

# Monthly FORESIGHT Islamabad

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## Chief Editor Note

Welcome to this edition of Foresight. In these pages, we delve into Pakistan's evolving narrative - one marked by challenges turned opportunities and global milestones celebrated.

Our lead feature explores how Pakistan's resilience and innovation are shaping its path. As the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) enters its second decade, it's a testament to collaborative progress.

We touch upon the importance of World Population Day and the evolving meaning of independence for the United States. Additionally, the enduring ties between Pakistan and Canada underscore the strength of unity amidst diversity.

As global economics take center stage, we anticipate insights from the upcoming BRICS summit and delve into Pakistan's journey towards food security, highlighting gender-inclusive policies.

Lastly, we invite you to the captivating Shandur Polo Festival, where tradition meets sportsmanship against the stunning Himalayan backdrop.

Join us in exploring these facets that shape Pakistan and the world. Happy reading!

Sincerely,



*Tanveer Ali Maken*

# PAKISTAN'S CHALLENGES

## Transforming Troubles into Opportunities

Tanveer Ali Maken

Pakistan, once grappling with issues of governance and government, now finds itself confronting a larger challenge—a crisis of the state itself. The stakes have escalated to the survival of Pakistan as a nation. The interplay of political inertia, governance stagnation, escalating security concerns, and an impending economic collapse have formed a web of interconnected problems. Even though this crisis could have been managed, the absence of a clear roadmap or strategy has left the nation grasping at straws, characterized by makeshift solutions that fall short of addressing the fundamental issues at hand.

While aspirations to reimagine Pakistan's trajectory are admirable, the absence of a comprehensive plan with concrete policy and administrative steps to mend the economy and secure the nation's viability remains glaring. It is often assumed that unity and consensus can birth a plan, when, in reality, it is the reverse that holds true—a consensus can rally around a well-structured plan. Despite the gravity of the situation, a widespread denial of the depth of the crisis and its underlying causes persists.

A stark illustration of the economic fracture lies in the fiscal

calculations. The projected federal government revenue for the fiscal year 2023 amounts to PKR 5.03 trillion, while debt servicing is estimated at PKR 5.2 trillion due to surging interest rates. This equates to the entirety of federal revenue being channeled into servicing debt, leaving essential sectors to rely on further borrowing. The situation is set to exacerbate with impending spikes in power tariffs, fuel costs, and taxes, alongside a depreciating Pakistani rupee. This domino effect could drive inflation to startling heights, potentially between 35-40 percent, putting additional strain on debt servicing. The





predicament is unsustainable and mandates immediate attention.

Pakistan's debt trajectory has been alarming, doubling approximately every five years over the past quarter-century. The debt accumulation has outpaced anaemic economic growth, with the GDP expanding at an average of only 3 percent annually, while debt escalated at an average of around 14 percent per annum. The resulting debt-trap has ensnared the nation, starkly visible as debt obligations mount.

Addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive overhaul, signifying a deconstruction and rebuilding of the economy. The landscape requires the closure of inefficient, government-subsidized entities, cutting back on elite-targeted subsidies, and broadening the tax base. Exemptions and concessions for special interest groups must make way for equitable taxation. Downsizing the state machinery, closing ministries, and restructuring sectors hitherto untouched by taxation are crucial steps.

At present, Pakistan's economy treads water, desperately clinging to survival amidst plummeting foreign exchange reserves and a free-falling rupee. An impending fuel crisis, crumbling supply chains, and stalling industries exacerbate the already grim situation. The pursuit of IMF conditions for temporary relief, including increased tariffs and taxes, underscores short-term measures that only offer a lifeline, not resuscitation.

The broader picture reveals that the IMF program's limited scope postpones, rather than remedies, default. Deeper, sustainable solutions are imperative. The crisis is an opportunity for Pakistan to chart a new course—one focused on restructuring its economy, instituting social and political reforms, renouncing terrorism unequivocally, and securing a debt restructuring plan. International cooperation can facilitate a transformative shift. The existential threat Pakistan faces can be harnessed as an opportunity to reshape the nation, assuring its stability and promoting regional and global security.

In conclusion, Pakistan stands at a crossroads. Its choice between default and debt restructuring presents difficult paths, both laden with pain and difficulty. Nonetheless, both avenues necessitate substantial, prolonged assistance from multilateral organizations and bilateral partners. The situation offers the international community a golden opportunity to reshape Pakistan into a stable, sustainable nation—a chance to steer it away from the brink and transform it into a force for regional and global stability.

It is time for Pakistan to embark on a holistic plan that restructures its economy, fosters social and political reform, eradicates terrorism, and renegotiates its debt commitments. Only through concerted efforts, both domestic and international, can Pakistan seize the chance to reemerge as a thriving, responsible nation that secures the well-being of its citizens, fosters regional cooperation, and contributes positively to the global arena.



# C P E C

## A DECADE OF FRIENDSHIP Development, and Strategic Impact

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

*China and Pakistan have built a model of economic cooperation for the world to learn from.*

Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China.

As the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) completes its first decade, it stands as a testament to the enduring friendship between China and Pakistan and the transformative power of strategic partnerships. Launched in 2013 as a flagship project under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the CPEC has emerged as a game-changer, reshaping the economic and infrastructural landscape of both nations. A decade of collaboration has brought about remarkable achievements, cementing the foundation for shared prosperity and regional connectivity.

