



中国传媒大学  
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Institute for a Community  
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人类命运共同体研究院



## **H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin: Architect of Diplomacy between Kazakhstan and Pakistan**



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Since assuming his role on June 2021, as the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin playing a significant role in deepening and expanding bilateral ties between the two brotherly nations. His tenure represents a period of renewed engagement and elevated cooperation, characterized by trust, mutual respect, and a shared vision for regional connectivity and prosperity. Ambassador Kistafin is a sincere friend and a true representative of Kazakhstan's warm and enduring commitment to Pakistan.



Ambassador Kistafin's dynamic approach to diplomacy has ushered in a new era of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. With unwavering dedication, he has focused on nurturing strong institutional ties, boosting trade and economic cooperation, and promoting cultural exchange. His initiatives reflect a holistic vision, aimed not merely at enhancing state-to-state diplomacy but also at fostering deep-rooted people-to-people connections.

From his earliest days in office, Ambassador Kistafin made it clear that his mission was to elevate Kazakhstan–Pakistan relations to new heights. He led numerous high-level engagements between the governments, facilitated cooperation between parliaments, and championed the formation of inter-governmental working groups to identify and remove barriers to bilateral trade, investment, and cultural collaboration.

## Economic Integration and Trade Expansion

One of Ambassador Kistafin's key priorities has been the expansion of trade and economic ties. Kazakhstan's geostrategic position at the crossroads of Eurasia presents immense opportunities for Pakistan, particularly in logistics, pharmaceuticals, food processing, energy, and IT. Recognizing this, Ambassador Kistafin has actively



pursued engagement with the Pakistani business community and has consistently encouraged the use of virtual platforms for B2B interactions.

In April 2025, his efforts culminated in a major milestone: the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Business Forum held in Karachi. The event facilitated business deals estimated at \$140.8 million and attracted more than 300 participants, including over 100 Kazakh officials and business leaders and more than 200 Pakistani companies.

A major breakthrough came during the 13th session of the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Joint Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) held in April 2025. The meeting concluded with the signing of seven vital MoUs covering sectors such as transport, education, trade, and culture. Notably, both sides agreed to finalize a Transit Trade Agreement, allowing Kazakhstan to utilize Pakistani ports such as Karachi, Bin Qasim, and Gwadar for regional trade.

Additionally, Ambassador Kistafin has championed regional connectivity through multimodal trade routes such as the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (KTAP) and Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (KUAP) corridors. These routes, underpinned by the International Motor Transport Agreement, are expected to become vital arteries for trade across Central and South Asia. The recent successful launch of a trade corridor connecting Jebel Ali (UAE) to Almaty via Pakistan is a milestone for regional integration.

### **Pioneering IT Collaboration and Digital Connectivity**

Ambassador Kistafin has also placed strong emphasis on digital transformation as a catalyst for bilateral growth. During a meeting in December 2024 with Pakistan’s Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunications, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, the ambassador proposed deeper cooperation in digital infrastructure, fintech, and data transfer.



Kazakhstan has attracted nearly 70% of Central Asia's FDI in IT—amounting to \$26 billion, offered technical support to Pakistan. The two sides explored potential collaboration through a proposed tripartite framework involving Kazakhstan’s IT sector, Pakistan’s Ministry of IT, and the State Bank's RAAST payment system. This partnership



envisioning a robust digital corridor facilitating knowledge exchange, cybersecurity cooperation, and e-commerce development.

### **Public Diplomacy**

Ambassador Kistafin understands the value of cultural diplomacy in building bridges between nations. Under his guidance, the Kazakhstan Embassy in Islamabad has evolved into a center of cultural engagement, regularly hosting exhibitions, film screenings, musical performances, and art shows that promote Kazakhstan's rich heritage to Pakistani audiences.

His personal visits to cultural and historical sites across Pakistan have resonated strongly with the local population. These visits reflect a genuine appreciation for Pakistan's culture, traditions, and hospitality. This human-centric diplomacy has endeared him to many Pakistanis, who view him not only as a representative of Kazakhstan but as a respected friend of their country.

One landmark initiative under his leadership has been the proposed launch of a Kazakh-Urdu dictionary, aimed at enhancing linguistic ties and mutual understanding between the peoples of both nations. Such efforts are testament to his belief that diplomacy must engage the heart as much as the mind. Ambassador Kistafin has also placed a strong emphasis on educational cooperation. He has promoted student exchanges, joint research programs, and collaborations between universities in Kazakhstan and Pakistan. Ambassador Kistafin has been in proactive engagement with Pakistan's intellectual and policymaking circles. He has participated in countless seminars, public policy dialogues, and roundtables



organized by leading think tanks and academic institutions. His outreach to federal and provincial governments, parliamentarians, civil society, and the diplomatic corps has ensured a multi-tiered and inclusive diplomatic strategy.

Ambassador H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin's tenure in Pakistan has been marked by visionary leadership, relentless diplomatic effort, and a heartfelt commitment to friendship between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. He has not only reinvigorated the strategic, economic, and cultural dimensions of bilateral relations but also elevated them to a new standard of people-oriented diplomacy. As a bridge between two proud nations, Ambassador Kistafin's legacy will be remembered as one of genuine partnership, shared progress, and enduring goodwill.