

# Monthly FORESIGHT Monthly

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**PAKISTAN  
DEMOCRACY**

Constitutionalism and Way  
Forward P06

**PAKISTANIS  
LOVE**

**PAK ARMY**

**US-CHINA  
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Transition towards a new cold  
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## Chief Editor Note

In this edition of FORESIGHT Magazine, we celebrate the significant event of Youm e Takbeer, which marks Pakistan's successful nuclear tests in 1998. We honor the scientific achievements that have shaped our nation's future.

We also highlight the unwavering love and respect that Pakistanis hold for their armed forces, acknowledging their dedication and sacrifice in protecting our borders and ensuring national security.

Democracy and the Constitution of Pakistan are integral to our progress. We explore the role of democratic principles in fostering a strong and inclusive society, while emphasizing the need to strengthen democratic institutions and promote good governance.

Looking ahead, we analyze the challenges and opportunities that lie before us. Our experts discuss economic prospects, foreign policy initiatives, and regional collaborations that can drive our nation's growth and sustainable development.

This issue aims to inspire pride in our nation's achievements, reaffirm our commitment to democracy, and encourage active participation in Pakistan's development. Together, we can build a prosperous and inclusive society.

Thank you for your continued support, and we hope you find this edition of FORESIGHT Magazine insightful and inspiring.

Sincerely,



*Tanveer Ali Maken*

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# IN THE FACE OF TRAGEDY

## Pakistanis Love for Pak Army and the Incident of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Tanveer Ali Maken

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Pakistan is a country renowned for its fervent patriotism and admiration for its armed services, as well as for their contribution to national security and support of the populace during trying times. In addition, the Pakistani Army plays a crucial role in protecting the nation's borders and firmly combating the threat of terrorism. It goes without saying that Pakistan's gallant army has always supported its people through times of adversity and natural calamities, as well as having a significant impact on aiding the civil administration in preserving peace and order during times of unrest. Pakistan's defence forces are the "9th most powerful army" in the world, according to worldwide firepower, which is a

source of national pride. Nobody can dispute the Pakistani Army's unparalleled professionalism. The Pakistan Army has historically been the nation's most structured, disciplined, and accountable institution. In actuality, after religion, it is the single unifying factor that has kept this country together. The military forces have been crucial in maintaining the nation's sovereignty and safeguarding its populace. The military has also played a leading role in conflicts, natural disasters, and difficulties with domestic security. The Pakistani people have come to love and trust this constant commitment. This reality is also readily accepted by our detractors from across the border.

The incident that occurred on May 9, 2023 startled the nation and caused debate over how civilians and the military should interact.

On that momentous day, something happened that rocked the cornerstone of the people's and the army's connection. A thorough inquiry is being conducted to ascertain the precise facts as more information about the occurrence becomes available. But because civilian lives were lost in the incident, there was shock and mistrust all across the country.

Even though it is vital to wait until the official investigation is complete, there are a few potential causes for this unfortunate tragedy. These explanations can help clarify the intricacies present in every institution, including one as reputable as the Pakistani military. It's crucial to keep in mind that individual instances shouldn't compromise the consensus definition and trust that have been developed over time.

Of certainly, everyone has the right to freedom of expression in a democracy. But it's important to remember that this freedom is subject to any legal restrictions that are reasonable and necessary for the integrity, security, or



defence of Pakistan or the honour of Islam.

It is regrettable that crucial state institutions like the Pakistan Army and the Election Commission, as well as the crucial state pillars of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and their leaders, have received harsh criticism. The lack of a competent and suitable response from the ruling class really gave them the guts to act in contempt against these crucial institutions. It would not be incorrect to assume that this unrestrained freedom was the cause of the terrible catastrophe that occurred on May 9, 2023. The respect that the Pakistani military forces receive both domestically and internationally seems to escape the criticism levelled at them. The Pakistan Army is the nation's most structured, disciplined, and responsible institution. The "9th most powerful army" in the world, according to Global Firepower, is Pakistan's armed forces.

1. The army operates in a dangerous and unreliable environment. Even with careful planning and protocol, unforeseen occurrences can still occur. Military operations typically involve travelling across challenging terrain, interacting with hostile forces, and making choices that can have unforeseen repercussions.

2. It can be difficult to ensure efficient monitoring and accountability measures since the Pakistani people hold the armed forces accountable. To swiftly address any wrongdoing, a transparent mechanism and an impartial investigation are



required. Increasing the effectiveness of these systems can support public confidence and help avoid such disasters in the future.

After the incident, effective communication and reconciliation efforts are crucial. The military leadership needs to interact with the families of the victims and the general public, show regret, show support, and reassure the country that measures would be done to stop future events.

The sacrifices made by its soldiers and their steadfast dedication to the welfare of the country are at the heart of Pakistan's affection for its military. Although the occurrence on May 9, 2023 is a painful reminder of the demise of any institution, it shouldn't cast a shadow over the benefits provided by the armed forces.

It is crucial to keep faith in the values of justice, accountability, and transparency as the inquiry

progresses. This tragedy serves as a reminder that no organisation is impervious to errors, but that trust can only be restored and increased by understanding these errors and taking appropriate action. At the same time, harsh criticism of the valiant army of the nation must stop right away.

The tragedy on May 9, 2023, shocked the country and called into question the Pakistani people's unshakeable loyalty and support for their army. Maintaining the relationship between the armed forces and their population will depend on recognising and resolving the core problems. Pakistan can get through this challenging time and continue to construct a future where love for the military does not decline but instead is further reinforced through shared resilience and togetherness with a commitment to transparency, accountability, and reconciliation.

75 years since its inception Pakistan has never been in a situation where all major stakeholders of the country are not at the same page. This may seem like an exaggeration but when the situation in Pakistan since April'22 is analyzed it is not difficult to arrive at the conclusion above stated. Moreover the political parties have reached an impasse. There seems to be no improvement in the situation, in fact Pakistan from an outsider's point of view seems to be nosediving at the moment.

There was a time not long ago when things weren't as bad as they look right now. All political stakeholders seemed to be on the same page but that was a bubble

the least. No politician or political party can claim that they never criticized the role of armed force's intervention in politics. But if we look at our history from an objective point of view the Army has always filled the vacuum in our politics created by the very politician who level blame against the saviors of the nation.

The current crisis which Pakistan faces is multifaceted. It has its constitutional fallouts as well as political. And in the midst of all this the non-democratic mindset amongst many political stakeholders is eager to push Pakistan into an abyss which will only benefit certain quarters. Another problem is that mean men are

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# PAKISTAN

## Democracy, Constitutionalism and Way Forward

**Muhammad Zain Ul Abdin**

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which was bound to burst any moment. All the blames leveled against the establishment especially Pakistan Armed forces have been blunt and much curated to say

occupying big position and their egos are consuming everything that is in their way. Self-aggrandizement was never so obvious in Pakistan.