The ambitious CPEC initiative aimed to connect Gwadar Port in southwestern Pakistan with China's northwestern region of Xinjiang through a network of highways, railways, and pipelines. Its overarching objective was to stimulate economic growth, alleviate poverty, and strengthen regional connectivity. Today,

CPEC encompasses various sectors, including energy, infrastructure development, industrial cooperation, and the promotion of Gwadar as a major trade hub.

During the past ten years, CPEC has witnessed the successful completion of several milestone projects. The construction of Gwadar Port, an integral part of CPEC, has transformed it into a bustling international port city. With Chinese investment and expertise, Gwadar Port has become a crucial maritime gateway connecting Pakistan to the world, providing a significant boost to trade and commerce in the region.

The energy sector has also experienced a significant transformation under CPEC. The establishment of several power projects, including coal, wind, solar, and hydroelectric, has helped bridge Pakistan's energy deficit, reducing load shedding, and ensuring a stable

power supply for industries and households. These initiatives have not only enhanced the country's energy security but also laid the groundwork for a greener and more sustainable future.

Furthermore, CPEC has played a vital role in boosting industrialization and economic diversification in Pakistan. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) established under the project have attracted both domestic and foreign investments, creating new employment opportunities and fostering economic growth. The transfer of technology and expertise from Chinese companies has been instrumental in enhancing Pakistan's industrial productivity and competitiveness.

The impact of CPEC extends beyond Pakistan's borders, encompassing the entire region. As a linchpin of the BRI, the corridor has strengthened connectivity between China, Pakistan, and other countries in the region, fostering regional integration and trade. The development of transport infrastructure, including the Karakoram Highway and the Peshawar-Karachi Motorway, has reduced travel time and improved connectivity, facilitating the movement of goods and people.

As we reflect on a decade of CPEC, the words of President Xi Jinping ring true: "Friendship between China and Pakistan is rock solid and unbreakable." The successful implementation of the CPEC projects demonstrates the depth of this friendship and the mutual benefits derived from it. The initiative has not only bolstered economic cooperation but has also enhanced people-to-people exchanges, cultural understanding, and strategic collaboration between the two nations.

Looking ahead, the next phase of CPEC holds tremendous potential. The completion of ongoing projects and the launch of new initiatives will further strengthen the economic and strategic ties between China and Pakistan. The focus will shift towards enhancing connectivity, promoting regional trade, and harnessing the potential of emerging sectors such as the digital economy and e-commerce.

The transformative journey of CPEC serves as an inspiration for other nations seeking to forge strategic partnerships for sustainable development. It underscores the significance of mutual trust, shared vision, and long-term commitment in realizing ambitious projects of this nature.

To usher the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into a new dimension and phase, the Chinese President is anticipated to make a significant visit to Pakistan. This forthcoming visit holds tremendous importance as the Chinese President is expected to inaugurate two pivotal projects that will greatly contribute to the country's progress. Firstly, the inauguration of the Gwadar International Airport will serve as a major milestone in the development of the strategic port city, bolstering its position as a key regional trade hub. Secondly, the Chinese President will oversee the inauguration of the 884MW Suki Kinari Hydropower Project, which not only signifies a remarkable achievement in energy cooperation between the two nations but has also generated approximately 4250 jobs during its construction phase. Situated on the scenic River Kunhar, a tributary of the mighty River Jhelum, this hydropower project exemplifies the shared commitment towards sustainable development and economic growth. The Chinese President's visit is poised to strengthen the bond between China and Pakistan and propel the CPEC initiative towards a brighter future, marked by enhanced cooperation and prosperity.

CPEC is a living example of the fact that we can achieve what we set out to do if we work together in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. As we celebrate a decade of CPEC, let us acknowledge the remarkable achievements and look forward to a future of continued cooperation, prosperity, and progress.

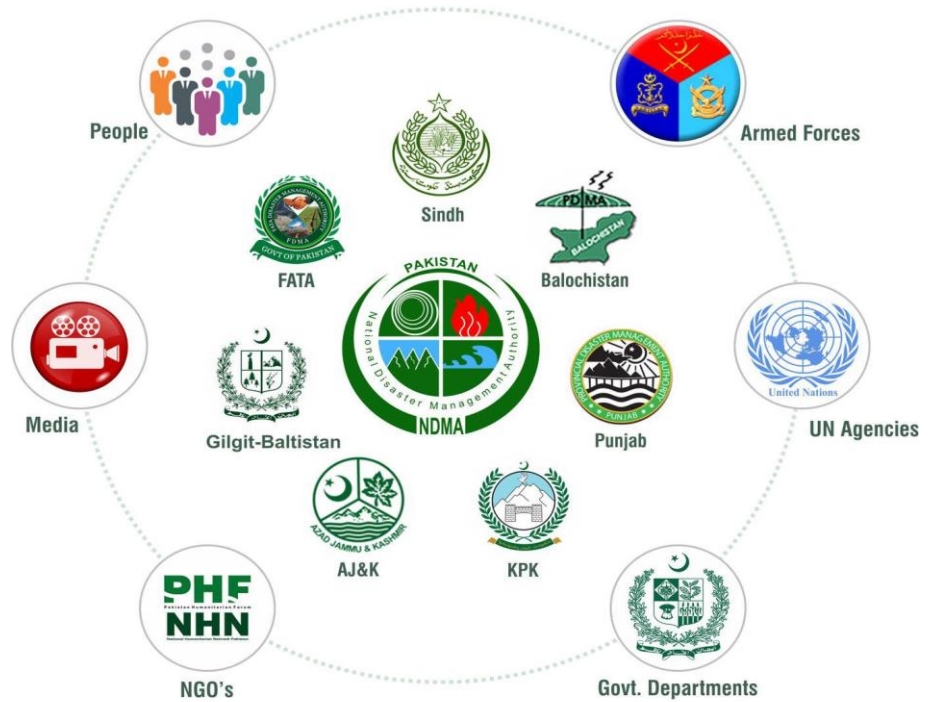
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As we celebrate the achievements of the past decade, let us acknowledge the remarkable progress made and look forward to a future of continued cooperation, prosperity, and progress.



