftikhar Shirazi (Chairman, Atlas Group), and Rear Admiral Syed Moazzam Ilyas (Chairman, Port Qasim Authority). They were joined by senior Foreign Office officials and members of the diplomatic corps, including the German Consul General and the Honorary Consul of Poland. The gathering underscored a collective commitment to professional cooperation between the two nations.



Cultural Lens: Belgian Art in Karachi Vasal Gallery Visit December 9, 2025

Bridging the cultural divide, the Ambassador visited the Vasal Gallery to inaugurate a unique exhibition supported by PBLBF. The showcase featured the work of Belgian photographer Ms. Wendy Marijnissen, in collaboration with Pakistani artists Ms. Malika Abbas, Mr. Arif Mahmood, and Mr. Hassaan Gondal. Running from November 25 to December 20, the exhibition highlighted the role of art in fostering people-to-people understanding.

Blue Economy: Port Diplomacy in Action

December 10, 2025 – Building on the momentum generated during the high-level maritime meetings in Brussels, His Excellency Ambassador Charles- Idesbald van der Gracht led a prestigious delegation to Karachi's key maritime hubs, signaling a new era of cooperation in the "Blue Economy."

The Ambassador was accompanied by Mr. Stef Commers (Consul/DHM) and a senior PBLBF team, including Chief Executive Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar, Mr. Sohail Mohammadi, and Mr. Ali Rajpar.

Charting the Course at Karachi Port Trust (KPT)

The mission began at the historic Karachi Port Trust (KPT) Head Office, where the delegation engaged in a productive dialogue with the Chairman of KPT, Rear Admiral Shahid Ahmed. The discussions centered on leveraging Belgian expertise to modernize Pakistan's port infrastructure and exploring sustainable opportunities within the Blue Economy. The visit concluded with a traditional exchange of crests, symbolizing a shared commitment to maritime excellence.



Strengthening Ties at Port Qasim Authority (PQA)

Continuing the diplomatic mission, the Ambassador and Mr. A. Rajpar proceeded to the Port Qasim Authority (PQA). The team was cordially received by Rear Admiral (R) Syed Moazzam Ilyas HI(M), Chairman, PQA and his senior management team.

The meeting at PQA focused on strategic industrial synergies and enhanced logistics frameworks. Both parties explored how Port Qasim's vast industrial zones could benefit from increased European investment and technical collaboration. This visit underscores the PBLBF's pivotal role in bridging the maritime capabilities of Belgium—a global leader in port management—with Pakistan's strategic coastline.

Energy Security and Social Impact: The EETL Visit

While at Port Qasim, the Ambassador visited the Engro Elengy Terminal Limited (EETL) to observe Pakistan's sophisticated LNG import and regasification operations. He was received by EETL Chief Executive Syed Ammar Shah, who outlined the terminal's critical role in strengthening the country's energy security via the national grid.



- **Technical Briefing:** General Manager Mr. Ahmed Muneeb provided a detailed overview of the terminal's efficiency and throughput capacity.
- **Empowering Change:** A highlight of the briefing was EETL's commitment to workforce inclusion, specifically the empowerment of women engineers from local communities—a groundbreaking shift in a traditionally male-dominated sector.
- **Safety First:** Mr. Aoun Kazmi, Manager of Terminal Operations, briefed the delegation on the facility's pristine safety record and its adherence to international risk-mitigation best practices.



The day of diplomacy culminated with the Ambassador boarding Pakistan's first Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU), the "Exquisite." Capt. Yuriy Bulgak presented the vessel's advanced technical specifications and handling capacity, offering the delegation a comprehensive look at the maritime infrastructure that underpins Pakistan's LNG value chain.



This intensive day of port diplomacy paved the way for long-term economic growth, demonstrating that the future of the Pakistan-Belgium partnership lies in the modernization of the seas and the empowerment of the people who manage them.

Security & Resilience: The Bedrock of Investment **A High-Level Visit to the Sindh Special Security Unit (SSU)**

On 10th December, a high-level delegation led by Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar, CEO of PBLBF, along with H.E. Mr. Idesbald van der Gracht, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Pakistan, and Mr. Stef Commers, Diplomat at the Belgian Embassy in Islamabad, paid an official visit to the Sindh Special Security Unit (SSU) in Karachi.



The visit was hosted at the invitation of Dr. Maqsood Ahmed, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Security & Emergency Services Division, Karachi, in coordination with Mr. Tariq Mustafa, Adviser to the Governor of Sindh.

The engagement focused on security infrastructure, institutional capacity building, and international collaboration, recognized as key enablers for foreign investment and sustainable economic growth. Dr. Maqsood Ahmed briefed the delegation on SSU's strategic mandate and its pivotal role in strengthening Karachi's security environment, an essential factor in restoring investor confidence and facilitating international business operations.

The delegation was informed about SSU's role in securing foreign dignitaries, international delegations, multinational investments, and major global events including the Pakistan Super League (PSL), reflecting the Government of Sindh's commitment to providing a secure, predictable, and business friendly environment.

A comprehensive presentation highlighted the modernization of Karachi's security framework, including investments in state-of-the-art facilities, advanced equipment, technology-driven security solutions, and specialized training programs. A visual presentation showcased SSU's progress and transformation since 2015, demonstrating enhanced preparedness and operational excellence.

During the facility tour, the delegation observed advanced training drills, virtual simulation platforms, and emergency response systems, underscoring SSU's alignment with international best practices. Mr. Tariq Mustafa emphasized the importance of youth engagement, public service, and institutional responsibility in building a resilient and forward looking Pakistan.



Discussions were also held regarding potential cooperation between the Sindh Special Security Unit and the Belgian Federal Police, including training exchanges, technical collaboration, and knowledge-sharing initiatives. Such cooperation was viewed as a meaningful step toward strengthening Pakistan Belgium institutional ties, while indirectly supporting long-term trade, investment, and governance collaboration.

The visit concluded with Dr. Maqsood Ahmed presenting a commemorative souvenir to H.E. Ambassador Idesbald van der Gracht, followed by a group photograph to mark the successful conclusion of the engagement.

This visit reinforces PBLBF's role in bridging public institutions, international partners, and the business community, recognizing that robust security frameworks and cross border cooperation are foundational to attracting foreign investment and enabling sustainable economic growth.

FROM OUR MEMBERS:

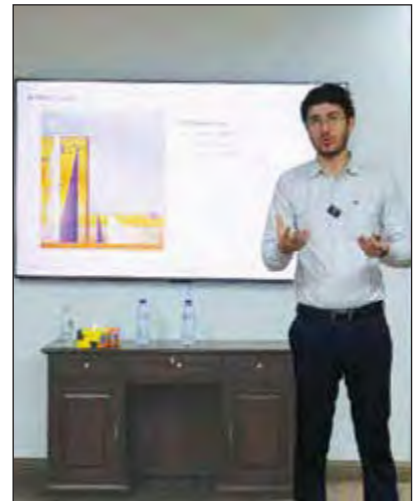
ARCELORMITTAL SHEET PILING REPRESENTATIVE CONCLUDES SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO PAKISTAN

December 1- 4, 2025 Karachi and Lahore, Shilton Rica, head of Project Development, a key representative of ArcelorMittal Sheet Piling , recently concluded a high impact market engagement visit to Pakistan, meeting with leading clients, consultants and contractors in the country's infrastructure sector and participation in the 17th International Conference on Geotechnical Engineering (17ICGE) and 8th International Conference on Geohazard (8ICG) held on the 4th and 5th December 2025 in Lahore as a Platinum sponsor.

The primary objective of the visit was to

1. Strengthen the relationship with existing and potential stake holders.
2. Introduce ArcelorMittal Sheet Piling's latest products, solutions, and technical expertise.
3. Inform the various aspects and applications of Sheet Piling at ArcelorMittal
4. Understand specific technical needs and challenges faced by local stakeholders.





Acknowledgement of Visa Support

ArcelorMittal Sheet Piling and Steel Agencies Corporation extends its sincere gratitude for the smooth and efficient processing of the business visa, which was crucial for the timely execution of this important market visit.

- A special thank you to the Trade Commissioner of Belgium in Islamabad for their excellent liaison and support.
- Our appreciation also goes to the Visa Consul and the team at the Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels for their professional and prompt handling of the visa.

Their cooperation greatly facilitated Shilton Rica's travel and enabled ArcelorMittal to strengthen its valuable relationships within the Pakistani construction and infrastructure sectors.

FROM OUR MEMBERS:

STRATEGIC TRIPARTITE MOU: ADVANCING BELGIUM–PAKISTAN INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION

A major milestone in Belgium–Pakistan industrial collaboration was recently marked by the signing of a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Zingametall BV, Zinga Mosh Pakistan (ZMP), and Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works (KSEW). This partnership brings advanced Belgian protective coating technology to Pakistan's critical marine and industrial infrastructure.

