

NEWSLETTER

PAKISTAN HIGH COMMISSION SINGAPORE

1ST JANUARY to 31ST DECEMBER, 2024



CONTENT

- Message of the High Commissioner 01
- DPM/Foreign Minister of Pakistan Meeting with PM Singapore 02
- DPM/Foreign Minister of Pakistan Meeting with Foreign Minister of Singapore 02
- High Commissioner's presentation of credentials to President 03
- High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal hosted women Ambassadors 04
- High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal visited Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry 06
- High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal's farewell call on. 09
- Flag hoisting ceremony 23rd March, 2024. 10
- Annual Diplomatic Reception, hosted by President Tharman Shanmugaratnam 11
- High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal delivered lecture at National University of Singapore College (NUSC) 12
- High Commissioner attended the swearing in ceremony of Prime Minister Lawrence Wong at the Presidential Palace 15
- Rabia Shafiq assumed charge as High Commissioner on 14th June, 2024 16

- Meeting of Pakistani students with High Commissioner who participated in Singapore International Maths Olympiad Challenge (SIMOC) 2024 18
- Flag Hoisting ceremony on the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan. 22
- High Commissioner's meeting with visiting IBA University delegation 24
- High Commissioner visited Jamiyah Singapore 25
- High Commissioner's meeting with Elevandi team 26
- High Commissioner's call on Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs 30
- High Commissioner inaugurated Pakistan Pavilion at Singapore Fintech Festival 2024 31
- High Commissioner's meeting with President, FPCCI 33
- High Commissioner's call on Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister of Defence Singapore 33
- High Commissioner's call on M. Faishal Ibrahim, Minister of State for Home Affairs & National Development. 34
- High Commissioner's meeting with Minister for Transport Chee Hong Tat 35

MESSAGE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

The High Commission is pleased to publish the newsletter of this Mission, which highlights its activities and achievements from January to December 2024. I assumed the charge of High Commissioner on 14th June 2024. Prior to my appointment, Ambassador Rukhsana Afzaal served as the High Commissioner.



The High Commission is committed to strengthening the friendly relations between Pakistan and Singapore, which have been in place since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1966.

The year 2024 has been productive in many ways. The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Ishaq Dar, held productive meetings with the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lawrence Wong, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Vivian Balakrishnan, on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Samoa. These interactions marked a significant increase in engagement between the political leadership of both countries. The meeting between the foreign ministers of Pakistan and Singapore enhanced mutual understanding and reflected a shared desire to deepen the bilateral relationship.

I also had a meeting with President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening ties with Singapore. Earlier, Ambassador Rukhsana Afzaal had also met with both the President and the Prime Minister of Singapore.

The High Commission remains actively engaged in building and strengthening bilateral ties across all sectors, including political, trade, culture, and public diplomacy. We celebrated the 84th Pakistan Day and the 68th Independence Day with traditional zeal, bringing together the community in Singapore. I met with key ministers and officials in Singapore to discuss matters of mutual interest. I also met with the heads of several organizations, including the Singapore Business Federation, the Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, to explore ways to further strengthen trade relations between our two countries.

A delegation from Singapore's business community attended FoodAG 24 in Karachi. Additionally, Pakistani IT and Fintech professionals participated in Techweek Singapore 2024 and the Singapore Fintech Festival 2024.

The High Commission remains committed to providing high-quality consular services to the Pakistani diaspora, Singaporeans, and other foreign nationals. Our services include e-visas, attestation of documents, virtual Power of Attorney, issuance of other necessary certificates, and emergency travel assistance. The Government of Pakistan has introduced a free online Visa Prior to Arrival (VPA) for friendly countries, including Singapore.

Through this journal, the High Commission aims to highlight and preserve the pictorial testimony of its work.

The team at the High Commission is dedicated to achieving our national objectives and foreign policy goals while maintaining the highest standards of professionalism. We are a group of committed individuals, steadfast in our mission to serve our country, our people, and to strengthen Pakistan's relationship with Singapore.

RABIA SHAFIQ

Pakistan's High Commissioner to Singapore



Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met with H.E. Lawrence Wong, the Prime Minister of Singapore on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Apia, Samoa on 25th October, 2024.

Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Singapore, Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan on the sidelines of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa on 25th October, 2024. The two sides reviewed the state of bilateral relations. Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to forge a broad-based relationship with Singapore anchored in strong economic, political and cultural cooperation.





High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq on 30th July, 2024 presented credentials to Singapore's President Tharman Shanmugaratnam. During her meeting with the President, the High Commissioner reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening ties with Singapore and building mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in trade & investment, climate change and human capital.



High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal hosted women Ambassadors to lunch with the prominent author, diplomat, international law professor, and Ambassador-at-Large for the Singaporean government Prof Tommy Koh. She shared her insights on a number of regional and international issues. The Lunch was hosted on 12th January, 2024.



High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal hosted a dinner on 27th January, 2024 in the honor of visiting delegation of Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, comprising senior justices from Lahore and Islamabad High Courts, SECP, Pakistan Stock Exchange and faculty members of IBA. The delegation was in Singapore for a training hosted by Singapore International Center for Mediation. This exchange will open fresh avenues of cooperation between Pakistan and Singapore. During the dinner, the guests engaged in a lively conversations and shared their experiences gained from the training.



High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal visited Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 06th February, 2024 and briefed the board members on business and investment opportunities in Pakistan.



High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal hosted the dinner of Pakistani delegation participating in Seamless Asia 2024 Conference on 25th February, 2024 in Singapore. The delegation comprised CEOs and founders of leading Pakistani tech companies/startups. The High Commissioner also presented certificates to the members of the delegation.



President of Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Abu Bakar Mohd Nor, called on the High Commissioner on 13th March, 2024, to discuss potential trade opportunities between the two countries. The High Commissioner highlighted Pakistan's premier Halal food market, offering Singapore a steady source of food supplies. She also flagged the exciting prospects in food, services, and digital economy for collaboration between Pakistan and Singapore.



High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal made a farewell call on H.E Grace Fu - Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations and Minister for Sustainability and the Environment on 16th March, 2024. They discussed ways of enhancing and diversifying bilateral trade with focus on trade in services. She also sought Singapore's support in making Pakistan part of the ongoing deliberations in ASEAN on green financing and trading of carbon credits.

84TH National Day of Pakistan 23rd March, 2024 Flag Hoisting Ceremony



A flag hoisting ceremony was held at Pakistan House on 23rd March, 2024. The High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal hoisted the flag to the tune of National Anthem. Press Counsellor Mr. Athar Zeb Abbasi and Deputy High Commissioner Mr. Salman Mahmood read out the messages of the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Special prayers were offered for peace, stability and prosperity of the country. Prayers were also made for the success of valiant struggle of the people of IIOJ&K and for lasting peace in the Middle East.



High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal on 30th March, 2024 attended the Annual Diplomatic Reception, hosted by President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Madam Jane Yumiko Ittogi. The High Commissioner's photo was posted on President Tharman's Official Instagram. The High Commissioner also met Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Presidential Palace.



The High Commissioner hosted ASEAN Ambassadors/High Commissioners to dinner at her place. 17-04-2024



High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal delivered a lecture on 20th April, 2024 at the prestigious National University of Singapore College (NUSC) to over 30 students on Pakistan's relations with Singapore and ASEAN. NUS College is the honors College of the National University of Singapore.



High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal hosted a networking dinner on 25th April, 2024 in the honor of President, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan, Mr. Farrukh Rehman which was attended by senior officials of the Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, CEO of Audit Alliance and Singapore based members of ICAP. H.E Mr. Shamsheer Zaman, Vice Chairman of Singapore Business Federation South Asia Group and Mr. Humayun Habib, President ASEAN Chapter of ICAP also graced the occasion.



High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal was hosted to a lunch by Elevandi on 28th April, 2024 to discuss the upcoming Singapore Fintech Festival and different activities being organized by the team as a build up to SFF. Pakistani startups have been exhibiting at this mega event since 2019.