Pakistan, situated in a geographically volatile region, has grappled with a series of natural hazards over the last decade that have tested its resilience and disaster preparedness. The earthquake of 2005, which struck the Kashmir region, left a devastating toll of over 75,000 lives lost, standing as a poignant testament to the region's susceptibility. Subsequent catastrophic events, including the unprecedented floods of 2010, 2013, and 2014, along with a lethal heatwave in 2015, have laid bare Pakistan's capacity to effectively manage and mitigate calamities. These occurrences offer critical benchmarks to assess



## COPING CALAMITIES

### Pakistan's Preparedness and Future Insights

Aniq ur Rehman

Pakistan's aptitude in dealing with natural disasters and underscore the imperative of cultivating robust strategies for disaster preparedness.

The landscape of Pakistan is a crucible for diverse natural hazards. The topography harbors geological fault lines, notably traversing the northern expanse, rendering it prone to seismic upheavals. The seismic jolt of magnitude 7.6 in 2005 that convulsed the Kashmir region remains a grim reminder of this vulnerability. Balochistan, typified by rugged terrain, experiences seismic tremors that further underscore the geophysical fragility. Conversely, the plains of Punjab and portions of Sindh

witness the recurring scourge of floods, exacerbated by the swelling of rivers during the monsoon season. In 2015, Karachi, the bustling coastal metropolis, encountered a deadly heatwave that exacted a toll of over 1,200 lives. The Thar Desert annually bears witness to the toll of blistering temperatures, while droughts ravage regions like Sindh. Collectively, these natural adversities have impacted the lives of over 40 million individuals since 2005, precipitating an economic setback exceeding USD 20 billion.

In the realm of disaster preparedness, Pakistan has embarked on a trajectory of remarkable progress, albeit with

nuances that warrant consideration. The establishment of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has effectively consolidated the reins of disaster-related undertakings at the federal echelon. This transition away from the antiquated National Calamities (Prevention and Relief) Act of 1958 underscores the commitment to bolstered preparedness. The provinces, consequent to the 18th Amendment to the Constitution in 2010, have assumed an empowered role in disaster management, with district governments entrusted with devolved responsibilities. The NDMA emerges as a lynchpin in orchestrating disaster response

endeavors, marshaling various stakeholders that span government departments, armed forces, NGOs, and INGOs.

Yet, amidst these advancements, a constellation of challenges remains embedded within Pakistan's disaster management framework. The conundrum of coordination persists, fueled by the entanglement of roles and responsibilities across policy-making entities, engendering inefficiencies. The undue dependence on the military for disaster management raises concerns about the government's resolve to nurture civilian institutions and formulate policies. While the establishment of the Ministry of Climate Change is a pivotal step, the interplay between climate change and disaster management mandates clear demarcation to circumvent encumbrances. This calls for a meticulous delineation of roles and communication mechanisms.

Education and the imbuing of resilience in societal consciousness are pivotal anchors in the endeavor of disaster preparedness. While the government harnesses mainstream media for awareness campaigns, their reactivity often trumps proactivity. NGOs, both autonomously and government-affiliated, contribute to localized awareness initiatives, yet their efforts lack congruence and consistency. The harnessing of civil society's potential to propagate comprehensive disaster preparedness education is an ongoing challenge, particularly in smaller locales and vulnerable geographies.

Concurrently, Pakistan's trajectory has elicited a spectrum of policy recommendations, calibrated to the nation's experiential tapestry. The imperative to revisit disaster management constructs is foregrounded, inciting a rigorous assessment of efficacy and alignment with intended objectives. A potent emphasis on local capacity-building emerges, galvanizing swift responses and empowering communities. An imperative pivot beckons, broadening the spectrum of focus to encompass less perceived risks, encompassing seismic events and heatwaves. This mandate resonates in the domain of enforcement of building codes and fortification of infrastructure against impending adversities.

Partnership crystallizes as a linchpin in surmounting fiscal constraints, ushering in innovative collaboration with the private sector and external stakeholders. Initiatives such as risk insurance funds, underpinned by symbiotic partnerships, emerge as potent tools to mitigate financial impediments. Outsourcing logistical management to the private domain, underpinned by outcomes-driven contracts overseen by external actors, navigates fiscal challenges. Private entities could spearhead early warning systems, marshaling data from public sector technical agencies and public data streams, disseminating alerts via mobile technology to affected regions.

