



Pakistan Day

The Daily Star

Special Supplement

March 23, 2000



In the Service of Peace, Liberty and Justice

by Anwar Khalil

PAKISTAN is a modern democracy. Its foreign policy is based on respect for the sovereignty and independence of states and their territorial integrity, human dignity, the right of self-determination of peoples and non-use of force in international relations. Pakistan is firmly committed to the principles and purposes of the United Nations charter, which provide the basis and hope for building a more just and equitable world order.

Over the past five decades, Pakistan has been consistently working for the promotion of international understanding and friendship among nations. Pakistan has always worked for lessening of tensions and creating better international environment to stabilize peace and enhance mutual cooperation.

At a critical juncture in the Cold War era when tensions were high between the two super powers, Pakistan played a very positive role by serving as a bridge between the United States and the People's Republic of China. They both wanted to remove obstacles in the way of normalization of their bilateral relations, and Pakistan, whom they trusted as a very close friend, helped them establish contacts behind the scene in their search for laying the ground work for a meeting between their top leadership. That historic summit meeting materialized in February 1972 when US President Richard Nixon undertook a week-long China visit and, after a series of meetings between Chairman Mao Tse Tung and Premier Chou En Lie, signed a declaration to serve as the basis of their mutual relationship.

Pakistan is proud to be a participant in this truly and epoch-making event that can be termed as the beginning of the end of the Cold War which had divided the world and had led to many a tragedy since the end of the World War II.

And again, it was Pakistan, which stood up to the Soviet Union when its forces quietly marched into Afghan capital Kabul on the Christmas Eve in 1978. Pakistan served as a bulwark against the expansionist designs of the Communist Empire. As a front-line state of the free world, Pakistan had to bear a heavy burden both in terms of meeting the military threat as well as the huge social and economic costs.

The war between the Soviet forces and the Afghan Mujahideen kept escalating and with it increased the refugee influx into Pakistani territory. It was almost unbearable for Pakistan but with some help from the West and its Muslim friends, it managed to bear the burden. The outside assistance had mostly focussed on arming and training of the Afghan Mujahideen and volunteers who were brought in from other countries, mainly Muslim, to fight along with the Afghans. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan ended and with it, the Soviet Union broke into pieces.

Thanks to Pakistan's courageous fight and support for the Afghan struggle, no more Soviet troops parade the streets of Kabul. The US and other Western opponents of the USSR left as soon as the Communist Empire collapsed. But the misery of Afghans remains.

Pakistan, the next door neighbour to Afghanistan, remains deeply affected by the Afghan situation. It continues to bear the socio-economic costs of a refugee population on its soil, which still runs into millions.

As an active member of the UN, Pakistan seeks peace with justice, disarmament with security and development with equity.

The United Nations was perceived by its founders as the repository of mankind's aspirations, the arbiter of its disputes and the avenue for the cooperative evolution of human civilization. It has emerged as the

authentic voice of humanity's conscience.

Support for National Liberation Movement

Over the past five decades, the United Nations has proved to be the most significant catalyst for the recognition of the right of self-determination of peoples under colonial and alien rule. During this period, over 100 independent states have emerged in the process of dismantling colonial empires. In this laudable achievement of the UN, Pakistan played a very active role and it can take justifiable pride in the substantive contributions it made towards this historic success.

From the time of its admission into the United Nations as a member state more than half a century ago, Pakistan has constantly supported the national liberation movements and the just struggle of peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America against colonialism, racism and apartheid.

The role played by Pakistan in the freedom struggles of peoples under colonialism is a cause for justifiable pride by the people of Pakistan.

Irrespective of creed, colour or ethnic origins, Pakistan provided needed support to all major movements for national rights including Kashmir, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, the Sudan, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Pakistan was among the first to oppose the racist policies of the white-minority regimes in South Africa, Rhodesia and Namibia.

