

A woman with dark hair, wearing a blue tunic with rainbow-colored stripes on the sleeves and a white beaded necklace, is playing an acoustic guitar and singing into a microphone. The background is a plain wall with some faint writing.

Khabr-o-Nazar

(News & Views)

June 2008

Published by the U.S. Embassy, Islamabad

Native American Storyteller visits Pakistan ◀

Photography Contest to Mark Earth Day ◀

'Building Islam in Detroit' Exhibit ◀



U.S. Consul General Karachi Kay L. Anske dancing with Sindhi folk singer Shazia Khushk at a charity event organized by the American Women's Club at Consul General's residence. The event included an art exhibition and performances to raise money for local charities.

U. S. Consul General, American Women's Club Hold Charity Show



Public Affairs Officer Karen Waltz-Davis, Pakistani folk singer Shazia Khushk and the American Women's Club President Kim Gillani.



Folk dancers performing at the charity event, organized at the residence of U.S. Consul General Kay L. Anske in Karachi.

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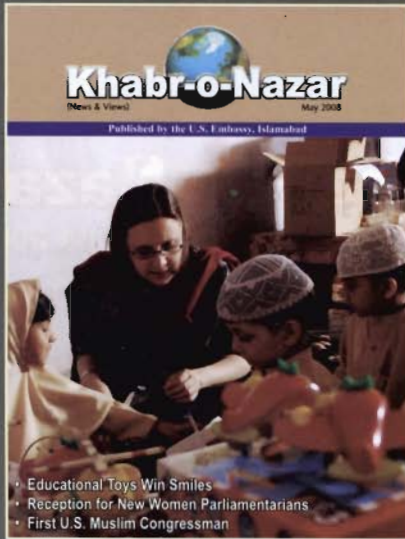
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Cover

American story-teller Red Rose Elk performing at the National Art Gallery, Pakistan National Council of the Arts in Islamabad.

Letters to the Editor



Genuinely Impressed

It was a pleasant surprise to receive the latest issue of "Khabr-o-Nazar" published by the U.S. Embassy. After going through the contents of the issue, I was genuinely impressed by the efforts put in by your editorial team. The most pleasing thing in the issue is that it is bilingual which manifests the U.S. efforts to promote understanding and harmony between Pakistan and the United States of America. The issue contains significant highlights of the multi-faceted activities of U.S. Embassy in Pakistan in the fields of arts, education, health, and human rights. It is an impressive effort full of revealing and informative contents.

Khurram Khiraam, Islamabad.

Enchanting

Thanks for sending me the link to the "Khabr-o-Nazar" magazine. This was the first time that I checked it out. Please convey my compliments to the editorial and production staff of the magazine. Both in terms of contents and layout, it is a first rate magazine. The picture of young school children on the title was simply enchanting.

Professor Mumtaz Ahmad, Hampton, VA

U.S. Elections

My focus is the November 2008 U.S. Elections. I would welcome if your magazine can touch upon the party conventions, names of principal presidential candidates, electoral procedure etc., and other relevant details.

Rahmat Ali Mujahid, Lahore

Beautiful Issue

What a beautiful issue of April, 2008! I very much appreciate the holding of American History course by the U.S. Embassy. As we are working on the project of modification of Madrassa curriculum and intend to include the world history course in it, therefore the AHC would serve as a mentor.

Dr. Zeenat Haroon Bint-e-Rashid, University of Karachi

Great Attempt

No doubt "Khabr-o-Nazar" is an excellent magazine, comprehensively covering each and every aspect of Pak-U.S. relationship. After going through the magazine I cannot but congratulate you and your team for making such a great attempt to bring the two nations together.

MPA Engr. Qamar-ul-Islam Raja, Rawalpindi



Moving the Cause of Equal Justice for Women Beyond Rhetoric

Secretary Responsible for Women's Justice in Washington

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice underlined the need for women's empowerment and noted that "this should be a policy priority for every country in the world," that was delivering her keynote address at the Senior Responsible for Women's Justice, hosted by the Department of State in Washington, D.C., on March 12. The conference concluded with International Women's Month.

"When we talk about the empowerment of women, what we're really talking about is the empowerment of societies. For in today's modern world, no country can expect to succeed with half its population sitting on the sidelines, unable to participate politically and economically," Secretary Rice said.

Approximately 20 cabinet, state, and international judges and legal practitioners participated in the seminar, which was aimed at bringing experienced legal practitioners together to address the growing global trend of violence against women and lack of women's access to justice. Participants from 17 countries, including Deputy Attorney General of Pakistan Nadeem Mullah (Chief, with seat in the deliberations. Secretary Rice pointed out that in today's world, we will come out of every three women in homes, raped, or otherwise abused during her lifetime. This violence, and this climate of perpetual fear that it creates, is particularly pervasive in areas of conflict - where the wrong has often erupted the worst, where the rule of law or justice exists to contain the darker demons of human nature and where it is women who are often the most, the most.

