



Independence Day of Pakistan



Asif Ali Zardari
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

MESSAGE

I wish to extend heartfelt felicitations to all the Pakistanis living within the country and abroad on the auspicious occasion of 66th Independence Day.

Falling in the holy month of Ramzan, it is the most important date in our national calendar. On this day in 1947 our long and hard struggle for independence against foreign domination was crowned with success and a new state was born wherein we could fashion our lives and destiny in accordance with our culture, values and aspirations. On this day our heads bow in gratitude before Allah and we are beholden to our founding fathers who under the leadership of the Quaid achieved a separate homeland for us.

While it is natural to rejoice today in our independence celebrations, it is also an occasion to pause and ponder over whether we have moved towards or away from the ideals for which Pakistan was

created.

Our founding fathers envisioned Pakistan as a country where democracy, constitutionalism and rule of law would reign supreme. It was envisaged to be a country where the power of the ballot, and not bullet, will determine the political choices of the people. Countless lives were sacrificed for the achievement of these ideals including that of the country's first directly elected Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the Muslim world's first elected woman Prime Minister Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

Unfortunately, for most part of our independent existence the people were often denied right to rule and the Constitution repeatedly abrogated. It is reassuring that the present Parliament unanimously restored to a large extent the democratic Constitution of 1973. The restoration of the Constitution by all political forces and provinces raises our hope that despite setbacks we will revert to our true bearings and restore to Pakistan the values and ideals for which it was created. However, the people and the Parliament must also be watchful against new forms of assaults on the Constitution and the Parliament.

Let us on this day rededicate ourselves to the democratic ideals and principles of the Quaid. Adherence to the principle that political choices must be made by ballot, and not imposed through bullet, demands that we banish from our midst all forms of bigotry, extremism and militancy.

On this day I wish to call upon everyone to work together for the strengthening of democracy, empowerment of the people and for a progressive, tolerant, moderate and modern Pakistan as envisioned by our great leaders.

Pakistan-Paindabad



Raja Pervez Ashraf
Prime Minister of Pakistan

MESSAGE

ON the auspicious occasion of 66th Day of Independence, I would like to extend my felicitations to my countrymen including the overseas Pakistanis.

August 14, 1947 saw the successful culmination of a heroic struggle of the Muslims of the sub-continent for their right to have a separate homeland.

Pakistan appeared on the world map through a democratic struggle and its progress and prosperity lies in continuation of the democratic system as well.

The present coalition government has undertaken various historic initiatives during the last four and a half years and pursued a policy of reconciliation. The passage of the 18th Constitutional Amendment empowered the federating units administratively as well as politically. The consensual adoption of the 7th National Finance Commission Award increased the share of the provinces in the federal divisible pool. Besides, Benazir

Income Support Programme, a flagship programme of the government, has focused on women empowerment and welfare of the poorest segments of society.

We have refashioned our country's foreign policy in accord with Parliamentary guidelines and national interest.

This year, the 14th of August falls in the holy month of Ramadan. Thus this holy month carries added significance for us.

On this blessed occasion, we bow our head in eternal gratitude to Allah Almighty for His favours and pray for the security, unity, progress and prosperity of the country.

I am reminded of Quaid-i-Azam's message on the inauguration of Pakistan Broadcasting Service on August 15, 1947. The Quaid-i-Azam said: "The creation of the new State has placed a tremendous responsibility on the citizens of Pakistan. It gives them an opportunity to demonstrate to the world how can a nation, containing many elements, live in peace and amity and work for the betterment of all its citizens, irrespective of caste and creed."

Despite difficulties, Pakistan is a vibrant polity where judiciary is independent, Parliament is functioning, media is vocal and free, and civil society is active.

We are confronted with various challenges such as energy crisis, law and order problem, economic difficulties, terrorism, and extremism, which have slowed down the pace of socio-economic development.

We are a resolute and determined nation and can overcome these daunting challenges if we demonstrate tolerance, national unity, solidarity and understanding.

Let us pledge to work together and commit ourselves to the progress and prosperity of our nation by setting aside our mutual differences so that the country can get its rightful place in the comity of nations.

MESSAGE

SIXTY five years ago on 14 August, Pakistan emerged as a sovereign and independent state on the world map. This day in 1947 represented the fruition of a long struggle by the Muslims of the sub-continent under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The people of Pakistan celebrate the Independence Day with fervour and jubilation. They take pride in the strides that they have made in the march towards progress and prosperity.

Pakistan is a land of contrasts. We have a rich and diverse heritage. We are home to the great treasures of the Indus and Gandhara civilizations, found in Moenjodaro and Harappa. Some of the earliest relics of the Stone Age in the subcontinent are found in Pakistan in the Soan Valley of the Potohar region near Rawalpindi. Mehrgarh, one of the most important Neolithic (7000 BC to 3200 BC) sites in archaeology, lies on the Kachi plain of Balochistan and is one of the earliest sites with evidence of farming and herding in South Asia. It was also here that Buddhism flourished for over 1000 years, starting from 2nd century B.C., till 10th century A.D. In the Gandhara period, Taxila, Swat and Charsaddah became the three important centers for culture, trade and learning.