The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad signed an MoU with the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore 29th April, 2024, for fostering research collaboration and developing better understanding of each other's perspective on regional and global issues. The MoU was signed by DG ISSI, Ambassador Rtd Sohail Mahmood and Director ISAS, Dr. Iqbal Singh Sevea, in a virtual ceremony attended by the High Commissioner and Director East Asia Pacific, MOFA. The MoU, first between think tanks of the two countries has been facilitated by Pakistan High Commission, Singapore.



High Commissioner Rukhsana Afzaal attended the swearing in ceremony of Prime Minister Lawrence Wong at the Presidential Palace. The new cabinet also took oath of office at the ceremony. Mr. Lee Hsien Loong became Senior Minister in the new cabinet after serving the nation as Prime Minister for 20 years.



**RABIA SHAFIQ ASSUMED CHARGE
AS HIGH COMMISSIONER
ON 14TH JUNE, 2024**



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq held an introductory meeting on 24th June, 2024 with Pakistan's Honorary Investment Counsellor Abdul Lateef Siddiqui. Both discussed existing collaboration between Pakistan and Singapore in economic realm & ways to increase investment opportunities especially in energy, shipping & packaged food.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq hosted talented Pakistani students at the High Commission on 22nd July, 2024, who participated in the Singapore International Maths Olympiad Challenge (SIMOC) 2024. 18 participants (17 girls & 1 boy) represented Pakistan & won medals in different categories. The High Commissioner appreciated the enthusiasm of the students & wished them the best of luck.

She delivered a keynote address at the Ferraro Global Forum, where she said that, with the end of the Cold War, "the most critical elements of the integration of the world community, as we approach the new millennium, are information and business". It was cable TV and the knowledge of free markets and consumer choices, she noted, that had contributed to the defeat of totalitarianism.

Around the world, Ms Bhutto was seen as a symbol of democracy and empowerment of women. The two-time Premier, a member of three, was the first democratically elected female leader of a Muslim country for her first term of office (1985-88). During her second term (1993-96), she was one of three female Prime Ministers in the Muslim world, alongside the Premiers of Bangladesh and Turkey. After her assassination in 2007, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong wrote a letter to her husband, Mr Asif Ali Zardari, noting that she would be honored and remembered for her "inimitable spirit" and "ultimate sacrifice".

Prime Minister of Pakistan
Benazir Bhutto receiving a bouquet on arrival in Singapore's Changi Airport, 7 March 1995.
Photo: Ministry of Information and Public Relations




Dendrobium Benazir Bhutto

PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN (1985-1990, AND 1993-1996)

Named after Ms Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan, during her official visit to Singapore from 7 to 9 March 1995.

This orchid's yellow colour, with its association with sunlight, represents warmth and happiness in Pakistani culture.

During her visit, Ms Bhutto spoke at a luncheon hosted by the Singapore Chamber of Commerce, and met overseas Pakistanis at a dinner reception. She and Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong witnessed the signing of a bilateral investment guarantee agreement.

This robust orchid produces upright inflorescences up to 30 cm in height, each bearing 25 to 35 well-shaped flowers. Each flower measures approximately 3 cm in width. The petals and sepals are broad and velvety, gracefully complemented by a yellowish-cream lip.



Singapore's Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan launched the book 'Singapore's Orchid Diplomacy', cataloguing Singapore's friendships with other countries. The book also features 'Dendrobium' named after Pakistan's former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto during her official visit to Singapore in 1995. Singapore uses hybridized orchids to project country's multicultural image, often naming new orchid hybrids to honor visiting foreign dignitaries as a special gesture of friendship.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq spoke to a virtual roundtable organized on 07th August, 2024 by Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad commemorating the 57th ASEAN Day (8th August). The High Commissioner said that Pakistan sees Singapore as a key facilitator in Pakistan's aspirations in ASEAN & deeper engagement with Singapore means deeper engagement with ASEAN markets.

**MESSAGE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
ON INDEPENDENCE DAY, 14TH AUGUST 2024**

Independence Day

14th August 2024

جشن
آزادی مبارک

On the momentous occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, we celebrate our nation's rich history, diverse culture, and the enduring spirit of our people. We pay tribute to the sacrifices of our forefathers and reaffirm our commitment to building a prosperous and peaceful Pakistan. let us continue to work together towards a brighter future for our beloved homeland.