The collaboration centers on the internationally recognized ZINGA® Film Galvanizing System, designed to significantly extend the lifespan of steel structures while reducing maintenance costs. ZMP, Zingametall's partner in Pakistan for over a decade, will provide KSEW with technical support and specialized training, promoting global best practices in corrosion protection and quality assurance.

The Economic & Commercial Counsellor of Belgium attended the signing ceremony, highlighting the diplomatic weight and strong Belgian support for this technological transfer. The partnership follows the successful "Zinganization" of KSEW's 40-year-old Caisson Gate earlier this year, which achieved a 15+ year durability rating under rigorous ISO standards despite constant seawater immersion.

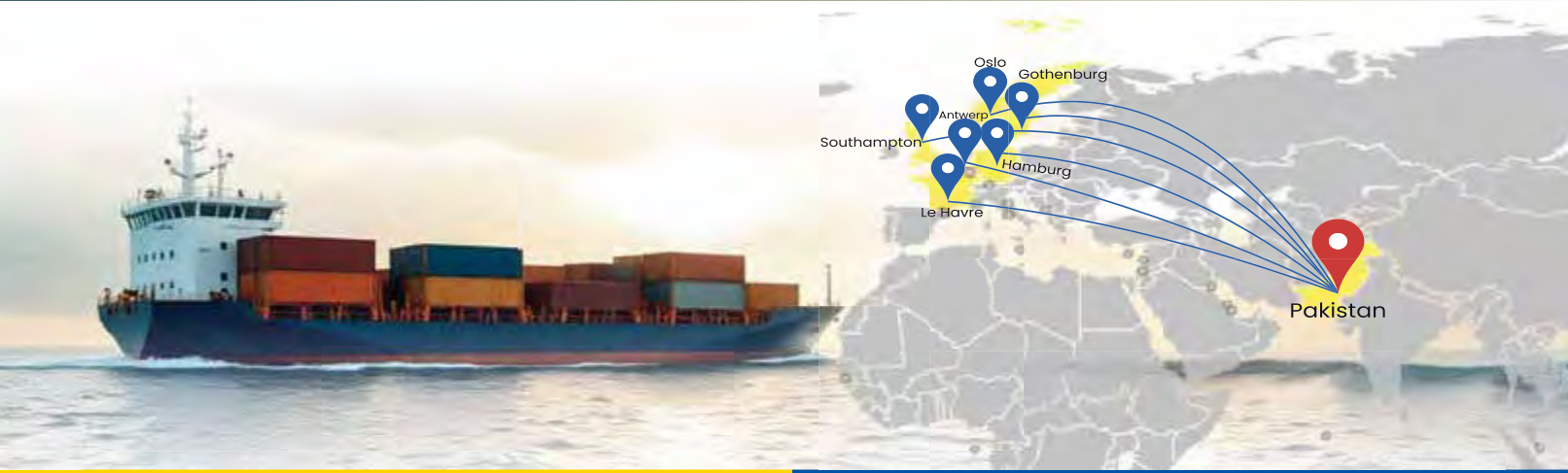
This multi-year MoU establishes a robust foundation for technology transfer and industrial growth. As we celebrate King's Day, this alliance stands as a testament to the synergy between Belgian innovation and Pakistani engineering.





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DIRECTORS' PROFILES



MR. MOHAMMED A. RAJPAR

Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar, Managing Director of General Shipping Agencies (Pvt) Ltd, holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree (magna cum laude) from Bucknell University and a M. Phil (Economics & Politics) degree from Cambridge University.

Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar has been conferred with the distinction of "Commander of the Order of the Crown" by the King of Belgium in recognition of his contributions over the past over two decades towards improving the economic, trade and cultural relations between Pakistan and Belgium.

Currently, Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar is the Chairman of Pakistan Ship's Agents Association since October, 2024, Chairman of Oxford & Cambridge Society Karachi Educational Trust (OCSKET) since February 2022, Chairman of the British Overseas School (BOS) since November 2016, Vice-Chairman of Pakistan National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce (PNC-ICC) since October 2022, Member, Advisory Board of National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) since July 2021, Chief Executive of Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum (PBLBF) since March 2019, Board Member of Al-Murtaza School since 1998 and Honorary Secretary of Zainabia Educational Society since 2003.

In addition, Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar was a Member, Board of Trustees, Karachi Port Trust (KPT) from March, 2009 to December, 2013 and Trustee from July, 2022 to May, 2024, Board Member of Port Qasim Authority (PQA) from March 2006 to March 2014 and from January 2023 to September 2023, Board Member of Oil and Gas Development Company Ltd (OGDCL) from June 2012 to May 2014, Board Member of Board of Investment (BOI) from January, 2013 to May, 2015 and Board Member Karachi Dock Labour Board (KDLB) from December 1996 to December 2014 and Vice Chairman from December, 2014 to June, 2015, and Member Executive Committee of the Pakistan National Committee of the ICC from December 2013 to September 2022, Director of Pakistan German Business Forum (PGBF) from March 2014 to February 2019 and Advisor of Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum (PBLBF) from March 2018 to March 2019, Chairman Advisory Board of Policy Research Institute of Market Economy (PRIME) from March 2022 to December 2024.

Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar also served as Honorary Secretary of Pakistan Ship's Agents Association from 1995 to 2004, as an Executive Committee Member for 2014-2015 and 2018-2019, and as Chairman for the terms 2006-2007, 2008-2009, 2010-2011, 2013-2014, 2017-2018, 2020-2021 and 2024-2026.

Mr. Mohammed A. Rajpar has served on the Gwadar Port Implementation Authority, Advisory Committee on Ship-owning, Planning Commission Task Force on Maritime Industry, Planning Commission Task Force on Trade Facilitation and Regional Connectivity and Prime Minister's National Trade Corridor Improvement Program.

DIRECTORS' PROFILES



MR. SAMEER HAMID DODHY

Director, PBLBF & CEO The Indus Basin Company. A Graduate Engineer and accomplished entrepreneur, Mr. Dodhy brings a sophisticated blend of business acumen and civic commitment to the Board. He is a prominent advocate for good governance and freedom of information, frequently volunteering with civil advocacy groups to enhance public transparency. His professional and social footprint includes memberships in the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, and the Karachi Toastmasters Club. Notably, Mr. Dodhy served as the founding CEO of the Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum, playing a pivotal role in establishing the organization's foundation and early growth.



MR. ZAHID DADA

Director, PBLBF & Managing Partner, Steel Agencies Corporation (SAC). Mr. Dada has served as the Managing Partner of SAC since 1985, representing world-renowned steel manufacturers within the Pakistani market. He holds a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering from NED University and completed specialized business certification at UCLA. A veteran leader within the Forum, Mr. Dada previously served as President (2005–2006) and held multiple terms as Vice President. His commitment to service extends beyond the commercial sector, evidenced by his extensive leadership history within the Rotaract Club of Karachi, where he served as District Secretary and President.



MR. TAKREEM UL HAQUE

Director, PBLBF & Honorary Vice Consul of Belgium (Karachi). With a Masters in Industrial Economics from the University of Brussels and 15 years of professional experience in Belgium, Mr. Haque serves as a vital diplomatic and commercial bridge between the two nations. In 2014, he was awarded "Chevalier de l'Ordre de Leopold II" for his exceptional and longstanding contributions to Pakistan-Belgium relations. Since joining the Honorary Consulate of Belgium in Karachi in 1989, he has facilitated trade delegations and provided specialized expertise in maritime affairs and visa support. He is fluent in English, French, and German.

DIRECTORS' PROFILES



MR. HAIDER NAQI

Director, PBLBF & Tax and Corporate Lawyer. A seasoned Tax and Corporate Lawyer with over 20 years of experience, Mr. Naqi specializes in high-stakes representation across judicial and taxation forums, including the High Court and Federal Tax Ombudsman. He is an active member of the International Bar Association and has served as President of the Rotary Club Karachi Midcity. As a former Secretary General of the Forum, he leverages his legal expertise and extensive global travel—spanning Europe, the USA, and the Far East—to strengthen international corporate ties and ensure professional excellence within the Forum's operations.



MR. SYED KHURRAM BUKHARI

Director, PBLBF & CEO, Ahab Associates. A Civil Engineer with an MSc in Construction Management from the UK, Mr. Bukhari leads Ahab Associates, representing prestigious European brands in construction and healthcare. He is a dedicated promoter of trade, frequently participating in BLCCA General Assemblies in Belgium and Luxembourg. Mr. Bukhari is deeply passionate about fostering international commercial activities and collaborates with global NGOs to drive sustainable development and poverty alleviation within Pakistan. His work focuses on bridging the gap between European innovation and local industrial needs.



Gerry's Group
extends its warmest wishes to
His Majesty King Philippe of the Belgians
on the occasion of his birthday.