Another genie that has come out of the bottle is the violent tendencies and the proclamation of self-righteousness. Now is the time when the entire nation is divided and subdivided into fragments that are highlighted by their ignorance and intolerance towards each other. There was a time when everything was fair but when it came to THE STATE, there was a silent agreement among all that no matter what happens The State must never suffer.

Political opinions may differ and that is the beauty of a democratic society but what happens when every segment is inclined towards proving themselves right and forcing others to accept their point of view. Pakistan has entered into an era where cult following is predominant and personalities have become more powerful and some times more assertive than the state.

PTI Chief Imran Khan was ousted as the PM last April and since then he has been protesting against the ruling coalition. His right to protest is not what has caused the current crisis but his constant obsession with naming and maligning Pakistan's army and especially its Chiefs. His demagoguery may have beguiled his innocent followers but his rhetoric is inconsistent and at times threatening to the State.

NAB had taken Mr. Khan into custody from the premises of the Islamabad High Court, after which sporadic and choreographed episodes of violence took place in major cities of the country. This was the first time in the history of Pakistan when the supporters of a major political party were being told and advised to gather at important military installations and garrison points. The highlight of the fiasco was when the official home of the XII Corps Commander (Lahore) JINNAH HOUSE was swarmed and ransacked and later set on fire. On the other hand main highways in Islamabad and Karachi were blocked and skirmishes broke-out between police and the so called protestors.

There is yet another perspective that needs the attention of everyone involved. Violent tendencies and forceful politics often bears desired results but in the long run Violent Political Tendencies have never proven beneficial to any political system. What happened in Sri Lanka, Egypt, and Sudan is just an aspect. All great conflicts of the past have one thing in common. No amount of force and might can provide long lasting results. Look at the two world wars, Vietnam War, Afghanistan invasion of 1979 and second invasion in 2001, all ended up being discussed among immediate

stakeholders on a table. Perhaps it is time all political stakeholders of Pakistan should sit down and stop blaming Pakistan Army for faults of their own. Pakistan Army has maintained its principle stance that it stands with the democratic setup of the country and that there is no imminent chance of a Martial Law. This alone should be enough for all Political stakeholders to take a step back and look to find out solutions for a better Pakistan.





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## US-CHINA SQUABBLING

### Transition Towards a New Cold War Or New World Order?

**Hina Habib**

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The two major powers, US and China, have broken the lance with each other geopolitically and ideologically to gain a global hegemony in the 21st century. The adversarial ties between US-China entail high prospects to reverberate the drums of repetition of the cold war in the coming future that happened 30 years ago when the United States took a driving seat to establish norms of the international world. However, the new cold war would constrict global peace and prosperity at the international level. A war on any one part of the world would escalate tensions all over the world. In this context, Winston Churchill once said: “War is a contagion. Like cholera or the

plague, it spreads from one country to another.

The US-China relationship is arguably the most significant and complex bilateral tie in the contemporary world that is continuously evolving. As the two largest economies and military powers, the US and China espouse intense repercussions on global security, trade, human rights, and the environment. Therefore, the ding-dong battle between two major powers is not on any one dimension, rather, it possesses various other dimensions of cooperation and confrontation. Both major powers have a common goal to cooperate in the areas of mutual concern like

climate change and nuclear non-proliferation, while, competing on diverse fronts including the economy that encompasses trade imbalance and intellectual property theft, technological skirmishes, territorial squabbling, and security concerns.

“US and China squabbling began as an economic confrontation between two major powers and slowly it mushroomed into intense competition between two major powers over various other fronts. At the heart of this dilemma, a popular discourse arises regarding the world order expediting toward Cold War 2.0. Is it really a variation in the overall

scenario, or is there any light at the end of the tunnel?"

The US has considered the rapid rise of China as a global power in the context that is posing a great challenge to the global hegemony of the United States. China is considered the second most significant economic power in the world and is continuously modernizing its military imperium. Besides this, China has a major emphasis on boosting alliances with other states to bubble up its strategic influence. Owing to China's rapid rise, it now appears almost certain that the Biden administration is trying to find ways to counter the rapid rise of China without provoking tensions with China.

President Joe Biden, who took the presidency in January 2021, inherited a contradictory relationship with China from his predecessor Donald Trump, who pursued an aggressive and confrontational approach toward Beijing. Trump imposed huge tariffs on hundreds of billions of

dollars worth of Chinese commodities, banned Chinese tech companies from accessing US markets and technology, blame China for the COVID-19 pandemic, and skyrocketed military support for Taiwan and other US allies in the Indo-Pacific region. Biden has sought to chart a different course from Trump and maintained a firm stance on China's impediments to US interests and values.

Biden's strategy revolves around cushioning any prospects of intense confrontation between two major powers. Thus, after assuming the reins of the presidency, Biden drove up cooperation with allies through the initiative of Quad and AUKUS in order to counter the influence of China. Moreover, the Biden administration strongly groused against China for disturbing human rights in Xinjiang and retaliated by inflicting sanctions on China on 19 January 2023. Moreover, the Biden administration has embraced a

dual policy on the Taiwan issue that is a major flashpoint between two major powers in a contemporary scenario. In this context, providing a security umbrella to Taiwan on one side and endorsing the One-China policy on the other side. Besides this, Biden's administration initiated a blame game on China for surveillance spy balloons over US territory and reprieved commodities coming from China and shifted labor to other corners of the world. The focus of the Biden administration is to deter China by constricting its orbit of influence via steering up alliances with Taiwan and other allies.

A variation in this scenario took place when the Biden administration articulated a euphonious statement in November 2022 despite a major power confrontation in order to elaborate its approach towards rival competitor China by asserting "There need not be a new Cold War". Biden's strategy, unlike its predecessors, is clearly



elucidating the impression that it does not revolve around confronting intense conflict with China, and the United States retains no ambitions to dig in heels within a Cold War 2.0. However, Biden's strategy towards avoiding a new cold war is complex, requiring the US to be both competitive and cooperative. Moreover, it revolves around resuming cooperation with allies in order to constrict the orbit of China's rapid rise. Besides this, Biden's statement of eliminating prospects of Cold War 2.0 provided a framework to manage ties. Therefore, Biden's strategy encompasses the impetus to counter China's imperium by avoiding any prospects of a major confrontation.