At its core, Pakistan's trajectory mandates a nuanced recalibration, with the spotlight on disaster preparedness, eclipsing disaster management alone. A redrafted mission for the NDMA, spotlighting risk

reduction, prescribes an imperative. The electoral recognition of progressive policy champions is pivotal, sustaining incentives for a shift toward proactive preparedness initiatives. The media assumes a pivotal role in steering this transition and extolling pioneering pathfinders.

In culmination, Pakistan's journey through natural hazards underscores the imperativeness of fortifying disaster preparedness capabilities. As the nation navigates seismic shocks to scorching heatwaves, the mantle of disaster risk reduction is not merely a contingency but an inherent responsibility. Pakistan's paradigm shift, from disaster management to disaster preparedness, hinges on an assemblage of strategies. These encompass local capacity building, fortification against latent risks, symbiotic alliances with the private domain, and an intensified emphasis on preparedness. This orchestrated cadence resonates with the aspirations of a more resilient Pakistan, poised to weather nature's most tumultuous outbursts.



# BEYOND EIGHT BILLION

## World Population Day

### Nurturing a Sustainable Tomorrow

Desk Report

World Population Day, designated by the United Nations and observed annually on July 11th, serves as a global platform to shed light on pressing population concerns. This day aims to foster awareness regarding sustainable development, reproductive health, and family planning. By sparking conversations about population growth's impact on resources and advocating for equal access to healthcare and education, the event underscores the significance of responsible population management.

Through diverse initiatives, World Population Day champions gender equality, empowerment, and envisions a future of equilibrium and prosperity. The crux of numerous environmental challenges lies in overpopulation, thereby demanding an urgent focus on population issues' gravity, coupled with their interrelation to the environment and human advancement.

The past year witnessed two noteworthy milestones in the realm of population. In November 2022, the global population crossed the remarkable eight

billion mark. This exponential growth, spanning from approximately one billion in 1804 to eight billion in 2022, is largely attributed to advancements in medicine and agricultural industrialization, which augmented food supplies.



Nonetheless, unchecked population expansion against the backdrop of finite global resources could potentially lead to catastrophic outcomes.

Further, April this year witnessed India surpassing China as the world's most populous nation. While this achievement brings recognition, it comes with the challenge of providing for a burgeoning population on a constrained budget. By 2050, Nigeria is projected to become the third most populous country, followed by the United States, Pakistan, Indonesia, Brazil, the

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Bangladesh. The theme for World Population Day 2023, "Power of Gender Equality," underscores the symbiotic link between population dynamics and comprehensive sustainable development. This theme emphasizes the necessity to strike a harmonious balance among population growth, economic advancement, and environmental sustainability.

The roots of World Population Day trace back to July 11, 1987, when the global population crossed the five billion milestone. This landmark spurred the establishment of the event by the United Nations, intending to elevate consciousness about population-related issues' influence across various societal facets. Over the years, World Population Day has been observed annually, each time spotlighting distinct themes tailored to address specific concerns.

Rapidly increasing populations place escalating demands on Earth's finite resources. Elevated

populations necessitate additional sustenance, water, shelter, public services, and amenities. However, our planet struggles to meet these heightened requirements. Wildlife populations dwindle, temperatures soar, oceans are inundated with plastic, and forests dwindle. Consumptive lifestyles in affluent societies exacerbate these issues further. Addressing these challenges goes beyond altering consumption patterns; the very core of unchecked growth needs to be addressed.

Sir David Attenborough, the eminent natural historian and broadcaster, has labeled unchecked population growth as a "plague on the earth." He attributes numerous contemporary environmental issues—climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, and land disputes—to the exponential population rise over the past centuries.