*On this auspicious event, we celebrate the shared values, mutual respect, and flourishing ties between **Belgium** and **Pakistan** that unite our nations.*



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IN CONVERSATION WITH

H.E. MR. CHARLES-IDESBALD VAN DER GRACHT

AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

It is a privilege to present this exclusive interview with His Excellency H.E. Mr. Charles-Idesbald van der Gracht, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Belgium to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

His Excellency brings to Islamabad a rich diplomatic experience forged in posts from Tripoli to Teheran to Bangkok, and most recently as Counsellor for European Affairs in Brussels. Since presenting his credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari in September 2024, he has worked tirelessly to deepen the already warm and multifaceted relationship between our two nations.

Ambassador van der Gracht has quickly become a respected voice in Islamabad's diplomatic community. Whether discussing climate resilience, educational partnerships, or the timeless beauty of the North, he speaks with the conviction of someone who believes that true friendship between nations is built on mutual respect and shared aspiration.


In this candid conversation, His Excellency reflects on the state of Belgium-Pakistan relations in 2026, explores new avenues of cooperation, and shares his vision for a partnership that honours both our histories and our common future.

Belgium and Pakistan have long enjoyed warm relations. How do you assess the current state of bilateral ties in early 2026?

Belgium and Pakistan continue to enjoy warm and constructive relations. In fact, we have almost reached 80 years of diplomatic relations – a reason to celebrate in the coming years! More concretely, Belgium has consistently ranked among Pakistan's top five trading partners within the European Union. Our bilateral trade has shown steady growth over the years, with a balanced exchange of goods (or, almost, as Belgium has just a slight deficit – for which I congratulate you). Belgium remains a strategic gateway for Pakistani exports to Europe, particularly textiles under the EU's GSP+ facility. On the other hand, Belgian exports to Pakistan such as industrial chemicals and pharmaceuticals, including vaccines, as well as metals and machinery, are closely linked to Pakistan's industrial productivity and modernization.

Our bilateral relations are not limited to trade: over the past years, the number of students attending one of our top-tier universities in Belgium has grown steadily, with more than 600 visa applications last year. In terms of academic exchanges, we were pleased to successfully launch an Alumni Chapter last year which brings together students who have studied in Belgium and have since returned to Pakistan.

In short, despite recent global and domestic challenges, our bilateral ties remain strong and dynamic, with trade, education, and innovation offering clear opportunities for future growth.



As the host country of key EU institutions, how can Pakistan and Belgium deepen cooperation on global challenges like climate change, counter-terrorism, and regional stability?

Belgium and Pakistan enjoy a strong and evolving partnership, and Brussels, home to the EU institutions, has been central to deepening our engagement on global challenges. Recent high-level dialogues underscore these opportunities of concertation at the highest level. In 2025 alone, several high-level dialogues took place in Brussels: the Pakistan-EU Strategic Dialogue in November focused on trade, energy security, climate action, and migration; and the Political Dialogue in July reaffirmed commitments under the Strategic Engagement Plan on green transition and sustainable development. More recently, the EU-Pakistan Joint Commission in December convened in Brussels. Crucially, on the margins of this Joint Commission, the European Investment Bank signed a EUR 60 million credit financing agreement in Pakistan's water sector, its first such loan since 2015.

What's more, these visits to Brussels enable additional ministerial contacts at the bilateral level.

In a polarized global landscape, how can Belgium and Pakistan collaborate on shared goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and digital transformation (from a governance and societal perspective)?

Belgium believes that constructive partnerships to advance the SDGs remain essential for responding to global challenges, particularly those linked to climate change, inequality, and governance. In the field of digital transformation, Belgium was the first EU Member State to adopt a dedicated Digital for Development (D4D) policy, underscoring our commitment to leveraging digitalization as a driver for sustainable growth.

Belgium and Pakistan already share productive bilateral channels, including structured political consultations, which provide an opportunity to discuss our shared interest in SDG implementation, climate resilience, innovation, and digital transformation. Belgium also strongly believes in multilateral solutions – where Pakistan is very active as well. Ultimately, both our countries stand to benefit from intensified collaboration.

How do you view the role of the Pakistani diaspora in Belgium in strengthening bilateral relations, and what message do you have for Pakistani-Belgians?

The Pakistani diaspora in Belgium is a vibrant and growing community, estimated at around 20,000 people, including students, researchers, and professionals. They play an invaluable role in strengthening bilateral ties, acting as cultural bridges between our countries. We welcome initiatives like the Networking Conference organized by the Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels last fall, which provides a platform for students and professionals to connect, share success stories, and build institutional linkages in higher education, research, and innovation.

My message to Pakistani-Belgians is this: you are ambassadors of friendship and cooperation. Your contributions, whether in academia, business, or community life, enrich Belgian society and strengthen Pakistan's global presence.

Do you see scope for deeper collaboration in higher education, research, or university partnerships between Belgian and Pakistani institutions?

Absolutely. Belgium is proud to be a hub of innovation and academic excellence. Our universities, from KU Leuven, Ghent University, to UC Louvain, rank among the world's top 200. This is reflected in the growing interest from this country: Belgian universities are open to Pakistani students and this opportunity is seized every year by some of your fellow citizens who are welcomed in our higher education institutions. Students are truly among our best diplomats: they represent the strong ties between Belgium and Pakistan and embody people-to-people diplomacy. Our Embassy in Islamabad has been actively fostering these connections: last year, we launched an Alumni Chapter and organized networking events.

The Belgian Embassy is also happy to facilitate further discussions between our respective higher education institutions. The potential is clear: more joint research, faculty exchanges, and structured university partnerships will only deepen our collaboration.

Belgium has supported Pakistan during past humanitarian crises. Are there new development or climate-resilience initiatives currently under discussion?

Belgium remains committed to climate resilience and sustainable development. Together with EU member states, we aim for carbon neutrality by 2050, investing in renewable energy, green hydrogen, and reducing carbon footprints at home.

In Pakistan, Belgium has provided humanitarian aid during the 2022 tragic floods, delivering tents and water sanitation equipment. Belgium aims to support recovery efforts more structurally through contributions to multilateral mechanisms like the FAO and UN emergency funds. Also, at the global level, the EU, together with its member states, is the largest provider of climate financing in the world. The funds it provides support climate-related actions in developing countries to facilitate their green transition and tackle the adverse effects of climate change.

Climate resilience remains a shared priority, and Belgium will continue to engage through partnerships and multilateral channels.

Belgium is a global leader in sustainability. In which areas of environmental and green-development cooperation could Pakistan benefit most from Belgian expertise?

Belgium's expertise in sustainability offers real opportunities for Pakistan. There could be cooperation between some of our Belgian companies which are champions in renewable energy and Pakistan's green hydrogen projects. We also have firms that are global pioneers in recycling and resource recovery. Their models can help Pakistan develop sustainable systems and create green jobs. Of course, Belgium is also known for its research and innovation: Belgian universities offer opportunities for joint projects in climate science, agriculture, and disaster risk reduction.

In short, Belgium can share technology, expertise, and partnerships to help Pakistan accelerate its green transition and build climate resilience.



What has been your most memorable experience in Pakistan so far, and which local traditions, foods, or places have left the strongest impression on you?

I have had the chance to discover many sides of Pakistan, but if I had to choose one unforgettable experience, it would be my visit to the North of Pakistan: its landscapes, of course, which are breathtaking, but also the warmth and confidence of the communities living there. The strong presence of women in commerce, the high literacy levels in several northern regions, and the sense of local empowerment all stand out. I was also deeply impressed during my visit to Sialkot. The entrepreneurial energy there is truly remarkable. There is a kind of dynamism that speaks volumes about Pakistan's economic potential.

As your tenure continues, what are your key diplomatic and cooperation priorities for the remainder of your mission?

Going forward, my priorities center on deepening the areas where Belgium and Pakistan already work well together, while opening doors in fields where our cooperation can grow even further. Strengthening political dialogue remains essential: our frequent bilateral consultations have shown how constructive our exchanges can be when we sit together with clear, shared objectives in mind. Another priority for me is enhancing people to people exchanges because these are the ties that shape long term understanding between our countries.

Finally, what is your vision for the future of Pakistan–Belgium relations in the coming years?

Belgium is not a global superpower, and I say that quite frankly. But we stand firmly by our partners, and we bring with us the strengths we do have: reliability, expertise, and a commitment to dialogue. In the years ahead, I want to see our relationship grow in ways that are concrete and meaningful: more Belgian companies discovering the entrepreneurial talent of Pakistan, more cooperation in areas where Belgium can genuinely contribute to resilience, whether in governance, climate adaptation, healthcare, or digital transformation.

BRIDGING PAKISTAN AND BENELUX:

AMBASSADOR RAHIM HAYAT QURESHI ON DEEPENING TRADE, INVESTMENT, AND STRATEGIC TIES

H.E. Mr. Rahim Hayat Qureshi, Pakistan's Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union since early 2025, is a career diplomat with over thirty years of experience across some of the world's most sensitive postings.

A veteran of the Pakistan Foreign Service, he previously served as Ambassador to South Korea (2017–2020), Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the Economic Cooperation Organization in Tehran (2020–2023), and Deputy Head of Mission in New Delhi (2013–2015), where he handled the complexities of India-Pakistan relations at close quarters.