Pakistan also continues to participate actively in the work of the United Nations specialized agencies, bodies and institutions. It is represented on the Governing Boards of several UN agencies including the ILO, UNESCO, WHO, etc. Its constructive contributions in this forum are widely appreciated. Pakistan is also a member of the Economic and Social Council and the UN Commission on Human Rights.

As a member of the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, Pakistan continues to play an active and constructive role to reverse the arms race, promote nuclear and conventional disarmament and to evolve confidence-building measures.

Pakistan favours the creation of nuclear weapons-free zones in South Asia, Middle East, Africa, South Pacific and other parts of the world.

Peace and Security in South Asia

Pakistan made several equitable proposals to India by which they could reassure each other, and the world, that both are committed not to develop nuclear weapons. These proposals include:

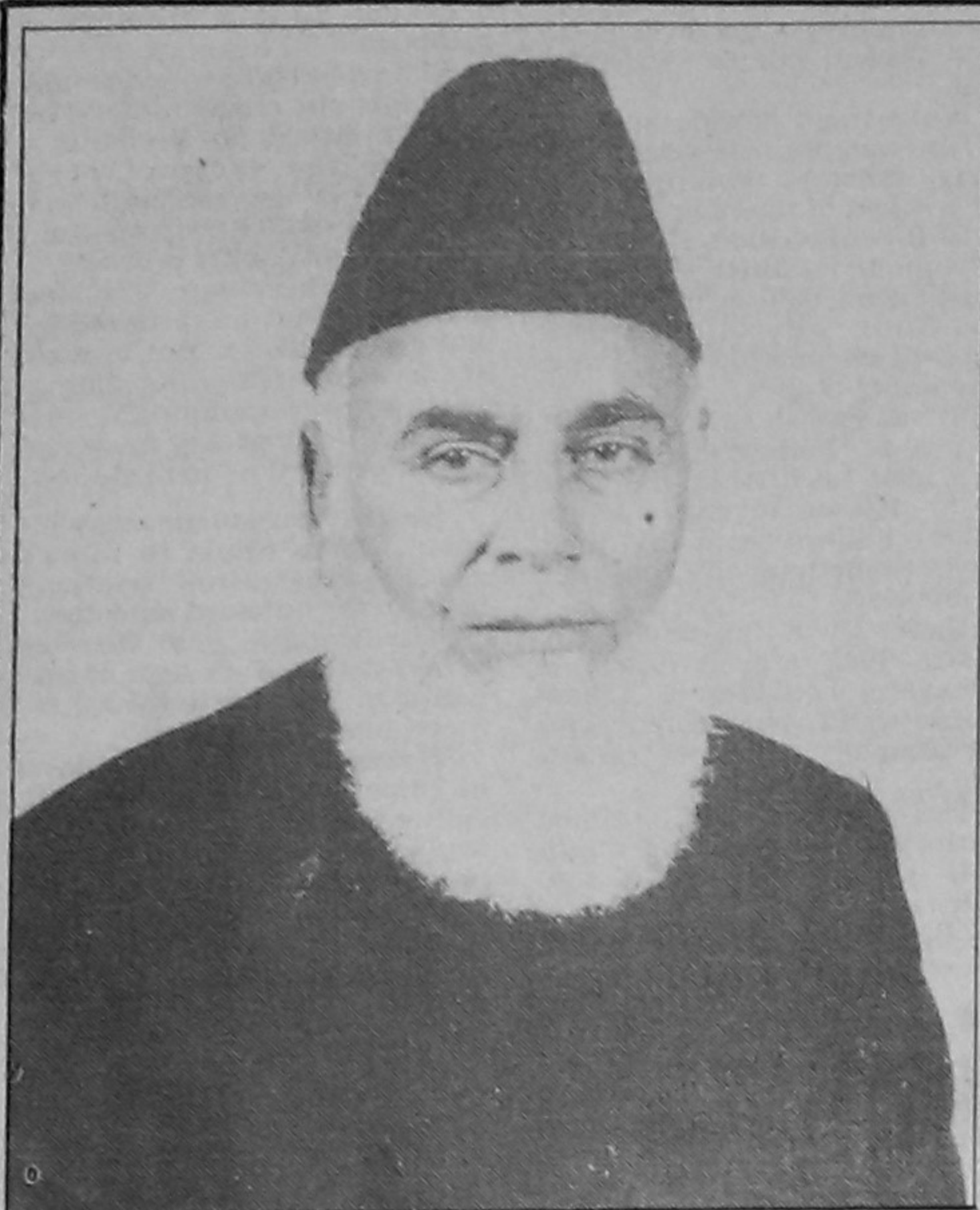
— Simultaneous accession by India and Pakistan to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty;