As far as China is concerned, China raised an eyebrow towards its rival states through a statement that China is keen to "crush the heads of capitalists and spill the blood of those who dare to challenge their country." On the

other hand, Chinese Défense Minister "Li Shangfu" during Shangri-La Dialogue 2023 said, "When friends come, we welcome them with fine wine. When jackals or wolves come, we will welcome them with shotguns". It indicates China is concerned about its approach toward other states that revolves around the fact that China does not interfere in the affair of others and does not want others to interfere in China's internal affairs. The director of the US National Intelligence "Avril Haines" considers China as a threat to the US's security, prosperity, and values." Nonetheless, China has never threatened the US regarding the use of force rather China has ambitions to erupt as an economically advanced state and is transitioning towards development. However, the provocative strategies toward the slowly moving dragon could expeditiously disturb the dragon with an escalation of tensions. In this context, Xi Jinping said in 2009 during a Moscow visit

"China does not cause trouble for you". China has a firm stand for its words in its affairs with other states. China entails a status of post-modern power, with the eloquent goal of tilting other states towards its orbit through economic development. Thus, it is a perception of two major powers regarding the international environment that is reverberating the drums of Cold War 2.0 that could be avoided through mutual cooperation and tolerance towards each other's development.

Across the board, the provocative strategies of two major powers entail high prospects to led the international world order towards a new cold war. As both major powers are trying to expand their influence by sprouting up alliances with each other allies and transitioning world order towards complex multi-polarity that would be complex and messier than before. However, the vulnerability lies in the fact that two major powers have too much at stake to allow ties to deteriorate in a Cold War 2.0 as both are overly interdependent on each other to resume the reins of avoiding each other. The historical cooperation on various fronts between two major powers could place Confrontation aside and find a way to collaborate on areas of common ground. However, it is yet to be seen whether Biden's strategy will escalate the prospects of Cold War 2.0 or will intensify cooperation between the two major powers. However, two major powers can still arrest the hostility and danger of evolving international order through shared global leadership.



Leaders, decision-makers, and business professionals gathered in Islamabad for the highly anticipated 6th Edition of the Leaders in Islamabad Business Summit. The summit, which was put together by Nutshell Conferences Group and Martin Dow Group in collaboration with the Overseas Investors Chamber

The five crucial Es, as Prof. Iqbal referred to them during the summit, are exports, e-Pakistan (digitization), environment (water and food security), energy (moving toward renewable energy sources), and equity and empowerment. These components served as the cornerstone for conversations and

initiatives meant to enhance Pakistan.

In his welcome address, Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, the founder and CEO of Nutshell Group and a former minister of state and the chairman of the Board of Investment (BoI), emphasised the necessity for a thorough rethink in order to

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## BIG RE-THINK

### Rethink for Sustainability and Progress

#### Desk Report

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of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) and Unity Foods Limited, sought to spur debate on sustainability, advancement, and the necessity of disruptive thinking in Pakistan's business environment.

The summit's slogan, "The BIG Rethink," established the tone for the occasion by challenging attendees to reexamine conventional methods and adopt cutting-edge tactics for sustainable growth. More than 50 speakers from domestic and foreign organisations from diverse industries participated in the two-day summit.

In order to build a sustainable and stable future, the summit's opening session concentrated on the significance of streamlining policies and encouraging collaboration. The Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, emphasised the importance of population management, education, and health as vital factors in fast development.



advance Pakistan. Citing successful examples from the ASEAN and Central Asian Republics, he cited education, health, and digitization as key pillars for the development of the nation.

The summit's second day included seminars on a variety of subjects, such as the future of digital technology, the state of education, crafting narratives, and climate change. These sessions gave specialists a forum to discuss their observations and viewpoints on the main difficulties and possibilities facing their particular disciplines.

The indigenization of Pakistan's energy production was a prominent topic of controversy. The Federal Minister for Power, Khurram Dastgir Khan, emphasised the move toward indigenous energy sources, such as the Thar Coal project, and the efforts to maintain the base tariff for power despite severe devaluation.

The critical need for digital transformation in numerous industries was also stressed at the summit. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) was recognised for its role in advancing digitalization by

Faisal Rehman, Managing Partner Middle East at SoftBank Investment Advisers. He also underlined the significance of utilising unique data for economic growth through analytics.

VEON's Group CEO Kaan Terziolu emphasised the need of turning data into useful knowledge that can power value-added services. In order to close the digital divide, he argued for broad 4G coverage and promoted universal access to the Internet.

Panel discussions held during the summit brought together eminent individuals from many fields to share their thoughts.



Financial collaboration, the role of renewable energy sources in lowering energy costs, the significance of innovation and digitalization, and the potential for privatisation to spur development in the power sector were some of the subjects explored in these conversations.

The former national security adviser for Pakistan, Dr. Moeed Yusuf, the president and CEO of HBL and chairman of the Pakistan Business Council, Muhammad Aurangzeb, the president and CEO of Engro Corporation, Ghias Khan, the president and CEO of Jazz and the chairman of the Mobilink Microfinance Bank, Aamir Ibrahim, and the CEO of InfraZamin Pakistan, Maheen Rahman, were among the notable speakers.

Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz, emphasised the value of universal Internet access and warned against Internet shutdowns, adding that such acts would impede rather than advance growth. He also highlighted the accomplishments of RAAST, a project showcasing Pakistan's potential for digitization.

The transformational path of Faysal Bank Limited toward Islamic instruments was highlighted by Yousaf Hussain, President & CEO, underlining the importance of reevaluating and redesigning conventional banking procedures.

The panel discussions in the sessions "Leadership and Strategy in the Age of Disruption" and "Disruptive Changes in the Power Sector" focused on the value of empowering teams, embracing failure, taking the long view, and realising the need for disruptive



changes to address food insecurity, sustainability, and circular debt in the power sector.

The Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman, emphasised the significance of environmental sustainability while urging for increased diversity and media support in addressing climate change challenges. She also urged large hotels to stop using plastic bottles, pointing out Pakistan's position as a country at the forefront of climate change.

Gen. Zubair Mahmood Hayat, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (2016–2019), emphasised the importance of narratives in influencing

Pakistan's destiny. Inspiring by transformative leaders, he urged the country to take control of its political, social, and economic facets.

In conclusion, the 6th Edition of the Leaders in Islamabad Business Summit provided a forum for lively debate and constructive interactions, inspiring leaders to reconsider conventional strategies and adopt disruptive thinking for long-term success in Pakistan. The summit brought together a wide range of specialists and business titans who exchanged insightful knowledge, ground-breaking concepts, and plans for advancing the nation.