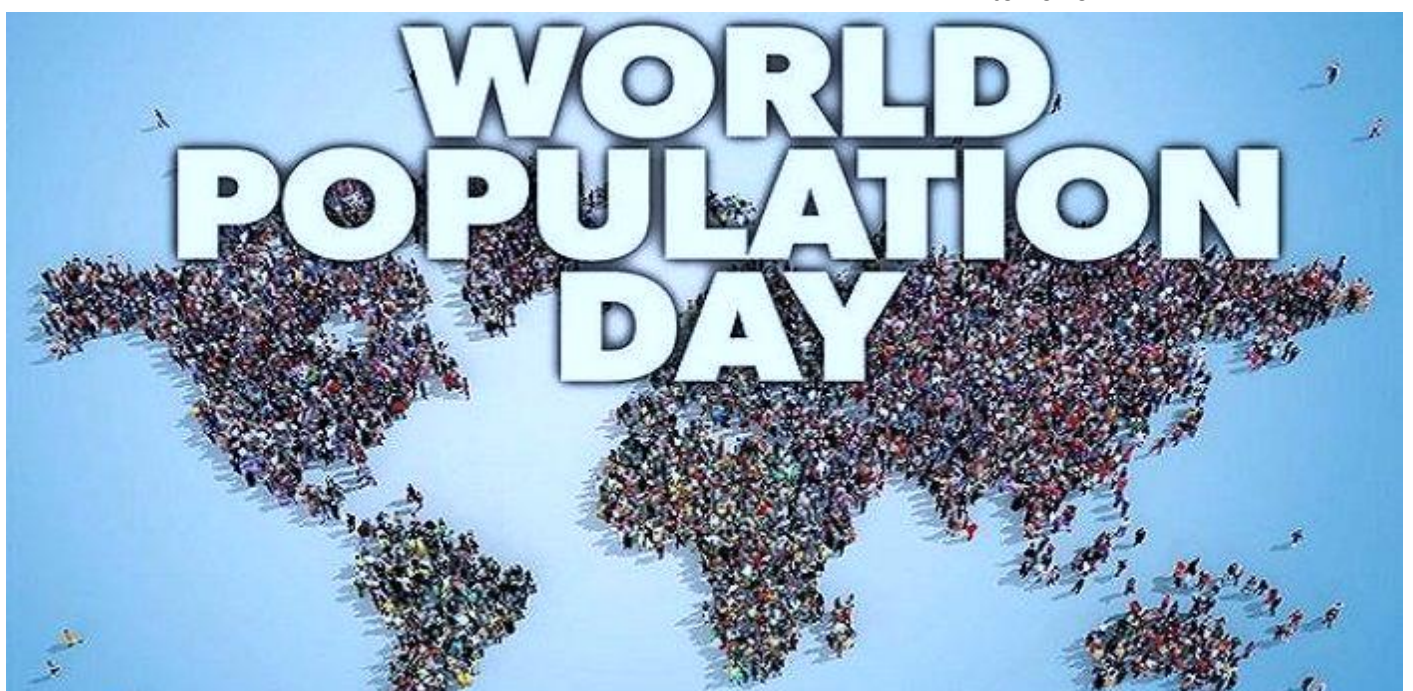
The Malthusian Theory, posited by Thomas Malthus, an English cleric, asserts that population

growth is potentially exponential. Malthus contended that while resource growth is linear, it eventually leads to declining living standards, triggering population decline. His work "An Essay on the Principle of Population," published in 1798, emphasized the inevitability of human demands outpacing planetary resources. The essay postulated that larger populations result in greater numbers of offspring, forming a positive feedback loop—yet food production doesn't necessarily escalate correspondingly.

In the contemporary landscape, a significant shift has occurred: the population of individuals aged 65 and older now surpasses those under five years old. Conversely, several regions in Europe and East Asia grapple with declining populations. Governments in these areas are introducing financial incentives to support new parents, striving to address the demographic and economic implications of diminishing populations.

Aging populations pose substantial challenges to labor markets, economies, and social services. As the number of working-age individuals declines, substantial reforms are needed to adapt healthcare systems and social services to accommodate aging demographics. The close interplay between population and social development necessitates careful planning and preparation to foster resilient societies equipped to embrace demographic changes.

World Population Day 2023 serves as a timely reminder of our collective responsibility in shaping the planet's future. It calls upon individuals, communities, and nations to collaborate in constructing a sustainable and all-encompassing world for generations to come. The day underscores the interconnectedness of population issues with broader global challenges. It urges concerted efforts to tackle climate change, ensure food security, and provide access to clean water, thus paving the way for a sustainable tomorrow.



The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad hosted a reception to commemorate the 247th anniversary of the independence of the United States of America. Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was

Green Alliance framework and looked ahead to the many opportunities for continued and expanded partnership between the United States and Pakistan.

The U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance

energy. Beyond mitigating climate change and its effects, the partnership recognizes that green choices also present tremendous economic opportunities, opening doors for increased bilateral trade and investment, as well as the

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## 247<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY Independence of the United States of America

Desk Report

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the guest of honor, representing the people and government of Pakistan. In addition to celebrating Independence Day, the event recognized the achievements of the U.S.-Pakistan

framework is a transformative initiative addressing today's most pressing environmental challenges, especially around water management, climate-smart agriculture, and renewable

creation of new jobs and industries. The initiative actively promotes the inclusion of women in the economy to ensure that the path to a greener, more





sustainable future is empowering for all.

Last year's flooding in Pakistan served as a stark reminder that climate change is not a distant threat. As Pakistan continues to recover from the devastation and prioritizes a transition to clean energy and environmental stewardship, the United States will remain a steadfast partner. The United States has already pledged over \$215 million to support the Pakistani people's recovery and resilience to future disasters.

In his remarks, U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome noted the importance of values like innovation and creative problem-solving to the Green Alliance framework, which builds upon more than 75 years of friendship between the United States and Pakistan: "From the Green Revolution of the 1960s to today's U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance, we have forged a partnership that has weathered many challenges and become stronger. The past year has been a testament to the breadth of our relationship, with productive dialogues on health, the environment, energy security,

and counterterrorism that strengthened our joint efforts to combat serious threats."

As we celebrate the anniversary of U.S. independence, we do so recognizing the importance of partners like Pakistan. Through our long-standing relationship and joint efforts through initiatives like the Green Alliance framework, we embrace the power of collaboration and acknowledge that we can achieve far more together than we can alone.

Thank you all for joining us this evening. I am especially delighted to welcome Prime Minister Sharif – thank you, your Excellency, for representing the people and government of Pakistan at this special occasion.