— Simultaneous acceptance by both countries of full scope International Atomic Energy safeguards;

— Mutual inspection of each other's nuclear facilities;

— Establishment of a nuclear weapons-free zone in South Asia.

Opposition and lack of positive response by India has blocked progress on these proposals. In May 1998, India exploded five nuclear devices and declared its resolve to make nuclear weapons. This left Pakistan with no option but to follow suit and save itself from nuclear blackmail of an ambitious neighbour. With its aggressive nuclear and missile doctrine made public recently, India has ushered in a more intense arms race in the post-Cold War era. A nuclear capable India is now firmly set on establishing its hegemony over the entire region. This has thrown up new challenges, particularly for the security of the sovereign nations in the region who are trying to focus their attention and energies on promoting the welfare of their people.



MESSAGE

23rd March is a red letter day in the history of the Muslims of the Sub-Continent, when 60 years ago, on this day, the Muslims of South Asia resolved to have a separate homeland of their own where they could lead their lives in accordance with the tenets of Islam. To achieve this noble objective, millions of Muslims of the Sub-Continent waged a relentless struggle under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and in a short span of seven years, transformed this dream into a living reality with the blessings of Allah.

23rd March is thus a day of thanks giving. It is a day on which we should bow our heads before Allah for his great bounty in crowning our struggle with success and bestowing on us the gift of independence. This day also testifies to the fact that no difficulty, however insurmountable it may seem to be, can stand in the way of a motivated and determined people to achieve their objective.

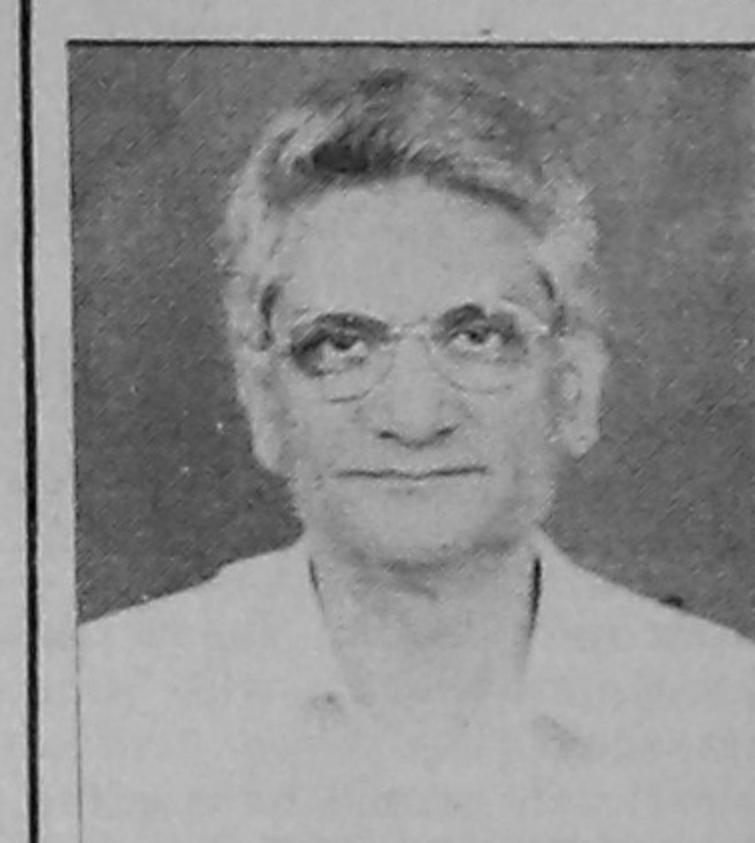
Our real strength, therefore lies in our firm adherence to Islam and our progress and prosperity depend on the cherished principles of Unity, Faith and Discipline propounded by the Father of the Nation. By upholding these principles we will not only overcome our difficulties but also attain further heights of glory for all of us, individually and collectively.