## THE WEB OF LIFE

### Importance and necessity of biodiversity globally

Javaid Iqbal Maken

The "biodiversity" created by nature, which includes not only humans but also all other known and undiscovered organisms, is such a vast and integrated system based on the relationship between each organism and other organisms that any loss or threat to one causes the "biodiversity" as a whole to decline.

Concerningly, during their evolutionary phases, human cultures did not fully appreciate "eco-diversity" and gave less attention to preserving the natural system. According to a recent study, up to a million species of plants and animals could become extinct due to a lack of concern for biodiversity in the ecosystem, and countless

more species of plants and animals are already extinct or in danger of going extinct.

A recent UN report issued a warning about the reduction of plants, animals, bees, and insects that are crucial to the production of human sustenance. Our ability to feed ourselves will be seriously threatened if such key species vanish. According to the report's authors, rising pollution, shifting land use patterns, and climate change are all contributing factors to this reduction in biodiversity.

The world's plants, animals, and insects are not being generated as quickly as we need despite the efforts being used to rescue them. The diversity of plants, animals, and other life forms, including

wild animals, domestic animals, and the plants and foods we grow, is referred to as biodiversity for food. All of these creatures and plants give us basic nutrition, energy, and fibre. This indicates that biodiversity also includes life that is beneficial to humans, such as bees, insects that carry plant seeds, insects, sea grasses, seaweed, and mosses, or fungi. All of these factors maintain the soil's fertility while also purifying the air and water.

The report cites a number of causes for the decline in biodiversity, the most significant of which are as follows:

- (1) Change in land and water use.
- (2) Pollution.

- (3) Cultivating more than the land area.
- (4) Climate change
- (5) Increase in population and migration to cities.

The World Food and Agriculture Organization's experts agree that biodiversity is crucial for food security, wholesome, energy-dense foods, rural employment, and people's capacity to endure suffering on a global scale. The United Nations' study on biological diversity actually conveys two messages to humans.

First, the variety and scarcity of the food sources on which the world's expanding population depends are declining. For instance, only nine species of the 6,000 plant or crop species that are farmed for food account for 66% of food production. Similar to domesticated animals, only a small number of the world's domesticated bird and livestock species are raised for their meat, milk, or eggs.

The report also makes the crucial point that many species of life that are essential to agriculture and food production are in danger of extinction or are already in decline. For instance, there are roughly 1,000 species of hydrangea that are now not as widely distributed. These include numerous animals, plants, birds, and fish.

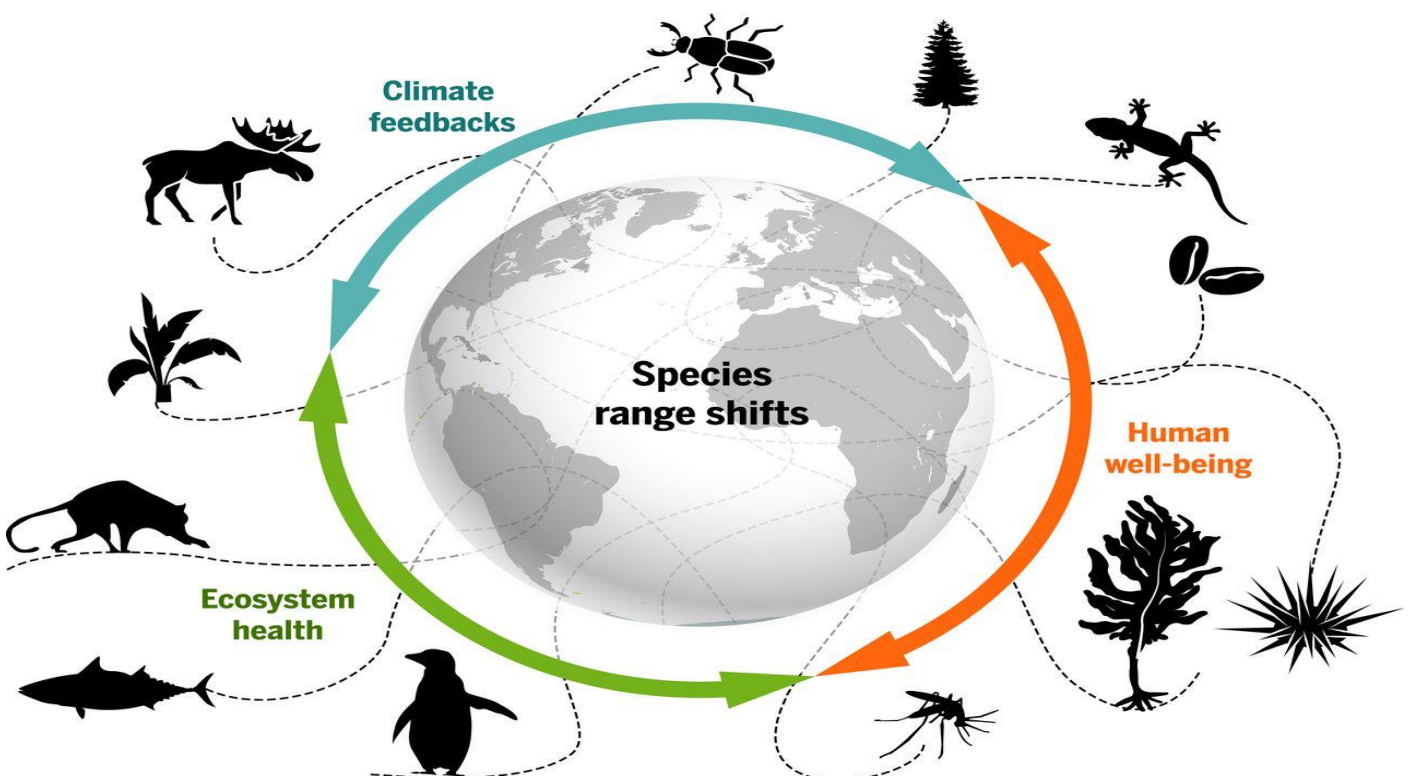
In addition, a large number of experts who contributed to the report's preparation state that other significant factors for the decline in biodiversity include the rise in temperature, air pollution, inappropriate use of drugs and fertilisers in agriculture, as well as an increasing amount of extraction from the land. such as obtaining crops.

The report lists a number of purportedly "diversity-friendly behaviours" that are spreading around the globe. According to the research, around 80% of the nations use some of these techniques. Consumers themselves hold the actual power

to address food shortages, just as they do with other environmental and climate challenges.

The general people might favour foods that farmers sell at markets and might avoid buying goods made in questionable ways. Although the fact that many nations are implementing techniques that can sustainably supply the world's food demands is extremely encouraging, many of these new techniques are only being applied on a relatively modest scale.