Happy Independence Day



Rabia Shafiq
Pakistan High Commissioner, Singapore



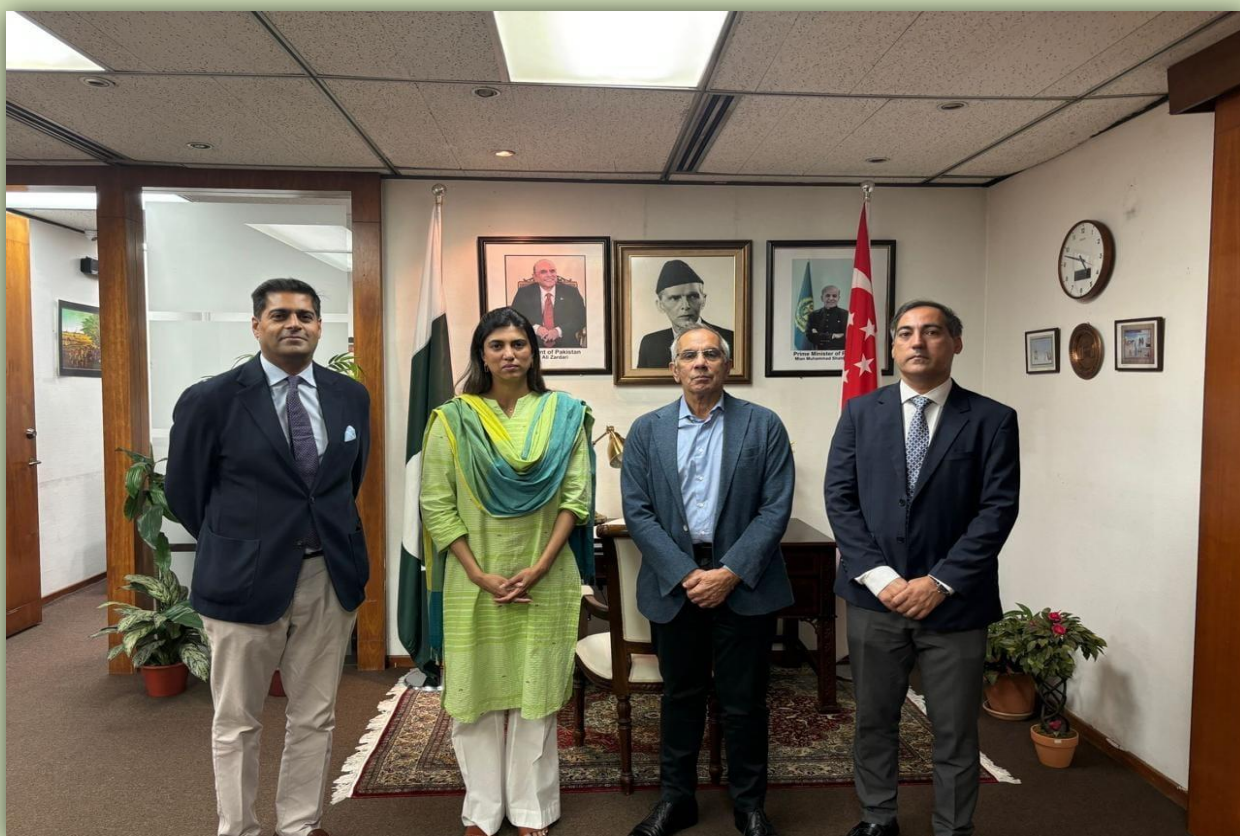
A Flag Hoisting ceremony was held at Pakistan House, Singapore on 14th August, 2024 to commemorate the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan.



78th Independence Day celebration with Pakistani Community at Pakistan House.



Pakistan High Commission Singapore hosted Open House on 14th August, 2024 to celebrate 78th Independence Day with Pakistani community. A large number of Pakistanis attended the celebration at Pakistan House. High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq welcomed the Pakistani community. The people enjoyed Pakistani cuisine on the occasion.