On Independence Day, we remind ourselves of core American values – freedom, democracy, and

of us today are facing the reality of global economic patterns that are shifting due to rapid changes in technology and patterns of trade. These changes will reward the values of openness, innovation, and flexibility. Partnerships will be critical, and our economic partnership with Pakistan is expanding. The United States has

long been a leading investor in Pakistan and Pakistan’s largest export market. We do over \$9 billion annually in bilateral trade, and in the past year, U.S. investment in Pakistan went up by 50 percent.

In February, we hosted ministerial level meetings under the U.S.-Pakistan Trade and Investment

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## AMBASSADOR BLOME’S Independence Day Remarks

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equality. But today I also want to focus on other qualities we cherish in the United States: innovation and problem-solving.

From our nation’s founding, Americans have been trailblazers and pioneers. From the creativity of Silicon Valley founders to the courage of social justice advocates struggling for greater equality, our nation’s history is one of overcoming daunting challenges.

Pakistan of course is no stranger to daunting challenges, and the most significant challenges today revolve around finding a path to economic growth that can meet the needs of Pakistan’s next generation. All



Framework Agreement, where participants made significant progress on U.S. market access for Pakistani products, digital trade, and ensuring Pakistani women contribute to the nation’s prosperity. What’s more, we – and the host of major U.S. companies doing business in Pakistan – are committed to training the next generation of Pakistani entrepreneurs and businesspeople through investment in Pakistan’s human capital. In fact, U.S. companies and their local affiliates are among Pakistan’s largest employers, directly employing more than 120,000 Pakistanis. Extensive training programs provided by U.S.



employers help the Pakistani workforce compete in the global economy and demonstrate Pakistan's enormous potential. U.S. firms are global leaders in corporate citizenship, social responsibility, and transparency, and bring those values to the places, like Pakistan, where they invest.

Today, one of the most pressing global challenges is climate change, a reality Pakistanis know well from last summer's tragic flooding. The United States stepped up, pledging over \$215 million to support the Pakistani people's recovery and resilience to future disasters. But our two countries can do much more together to address the threat that climate change poses to

Pakistan, the United States, and the broader world.

I heard a saying recently that resonated and which, I think, captures the spirit of our partnership: "humaray safer ka her eik qadam kaleedi ahimiet rakhta hay" – each step of the journey is important. As we continue toward a more sustainable and prosperous future for both our countries, the U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance will remain at the center of those efforts.

The U.S.- Pakistan Green Alliance is a transformative initiative between our two countries to address today's most pressing environmental challenges, especially around water management, climate-smart

agriculture, and renewable energy. Through the Green Alliance, we are working toward a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable future.

The Green Alliance also builds upon the rich history of our partnership in these areas. The United States supported Pakistan's "Green Revolution" in the 1960s to boost agricultural production and food security. Similarly, U.S. investments in Pakistan's hydroelectric sector helped electrify the country and boost economic opportunity for Pakistanis. As in the past, our continued partnership is yielding significant results.

Just a few months ago, our senior leaders met for a high-level Energy Security Dialogue and



convened a working group on Climate and the Environment, both vital touchpoints for deepening the U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance. Through these and other initiatives, we are making tangible progress toward a greener, more sustainable future for Pakistan.

But the Green Alliance framework isn't only about mitigating climate change and environmental degradation. It also offers Pakistan tremendous economic opportunity by recognizing that green choices are also increasingly profitable and demanded by private markets. Through the U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance, we can increase bilateral trade and investment and create new jobs, new industries, and new opportunities for our people.

For example, under the Green Alliance, the U.S. government is supporting the Lahore University of Management Sciences Electric Vehicle Research and Development Center as it develops domestically produced electric vehicles for the Pakistani market at commercial scale. This will help Pakistan as it works toward an ambitious target of 30 percent electric vehicle sales by 2030.

And this is just the beginning.

Last year's flooding in Pakistan made clear that climate change is not a future threat. It has already arrived and doesn't respect national borders.

I applaud the many government, business, and civil society leaders in Pakistan who have called for transformative change to advance your country's climate resilience and energy independence. I was

particularly encouraged by last September's announcement that the Pakistani government will not launch any new power projects that run on imported fossil fuel. Looking ahead, the Green Alliance is advancing our cooperation in three primary areas.

First, as a global leader in renewable energy technology, the United States is helping Pakistan reduce its dependence on fossil fuels, lower carbon emissions, and improve energy security. This country is blessed with abundant sunshine, vast open spaces, and strong winds – all of which should make renewables an easy and economical choice. Just a few weeks ago, I welcomed back to Pakistan the second cohort of the U.S.-sponsored Future of Women in Energy Scholars Program, which aims to expand the number of women working in Pakistan's energy sector.

Second, through the Green Alliance, we are helping Pakistan pivot to climate-smart agriculture. Through initiatives like our \$20 million project to help farmers in Punjab and Sindh improve water use, we've already seen farm productivity increase by more than 10 percent. We must continue to work together to invest in new technologies like drought-resistant crop seeds that improve agricultural output while reducing environmental risk.

Finally, just as the United States was instrumental in constructing Pakistan's most important dams and hydro-electric projects decades ago, we now look forward to continuing our long tradition of working side-by-side to improve water management. The United States has partnered

with Pakistan to increase access to safe drinking water, improve water governance, and expand water storage capacity.