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"In addressing the challenge of domestic violence and women's access to justice, we realize that ensuring our women the equal rights and equal treatment under the law is essential, but not sufficient, to reach the goals we seek," Secretary Rice said. "We realize that passing laws is not enough. Laws must be enforced by effective and responsible governments."

She called upon the participants, not only to influence law laws are made, but to help ensure that they are enforced fairly.

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Bagh Health Staff Efforts Honored

Public Health Improved Through \$28 Million USAID Project

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) recognized health department staff of Bagh District, Arad District and Kaduna (ARD) for their efforts to improve public health services in the area through the agency's \$28 million health care project.

"USAID works with local health officials and citizens to improve, expand and expand the network of health services for the residents of the earthquake-affected areas of Pakistan," said USAID/Pakistan Earthquake Reconstruction Deputy Team Leader Marilee Katz at a ceremony in Bagh on March 19. "Those who are meeting certification today have helped local health facilities serve their communities better."

Supported by USAID, Primary Healthcare Revitalization, Integration, and Decentralization in Earthquake-Affected Areas (PRIDE) project, the Bagh health department members helped to increase the efficacy of child immunization in health centers and improve hygiene practices.

In a related ceremony, USAID, AIC, and Bagh District officials broke ground for a \$100,000 in-service training facility building the health care professionals. The new building will replace a facility destroyed in the October 2005 earthquake.

USAID supports primary health programs in 95 basic health units and 22 rural health centers in Bagh and Mandi Bahauddin. The project is part of USAID's five-year, \$200 million Earthquake Reconstruction Program that is building schools and health facilities, supporting quality health and education services, and improving economic activities in the quake-affected areas of North West Frontier Province and AIC.



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Native American Story Teller Performs
in Pakistan

Red Feather Woman Enthralls and Educates

During her first ever visit to Pakistan, Native American story-teller and song writer Rose Red Elk, popularly known as Red Feather Woman, performed in Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad. As a U.S. Embassy sponsored performer Rose Red Elk brought local storytellers together to exchange stories. Wherever she performed, the guests were impressed by her singing, dancing, and story-telling, and her with a mission of building bridges of understanding and communication through sharing cultural heritage. She described her experience by saying, "I am simply overwhelmed by the affection, kindness and generosity of the people here. I have fallen in love with Pakistan."

With a guitar in her hands, she narrated stories of the history of the Native Americans, the role of spirits in their culture, the art of herbal medicine and integrity even during war. She has spent 20 years singing and telling traditional stories with the objective of keeping her culture alive and also teaching audiences about the importance of Mother Earth.



American Storyteller Rose Red Elk dancing with students during her performance at the Lok Virsa Museum in Islamabad.

The Red Feather Woman performed at the Pakistan-American Cultural Center (PACC) in Karachi on April 21 with her traditional story-telling and folk songs bearing the message of peace and brotherhood. She shared stories told years ago by her father and grandfather. She composed songs around the stories which then became an elemental feather of her story telling. During her stay in the city she also met with the local performing artist groups and students at Karachi Arts Council.

For the majority of audiences in Lahore, it was their first encounter with a Native American. During her visit, she performed at the Rafi Peer Theater Workshop for a diverse and appreciative audience of 200 invited guests and attended a reception to meet Lahore's art and theater patrons.

Pride of Balochistan, Akhtar Channal and Red Feather Woman presented folk stories of their regions at the Lok Virsa Heritage Museum in Islamabad. The performance by the duo captivated the audience and highlighted the shared traditions of folk songs and dance throughout the world. She also performed at Fatima Jinnah Women's University and National College of Arts in Rawalpindi.



Rose Red Elk with U.S. Consulate Principal Officer Bryan Hunt and ulema during her visit to Madrassa Jamia Fatmia in Mughalpura.

Rose Red Elk made connections between Pashtun and American tribal societies during a series of performances in Peshawar. She discussed her experiences as a storyteller and singer with Peshawar University Fine Arts, English, and Journalism students at the Lincoln Corner. The students were fascinated by her stories and posed a number of questions about Native American culture, society and values. They were amazed to find many parallels between the Pashtun and American tribal societies. She also gave an evening performance for 50 academics, journalists, political leaders, NGO workers at the residence of Consulate Principal Officer Lynne Tracy. A group of guests volunteered to dance with her to the beat of drums. As one participant put it, "She truly is a master storyteller."



Students of the U.S. State Department-funded Access English Micro-scholarship program welcomed Rose Red Elk to the MCL Boys High School in Harbanspura.

Stories to Tell, Songs to Sing

Red Feather Woman talks to Khabr-o-Nazar



My traditional name is Weika Luta Win, which means Red Feather Woman. My English name is Rose Red Elk, my married name is Rose Haywood. So I have many names. I'm originally from a Reservation in Montana. I'm an enrolled member of the Assiniboine Lakota Tribe.

I became a professional storyteller in 1997. But I actually started telling stories and talking about the American-Indian culture in my oldest daughter's school when she was little. So that's when it started. I later started integrating stories into song.