A visiting IBA University delegation headed by Dr. S. Akbar Zaidi, Executive Director IBA, Karachi met with High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq on 27th August, 2024. The delegation visited Singapore for Singapore Convention Week 2024.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq visited Jamiyah Singapore on 22-08-2024. Jamiyah briefed on their mission, services & community outreach programs and also discussed potential ways to collaborate with Pakistan.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq and her team held a productive discussion with Singapore Business Federation (SBF) delegation. She briefed SBF on economic relations between Singapore and Pakistan and exchanged ideas on increasing trade in goods & services, emphasized the importance of SBF in fostering growth & Pak-Singapore economic partnership.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq held a meeting with the President and office bearers of the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry on 04th September, 2024 and discussed business promotion and explore potential for trade expansion between Pakistan and Singapore including in Food, Services and digital economy. The High Commissioner highlighted investment opportunities in Pakistan, especially in energy, IT, agriculture, and minerals sectors, for Singapore..



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq met with Elevandi team to discuss collaboration between Pakistan & Singapore in Fintech and participation of Pakistan startups in 9th Singapore Fintech Festival on 10th September, 2024.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq met with Tan Soon Kim, DMD Enterprise Singapore (ESG) on 18th September, 2024. Both discussed potential collaboration between Pakistan & Singapore in agro-food, technology & BPO. Mr. Tan said that a number of Singapore companies were doing good business in Pakistan. High Commissioner apprised of investment opportunities in Pakistan & potential business partnerships in ports, industrial parks & airport outsourcing.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq on 19th September, 2024 met Tony Kettinger, COO, Golden Agri-Resources, a global seed to shelf agribusiness, headquartered in Singapore and discussed trade & investment prospects in Pakistan especially in food & corporate farming. GAR operates in 14 countries & supplies 20% of Pakistan's palm oil imports.





High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq on 02nd October, 2024 visited the Asian Civilization Museum and was briefed on the museum's impressive collection of artefacts including from Gandhara. She engaged in an insightful discussion with Director, focusing on potential collaboration between the Museum & Pakistan. She highlighted rich heritage of Gandhara civilization, emphasizing the importance of cultural exchange through art and history between Pakistan and Singapore.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq on 17th October, 2024 met Singapore Manufacturing Federation President Lennon Tan & council members to discuss potential for long term collaboration between our manufacturing sectors. The High Commissioner apprised SMF about investment opportunities in Pakistan especially in textiles, automotive, IT & pharma sector.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq visited Pakistan pavilion & met representatives of IT companies attending Tech Week Singapore. She commended their dedication to promoting innovation & discussed ways to enhance Pakistan-Singapore trade. Pakistan's IT exports reached \$3.2 billion in 2023 & platforms such as Tech Week provide an excellent opportunity for our companies to showcase their expertise & talent on the global stage.



High Commissioner on 21st October, 2024 called on Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan to discuss bilateral matters.

High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq on 24th October, 2024 met with Ambassador Beata Stoczynska, the newly appointed Executive Director of the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), to explore avenues for strengthening Pakistan's collaboration with ASEF. The discussion centered on enhancing Asia-Europe cooperation through strategic initiatives in education, technology, and cultural exchange, marking a significant step towards fostering stronger ties between Pakistan and ASEF's member countries.