Of course, none of this will be possible without a business and regulatory environment that gives investors confidence to place their funds alongside public money. This transition will also require the full participation of women in the economy. Through the U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance, the United States is committed to supporting Pakistan in making reforms that catalyze Pakistan's green economy.

As we look back on more than 75 years of friendship between the United States and Pakistan, we should be proud of our accomplishments. From the Green Revolution of the 1960s to today's U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance, we have forged a partnership that has weathered many challenges and become stronger for them. The past year has been a testament to the breadth of our relationship, with productive dialogues on health, defense, and counterterrorism that strengthened our joint efforts to combat serious threats.

As we celebrate the United States' Independence Day and the ties that bind our peoples and countries, I encourage you to look at tonight's information display to learn about the many ways, including the Green Alliance, the U.S. Mission in Pakistan is investing in Pakistan's environment and green economy.

Thank you again for joining us this evening.



**PAKLAND  
TOWER 2**  
New Blue Area, Islamabad

We were the first to acquire land in New Blue Area in July 2020. By the Grace of Almighty, construction work of *Pakland Tower 2* has already started. InshaAllah keeping our tradition of timely delivery, we will handover the possession to our valued investors in *July 2023*

[www.paklandbuilders.net](http://www.paklandbuilders.net)



J.  
FRAGRANCES

# A ROYAL AFFAIR



On the occasion of Canada's 156th National Day in July 2023, the vibrant maple leaf flag will be unfurled across the nation, uniting Canadians in celebration of their rich history, diverse culture, and remarkable achievements. This special day commemorates the birth of Canada as a nation and provides an opportunity

day, a country that embodies diversity, compassion, and progress.

On this Canadian National Day in 2023, it is fitting to explore the intricate tapestry of relations between Canada and Pakistan, two nations separated by vast

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# CELEBRATING 156 YEARS

## Canada Day 2023

### Canada-Pakistan Bridging for Progress

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Nadir Abbas

for citizens to reflect on the values of inclusivity, diversity, and progress that have defined the country. Festivities will include parades, fireworks, cultural exhibitions, and various community events, all aimed at highlighting the essence of Canadian identity. As Canada continues to excel in fields like technology, innovation, and social development, this National Day serves as a reminder of the country's unwavering commitment to building a brighter future for its citizens and making positive contributions on the global stage. As the maple leaves paint the landscape with hues of crimson and gold, Canada stands proud on its national

distances but united by shared values and aspirations. Beyond diplomatic ties and trade agreements, Canada has played a significant role in driving social development in Pakistan, leaving an indelible mark on the fabric of the nation.

#### Nurturing Diplomacy

Pakistan and Canada have maintained diplomatic relations since the early days of Pakistan's inception. These ties have been marked by mutual respect, cooperation, and a commitment to addressing global challenges. Over the years, both nations have stood side by side in forums such as the United Nations,



collaborating on matters of global significance, including peacekeeping missions and climate change mitigation.

The Canadian-Pakistani diaspora in Canada forms an essential bridge between the two countries. This vibrant community serves as a living testament to the strength of people-to-people connections, fostering cultural exchanges and nurturing ties that extend beyond borders.

Canada's role in Pakistan's social development is a testament to its dedication to making the world a better place. Canada has consistently contributed to initiatives that target healthcare, education, gender equality, and poverty alleviation.

### **Education**

Canada has been instrumental in supporting educational initiatives in Pakistan, recognizing that education is the cornerstone of progress. Numerous educational projects have been launched, providing access to quality education to marginalized communities. Scholarships, exchange programs, and partnerships between Canadian and Pakistani universities have enriched the educational landscape.

### **Women Empowerment**

Canada has championed the cause of gender equality in Pakistan, advocating for women's rights and economic empowerment. Programs designed to enhance women's participation in the workforce, politics, and decision-making processes have been pivotal in transforming societal norms.

### **Healthcare Initiatives**

The collaboration between Canada and Pakistan in the healthcare sector has led to advancements in medical research, infrastructure development, and disease prevention. Canadian assistance in tackling diseases such as polio and tuberculosis has played a crucial role in improving public health.

### **Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation**

In times of natural disasters, Canada's swift response has provided much-needed relief to affected communities in Pakistan. Humanitarian aid and support during floods and earthquakes have demonstrated Canada's commitment to standing by Pakistan in times of crisis.

## **Sustainable Development**

Canada's focus on sustainable development aligns with Pakistan's efforts to create a greener and more environmentally responsible future. Collaboration in areas such as renewable energy and climate change adaptation has yielded positive outcomes.

### **A Shared Vision for Progress**

On this Canadian National Day, the enduring relationship between Pakistan and Canada takes center stage. Both countries share a vision of a world where diversity is celebrated, inequalities are eradicated, and progress is a shared endeavor. As Canada continues to extend its hand of friendship and collaboration, Pakistan stands poised to transform its socio-economic landscape.

The partnership between Pakistan and Canada is a beacon of hope, illustrating that even across vast oceans and diverse cultures, the pursuit of a brighter future unites us all. On this special day, let us celebrate the alliance between these two nations and reiterate our commitment to working hand in hand for a world that is equitable, just, and prosperous for all.





The 21st century has witnessed the emergence of a formidable alliance known as BRICS, comprising the nations of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. This coalition, which

signaling a new chapter in global economic dynamics.