The role of those people and institutions who voluntarily not only monitor biodiversity but also work for the protection of plants, animals, and other species is highlighted in the paper, the analysts claim. They contend that in order to combat climate change and generate food without endangering the environment, we must employ biodiversity in a sustainable manner. Given its significance, we should preserve biodiversity so that humans can continue to eat.



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# YOUM-E-TAKBEER

## Promoting Peace, Stability, and Development

### Desk Report

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Every year, Youm-e-Takbeer serves as a time to give thanks and celebrate our country. The nation pays a heartfelt tribute on this day to the leaders, scientists, engineers, technicians, security guards, strategists, and diplomats who have made priceless contributions throughout the years to Pakistan's nuclear adventure. The core of our impenetrable national security and an essential contributor to accelerated socioeconomic progress continues to be Pakistan's nuclear programme, which is supported by total public consensus. Pakistan had maintained a strong operationalized deterrent capacity along with an excellent nuclear safety and security system in the 25 years after crossing the Rubicon. Pakistan had gained international recognition as a trustworthy nuclear power. Additionally, active nuclear diplomacy continued to promote Pakistan's foreign objectives of restraint and responsibility and to work toward mainstreaming the nuclear order.

On May 28, the nation will enthusiastically commemorate Youm-e-Takbeer, the momentous day when Pakistan successfully conducted nuclear testing in the Chaghai Hills 25 years ago.

By conducting the tests, Pakistan strengthened its position in the area and restored the balance of power by becoming the region's and the Islamic world's first nuclear-armed nation.

Youm-e-Takbeer, which guaranteed unbeatable defence capabilities and regional security through power equilibrium, is seen as a watershed moment in Pakistani history.

'Nukes acquisition indeed a remarkable achievement':  
President Alvi

President Arif Alvi noted that Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons was "truly a tremendous



achievement" at the time since it was necessary to preserve the balance of power in the neighbourhood.

He congratulated the country on having nuclear weapons and claimed that Pakistan had conducted the tests in reaction to India's admission that it had atomic bombs.

"The nation pays tribute to its renowned engineers and scientists who made Pakistan a nuclear power in a short span," Alvi added.

'No compromise on national defence': PM Shehbaz

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reiterated that the national defence and sovereignty were invincible in his address on the occasion. According to him, Youm-e-Takbeer was a clear statement that "no compromise over country's sovereignty, and defence," and it served as a reminder that the country will not back down from whatever sacrifice made to protect.

He said that the nation values its freedom, dignity, and national defence above all else, and no one has the guts to take them away.

In order to achieve economic independence and sovereignty, he urged the nation to proceed in the same spirit as that which was demonstrated on Youm-e-Takbir.

The prime minister praised the patriotism of former leaders Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who started Pakistan's nuclear programme, and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who conducted nuclear tests under intense pressure from outside sources.

The prime minister also praised the efforts of Pakistan, Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan, and all other scientists, engineers, and people who helped establish nuclear deterrent. He also thanked Saudi Arabia and other friendly nations for supporting Pakistan during the economic sanctions brought on by the atomic programme.

Army honours those who contributed to the nuclear programme.

The director general of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) emphasised the significance of the day by declaring that despite obstacles, the armed forces pay rich tribute to the "great minds who designed and achieved" nuclear deterrence.

"We salute the scientists and engineers who turned the impossible into a reality. Long Live Pakistan," the military's media wing stated.

The nation's determination to protect its territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty as well as its aim to maintain the strategic balance in South Asia were both made plain by Pakistan's nuclear tests.

In 1974, India conducted the first test of its "device," which forced Pakistan to intensify its nuclear development.

Pakistan conducted its first test on May 28, 1998, at the RasKoh hills in the Chaghai District of Balochistan, amid cries of "Allah-o-Akbar."

While maintaining its capabilities to repel any kind of aggression or adventurism, Pakistan is dedicated to fostering a climate of peace and stability in South Asia.

It adheres to the most recent international standards on export controls and upholds the highest standards of nuclear safety and security. It is a partner in international efforts to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime based on the principles of non-discrimination and equal security for all states.





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On 25 May 1963, Africa made history with the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) the precursor to the African Union (AU).

Africa Day is intended to celebrate and acknowledge the successes of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU now the AU) from its

The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI) organized a special event to celebrate “Africa Day 2023.”

The Speakers included: Chief Guest, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit Baltistan, Mr. Qamar Zaman

members of the business community and students participated in the celebratory event. Stalls exhibiting African products were also set up by the African Missions in Islamabad.

In this keynote address on the occasion, Adviser to the Prime Minister Mr. Qamar Zaman Kaira

## AFRICA DAY 2023

### Uniting Nations, Empowering People

#### Desk Report

creation on May 25, 1963, in the fight against colonialism and apartheid, as well as the progress that Africa has made while reflecting upon the common challenges that the continent faces in a global environment.

The annual commemoration of Africa Day marks the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

Kaira; Dean of African Corps/Ambassador of Morocco, H.E. Mohammad Karmoune; Additional Secretary Africa, Mr. Javed Ahmad Umerani; Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood; and Director CAMEA, Ms. Amina Khan.

The Heads of African Missions in Pakistan and Heads of Pakistan Missions in Africa also spoke on the occasion. Academics and

said that Africa was a Continent full of opportunities and potential and was poised to play an increasingly important role globally, in the years to come. He added that Pakistan’s “Engage Africa” policy was a testament to Pakistan’s commitment to strengthening its relations with African nations in myriad field. He further added that this policy was encouraging trade and

investment between Pakistan and African countries. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to the "Engage Africa" policy, he stated that we must overcome any challenges and keep moving forward towards greater progress.

Director General ISSI Amb. Sohail Mahmood, in his welcome remarks, said Pakistan's relations with Africa were long-standing — marked by warmth, cordiality, mutual respect and close cooperation. Africa, with its vast natural resources, young population and untapped potential had emerged as a land of immense opportunities. The Continent was experiencing rapid economic growth and technological advancement. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) had multiplied those possibilities and it was no wonder that Africa was called the 'Continent of the Future.'

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood added that this Africa Day was an important occasion to acknowledge the significance of "Engage Africa" policy as part of Pakistan commitment to comprehensively upgrade its partnership with African countries, both on the bilateral and Continental plane. This policy recognized Africa as a priority in Pakistan's foreign policy agenda. Besides geo-political considerations, the key driver of "Engage Africa" policy was Pakistan's pivot to geo-economics. This policy framework was aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063 as well. He concluded by stressing the importance for both Pakistan and African partners to have clear vision, consistent policy, and long-term strategy.