Pakistan's High Commissioner to Singapore, Rabia Shafiq inaugurated the Pakistan Pavilion on 08th November, 2024 at the prestigious Singapore Fintech Festival (SFF) 2024. The annual event brought together Fintech leaders, investors, innovators, and experts from around the world to explore the latest advancements in financial technology.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq on 07th November, 2024 addressed the PakLaunch and AWS event, highlighting Pakistan's remarkable progress in the IT sector. She commended Pakistan IT companies and startups participating in Singapore Fintech Festival 2024, showcasing Pakistan's growing technological prowess on the international stage.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq hosted an exclusive networking dinner at Pakistan House on 09th November, 2024 for Pakistan tech companies, Asian Development Bank, SBP, and Singapore tech experts participating in the Singapore Fintech Festival 2024. The High Commissioner commended the delegation's contributions, encouraging them to forge valuable partnerships & showcase Pakistan's tech talent. She congratulated Hakeem App for winning the prestigious 'Fintech Excellence Award 2024', by MAS.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq met Atif Ikram Sheikh, President, The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) & delegation on 15th November, 2024, who were participating in the 38th Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry Conference in Singapore. High Commissioner encouraged FPCCI to send a business delegation to Singapore to explore local market which can serve as a gateway to ASEAN region.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq on 17th November, 2024 made a courtesy call on Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister of Defence Singapore. The two discussed bilateral defense relations & participation in defense exhibitions.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq on 21st November, 2024 hosted companies participating in Singapore International Agri-Food Week 2024. She said that we must maximize such events to promote Pakistan agri, meat & dairy products in Singapore & the ASEAN market

High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq on 22nd November, 2024 paid a courtesy call on Associate Prof Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Minister of State for Home Affairs & National Development. Discussed enhancing collaboration between Pakistan & Singapore in all areas of mutual interest.



The High Commissioner on 29th November, 2024 met Minister for Transport & 2nd Minister for Finance, Chee Hong Tat. Both discussed leveraging Singapore expertise in transport tech, green shipping & Fintech to support Pakistan growth. She highlighted the importance of direct flights between two countries to boost trade, tourism and people to people's ties.

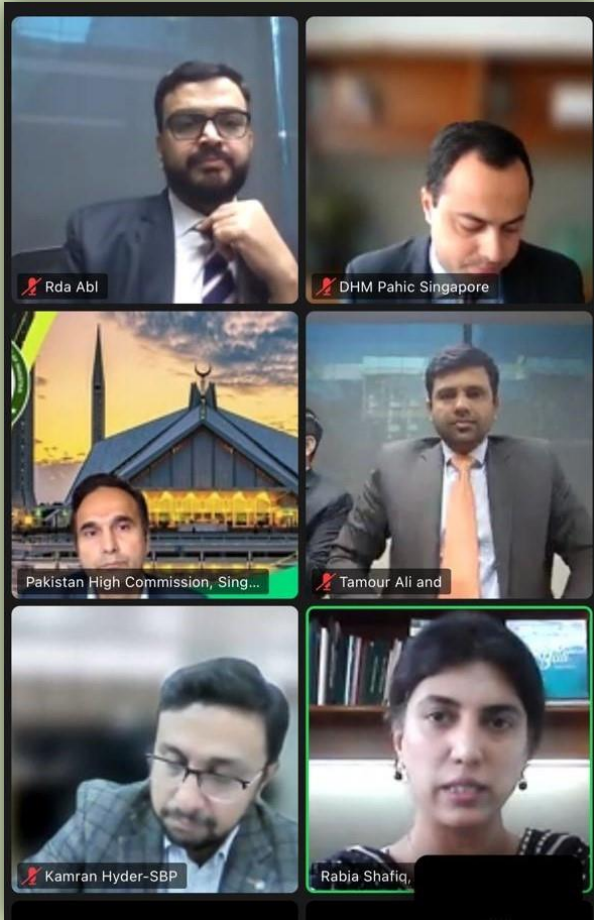


The High Commissioner on 4th December, 2024 met Grace Fu Hai Yien Minister for Sustainability and the Environment of Singapore to discuss ways to grow bilateral trade & investment & scope to collaborate on climate change, including capacity building, waste management & circular economy.



High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq called on Singapore's Minister for Social and Family Development, Masagos Zulkifli on 28th November, 2024. Both discussed potential collaboration in health, including work opportunities in Singapore for healthcare professionals from Pakistan.





Pakistan High Commission, in collaboration with Allied Bank Limited Pakistan and State Bank of Pakistan hosted a webinar on Roshan Digital Accounts on 17th December, 2024, where SBP & ABL briefed the Pakistani diaspora on the benefits of RDA and encouraged them to open accounts and invest in Naya Pak certificates. High Commissioner Rabia Shafiq lauded the initiative and stressed on the importance of sending remittances through legal channels.



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