I come from a long line of musicians and entertainers, my mother and father were singers and my grandfather was a jazz musician. But I never thought I would take it to the level I've taken it because I had children to take care of. The whole point was just to get through college and take care of my children.



Acting Consul General Catherine Rodriguez with others dancing to Native American songs as part of the Red Feather Woman performance held at PACC in Karachi.

Finally in 2005, I was able to quit my day job and do storytelling full-time. I've also built up a team to work with me, but it has taken me some years. I have won awards for my work. I will publish my first book of short stories this year.

I like to say that I enlighten, enrich and entertain. My audiences are all ages. I don't do as many schools. But I still like to do those because children are so beautiful. They like to see a 'real Indian.' Several of the stories that I tell have been passed on from my father and grandfather. But the ancient ones are stories that I heard from my elders.

The response to these stories – in whichever culture I tell them -- is always very positive. It makes them feel very connected, especially to the American Indians. But even in the United States, you'll be amazed that many people do not know anything about American Indians. So through my work I get to educate the non-Indians, while to the Indians, I give a sense of pride in their heritage.

The main theme in my stories is that we're all connected, we have a saying that goes "We are all relations." The common theme is that we're keepers of the Earth, how we all have unique gifts. I have some funny stories and some animal stories but I haven't really been able to tell many of them because I have had to pick which stories would be the most appropriate and universal.

The tradition of storytelling around the world is fading. It is important that story-tellers remain, especially the oral tradition. Because I come from an oral culture. My people didn't have written language, it was orally that information was transferred.

We live in a different time now. As long as we continue to have storytellers, the tradition will live on. A storyteller has to educate, enrich entertain and enlighten – all of those things.

U.S. Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs Kay Webb Mayfield presents a certificate to one of the winners of a nationwide "Earth, My Home" photography contest for school children organized by the U.S. Embassy and PIEDAR to observe Earth Day.



U.S. Embassy Holds Photography Contest to Mark Earth Day

The U.S. Embassy, in association with Pakistan Institute for Environmental Development and Research (PIEDAR), opened in Islamabad an exhibit of selected photographs from a nationwide photography contest for school children to observe Earth Day with the theme of "Earth, My Home."

"In the United States, children who learned in school about preserving the environment have become leaders in the promotion of recycling, planting trees, saving water, and other conservation measures," the U.S. Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs Kay Webb Mayfield said while addressing the participants. "Students can still lead the way, teaching their families about what each of us can do to protect our natural resources."

Earth Day began in the United States on April 22, 1970. The idea came from U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, who was concerned about protecting the environment. In the 38 years since then, Earth Day has become a global celebration and is currently observed in more than 140 countries around the world. The day aims to inspire awareness of and appreciation of the earth's environment.

Some 60 schools from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Kabirwala, and the FATA participated in the competition held on the topic of "Conservation of Environment."

The U.S. Embassy's Counselor for Public Affairs, Kay Webb Mayfield, presented prizes and certificates to the winning student photographers.



Students and other visitors at Sir Syed Memorial Hall view winning photographs captured by students for the nationwide "Earth, My Home" photography contest to observe Earth Day.

Fulbright Program is Significant Investment by Both Countries: Ambassador Patterson

The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne W. Patterson, declared the Fulbright Program in Pakistan “a significant investment by both countries” while speaking at the 5th annual Fulbright Alumni Conference at the National University of Modern Languages in Islamabad on April 26.

“The Fulbright program in Pakistan is the largest in the world with the U.S. Government contribution of \$19.5 million per year,” Ambassador Patterson said “The other major funding source is Pakistan’s Higher Education Commission, which contributes \$10.5 million per year.”

The American Ambassador, who is also the honorary co-chair of the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP), said that some 175 outstanding Pakistani students travel to the United States each year with full scholarships to begin work on a master’s degree or a doctorate. Dozens more receive scholarships to take part in Fulbright affiliated programs that range from community college training to teaching Urdu or Pashto at U.S. universities, she added.

“Among the highest priorities for the United States in our partnership with Pakistan are these: to encourage this country’s continued economic growth, and to support programs that will distribute the benefits of that growth as widely as possible,” Ambassador Patterson remarked.

She said that the challenge will be to move forward with development and democratization in tandem so that people not only have economic opportunity, but also have the ability to participate politically. “Sharing the benefits of Pakistan’s growth among all its citizens” will be strong defenses against the dangerous forces of disillusionment and alienation.”

Ambassador Patterson lauded the USEFP for “reaching out to young people from all over Pakistan” to offer student advising. “Pakistan now ranks 23rd among countries sending their students to U.S. colleges and universities,” she added.

“More Pakistani students on U.S. campuses means more people from this country come to know and understand the United States; and it means more opportunities for people in American communities to learn about Pakistan and its people,” the American Ambassador said.



U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson speaking at the Fulbright Alumni Conference. Also seen in the picture are U.S. Embassy’s Counselor for Public Affairs Kay Webb Mayfield and the Director of U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan, Dr. Grace Clark.