Director CAMEA Amina Khan, while giving her views, said that every year CAMEA at ISSI commemorates 'Africa Day'. This served as a testament to ISSI's unwavering commitment to foster closer relations between Pakistan and the African Continent. She added that Pakistan had established and strengthened diplomatic missions across the Continent to facilitate meaningful dialogue and promote cooperation in diverse areas of mutual interest. Economic cooperation formed a vital pillar of Pakistan's engagement with Africa and therefore recognized the tremendous potential for trade and investment between the two sides.

Ambassador Mohammed Karmoune, Dean of the African Corps in Pakistan, while expressing his views said that Africa was now building its single market to facilitate trade among States parties to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and with the rest of the world. He further said that the African Union had made the 'Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area implementation' its main theme for the year 2023 to increase the attractiveness of the African market for trade and investment, though a number of critical protocols were yet to be negotiated, finalized and implemented. He noted that the 'Engage Africa' policy had resulted in the organisation of three Trade and Development Conferences in Africa. The objective of these forums had been to highlight the untapped potential of trade and investment relations with African countries and to present

Pakistan's export sectors to African business communities. He also shared his thoughts on how the economic relationship could be further deepened and broadened.

Mr. Javed Ahmad Umrani, Additional Secretary (Africa) at the Foreign Office, underlined that Africa Day served as a significant reminder of the historic struggles and aspirations of the African people in their journey towards independence, self-determination and unity, which Pakistan had fully supported. Pakistan and Africa shared bonds that went beyond geographical proximity and these historical bonds had been reemphasized with the introduction of the 'Engage Africa' policy by Pakistan, which had become an important part of the country's foreign policy agenda.

An interactive discussion followed, where representatives from the African Missions based in Pakistan shared their views. Representatives from the Pakistani Missions based in Africa also joined virtually and reiterated the importance of closer ties with Africa. They also provided updates as well as suggestions on growing trade, economic and investment ties and people-to-people exchanges.

The event concluded with the launch of a Special Issue of ISSI's PIVOT magazine titled 'Engaging Africa.' A cake was cut in celebration of Africa Day.

At the end, the Chief Guest visited all the stalls established by African Missions in Islamabad, displaying African food and other products, which were introduced by the concerned Heads of Missions.

# Pay Raises vs. Inflation

## A Closer Look at Pakistan's Upcoming Federal Budget 2023-24

Azhar Jatoi

The federal budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 in Pakistan is eagerly awaited, and here are some important details about what can be expected when it is tabled in the National Assembly on June 9. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar announced this date during a seminar organized by the National Security Division in Islamabad on May 11.

1. Total Outlay: The expected outlay for the federal budget 2023-24 is set at Rs16,600 billion or Rs16.6 trillion, a significant increase compared to the Rs9.5 trillion allocated for the fiscal year 2022-23.

2. Pay Raise for Government Employees: The government plans to announce a 20% increase in salaries for federal government employees and a 15% increase for pensioners. However, this raise may not be enough to keep up with the soaring inflation rate, which stands at over 40%.

3. Public Sector Development Program (PSDP): The PSDP will bear the brunt of the

economic challenges in the country. The estimated PSDP for the year 2023-24 is Rs950 billion, slightly higher than the Rs800 billion allocated in the ongoing fiscal year. However, there are reports that it could be reduced to Rs700 billion, with an additional Rs150 billion allocated for public-private partnership programs.

4. GST and Other Taxes: The government does not plan to offer tax relief to the people, so the taxes introduced under the mini-budget earlier this year will continue into the next fiscal year. The GST rate, increased to 18% from 15% in the mini-budget, will remain unchanged, affecting the prices of packed food.

5. FBR Target: The Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) has been given a revenue collection target of Rs8,200 billion, compared to Rs7,000 billion for the fiscal year 2022-23. The government also aims to raise Rs2,396 billion from non-tax revenue sources.

6. Vicious Cycle of Debt: In the next fiscal year, Pakistan will be paying a staggering \$7.56 billion (Rs2,140 billion) in debt servicing. To meet these obligations, the country will borrow more money from local and international sources, aiming to secure at least Rs1,804 billion from other countries or financial institutions.

The upcoming federal budget will have significant implications for

the economy and the livelihoods of the people of Pakistan. As the details are unveiled, it will become clearer how the government plans to address the economic challenges, manage debt, and spur sustainable growth in the country.



On the occasion of the 72nd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan, Chinese Embassy held the reception on

Pakistan relationship has profound historical roots, solid public support and strong practical needs. Under the strong leadership of President Xi Jinping,

by President Xi Jinping, and the 10th anniversary of the launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. With the joint efforts of both sides, CPEC has achieved

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## FROM PAST TO PRESENT

### Reflections on the 72-Year History of Pakistan-China Diplomatic Relations

#### Desk Report

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“China-Pakistan Unbreakable Friendship and the Bright Future” on May 19. H.E. Ms. Pang Chunxue, Charge d’Affaires of the Chinese Embassy, H.E. Dr. Asad Majeed Khan, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Mazhar Javed, Director General of Foreign Service Academy spoke at the reception, which were attended by former Pakistani Ambassadors to China, officials from MFA and Pakistani young diplomats along with Chinese diplomats.

Ms. Pang welcomed friends old and new to the Chinese Embassy, emphasized that the China-

China is steadfastly advancing the process of Chinese modernization. China will provide new opportunities for the development of countries including Pakistan, with new accomplishments in Chinese modernization. As developing countries, both China and Pakistan are constantly exploring development paths that suit their own national conditions, and are actively committed to maintaining world peace and stability.

Ms. Pang stated that this year marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative proposed

fruitful outcomes covering areas of industry, agriculture, IT, disaster prevention and mitigation, etc., which made significant contributions to promoting Pakistan’s economic and social development, upgrading Pakistan’s infrastructure, improving Pakistani people’s well-being, enhancing people to people contact and deepening regional connectivity. CPEC has become well-known hallmark of China-Pakistan cooperation.

Ms. Pang said that from 5th May to 6th May, Chinese State

Councilor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang paid a successful visit to Pakistan, which is of tremendous significance in solidifying and deepening the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic partnership of cooperation. She conveyed great appreciation to successive generations of diplomats from the two countries for their painstaking efforts and contributions, and asserted that China will join hands with Pakistan to implement the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries in real earnest and continuously promote the great cause of China-Pakistan friendship with great strides.

Pakistan Foreign Secretary Dr Asad Majeed Khan applauded the contribution of generations of the two countries' diplomats to the achievements of China and Pakistan unbreakable friendship and cooperation. The change of the compound of Chinese Embassy in Pakistan itself is the witness of the development of friendship with its previous compound been handed over to Pakistan government and became

the Foreign Service Academy and the new compound became the biggest one in all Chinese Embassies abroad.

He appreciated that Chinese friends always unswervingly provide generous help, give strong support to Pakistan's sovereignty and independence, financial stability and infrastructure construction. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has brought prosperity and progress to Pakistan's economy and society, which Pakistan is deeply grateful of. In the year marking the 10th anniversary of the "Belt and Road Initiative" and the launch of the CPEC, China and Pakistan should jointly celebrate this memorable moment. Now that the baton of China-Pakistan friendship has been handed over to a new generation of diplomats, it is hoped that diplomats of the two countries will work together to build a closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future.

Dr. Mazhar Javed said that the relations between China and Pakistan have been nurtured by

both sides for last 72 years. All-round cooperation between the two sides provides valuable opportunities for exchanges and learning between the younger generation. The engagement of State Councilor and Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Qin Gang with Pakistani young diplomats in his visit to Islamabad and the reception held are very helpful to Pakistani Young diplomats in strengthening their understanding of the China-Pakistan iron-clad relationship. He hoped that young diplomats will continue the traditional friendship throughout their career, and promote greater development of China-Pakistan relations.

Before the reception, the guests watched the photos on history of the China-Pakistan friendship and the transformation of the Chinese Embassy compound, enjoyed traditional Chinese tea ceremony performance, and made dumplings by themselves. The whole atmosphere was warm, cheerful and harmonious.





## PAKISTAN'S DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS Seeking Support to Boycott Future G20 Events in IIOJK

**Dr. Abdul Rauf**

The G20, a group comprising the world's largest economies, serves as a global forum for discussions on various economic matters. However, the recent decision by India to host the G20 meeting in Srinagar, the capital of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), has raised concerns and marred the event's objective. This article explores the implications of this decision, highlighting the disputed nature of Kashmir and the consequences it has on international relations.

**Kashmir Dispute and UN Resolution:**

Kashmir has long been a disputed area under the United Nations resolution, and its fate is yet to be decided by the Kashmiri people themselves. India's attempt to showcase Kashmir as its territory through hosting the G20 meeting in Srinagar has not fooled the international community, which remains aware of the complex situation and the need for a resolution that respects the rights of the Kashmiri people.

**G20 as a Leading Global Forum:**

Established in 1999, the G20 serves as a significant platform for economic cooperation among its

19 member countries and the European Union. India, as a founding member, plays a vital role in shaping the agenda of the G20 and its program outcomes. However, hosting the summit in a disputed territory raises ethical, moral, and legal implications that overshadow the forum's objectives.

**Dissatisfaction and Opposition:**

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, along with China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Oman, and Egypt, expressed dissatisfaction and opposition to the choice of venue. These

countries understand the sensitive nature of the Kashmir issue and the need to respect international law and the UN Charter. Their stance reflects the international community's concern regarding India's attempts to legitimize its control over the region.

#### **Human Rights Concerns:**

Holding the G20 meeting in a disputed territory like Kashmir brings attention to the severe human rights violations and the ongoing conflict in the region. The United Nations special rapporteur on minority affairs criticized the decision, emphasizing that India's choice aims to normalize its military occupation. This raises questions about the promotion of tourism and development in an environment where human rights are at risk.

#### **Potential Diplomatic Escalation:**

Pakistan has been proactive in internationalizing the Kashmir issue, seeking support from member states, particularly

Muslim countries, to boycott events taking place in Jammu and Kashmir. The country urges the UN to issue an official statement on the choice of venue and take legal action against India for violating UN Security Council resolutions. This could lead to a diplomatic escalation between Pakistan and G20 member states.

#### **Economic Implications:**

India's desire to attract foreign direct investment and engage in economic activities during the summit clashes with the reality of the region's lockdown and limited freedom of movement for local residents. The choice of a disputed area for the G20 summit undermines the potential for sustainable economic governance and raises questions about ethical and legal implications for participating countries.

#### **Normalcy versus Reality in Kashmir:**

India's attempt to project a sense of normalcy in Kashmir contrasts with the harsh reality on the

ground. The heavily militarized region continues to witness arbitrary arrests, harassment, and human rights violations. Low-level representation and the absence of important invitees at the Srinagar meeting reflect the international community's skepticism and refusal to endorse India's narrative.

#### **International Support:**

Countries such as China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Oman, and Egypt stood against India's choice of venue, emphasizing the disputed nature of Jammu and Kashmir. Their support for international law and the UN Charter reinforces the need to address the Kashmir issue through peaceful means and dialogue.

#### **Urgent Need for UN Involvement:**

Pakistan calls on the UN to intervene and establish an independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights violations in IIOJK. By doing so, the UN can play a significant role in resolving the conflict and ensuring the rights of the Kashmiri people are upheld.

India's decision to host the G20 meeting in Srinagar has drawn attention to the long-standing Kashmir dispute and the human rights violations occurring in the region. The choice of venue has polarized opinions and raised concerns among G20 member states. As the international community continues to grapple with the Kashmir issue, it is crucial to prioritize dialogue, respect for international law, and the rights of the Kashmiri people in seeking a lasting resolution.



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# EXPLORING NEW AVENUES

## Pakistan and Belarus Forge Closer Ties

### Desk Report

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Belarus is an Eastern European country that is landlocked. It is bounded to the east and northeast by Russia, to the south by Ukraine, to the west by Poland, and to the northwest by Lithuania and Latvia. Belarus is the 13th-largest and 20th-most populous country in Europe, with an area of 207,600 square kilometres and a population of 9.2 million. The country has a hemiboreal climate and is divided into seven administrative regions. The capital and largest city is Minsk. Belarus is a developing nation that ranks 60th on the Human Development Index. Since its inception, the country has been a member of the United Nations, as well as the CIS, the CSTO, the EAEU, the OSCE, and the Non-Aligned Movement. Although it

has shown no desire to join the European Union, it maintains a bilateral connection with the union and participates in two EU programmes, the Baku Initiative and the Eastern Partnership. Its strategic location has grown more important as a result of the Ukraine conflict, and it has come to the attention of the Western world as a result of its close ties with Russia.

Belarus-Pakistan relations refer to Belarus and Pakistan's current and historical ties. After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognise Belarus. Pakistan has an embassy in Minsk, and Belarus has an embassy in Islamabad.