Let us pledge today to re-dedicate ourselves to spare no efforts to realize the goal for which this country was created. May Almighty Allah bless our efforts with success in this behalf.

Muhammad Rafiq Tarar
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan



Gen. Pervez Musharraf
Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan



MESSAGE

Pakistan is proud to celebrate its National Day today.

On 23rd March 1940, the Founding Fathers resolved to create an independent state of Pakistan, a homeland free of foreign domination, inhabited by a nation free from subservience. Within a short span of 7 years, Pakistan had come into existence. This was not the end of a journey, but the beginning of a continuous voyage.

The leaders of Pakistan envisioned the creation of a society and a polity based on the immutable Islamic principles of peace, justice and equality. To translate this vision into reality requires the continuous participation and the unswerving commitment and endeavour of all Pakistanis.

From the very beginning our Founding Fathers realized that societies do not live in a closed system, but are an organic part

of a larger whole and that peace and prosperity is indivisible. It is this awareness that made active involvement in global affairs an imperative of Pakistan's foreign policy and provided an impetus towards the promotion of regional and international peace and stability.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that Pakistan's relations with Bangladesh have been cordial and friendly. Pakistan regards Bangladesh as a reliable partner in the region, which shares its vision of a close and cooperative bilateral relationship and a progressive and prosperous South Asia flourishing in a peaceful and secure environment. This is natural, given the many commonalities that exist between the two brotherly countries. Over the years, Pakistan and Bangladesh have successfully developed a multifaceted relationship based on the principles of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs.

Permit me on this occasion to extend to the Government and the people of Bangladesh my best wishes for their prosperity and well being. May the friendship between our nations endure and prosper.

Long live Pakistan,
Long live Bangladesh,
Long live Pakistan-Bangladesh Friendship.

Iqbal Ahmad Khan
High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh

Road to True Democracy

by Mir Jamil-ur-Rahman

sincerely aimed at establishing a true democracy in the country. The constitution and democracy just served as a facade behind which the politicians set up an autocratic rule worse than a dictatorship. Their aim was to grab power for the sake of power and then hold on to it by means fair or foul. They kept themselves engaged in the game

of muscle chairs neglecting the welfare of the poor masses. It is for this reason that the vast majority of Pakistanis is illiterate and poor and has no access to the basic necessities like clean drinking water, health-care and housing.

The politicians not only governed badly but also encouraged the culture of corruption to the extent that Pakistan got the distinction of being the third most corrupt country in the world. Currently, one former prime minister stands convicted of corruption and another former prime minister is facing the corruption charges. Besides them, scores of their colleagues are also being tried for plundering the national exchequer, misusing their offices and for receiving kickbacks. This corruption at the highest level coupled with bad governance had led to the demoralisation of a nation that was ever ready to offer sacrifices for the sake of the country. The nation was fast losing its faith in its country and its leaders.

It was in these circumstances of despair and disappointment that on 12 October 1999 the Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Pervez Musharraf took over the reins of the country. People welcomed the change wholeheartedly because what they have been experiencing was merely a label of democracy, not the essence of it. They have been living under one despot after the other. They were citizens of an independent country, but never really emancipated from the twin yokes of despotism and feudal exploitation.

Gen Pervez Musharraf was faced with a critical choice when he took over on 12 October. He could try to save the body, which is the nation, at the cost of losing a limb, which is the constitution; or save the limb and lose the whole body. He chose to save the nation and yet took care not to sacrifice the constitution. He found the solution by temporarily holding the constitution in abeyance. He has emphatically declared that it was not Martial Law, only another path to democracy.

Gen Pervez Musharraf is now seriously engaged in paving the way for true democracy. To attain that goal, he has unveiled a 7-point agenda that he wants to accomplish in the shortest possible time. The agenda covers the entire range of national life envisaging political, social and financial reforms by associating the people in the affairs of the state.

The rebuilding of national confidence and morale is at the top of 7-point agenda. There is no denying the fact that a demoralized nation that has lost faith in its leaders cannot contribute to the economic and social development of the country. The people's confidence in the

country and national institutions has to be restored to reactivate their energies for the nation building. Once people are pulled back from the state of despair and frustration, they would become valuable national asset ready to face any challenge.

Article 2 on the agenda vows to 'strengthen federation, remove interprovincial disharmony and restore national cohesion'. Unfortunately, the social and political life of Pakistan has been beset by ethnic and sectarian rivalries that often turn violent. We have been pushed to this quagmire because of political shortsightedness and administrative inertia. Similarly, the disharmony among the federating units is the result of non-application of constitutional provisions that guarantee and protect provincial autonomy. Gen Pervez Musharraf intends to cement the federation through devolution of power, from the Centre to the provinces and from the provincial to the local government as actually enshrined in the Constitution.

Article 3 seeks to 'revive economy and restore investor's confidence'. As a result of political interference in the financial sector and rapidly changing economic policies, the confidence of the local and foreign investor was badly shaken. It resulted in economic stagnation that has led to lower growth rate and unprecedented unemployment. The disputes with the independent power producers (IPP) had further deteriorated the investment climate. The disputes with the IPPs are being resolved and investors' confidence is being rebuilt through introducing stability, consistency and transparency in economic policies.

Article 4 of the agenda states to 'ensure law and order and dispense speedy justice' while Article 5 gives the pledge 'to depoliticise the State institutions'. These two articles are interrelated because the deterioration in law and order and delay in dispensing justice are the products of politicised institutions. This objective is being achieved by making key appointments purely on merit.

Article 6 is very important in the context of democracy because it aims at 'devolution of power to the grassroots level'. So far we have confined our democracy to the elections of assemblies giving no importance to the local government institution. The government has already announced to hold the local bodies' elections by the end of the current year. The local bodies enjoying political and administrative powers would help in laying the foundations of true democracy as has been solemnly promised by Chief Executive Gen Pervez Musharraf.

The Article 7 declares to 'en-

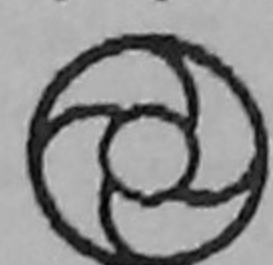
sure swift and across the board accountability'. The lack of accountability or its discriminatory application on political foes only has resulted in corruption of horrendous proportion, threatening the very basis of society. For the first time an indiscriminate accountability drive has been launched that is directed especially towards those guilty of plundering the national wealth.



