

PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT (PUBLIC)  
PRESS WING

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**Ambassador of France to Pakistan Mr. Marc Baretty calls on President Dr. Arif Alvi**

**ISLAMABAD; DECEMBER 13, 2019:** The controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 is a defacement of the proclaimed Indian secularism and has put minorities, especially Muslims, at a serious risk, said President Dr. Arif Alvi, while talking to the Ambassador of France to Pakistan Marc Baretty, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad today. He emphasized that Kashmir was under complete lock-down, where all civic liberties of the Kashmiri people had been suspended, and they were being subjected to brutal rape, lynching and imprisonment. Taking stock of the bleak plight of Kashmiri people, he hoped that France would play its rightful role in alleviating the suffering of the Kashmiri people by urging India to stop human rights violations in Kashmir.

The President said that Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with France and endeavoured to further enhance its relations with France both at the bilateral level as well as in context of the EU, he added. He expressed his satisfaction that there existed contacts at the highest-level between the leadership of the two countries, including Parliamentary friendship groups, which played an important role in strengthening bilateral relations. He further said that Pakistan wished to enhance economic cooperation with France and there was ample scope of investment in Pakistan, because of its investment-friendly policies.

The President highlighted that 100,000 strong Pakistani Diaspora in France was a bridge to promote people-to-people contacts. He also said that Pakistan had a huge tourism potential as it had rich cultural artifacts and this potential must be tapped by the French people. The President also highlighted that climate change was a global threat and Pakistan was one of the most vulnerable countries in this regard, despite having a small carbon-footprint; therefore, international collaboration must be strengthened to mitigate its serious consequences.

While referring to the Kashmir issue, the Ambassador said that France had a clear policy that human rights must be protected at all costs. He also said that climate change was a serious global issue and in this regard, France was offering special scholarships. He also emphasized the need for academic collaboration between Pakistani and French academicians and said that the training of the trainers was also very important in this context. He further said that Pakistan was rich in natural beauty, especially its Northern Areas, and has huge tourism potential.

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