Since presenting his credentials to King Philippe of Belgium in May 2025, Ambassador Qureshi has moved swiftly to strengthen Pakistan's economic and political ties with the EU. He actively promotes investment in textiles, agriculture, and renewable energy, defends Pakistan's vital GSP+ trade preferences, and engages on climate resilience, migration, and counter-terrorism.

In Brussels, he has emerged as a calm, resolute bridge-builder—committed to dialogue and determined to secure mutual prosperity for Pakistan and Europe in an uncertain world.

Q: How would you describe the current state of Pakistan's bilateral relations with Belgium and Luxembourg, particularly in the field of trade and investment?

A: Pakistan's bilateral relations with Belgium and Luxembourg are friendly, stable, and steadily progressing, especially in trade and economic cooperation. Belgium remains an important European partner for Pakistan, serving as a key gateway to the EU market. Our trade has grown in areas such as textiles, agriculture, machinery, and industrial goods, supported by ongoing institutional dialogue and business-to-business engagement. While investment flows remain modest, there is strong potential in sectors like renewable energy, logistics, IT, and value-added manufacturing. Overall, the relationship is constructive, with significant room to deepen commercial and investment linkages.

Q: *What key sectors do you believe hold the greatest potential for Belgian and Luxembourgish companies to invest in Pakistan in the coming years?*

A: Belgian and Luxembourgish companies will find strong potential in Pakistan's fast-growing sectors such as renewable energy, where demand for solar, wind, and green technologies is rapidly increasing. Logistics and port infrastructure also offer major opportunities, given Pakistan's strategic location and expanding trade corridors. IT and digital services present high-value prospects, supported by a young, skilled workforce. Additionally, agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, and high-quality manufacturing remain promising areas for long-term, mutually beneficial investment.

Q: *How can Pakistan enhance its export competitiveness in the Benelux region, especially in high-value sectors?*


A: Pakistan is actively working to boost its competitiveness by moving up the value chain- focusing on high quality textiles, engineered goods, IT services, and specialty agriculture products. Strengthening compliance with EU standards, specially in sustainability and traceability, will be essential. Pakistan is also investing in branding, design and innovation to differentiate its products in niche Benelux markets to enhance its export competitiveness in the Benelux region.

Q: *What initiatives are currently underway at the Embassy to strengthen business-to-business connectivity and facilitate commercial engagement?*

A: The Embassy is actively strengthening B2B connectivity by organizing targeted webinars and trade briefings for Belgian and Luxembourgish companies, highlighting opportunities in sectors like textiles, pharmaceuticals, IT, and renewable energy. The Embassy continues to support trade delegations, facilitate market linkages, and guide companies on regulatory requirements and investment procedures. Additionally, we work closely with Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to promote Pakistan's investment-ready projects and streamline investor engagement from the Benelux region.

Q: *How do you see the role of the Pakistani diaspora in Belgium and Luxembourg in promoting economic and cultural ties?*

A: The Pakistani diaspora in Belgium and Luxembourg plays an increasingly influential role in strengthening both economic and cultural connections. Many are well-integrated professionals and entrepreneurs who serve as natural bridges between local markets and opportunities in Pakistan. Their business networks help facilitate trade links, investment interest, and partnerships for Pakistani companies. Culturally, the diaspora promotes a positive image of Pakistan through community events, educational initiatives, and people-to-people engagement. Overall, they are a valuable asset in deepening bilateral understanding and expanding commercial cooperation.



Q: *In your view, what opportunities exist for collaboration in innovation, technology, and renewable energy between Pakistan and the Benelux countries?*

A: There is strong potential for collaboration in innovation and technology, especially as Pakistan's IT and startup ecosystem continues to grow and seeks partnerships with advanced European markets. Belgian and Luxembourgish expertise in fintech, cybersecurity, and smart logistics aligns well with Pakistan's digital transformation priorities. In renewable energy, opportunities are significant in solar, wind, and waste-to-energy solutions, where Benelux firms have world-class capabilities. Joint ventures, technology transfer, and pilot projects in green energy can deliver real impact. Overall, combining Benelux innovation with Pakistan's scale and talent offers a mutually rewarding path forward.

Q: *What message would you like to convey to business leaders and policymakers in Belgium and Luxembourg regarding Pakistan's economic outlook and investment climate?*

A: Pakistan offers a dynamic and evolving economic landscape with growing opportunities across sectors like renewable energy, IT, manufacturing, and infrastructure. The Government of Pakistan is committed to creating a business-friendly environment through regulatory reforms, investment facilitation, and incentives for foreign investors. Strategic location, a young and skilled workforce, and expanding trade corridors make Pakistan an attractive gateway to South and Central Asia. We encourage Belgian and Luxembourgish businesses to explore partnerships, joint ventures, and long-term investments, which can yield sustainable growth while strengthening bilateral economic ties.

PAKISTAN-BELGIAN BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS

By Mr. Shaukat Niazi
Economic & Commercial Counsellor,
Royal Embassy of Belgium in Pakistan

Mr. Shaukat Niazi, a passionate polyglot with a degree in Political Science, brings a unique blend of cultural flair, literary zest and hands-on experience to his current role as Trade Commissioner at the Embassy of Belgium in Islamabad, Pakistan. After a decade long stint with the French Government in trade promotion capacity, he has since been working with the Economic & Commercial Representation at the Embassy of Belgium for more than 25 years.


In his professional role, Mr. Niazi strengthens economic linkages between Belgium's dynamic regions and Pakistan, promoting trade and investment in sectors such as energy, textiles, infrastructure, industry, and education. With Belgium as Pakistan's fifth-largest EU trading partner, he advances important initiatives—including trade delegations, B2B matchmaking, and maximizing GSP+ benefits.

A keen wordsmith and passionate amateur translator, in 2023, H.E. Mr. Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of France to Pakistan, bestowed upon Mr. Shaukat Niazi the prestigious French insignia of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters). He has also been awarded the Muhammad Hassan Askari Award for best translation twice by the Pakistan Academy of Letters. These high distinctions recognize his outstanding contribution to the promotion and dissemination of French and Francophone literature, theatre, and culture in Pakistan.

For those eager to connect, he can be reached at the Royal Embassy of Belgium: Tel: +92 51 873 9514 or Email: islamabad@awex-wallonia.com

In my first year as the Economic & Commercial Counsellor at the Royal Embassy of Belgium in Pakistan, it is a privilege for me to be able to contribute and celebrate the strong and cordial bilateral trade relations between the two countries.

Within the 27 European Union countries, Belgium has for many years ranked amongst Pakistan's top 5 trading partners. This is itself a significant achievement. Belgium holds significant global positions for a range of export categories like vaccines & pharma products, chemicals, mineral fuels and oils, automobiles, food products, machinery and industrial equipment, plastics and precious stones.



An overview of Belgian–Pakistan bilateral trade has shown a steady growth over the years with the balance of trade more or less evenly distributed. However, our recent bilateral trade figures down from € 1.2 Billion in 2022 to nearly € 915 Million in 2024 reflect the economic & political situation in Pakistan. However, a stabilisation is on the horizon as the bilateral trade between the two countries has already reached € 650 Million during the first 8 months of 2025.

Nevertheless, our trade figures confirm the importance of Belgium as a strategic transit point for the European markets. Pakistan’s exports were primarily in the textile related sectors helped significantly by the GSP+ facility granted by the European Union.

As for Belgian exports to Pakistan, they are varied and represent industrial raw materials as well as machinery for the various industrial sectors. Our exports can be summarized as follows: Industrial chemicals and pharmaceuticals including vaccines accounting for almost 45%, iron, steel and non-ferrous metals 24%, textile and other industrial machinery at 10%. It is obvious that Belgian exports to Pakistan, made up largely of input materials and equipment, are closely linked to the industrial productivity in Pakistan.

What is most heartening is the fact that business communities of both countries recognize the desire and potential to increase mutual trade beyond current levels and diversify products. Interesting areas for future cooperation include energy, mining and minerals, agriculture, logistics, information technology, and renewable energy, where Belgium's expertise in advanced technology could be beneficial. My office with close cooperation of the Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum is striving to strengthen business-to-business links and exploring joint ventures and investment opportunities.

In the end I would like to ensure the readers of this eminent publication that I and my office shall be always ready and willing to advise and assist Pakistani companies and entrepreneurs in further enhancing the bilateral trade relations between Pakistan and Belgium.

150 YEARS OF CONNECTION: THE LIVING STORY OF THE FEDERATION OF BELGIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Mr. Wouter Van Gulck
General Manager
Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce

In the vibrant city of Brussels, Mr. Wouter Van Gulck leads the Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce as General Manager since 2007. His lean team of 6 experts streamlines trade and sustainable entrepreneurship through a dynamic network of 13 local chambers and 40 Belgian chambers abroad empowering Belgian businesses worldwide. Under his stewardship, the 1875-founded network evolved into a 150-year-old powerhouse—celebrated in a 2025 royal gala with HRH Princess Astrid earlier this year.




Mr. Van Gulck's global footprint shines: elected to the ICC World Chambers Federation Council (2016–2023) and as Eurochambres deputy president since 2024, he strengthens the impact of chambers of commerce, with a strong emphasis on trade and sustainability. Innovator at heart, he launched DigiChambers in 2009 for seamless SME exports and champions green transitions via SDG trainings.

A globe-trotter across more than 70 countries with 500+ LinkedIn ties, Mr. Van Gulck fosters intercultural bridges, urging "exchange more, understand deeper." Contact: wvangulck@belgianchambers.be. His mantra? In commerce, bold bridges build thriving futures.

This year, the Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce (Belgian Chambers) celebrates an extraordinary milestone: 150 years of building bridges, nurturing enterprise, and shaping Belgium's economic footprint across the world. For a century and a half, the Federation has evolved alongside Belgium's own transformation—through industrial growth, geopolitical shifts, technological revolutions, and changing global dynamics. Yet throughout this journey, one thread has remained constant: the commitment to fostering trusted, meaningful connections between Belgian businesses and the wider world.

A Network Rooted in History, Shaped for the Future

When the Federation was founded in 1875, Belgium was emerging as one of Europe's most industrious and outward-looking economies. Chambers of commerce played a vital role in supporting entrepreneurs who ventured beyond the country's borders in search of new opportunities. What began as a handful of regional chambers coordinating their efforts



gradually grew into today's global network of accredited chambers of commerce in Belgium and Belgian-Luxembourg chambers of commerce abroad.

This network is not a static structure; it is alive with the stories of thousands of companies—large and small—that have relied on chamber support to explore markets, forge partnerships, and overcome challenges. Over time, the Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce became the guardian of this ecosystem, ensuring that wherever a Belgian business goes, it encounters the same professionalism, trustworthiness, and openness that Belgium itself is known for.

Representing a Global Family of Chambers

Today, Belgian Chambers stands at the center of a diverse community that spans continents. It represents Belgium's accredited chambers at home as well as 40 Belgian-Luxembourg chambers abroad. These organizations vary in size, geography, and local context, but they share a common mission: to act as reliable partners for companies seeking to grow internationally.

In this sense, Belgian Chambers serves as the conductor of a global orchestra. Each chamber brings its own strengths and local knowledge, yet the collective impact depends on coherence and shared purpose. For Belgian companies, this means seamless access to opportunities around the world. For international partners looking toward Belgium, it provides clarity and a credible, structured point of entry.


Chambers such as the Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Form (PBLBF) operate within this framework. Their efforts to strengthen economic bonds between Pakistan and Belgium gain legitimacy and visibility through their accreditation by Belgian Chambers. This accreditation is more than a hallmark of quality—it is a signal to companies that they are engaging with a trusted and globally connected institution.

A Relentless Commitment to Quality and Cohesion

Throughout its 150-year journey, the Federation has consistently worked to ensure that quality remains the defining characteristic of every accredited chamber. Accreditation is not simply a label; it is a continuous process, requiring chambers to meet clear standards in governance, financial transparency, strategy, and service delivery.

Yet quality alone is not enough; cohesion is equally vital. Belgian Chambers fosters this cohesion through regular coordination meetings, knowledge-sharing workshops, and opportunities for cross-border collaboration. This ensures that chambers—whether in Belgium, Europe, Asia, or beyond—operate within a common framework and a shared culture of professionalism.

For chambers working in complex markets, such as Pakistan, this connection to a wider global network is particularly important. It enables them to draw on collective expertise, align with international best practices, and remain firmly connected to Belgium's broader trade ecosystem.



This focus on quality and cohesion is one of the reasons the global network has remained relevant and robust for 150 years—and why it continues to serve as a powerful asset for Belgian businesses today.

Championing International and Sustainable Entrepreneurship

As the global economy evolves, Belgian Chambers has ensured that its mission evolves with it. Internationalization remains at the heart of its work, supported by a modern suite of services—from export documentation and market insights to business matchmaking and close cooperation with the regional trade agencies.

But the Federation’s ambitions extend beyond internationalization. It has become a leading advocate for sustainable entrepreneurship, promoting long-term responsible business practices through initiatives such as the Certificate of Sustainable Entrepreneurship, a programme developed in collaboration with CIFAL Flanders, a UNITAR-affiliated centre of expertise on the SDGs offering trainings, project development and coaching. This work reflects a broader understanding that competitiveness today is increasingly connected with environmental responsibility, social impact, and good governance.

150 Years of Legacy—and the Road Ahead

Marking 150 years of the Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce invites both reflection and anticipation. The challenges facing today’s entrepreneurs differ significantly from those of 1875, yet the need for trusted networks, reliable partnerships, and strong institutional support remains unchanged.

For international Chambers such as the PBLBF, the Federation’s leadership and the global network it coordinates provide a foundation on which to build deeper and more impactful bilateral relations. Their work, just like that of every accredited chamber abroad, contributes to the broader mission of strengthening Belgium’s global economic presence.

As we celebrate this milestone, we also celebrate the countless stories that have shaped this network: the companies that took their first steps abroad with chamber support; the partnerships forged across cultures; the chambers that adapted and innovated; and the generations of people who maintained the commitment to openness, professionalism, and trust.

This is the legacy—150 years in the making—that continues to guide the Federation’s work today. And it is this legacy that will carry the global network into the future, empowering chambers everywhere, including those in Pakistan, to continue building bridges and creating opportunities for decades to come.

SPOTLIGHT ON MR. RENÉ BRANDERS:

A PILLAR OF BELGIAN INDUSTRY AND GLOBAL TRADE

In the world of international business, few figures embody the spirit of innovation, resilience, and cross-border collaboration quite like Mr. René Branders. As the President of the Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce (Belgian Chambers), Mr. Branders has been instrumental in steering Belgium's entrepreneurial ecosystem toward sustainable growth and global connectivity. His exclusive interview with the Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum magazine offers a rare glimpse into his vision for deepening economic ties between these vibrant markets—particularly in light of emerging opportunities in technology, manufacturing, and sustainable trade.


PBLBF: The Trilateral Advantage How does the inclusion of Luxembourg in our forum change the value proposition for Pakistani businesses, and what specific synergies between the Belgian and Luxembourgish markets should we exploit?

Mr. Branders : Relations between Belgium and Luxembourg are longstanding and deep, as can be witnessed from the creation of the Belgian-Luxembourg Economic Union in 1921 and the Benelux in 1944. Both countries are the driving force behind a further integration of the EU single market.

Most Belgian chambers of commerce abroad are trilateral chambers, representing both Belgium and Luxembourg. The Federation of Belgian Chambers of Commerce and the Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce work closely together to support these chambers and to feed them with information on both countries. Not unlike Belgium, Luxembourg has a highly diversified economy, but is internationally recognized for its financial services industry. Other sectors with global renown are ICT, logistics and space industry, all supported by an active innovation ecosystem.

PBLBF: Diversification Beyond Textiles Beyond our GSP+ reliance on textiles, which underutilized sectors (like IT, surgical instruments, or food) best line up with Belgium's import needs for the next 5 years?

Mr. Branders : Belgium is an open economy, ranking as the 12th leading merchandise exporter and 14th importer globally. This means that all kinds of goods cross the country's borders every day. Whatever Pakistan is manufacturing might find a market in or via Belgium. I would like to stress here that Belgium is a distribution hub for the European continent and beyond. With the Port of Antwerp-Bruges and the airport of Liège, we have two main logistical hubs, with all the main service providers present to tranship your goods to the end customer, wherever he may be located.



A sector that is particularly well developed in Belgium is the food processing industry. With raw materials we grow ourselves or that we import from abroad, we manufacture high-quality products that are exported worldwide. This might be interesting for Pakistani food exporters.

Another characteristic of Belgium is that it is at the crossroads of several cultures and that Brussels is one of the most diverse cities with more than 180 nationalities. This makes our country into an ideal test market for new products.

PBLBF: Industrial Modernization Drawing on your leadership, how can the Chambers facilitate technology transfer or joint ventures to help modernize Pakistani manufacturing machinery?

Mr. Branders : Machinery and equipment is currently our third export sector to Pakistan, but it represents less than 10% of our total exports. There is certainly room for improvement. Let's start with mapping the needs of the Pakistan manufacturing industry and study how Belgian suppliers can respond to these needs. In a second phase, it might be useful to organise a trade mission from Belgium to Pakistan with a focus on industrial goods. This mission can be a collaboration between Belgian's trade agencies, leading sector federations and the Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum.

PBLBF: Renewable Energy Cooperation Given Pakistan's energy crisis, is there an appetite among Belgian green-tech and offshore wind firms to enter our market, and what assurances would they need to do so?


Mr. Branders: The Belgian cleantech and renewable energy industries are export-driven sectors. Most of these companies are SMEs and might not be able to take the lead in large-scale energy projects, but they are certainly interested to be part of a larger consortium where they can supply their technology.

As in every foreign market, companies will weigh the commercial and political risks before investing. A coverage by the national credit insurance company is therefore an important asset.

PBLBF: Family Business Governance As a successful family business owner, what advice do you have for Pakistani family conglomerates looking to professionalize their management to attract European partners?

Mr. Branders: My advice to Pakistani family conglomerates is to treat professionalization not as a loss of family influence, but as an investment in long-term credibility. Begin by establishing transparent governance structures – clear roles, clear decision-making processes, and a board that combines family continuity with independent expertise. Surround your family leadership with seasoned professionals and give them real authority.

Equally important is to articulate a long-term strategy that outlives any single generation. European companies look for stability and predictability: documented processes, financial transparency, and a culture of accountability. When a family



business shows that it can combine its entrepreneurial spirit with modern management practices, it becomes a highly attractive and trusted partner for European investors and companies — because it offers both heritage and reliability.

PBLBF: Regulatory Mentorship Could the Federation collaborate with us on a "Compliance Mentorship" program to guide Pakistani suppliers through complex EU regulations like ESG reporting and CE marking?

Mr. Branders : Some of our regional chambers, like the Chamber of Commerce of Antwerp, have developed programmes that help foreign companies access the EU market and navigate all regulatory requirements. In the field of sustainability, we have a partnership with CIFAL Flanders, a UNITAR-affiliated centre of expertise on the SDGs offering trainings, project development and coaching. We have worked with them in the past for ESG trainings, both for companies in Belgium and outside Belgium.

PBLBF: Visa & Mobility How can the Federation advocate for a "Trusted Business Traveler" program to ease visa bottlenecks for verified PBLBF members?

Mr. Branders : The Federation is prepared to enter into discussions on this matter with the relevant authorities in Belgium, but similar attempts in the past have unfortunately not led to any concrete results. However, it remains worthwhile to try, as this could be an important asset for the commercial attractiveness of our country.

PBLBF: The 2030 Vision What does success look like to you in five years regarding the Belgium–Pakistan trade corridor?

Mr. Branders : The last few years, the trade flows between Belgium and Pakistan are showing a downward trend. I would like to reverse this trend in the coming years, and surpass the 1 billion EUR mark, both in imports and exports, by 2030. For that, we need some clear success stories from Belgian companies doing business with or operating in Pakistan. A few such stories can trigger the interest of other companies. So let's write these success stories together!

INTIMATE RESISTANCE

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY AND DIALOGUE

BY MS. WENDY MARIJNISSEN

Ms. Wendy Marijnissen is an acclaimed Belgian photographer and curator whose work serves as a bridge between the intimate and the universal. Based in Antwerp but deeply rooted in the cultural landscape of Pakistan, Wendy has spent over 16 years documenting the human condition with a lens focused on maternal health, humanitarian crises, and the nuances of identity. She is the author of the poignant photo-book 'Always the Guest', founder of Bending The Frame vzw (Non-Profit Association) and the co-founder of the Pakistan Documentary Photography Initiative (PDPI). Through her collaborative exhibitions, she continues to foster a visual dialogue that transcends borders, defying stereotypes in favour of deep, empathetic storytelling.

For the past 16 years, I have been a frequent traveller between Antwerp and Karachi, a city that has truly become my home away from home. I will never forget my first steps into Pakistan in 2009, crossing the Wagah border on foot. I was immediately met by the electric, vibrant chaos of the roads—an energy I still find as exhilarating today as I did then.

Through my camera, I set out to discover the heart of Pakistan. While I explored the urban centres of Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, it was my frequent journeys into the interior of Sindh that shaped my perspective. I met extraordinary people and documented devastating chapters of history, such as the disastrous 2010 floods.

From the beginning, my work was driven by an exploration of maternal health. I sought to document the visceral realities of childbirth, the quiet strength of traditional midwives and the harrowing impact of displacement on women like Hamida, whose pregnancy became a symbol of vulnerability and resilience amidst the floodwaters.



With every trip, I found myself growing more comfortable, building relationships that transformed from professional contacts into family. In 2015, I synthesized these experiences into my book, 'Always the Guest.' My goal was to challenge the many misconceptions held by the world about Pakistan. In its pages, I wove my own personal memories, my grief, and my longing for motherhood into the lives of the women I photographed. As a photographer, your lens is a reflection of who you are; in Pakistan, I found reflections of my own soul in the people who guided me on this continuous journey of discovery.

One of those guiding lights is my dear friend and colleague, Malika Abbas. We met in 2018 during a panel on documentary photography and immediately connected over our shared belief in the power of storytelling. Despite our different cultural backgrounds, we discovered profound commonalities: we both draw inspiration from our families and our pasts. We connected through shared experiences of loss—the loss of our mothers and the complex grief surrounding motherhood. We realized quickly that missing someone is a universal language.

Together, we co-founded the Pakistan Documentary Photography Initiative. Two years ago, we staged our first joint visual dialogue, 'Belonging,' at the VM Gallery in Karachi.

December 2025 marked the debut of our second co-curated presentation, 'Intimate Resistance.' Working alongside acclaimed photographer Arif Mahmood and young new talent Hassaan Gondal, we aim to elevate documentary photography into the spotlight, honoring the profound storytelling power this medium deserves. In a world that feels increasingly polarized—where algorithms often dictate what we see—genuine conversation is essential. 'Intimate Resistance' is our attempt to defy stereotypes through nuanced storytelling. The works explore the emotional and psychological landscapes of individuals navigating personal and political realities. This resistance is "intimate" because it emerges from within; it is rooted in memory, home, gender, humor, and desire.



IN APPRECIATION OF MR. MUHAMMAD BILAL KHAN,

TRADE AND INVESTMENT ATTACHÉ, EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN, BRUSSELS

PBLBF would like to acknowledge and appreciate the co-operation and active support received from Mr. Muhammad Bilal Khan during his tenure as Trade and Investment Attaché, Embassy of Pakistan, Brussels from September, 2022 to October, 2025. We found Mr. Muhammad Bilal Khan to be extremely proactive and successfully managed several Belgian delegations to TEXPO Pakistan during which meetings/dinners were held with PBLBF members. In addition, Mr. Muhammad Bilal Khan was able to arrange networking meetings for PBLBF members whenever required with Belgian companies as well as Chambers of Commerce. In addition, Mr. Muhammad Bilal Khan maintained an active relationship and contact with Mr. Paul Scheynen, PBLBF representative in Belgium.



MR. MUHAMMAD IQBAL

**GROUP COO/ DIRECTOR
PTN LOGISTICS GROUP, PAKISTAN**



In today's rapidly evolving global landscape, technology and logistics have become key drivers of economic growth and operational excellence.

Belgium stands as a global benchmark in advanced logistics, digital innovation, and smart supply chain systems. Pakistan, with its dynamic potential, is steadily moving towards the integration of modern technologies in the logistics sector.

PTN Logistics Group, backed by over 40 years of experience in Pakistan's logistics industry, has been serving multiple sectors with excellence, reliability, and a strong commitment to quality. Our team continues to perform with dedication while adapting to emerging challenges and evolving industry demands.

At PTN Logistics Group, we are actively shaping the future by investing in Artificial Intelligence (AI), smart fleet management, and digital transformation. Our initiatives include AI based tracking systems, predictive maintenance, RFID-enabled asset management, and real-time operational dashboards, aligned with global standards.

With a clear vision for international expansion, we are continuously embracing emerging technologies and innovations to compete in international markets.

We strongly believe that collaboration between Belgium and Pakistan in logistics and technology will unlock new opportunities, strengthen partnerships, and drive sustainable growth.

Long Live Pakistan–Belgium Friendship, Long Live Pakistan!

I would also like to appreciate the efforts of Mr. Muhammad A. Rajpar, Chief Executive of Pakistan Belgium Luxembourg Business Forum, and his dedicated team, who have been playing a significant role since 1997 in strengthening trade relations between Pakistan and Belgium.

Their continuous vision and commitment have brought business communities closer and created new opportunities for mutual growth.

Together, we are not just moving cargo—we are shaping the future of intelligent logistics.



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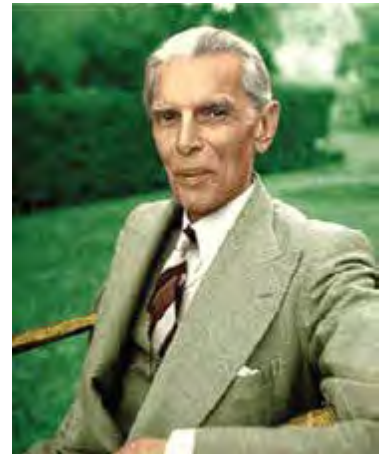
As a responsible corporate citizen, we pledge to use our resources and expertise to leverage lives of thousands of people through our contribution and experience specially in the social sectors, such as health and education, and therefore continue to help build a strong and resilient Pakistan for our coming generations. In achieving this position, we owe extreme gratitude to our global business partners whose names are icons in their respective business-fields.

Quaid-e-Azam, founder of Pakistan's famous quote on success:

"With faith, discipline and selfless devotion to duty, there is nothing worthwhile that you cannot achieve".

Stanley Wolpert in his book "Jinnah of Pakistan"

"Few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer still modify the map of the world. Hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation-state. Muhammad Ali Jinnah did all three."



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BELGIUM: A NATION WITH MANY CARDS TO PLAY

A knack for business.

With only 11 million inhabitants, Belgium is the 12th largest exporter and 14th largest importer in the world.

All that glitters is not gold...

... but it may be diamonds! Especially in Antwerp, where 85% of the world's rough diamonds end up at some point.

Ever heard of the Libramont fair?

It's the largest agricultural and forestry fair in Europe! It takes place every year in the south of the country.

Are you a pool pro?

If so, then just like 80% of the players on this planet, you must use balls produced by a world-leading Belgian company.

Thou shalt not invest poorly!

It could have been Bruges' motto, where the first stock exchange in the world was created back in 1309.

Belgian tennis has many strings to its racket?

In addition to our talented athletes, many world stars swear by racket strings Made in Belgium.

It's no coincidence that you have these cards in your hands.

Belgium is home to the world's leading manufacturer of playing cards, trading cards, and board games.

The Port of Antwerp-Bruges has the wind in its sails.

Europe's largest port for chemicals and vehicles, and home to the largest lock in the world – not bad at all !

A pharma industry in tip-top shape.

Belgium is the world's largest producer of vaccines and the second largest market for clinical studies in Europe.

Do you carry Belgium in your pockets?

Most Europeans do! The Euro owes its name and symbol to two Belgian linguists and graphic designers who created the currency's logo.

Smack dab in the middle.

At the center of Western Europe, Belgium boasts 500 million consumers within a 800 km radius.

A first-class travel experience.

Antwerp Station, a marvel of 19th-century architecture is one of the most beautiful train stations in the world.

Brussels is way more than just a capital.

Literally! The Belgian capital is also the seat of the European Union, NATO, and the Benelux.

A diplomatic powerhouse!

Along with Washington DC, Brussels has the largest number of diplomats and foreign correspondents in the world.

Fancy a party?

Often referred to as the world's best electronic music festival, Tomorrowland welcomes around 400,000 visitors from 75 countries yearly.

Belgium is a multimodal hub.

Judge for yourself: 3,602 km of railways, 153 km of canals, 1,703 km of highways, 5 airports... all on just 30,000 km²?

Cooperation above all!

The Benelux, a customs union with Luxemburg and the Netherlands, laid the foundations for the European Union in 1944.

Cycling is easy in the "Flat Country".

Flatness helps, but thousands of kilometers of cycling routes, including 5 EU cycling routes, also come in handy.

Tintin and the traveling Smurf.

The Belgian passport showcases dozens of Belgian comic strip heroes, while meeting the highest security standards.

Who is the King of Belgium?

Nobody! King Philippe is officially “King of the Belgians” underlining the sovereignty of the people.

What is the largest chocolate store in the world?

Brussels Airport! Two tons of chocolate specialties are sold there every day.

Do you feel like being pampered?

How about a spa, named after the Belgian spa town that its prestigious visitors once called the “Salon of Europe”?

Belgian art on the moon?

“Fallen Astronaut” by Belgian sculptor Paul van Hoeydonck, has been delighting lunar inhabitants since 1971.

Living for the rush?

Then head to Spa-Francorchamps: the longest, oldest and for many the most beautiful of the current F1 circuits.

Are you crazy about fashion? He is too!

The wardrobe of Manneken Pis is so large (more than a thousand costumes) that an entire museum is dedicated to it!

Let Art Nouveau put a spell on you.

Brussels is the cradle of this fabulous style and boasts over 500 grandiose buildings like the Horta House.

Have you ever dreamt of living in a big mansion?

Then you are in the right place! Belgium has the highest number of castles per square kilometer!

Sunbathing on a beach or checking the latest artsy trends?

Why not both? The seaside town of Knokke has more than 80 art galleries on its waterfront!

Would you like another drink?

The Belgian art of beer, classified by UNESCO is perpetuated by 400 breweries producing 1500 different beers.

A most efficient magnifying glass!

The Atomium rises 102 meters above Brussels and represents an iron atom, magnified 165 billion times!

Plastic is fantastic!

In 1907, Len Baekeland invented Bakelite the first synthetic plastic in history.

Want to know your ideal weight?

You can, thanks to the Belgian Adolphe Quetelet who developed the BMI, or Body Mass Index.

This is how it all began...

The Big Bang theory was developed by Georges Lemaitre, a Belgian priest and mathematician.

Empire State of.... Fries?

New York was founded by a Belgian, Pierre Minuit, and Wall Street could take its name from the first Walloon settler.

A little jazz in the citadel's shadow.

The saxophone was invented in 1846 by Adolphe Sax, who lived in Dinant.

One hell of a brush stroke!

In the 14th century, Jan van Eyck revolutionized his art so much that he is considered the father of oil painting.

He had his heart set on it!

Andreas Vesalius, born in Brussels in 1514, established the foundations of modern Western anatomy.

How many Nobel Prize winners are Belgian?

Eleven! 5 for Peace, 3 for Medicine, and 1 each for Literature, Physics, and Chemistry.

This is not a card.

The work of Magritte epitomized by apples, bowler hats, and clouds emulates Belgian surrealism.

Which athlete was nicknamed “The Cannibal”?

Eddy Merckx, named best cyclist of the 20th century, won 625 races and a whopping 11 Grand Tours. A record!

IN MEMORIAM: DR. MUHAMMAD MUKHTAR AHMED (1937–2025)

A LIGHT THAT WILL NEVER FADE



Portrait of Dr. M. Mukhtar Ahmed awarded the President of Pakistan's Pride of Performance Medal, a testament to his unmatched skill and service to the nation

It is with profound sorrow and heavy hearts that we bid farewell to a true legend, a pioneer, and a saviour of sight, Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar Ahmed (beloved husband of Elza Maria Lucia Moysons Ahmed). As the Medical Director of Al-Ain Institute of Eye Diseases and a titan in the medical community, with Dr. Mukhtar's passing on the 11th of December 2025, we mourn not just a surgeon, but a man who spent his life ensuring that the world remained bright and beautiful for many thousands of others.

The Pioneer of Modern Retina Surgery in Pakistan

Dr. Mukhtar was not merely a doctor; he was an institution in himself. Widely recognised as the Pioneer of modern Retina surgery in Pakistan, he introduced complex Vitreo-Retinal procedures to the country at a time when such treatments were scarce. He specifically introduced silicon oil in retinal surgery in Pakistan. With qualifications including his Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons (FRCS) from Edinburgh and Fellowship of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists (FRCOphth) from London, he brought world-class expertise back to his homeland, refusing to let his people remain in darkness.



Dr. M. Mukhtar Ahmed with Dr. Charles Louis Schepens, the Father of Modern Retinal Surgery and also a Belgian National. Boston 1976.



Dr. M. Mukhtar Ahmed with His Highness Prince Agha Khan

Dr. Mukhtar's excellence was recognised at the highest levels, earning him the President of Pakistan's prestigious Pride of Performance Award (Tamgha-e-Husn-e-Karkardagi) — and many other awards such as the President of Pakistan's Certificate of Excellence of the Al-Shifa Eye Trust, the Norman Christy Gold Medal, Paul Harris Medal, Wania Memorial Medal as well as others from the Vitreo-Retinal Society of Pakistan, OSP (Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan) & Ophthalmic Society of Sri Lanka — a testament to his unmatched skill and service to the nation.

He was also elected President of OSP Karachi Branch for two years & President of Vitreo-Retinal Society.

A Partnership Across Borders: The Belgian Connection

Behind every great man is often an incredible story of partnership, and Dr. Mukhtar's life was defined by his beautiful union with his wife, Mrs. Elza Moysons-Ahmed.



Dr. M. Mukhtar Ahmed and Elza Maria Lucia Moysons at one of their first engagements.



Dr. M. Mukhtar & Elza M. L. Moysons at their Wedding, Brussels, 24 February 1968

Their story began decades ago in Ireland, a meeting of minds and hearts in Dublin that crossed cultural divides. In a testament to true love and devotion, Elza left her homeland of Belgium to make Pakistan her home alongside Dr. Mukhtar, where they grew their family welcoming their 3 children Soraya, Samina and Irfan. Elza embraced Pakistan with open arms, standing as his rock and his equal partner, as Dr. Mukhtar commenced his ophthalmological career in Pakistan establishing the first Retinal Unit at Spencer Eye Hospital followed by Medicare and his first clinic at Rimpia Plaza. Dr. Mukhtar continued to establish further practices and support and drive a number of philanthropic initiatives such as the first Retinal Units at Liaquat National College Karachi and Al Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Rawalpindi.

A Legacy Built at Al-Ain Institute of Eye Diseases

At the Al-Ain Institute of Eye Diseases, Dr. Mukhtar created a sanctuary for healing. He did not just treat eyes; he restored lives. He was a very kind-hearted man and was always ready to help people in need.

He served with integrity, humility and compassion. Countless patients and families found comfort in his healing hands and gentle reassurance. Many in the Pakistani Ophthalmological community today, owe a part of their professional identity to his guidance, his discipline, and his belief in lifelong learning.



Beyond his clinical brilliance, he was known for his humanity. He treated every patient with respect, every colleague with kindness, and every student/junior doctor with patience. His achievements—whether in teaching, research, leadership, or service—stand as a testament to a life lived with purpose and honour. He dedicated his life to healing, often working through the day & night. Any project he took on in his life, he took it extremely seriously.

As we reflect on his extraordinary journey, let us also celebrate the values he embodied: commitment, generosity, curiosity, and service to humanity – of which a living example is his creation of the charity ERWO (Elza Retinal Welfare Organisation) Retinal Centre in Nawabshah and his free services to Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital in Rawalpindi and Eye clinics in Turbat, Baluchistan. These will remain alive & remembered for the rest of our lives.



Dr. M. Mukhtar Ahmed performing Surgery.

ERWO (Elza Retinal Welfare Organisation) Eye Centre – Nawabshah

This eye centre, named after Elza, Dr. Mukhtar's severely visually impaired wife, in interior Sindh provides total eye care free of cost to needy & Zakat deserving patients. ERWO is Pakistan's first and only retina focused welfare NGO providing free retinal treatment to financially vulnerable and deserving patients. Treatments include all diagnostic procedures (such as: OCT, IOL calculation, B-Scan etc) as well as Cataract, Glaucoma & Retinal Surgery to patients in the area in and around Nawabshah.



Dr. M. Mukhtar Ahmed examining and treating patients in interior Sindh.



Dr. M. Mukhtar Ahmed with patients operated at ERWO Nawabshah, Sindh.

- **For the Patient:** He was known for his steady hands and reassuring presence. To his patients, he was often the last hope, the man who could fix what others deemed impossible.



- **For the Student:** As a mentor, examiner, and teacher, he shaped the careers of countless young ophthalmologists. The gold medals instituted in his name for ethical practice reflect his commitment to integrity in medicine.

(Zakat is an obligatory annual charity, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, requiring eligible Muslims to donate a fixed portion (typically 2.5%) of their accumulated wealth supporting the needy, fostering social justice and spiritual growth.)

Beyond the Operation Theatre

Dr. Mukhtar was a man of depth and intellect. He was a philanthropist, serving as a trustee for LRBT (Layton Rahmatulla Benevolent Trust), ensuring that the poor received free eye care. Dr. Mukhtar's love of music was immense, taking up playing the harmonium and singing in his free time with musical legends such as Mehdi Hassan and many friends. He was also a man of letters, sharing his wisdom and life experiences, as well as love of poetry in his autobiography, Mukhtar Nama.



Dr. M. Mukhtar & Mr. Layton of
The Layton Rahmatullah Benevolent Trust (LRBT)
Pakistan in conversation.

Mukhtar Nama

This comprehensive biography undoubtedly is an expression of Dr. Mukhtar's soul through poetry & his life experiences. A journey from his very modest childhood village life in 291 GB District Toba Tek Singh, from when he was born to Ghulam Muhammad and Fatima Bibi, until his passing, touches upon his goals, struggles, family life, as well the political structure, corruption, horse trading & mismanagement experienced in his country. This book is definitely worth a read.

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed was also a keen traveller. His intrepid spirit to continue to learn, travel, train and serve patients not only took him travelling from Europe by car to Pakistan in the 1970s but onto teaching assignments from Iraq to locum work in the United Kingdom and countless ophthalmological conferences globally where his contributions were shared and recognised.

A Final Farewell

We have lost a "Living Legend," but Dr. Mukhtar's legacy is immortal. It lives on in the many thousands of people who can see the faces of their loved ones today because of Dr. Mukhtar's skill. It lives on in the doctors he trained who now carry his torch forward...



Together in Sindh, Pakistan:
Dr. M. Mukhtar and Elza M.L. Moysons
at an Eye Camp in Nawabshah, Sindh.



Dr. M. Mukhtar and Elza M.L. Moysons
on holiday with their children
and grand children.

Though he is no longer with us, Dr. Mukhtar's legacy continues in the lives he touched, the juniors he shaped, and the institutions he helped strengthen. He will be remembered with deep respect and profound gratitude.

To Dr. Mukhtar's family, his colleagues at Al-Ain Institute of Eye Diseases, ERWO & all the members of the Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan (OSP), and the medical fraternity, we offer our deepest condolences.

“To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return”

May his soul rest in Eternal Peace

Should you be interested to support needy patients' eye treatments in Nawabshah, Pakistan and continue Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed's and Elza Moysons-Ahmed's legacy kindly donate in any currency to:

Title of Account: ELZA RETINA WELFARE ORGANIZATION (DONATION ACCOUNT)

Bank: Meezan Bank Marriott Hotel Branch

Account No.: 0105-0102951099

IBAN No.: PK90MEZN0001050102951099

BIC: MEZNPKKAGR

Address: Meezan Bank Marriott Hotel Branch, 9 Abdullah Haroon Road, Karachi-75600, Pakistan.

To learn more about Elza Retina Welfare Organization, please visit ERWO at:

 <https://www.facebook.com/erwoeye/>

 <https://www.instagram.com/erwoeye/>

 <https://erwoeye.org/index.html>

IN MEMORIAM: MR. ABDUL SATTAR (1936–2025) A LEGACY OF INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE



PBLBF mourns the passing of one of its most respected members, Mr. Abdul Sattar of the distinguished law firm Sattar & Sattar, who passed away in September 2025.

Mr. Sattar was a legal professional of exceptional standing, held in the highest regard across Pakistan's legal and business communities. As a founding pillar of Sattar & Sattar, he exemplified intellectual rigor, principled conduct, and professionalism. Under his stewardship, the firm earned a reputation for excellence, reliability, and ethical practice that remains its hallmark.

Within the PBLBF, Mr. Sattar was far more than a member. He was a thoughtful advisor and a steadfast supporter of the Forum's mission to strengthen international commercial and institutional ties. His measured counsel and quiet leadership were particularly valued during key phases of the Forum's development. Those who worked alongside him remember not only his professional acumen, but also his humility, kindness, and the generosity with which he mentored younger colleagues.

His passing leaves a profound void in our community. The PBLBF extends its deepest condolences to his family, the partners and team at Sattar & Sattar, and his wide circle of friends and peers. While we mourn his loss, we honor a life marked by integrity, service, and enduring impact—one that will continue to inspire the legal and business communities for generations to come.

May the Almighty grant him eternal peace and give strength and comfort to his loved ones.

IN MEMORIAM: DR. SHAMSHAD AKHTAR (1954–2025)

A LEGACY OF ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND BARRIER-BREAKING LEADERSHIP



PBLBF joins the global community in mourning the passing of Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, an extraordinary economist, reformer, leaving behind a legacy defined by intellect, integrity, and fearless leadership.

Born in Hyderabad, Sindh, Dr. Akhtar's journey to the highest levels of international finance was built on a formidable academic foundation, much of it rooted in Europe. After completing her early education in Pakistan, she earned a Master's degree in Development Economics from the University of Sussex and a PhD from the University of the West of Scotland. This European exposure played a formative role in shaping her deep understanding of Western financial systems, regulatory frameworks, and institutional governance. Her postdoctoral research at Harvard University further cemented her reputation as a global thinker.

Dr. Akhtar's professional life was marked by a series of historic firsts. In 2006, she became the first woman Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, breaking one of the most significant glass ceilings in the Muslim world. Her tenure coincided with the 2008 global financial crisis, during which she led with discipline and resolve. Under her leadership, the State Bank was modernized to international standards, earning her recognition as Asia's Best Central Bank Governor by Euromoney and a place among the Wall Street Journal's most influential women in Asia.

Her influence extended far beyond Pakistan. At the World Bank, IMF, and United Nations, Dr. Akhtar emerged as a respected bridge between developing economies and Western institutions. As Executive Secretary of UN ESCAP, she championed regional connectivity, sustainable development, and inclusive growth across Asia and the Pacific, becoming a familiar and trusted presence in global diplomatic circles, including Brussels.

In her final years, Pakistan once again turned to her steady hand. Serving twice as Caretaker Finance Minister, most recently in 2023–24, she played a crucial role in stabilizing the economy and managing sensitive IMF negotiations. At the time of her passing, she was Chairperson of the Pakistan Stock Exchange. Her service was fittingly recognized with the Nishan-e-Imtiaz in 2024.

For the PBLBF, Dr. Akhtar's legacy resonates deeply. Her support for trade access, regulatory reform, and sustainable finance helped lay the groundwork for stronger Pakistan–Europe economic ties. She exemplified the belief that economic progress is built through education, cooperation, and the courage to lead change.

Dr. Shamshad Akhtar was not only an economist, but a stateswoman of rare stature. Her life remains an enduring source of inspiration.

May her soul rest in peace.

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