Pakistan and Belarus established joint ventures (JVs) in the textile, pharmaceutical, and lighting solution industries, while exchanging technological know-how. Pakistan imported \$42.65 million from Belarus, the majority of which were tractors (62.04 percent), artificial filament yarn (13.01 percent), and rubber tyres (8.06 percent). Belarus has praised Pakistan's role and efforts in ensuring world peace and stability by combating terrorism, and has pledged his country's full assistance in this struggle.

On the request of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, H.E. Mr. Sergei Aleinik,





paid an official visit to Islamabad on May 30 to 31, 2023.

In addition to having thorough delegation-level bilateral talks, Foreign Minister Sergei Aleinik paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir during his visit.

H.E. Mr. Sergei Aleinik also met with H.E. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Minister of Economic Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

In an environment of friendliness and mutual understanding, the two Foreign Ministers had a wide-ranging and comprehensive discussion on a variety of themes including political, economic, technological, cultural, educational, and multilateral cooperation. The two sides committed to take real steps to turn mutual goodwill between their governments and peoples into tangible collaboration in several spheres.

The Ministers expressed their delight with the cordial relations formed between the Republic of

Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and they strongly valued the bilateral meetings and engagement at the highest and highest levels that have occurred in recent years.

The Ministers welcomed the 6th Session of the Joint Belarusian-Pakistani Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, which will be held in Minsk on January 12-13, 2023, under the chairmanship of H.E. Viktor Karankevich, Minister of Energy of the Republic of Belarus, and H.E. Khurram Dastgir Khan, Federal Minister of Energy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The Ministers underlined their desire to strengthen collaboration on mutually beneficial issues within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the United Nations, and other International Organizations, and reaffirmed their willingness to mutually support one another.

The Ministers noted both countries' desire to expand the legal framework of bilateral relations and welcomed the

signing of the Agreement on the Abolition of Visas for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports between the Governments of the Republic of Belarus and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, as well as between the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, and the Belarus Institute of Strategic Research.

The Ministers seek to promote corporate activities aimed at developing bilateral trade and industrial cooperation, including participation in exhibitions and fair events in both countries, face-to-face and online discussions, and business councils.

Given that the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and Pakistan will be on February 3, 2024, the Ministers welcomed the aim to prepare a plan of cooperative events commemorating the anniversary of diplomatic relations.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus expressed gratitude for the warm welcome extended to the Belarusian delegation and asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to visit the Republic of Belarus at a time suitable for him. The invitation was gratefully accepted, and the visit dates will be arranged through diplomatic channels.

Both countries are committed to assisting and benefiting from one another's strengths. Both sides wish to enrich and strengthen cooperation in all areas of life, including trade, economy, industry, research and technology, education, and so on. Long live the relationship between Pakistan and Belarus.



# ENTERTAINMENT

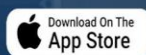
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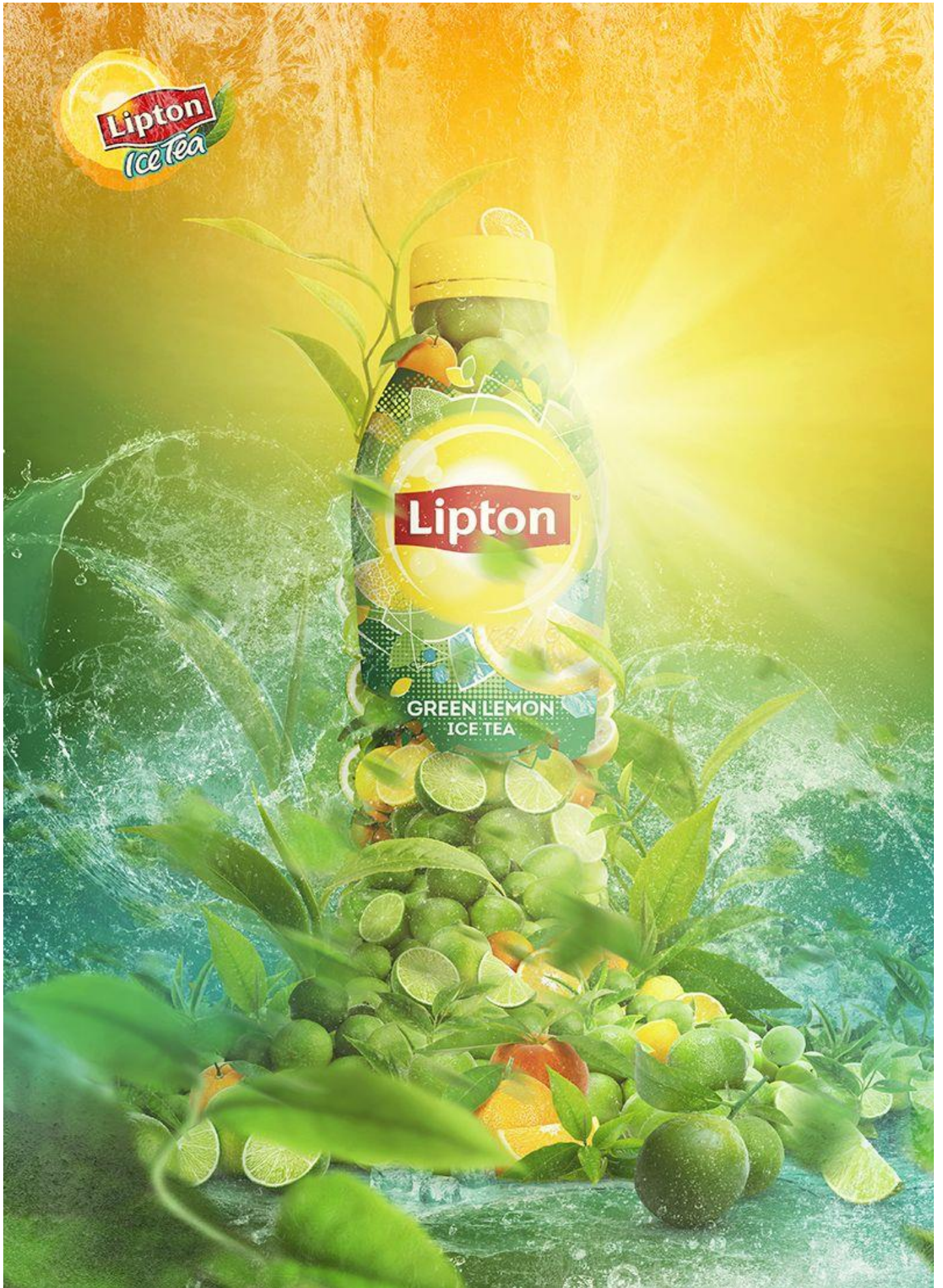
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