

Embargoed: Not to be published/broadcast/telecast before 14 August 2023

Dr Arif Alvi

President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Message On the Occasion of the 76th Independence Day Anniversary

I congratulate all my compatriots on Pakistan's 76th Independence Day anniversary. On this day, we pay tribute to the sacrifices rendered by our founding fathers and workers of the Pakistan Movement. The stories of those people, who faced hardships, endured oppression and braved immense challenges to reach Pakistan, serve as a source of inspiration for our future generations. We should value the sacrifices of our forefathers for the creation of Pakistan and work for the prosperity of our people.

76 years ago, on this day, Pakistan gained independence after the historic struggle of the Muslims of the sub-continent under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The Muslims of India wanted a homeland for themselves where they could freely order their individual and collective lives in accordance with the teachings of Islam. This day marks the culmination of a democratic and political struggle in our quest for freedom from colonial rule.

This day also gives us the opportunity for introspection. We should reflect on the nation's progress so far, prevailing challenges, and opportunities for growth. It is a time to renew our commitment to building a stronger and more prosperous Pakistan as envisioned by the Father of the Nation. I urge my fellow countrymen to work for the welfare and uplift of deprived sections of our society. Let's pledge to uphold the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance, forgiveness, socio-economic justice, and moral and ethical values, as enunciated by Islam.

On this important day, let's also remember our oppressed brothers and sisters in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), facing Indian atrocities for decades. India's illegal actions, including ending Jammu and Kashmir's special legal status in 2019, have further deteriorated the human rights situation in the valley in the form of extra-judicial killings, torture, and illegal detentions. We stand with our Kashmiri brethren and assure them of unwavering and continued political, diplomatic and moral support for their legitimate right to self-determination.

On this occasion, I urge the entire Pakistani nation to remain steadfast and work wholeheartedly for the development of the country. There is a need to unite to cope with the social, political, economic and security challenges facing the Nation today. So, let's resolve that we will not hesitate to offer any sacrifice for the security, prosperity, and development of the country.

**Message of the Prime Minister
Islamic Republic of Pakistan
On 76th Anniversary of Pakistan's Independence
(August 14, 2023)**

The nation is celebrating the 76th anniversary of Pakistan's Independence today. On this auspicious occasion, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the entire nation including overseas Pakistanis.

This day holds a special significance in our hearts, for this historic day saw an unprecedented freedom struggle culminating in the establishment of the State of Pakistan. Today, we pay rich tributes to the men, women and children who got together under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to struggle for the creation of a land they could call home.

In the process, they established a glorious example of commitment and devotion to the cause of Pakistan. I also take this opportunity to pay homage to the Quaid-i-Azam's visionary leadership and other leaders without whom the dream of Pakistan could not see the light of day. The nation will eternally remain indebted to them for gifting us with the precious gift of freedom.

The freedom struggle for a separate homeland represented an idea whose time had come; an idea rooted in self-assertion and hope of a better tomorrow. It was for a country where our people could explore their potential and live a life in peace and prosperity in line with their glorious traditions, ethos, culture and values. The idea of Pakistan was much bigger than we can imagine; it was an aspiration, which was shaped by a fear of living under the majoritarian principle advocated by Congress.

The Quaid-i-Azam challenged this interpretation, which was meant to suppress Muslims' identity and keep them as a minority under the garb of Western democracy. On the one hand, he established that Muslims were a separate nation in every sense and their demand for a separate homeland was historically justified. He warned that forcing them to live in a large country under the principle of majoritarianism was a recipe for disaster.

On the other hand, he led a peaceful democratic and political struggle. So staunch was his determination and belief unwavering in the justness of his cause that the combined opposition of the ruling British and Congress failed to dent his resolve.

Two lessons are noteworthy in this regard. One, unity was one of the most remarkable aspects of Pakistan's independence that emerged from a diverse tapestry of cultures, languages, and ethnicities. The 14th of August is not only a celebration of political freedom; it is a testament to the ability of a nation to come together to overcome mammoth challenges. Pakistan's flag, with its green representing the

Muslim majority and white symbolizing religious minorities, embodies the principle of unity in diversity that continues to shape the nation's identity.

Second, no obstacle is too insurmountable to be overcome if a person is driven by a deep sense of purpose. Self-belief ignites the imagination of nations and powers their journey towards the destination.

As we celebrate the 76th Independence Day today, we need to summon the spirit that marked the independence movement and employ the lesson of unity and self-belief to chart the way forward.

There is no denying the importance of many milestones we have achieved in the last seven and a half decades, often against opposing circumstances. We have faced the worst natural disasters, conflicts and wars and always managed to build back better. All along the way, we have jealously guarded the gift of freedom that we so passionately prize.

As we celebrate Independence Day, we stand in complete solidarity with the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK), who are waging a struggle for their right to self-determination.

Pakistan remains committed to providing political, moral, and diplomatic support to them. Despite a four-year military siege and complete information blackout, the people of IIOJK have displayed remarkable resilience and defiance against the Indian oppressive apparatus.

We call upon the international community and human rights organizations to take note of the rights abuses in IIOJK. Our stance remains firm, advocating for a peaceful resolution of the dispute in line with the UN resolutions, recognizing the right of Kashmiri people to decide their own future through a free and fair plebiscite.

The 14th of August is more than just a date; it is a symbol of the Pakistani nation's resilience, courage and unwavering commitment to freedom. As the nation commemorates this day, it is an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices of the past, celebrate the achievements of the present, and envision a brighter future for our people.

The spirit of independence continues to inspire Pakistanis to overcome challenges and work towards a nation that embodies the principles of justice, equality, and prosperity for all.

On this day, let us remember the sacrifices of our forefathers and pledge to uphold the values that define our great nation.

Happy Independence Day!***