23 March
Pakistan Day

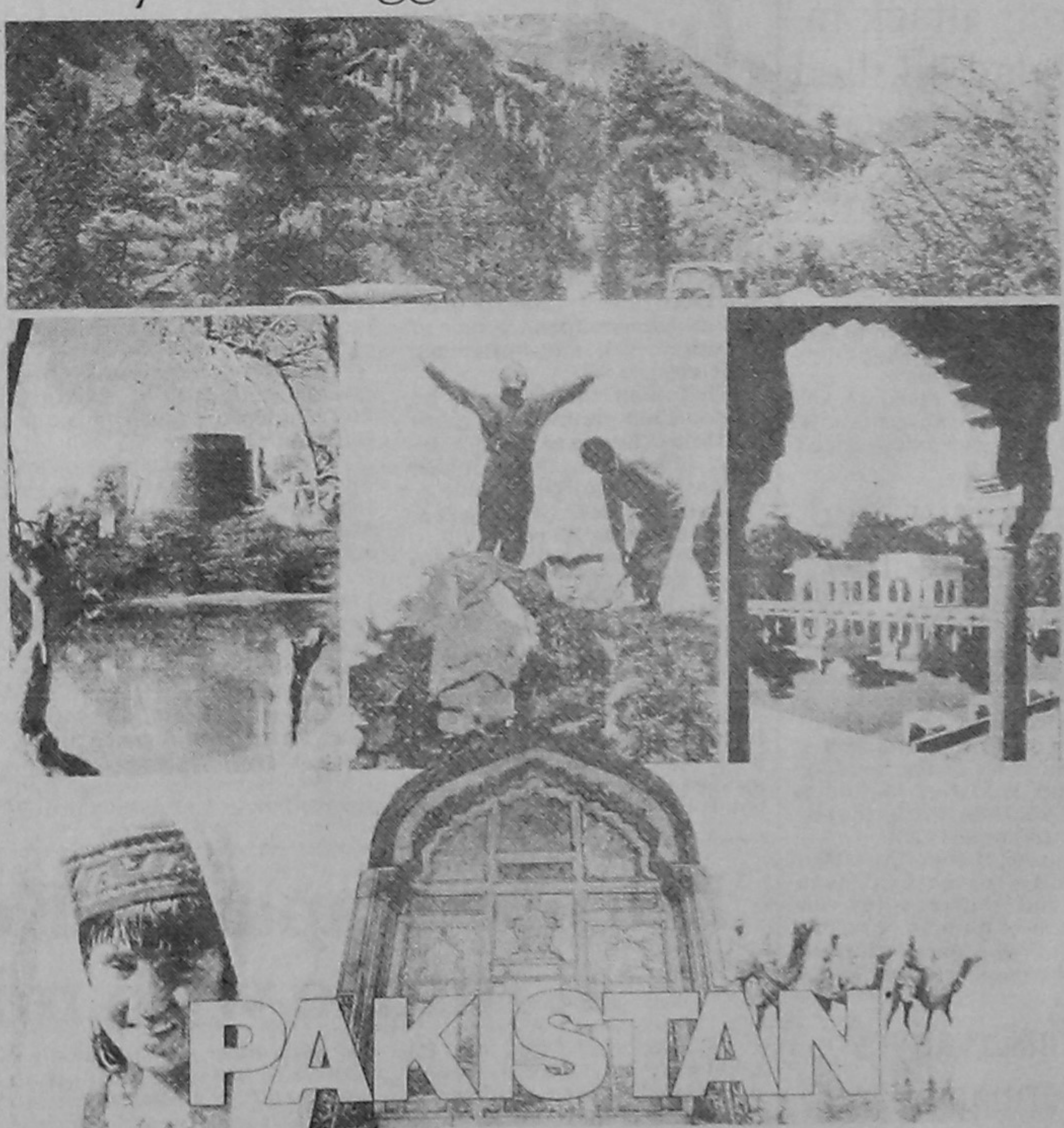
The national spirit of resolution.

Twenty-third of March returns each year reverberating with glorious memories of that historic resolution which led to the creation of Pakistan. The dauntless spirit of that day lives on as our greatest inspiration to build a strong and prosperous Pakistan. NBP shares the nation's determination to achieve this goal.



National Bank of Pakistan
A Symbol of Service, Trust & Security
79 Motijheel C.A., G.P.O Box No. 2226, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.
Tel: 9560248, 9560249, Fax: 880-2-9560247
Telex: 632393 NBP-BJ, Cable: MILLATBANK.

May We Suggest



As Your Next Destination?

A land where past and present blends into a harmonious culture, where people with a proud heritage welcome you with a smile, adding a special something to your holiday.

PIA is privileged to be the one airline which brings these unrivalled holiday destinations to you. Hospitality and grace, which is the very essence of our nation, is represented by our well trained and experienced staff. So at any time of the year, PIA invites you to add Pakistan to your itinerary.



For further information, please contact the nearest PIA booking office, your travel agent or Internet: <http://www.piac.com>