

## Statement at Award Giving Ceremony China Puppet Art Theater

25 June 2021

**Madam Zhao Yongzhuang**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**Good Afternoon**

**Asalam o Alaikum**

**Ni Hai**

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome our respected guests to today's award giving ceremony to recognize the hard work, excellent arrangements and seamless partnership extended by the China Puppet Art Theater to the Embassy of Pakistan for "celebration of Pakistan-China civilizational and cultural heritage through puppetry and related arts" held on 21 March 2021.

I once again want to convey my profound thanks to Madam Zhao Jiachen, Party Secretary and Chairperson of Beijing Performance and Art Group and Mr. Saadan Peerzada, Rafi Peer Theater Workshop for coming together to make this celebration of our friendship a success. I would also like to thank all the artists and actors who contributed to the success of this event.

Personally, I was very sad for not able to join you physically in the March event, but I was ably represented by my wife, DHM and Counsellor Mariam.

The event was amongst the first in this year's celebrations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, and was instrumental in engaging our children and youth. Such events indeed help us pass on the baton of our traditional brotherly ties to the next generation.

Arts and crafts are essential elements of a nation's heritage and traditions. Folk puppet art shows are very popular both in Pakistan and China. Both to entertain and educate especially our children and youth about various social problems.

I am sure that the MoU for Cooperation signed between Rafi Peer Theater Workshop and China Puppet Art Theater would surely bolster collaboration in related fields by artists and industry specialists such as designing and crafting of puppets and developing innovative techniques to preserve the art of puppet-making.

I am also happy to share that the three puppets gifted to Rafi Peer Theater have found a new home and are very happy with their Pakistani friends.

I thank you all for participation in today's event.