The rise of the BRICS alliance marks a transformative shift in global economic dynamics. These

This shift in economic power has not gone unnoticed. The BRICS alliance has not only demonstrated its capacity for rapid growth but has also paved the way for new narratives in

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## BRICS 2023 SUMMIT

### Reshaping the Global Economic Landscape

Nadeem Aslam

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derives its name from the initials of its member states, has evolved into a significant force in the global economic landscape. In 2023, the BRICS economies collectively eclipsed the combined contribution of the G7 nations to global GDP, underscoring their growing influence and potential. However, their ambition doesn't stop at economic prowess; the BRICS nations are challenging the status quo of Western dominance and the supremacy of the US Dollar,

five nations, spanning different continents and diverse cultures, have come together with the shared goal of reshaping the international order. This year's milestone achievement of overtaking the G7's contribution to global GDP highlights the rapid growth of these economies. The BRICS bloc now accounts for almost a third of worldwide economic activity, a remarkable feat considering the economic stagnation experienced by many Western countries.

global financial governance.

One of the most significant aspirations of the BRICS nations is to reduce their dependence on the US Dollar as the world's primary reserve currency. The current international monetary system, established after the collapse of the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1971, has given the US Dollar a central role in global trade and finance. This privileged status affords the United States

substantial influence over international economic affairs.

In response, the BRICS countries have explored the idea of creating their own global reserve currency, challenging the long-standing dominance of the US Dollar. This ambitious proposition, if realized, could reshape the financial landscape, reduce vulnerabilities to the fluctuations of the Dollar, and enhance the economic sovereignty of these nations.

The BRICS alliance brings together nations with distinct political systems, cultures, and histories. The diversity among its members is a double-edged sword. While it enriches the alliance with different perspectives and expertise, it also presents challenges that need careful navigation. Geopolitical tensions, especially those involving Russia and China, have at times strained the unity of the BRICS nations.

For instance, the question of Russian President Vladimir Putin's

participation in the upcoming summit in South Africa underscores the complexities the alliance faces. These challenges, however, do not overshadow the potential that the BRICS nations collectively hold.

A core aim of the BRICS alliance is to influence global political and economic structures in ways that better serve their interests. This commitment is demonstrated through initiatives such as the BRICS Parliamentary Forum and Outreach Dialogue, which facilitate engagement with neighboring regions and other interested countries. South Africa, for instance, leverages the BRICS platform to advance its foreign policy priorities, including the African Agenda and South-South Cooperation.

The alliance has further solidified economic relationships among member states through institutions like the BRICS Business Council, the Contingent Reserve Agreement (CRA), and

the New Development Bank (NDB). The NDB, headquartered in Shanghai, plays a pivotal role in mobilizing resources for sustainable development projects and infrastructure within BRICS nations. The CRA enhances financial stability by providing short-term liquidity support to member countries during balance-of-payment crises.

While the BRICS nations celebrate their achievements, they are not immune to challenges. Internal political and economic instability, disagreements over UN Security Council reform, and territorial disputes between India and China present significant obstacles to continued cooperation and growth. External factors, such as China's economic slowdown and declining foreign investment, have also cast shadows over their progress.

Critics argue that these challenges could signal a plateau in the BRICS' trajectory. However, the member countries are



determined to overcome these hurdles and demonstrate the resilience and potential of their alliance.

The recent invitation extended to Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Egypt, and Ethiopia to join the BRICS bloc marks a pivotal moment. This expansion carries the potential to amplify the influence and economic significance of the alliance. The inclusion of major oil producers like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Iran underscores their commitment to shaping the global economic landscape.

However, uncertainties persist. While Saudi Arabia's reaction to the invitation remains cautious, Iran's reception of it as a strategic victory reflects the geopolitical implications of the alliance's expansion.

The upcoming 15th BRICS summit, scheduled to take place in South Africa, is poised to address critical issues that challenge the existing global order. De-dollarization, which seeks to diminish the dominance of the US Dollar, stands at the forefront of discussions. Furthermore, deliberations on expanding the alliance to include new members signify the BRICS' commitment to strengthening their influence and reach.

The BRICS alliance collectively represents over 40% of the world's population and approximately 26% of the global economy. While the G7 and G20 still exert considerable influence, the BRICS serve as a counterbalance by advocating for a more equitable world order and the reform of international institutions.

As the BRICS alliance convenes its 15th summit, the world witnesses a turning point in global economic dynamics. The alliance's expansion, de-dollarization efforts, and commitment to reshaping global financial structures reflect a determination to challenge Western dominance. While internal and external challenges persist, the BRICS nations remain steadfast in their ambition to redefine the balance of power on the global stage.

The path ahead for the BRICS is complex and multifaceted. Their success will be measured not only by economic growth but by their ability to forge a new global narrative that accommodates the interests and aspirations of emerging economies and the developing world. As the BRICS navigate this transformative journey, they carry the potential to reshape the contours of global power and influence, leaving an indelible mark on the 21st-century international order.





The agriculture sector of Pakistan contributes 18.9% to GDP and employs 42.3% of the labor forces, including women. The estimates suggested that half of country's population still resides in rural areas and directly dependent on the agriculture, including production of wheat, cotton, sugarcane, rice, mangoes, dates and kinnow. