**Diplomacy prevails**

[**Najm us Saqib**](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/najm-us-saqib)

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Prime Minister Imran Khan’s recent dressing down of the Pakistani envoys has received such extensive commentary that one could easily compile a 500-page book on it. Any young officer of the Foreign Office could write an expansive tome on the pros and cons of the worst possible aide memoire received by the incumbent and future Ambassadors, evenly so the Foreign Service Fraternity. Another compendium could be compiled on the tongue-in-cheek remarks made by the Indian media, the overseas Pakistanis, the diplomats of the world, the victims of overall bureaucratic systems and members of other service groups. However, in view of the mystery involved around the real raison d’être of the episode and its timing, the most voluminous compilation would perhaps be on the Prime Minister’s admission of ‘the error’ he speciously made. One wonders how much time will the splinter-stricken eyes of the first line of Pakistan’s defence take to heal.

[Gaza death toll from Israeli attacks hits 227, including 64 children](https://nation.com.pk/20-May-2021/gaza-death-toll-from-israeli-attacks-hits-227-including-64-children)

Clarifications made by the Association of Former Ambassadors (AFA), numerous talk shows, tweets and articles carried by national print media demand that the subject matter should now be treated as an open and shut case. The good news is that the whole saga ended on a pleasing note leaving behind some lessons learnt. The best news is that everyone in and outside Pakistan now stands educated on the real worth and working of the Foreign Office and its Missions abroad, an awareness that was hitherto missing from the scene. The amazing fact is that the Prime Minister showed to all of us a totally different aspect of his strong personality by admitting something that he later on thought required rectification. By taking the daring step of making a clean breast of his address, he not only stood tall in the eyes of the nation but also helped allaying certain fears and lessening the anguish of all concerned and all affected.

Diplomacy is all about making new and reliable friends in the international arena to help project and promote one’s national interest in a cordial, conducive and friendly manner. Various receptions hosted by diplomats are the accepted way of tacitly conveying to the host dignitaries and foreign diplomats the better aspects of one’s culture, norms, ethics, behaviour and character. The image created through such an interaction helps build confidence of one’s interlocutors to subsequently accept any proposal of signing an agreement or one’s viewpoint on bilateral, regional or international developments. In the process, even the diplomats coming from capitals of former colonial masters could ill afford a colonial mindset. Being suave, courteous and polite are the three sterling aspects of a true diplomat’s disposition.

[KP reports 28 death, 186 newly infected cases of COVID-19](https://nation.com.pk/19-May-2021/kp-reports-28-death-186-newly-infected-cases-of-covid-19)

Economic diplomacy, among other things, entails efforts of a diplomatic mission to gradually increase and diversify exports, explore joint ventures and bring home FDIs. Line Ministries, BOI, TDAP and other related organs along with the business community play their respective roles in this common endeavour. The Ambassador duly assisted by the Trade Officer hailing from the Commerce Ministry facilitates all concerned in business meetings and two-way dissemination of related information in reaching the desired results. Bringing FDIs to the country, therefore, is a joint team effort. Depending on the Ambassador’s personal drive and commitment, he or she might be able to prevail upon the investors on the question of availability of a one-window-operation in Pakistan or verbal assurances on the safety of business proceeds and personnel of the companies against the uncertain political situation back home, but by no means is an Ambassador at the head of this team. In case his or her country does not enjoy an investment-friendly environment, an Ambassador’s role in attracting FDIs does not go beyond providing personal guarantees to the potential investors or cutting a sorry figure before the government of Pakistan over sins he never committed.

[PSL 6 likely to be postponed indefinitely](https://nation.com.pk/19-May-2021/psl-6-likely-to-be-postponed-indefinitely)

Representatives of the Ministry of Interior and NADRA, HEC, related magistrates and police stations in Pakistan and junior most diplomats deal with all consular matters ranging from attesting documents and certificates of all kinds to issuance of visas and passports. Majority of the complaints from overseas Pakistanis on delays of work delivery are genuine. However, the explanations of such delays, given by the lower staff, would not satisfy the applicants, to say the least. There is no need to seek reforms or additional funds to address issues relating to consular matters. The applicants’ frustration in not getting expeditious response could easily be addressed by the Ambassadors, provided they spare at least a couple of hours weekly and hold an open discussion for all our fellow Pakistanis living overseas. Simple listening to their problems in the presence of all concerned officials of the mission and explaining the involved rules and procedures will be enough to pacify the agitated minds. On the other hand, Ambassadors must be given the prerogative of writing Personal Evaluation Reports (PERs) of all officers and officials of the mission, thus making all of them directly answerable to the Head of Mission.

[Russia voices concern over civilian casualties in Jerusalem, Gaza](https://nation.com.pk/19-May-2021/russia-voices-concern-over-civilian-casualties-in-jerusalem-gaza)

Community issues especially of fellow Pakistanis involved in menial work or committed to various political parties of Pakistan or representatives of various Pakistan based Associations is a different ball game altogether and must not be left for any Community Welfare Attaché to address. The Ambassadors must meet them personally, listen to their individual problems, offer all possible assistance and create a personal rapport with them. A case in point is the over 150,000 Pakistanis living in South Africa, who were brought under the umbrella of Pakistan-South Africa Association through the efforts of the Pakistan High Commission Team in 2014. This vibrant self-sustained and self-reliant Association has been working for the welfare of thousands of overseas Pakistanis as well as assisting the High Commission in their common endeavour of promoting the interests of Pakistan ever since its inception. The amazing unity of Pakistanis in South Africa could be an interesting case study for Islamabad to encourage all missions to follow suit.

[Asad Umar inaugurates vaccination centre at F-9 Park Islamabad](https://nation.com.pk/19-May-2021/asad-umar-inaugurates-vaccination-centre-at-f-9-park-islamabad)

Your diplomats are the face and pride of Pakistan. They are understaffed but that is not their main problem. All they need is a little appreciation and support from their own Foreign Office in their pursuit of protecting the interests of Pakistan and Pakistanis.