Pakistan astrides the traditional trade routes that link West, Central and South Asia. From Gwadar Bay

in its south-eastern corner, the country extends more than 1,800 km to the Khunjerab Pass on China's border. Iran makes up the country's south-west border, and Afghanistan runs along its western and northern edge. The Arabian Sea is Pakistan's southern boundary with a 1,064 km of coastline.

Pakistan and Bangladesh enjoy a special relationship. Our two countries are engaged in a broad range of mutually beneficial partnerships in areas of commerce, health, education and culture.

Bilateral trade and investment have registered a healthy growth. Trade between Pakistan and Bangladesh has more than doubled from US\$ 477 million to US\$ 1 billion. There have been several exchanges of trade delegations. Eighteen Pakistani companies participated in the Dhaka International Trade Fair in January this year. Another fourteen Pakistani companies participated in the 11th SAARC trade fair and tourism mart, 2012. The Rawalpindi Chambers of Commerce and Industries also held the second "Pakistan-made exhibition" in Dhaka, this year.

The people to people contact and exchanges are gaining momentum. Participants from National Management College, Lahore and from National Defence University, Islamabad visited Bangladesh. Pakistan's women cricket team participated in sporting events here. Famous Qawwals by the

name of Sabri brothers entertained Bangladeshis at the Alumni dinner hosted by the Pakistan High Commissioner in Dhaka. Bangladeshi delegations comprising media representatives, scholars and academicians visited Pakistan. More than 20 Bangladeshi students from public and private colleges and universities, visited Pakistan. The High Commission organized the fourth Inter-school Dosti Art Competition in Dhaka, where students from more than 77 schools participated.

These are encouraging trends that continue to strengthen our bilateral relations. We look forward to this growing partnership between Pakistan and Bangladesh for their mutual benefit. As we celebrate our Independence Day, I take this opportunity to wish the people of Bangladesh progress and prosperity in the years ahead.



Mian Afrasiab Mehdi Hashmi Qureshi
High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh

Gandhara civilisation in Pakistan

PAKISTAN is endowed with some of the rarest civilisations and cultures spanning over thousands of years. The much-famed Harappan Civilisation that flourished here in the Indus Valley roughly between mid-third and mid-second millennia BC is termed as unique and stands out among its contemporaneous cultures of the world. With its decay, the localised cultures continued to flourish while a new type of powerful culture called Gandhara developed in north-eastern Pakistan about the middle of the 1st millennium BC to around 7th century AD, famous for its refined art and Buddhist architecture.

Gandhara is generally taken as the region comprising of most of the

areas of what now is the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan. In the past, the area beginning from the junction of the river Kabul and the river Indus, including Taxila, had also been known as 'Charene'. The first mention of Gandhara in the historical literature (in the Bisutun inscription of Darius) shows it as part of the Achaemenian Empire in the times of Cyrus the Great (558-28 BC). It had a major role as the channel of communication with Iran and Central Asia. Gandhara was invaded by Alexander the Great in the winter of 327 BC.

In the early seventh century AD its mention is found in the account of the Chinese Pilgrim, Hsuan Tsang who visited the Buddhist sites in this



region. In the 5th century BC, Gandhara is mentioned by the Greek historian Herodotus as one of the wealthiest territories. He

further noted that it served as source in providing the forces for the Persian King Xerxes I in his battles against the Greeks. In fact Gandhara by then had become a melting pot of Persian and South Asian Vedic traditions, while its capital was at Taxila, which then was also a great seat of higher learning.

In the 3rd century BC the Mauryan king Asoka, a convert to Buddhism, was for a time governor of Gandhara. During his reign the region also converted to Buddhism and, according to some scholars, it could have been here that the Mahayana Buddhism (in contrast to the earlier Theravada Buddhism) began to emerge. The proof of the proclamation of Buddha's Law in Gandhara is amply clear from the edicts of Asoka on a rock boulder at Shahbazgarhi in the Mardan district in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan. The gradual decline of the Mauryan Empire following the death of Asoka in 232 BC again opened the region to foreign aggression.

Gandhara under the Kushans' patronage developed as a centre for Buddhism around 64 AD. Even long afterwards it continued to draw Buddhist pilgrims from all over the South Asian Subcontinent and also China. It is known for not only giving the region a powerful rule but also maintaining contacts with the Roman Empire of Augustus.

The most famous of all the Kushan rulers was Kanishka, who became a convert to Buddhism like Asoka before him. His zeal for the newly adopted religion is evident from the numerous monasteries and stupas, the tomblike structures containing the relics of the Buddha or of Buddhist saints, built by him throughout the length and breadth of his empire.

It was especially during the period of Kushan that a style of Buddhist art known as Gandharan developed in the region. It was also this period to which are attributed the best pieces of sculptural art. The architectural activities of Gandhara of this period occupy the same prominent position as its fascinating art. 'Blending Hellenistic and Indian influences, the style depicted Buddha in human form for the first time, often with features resembling the Greek god Apollo and a Persian solar disk, or halo'. Although the Buddha himself never visited Gandhara, the texts composed by Buddhist sages under the Kushans made the region a genuinely holy land of Buddhism.

The Huns swept over Gandhara and the Punjab in the third quarter of the fifth century, which led to the fall of the Mauryan Empire in this region. Thanks to the archaeologists' spade that these sites were retrieved from under the earth in the twentieth century as treasures of the past.




Our Heartiest Congratulations to the Brotherly People and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Occasion of its Independence Day

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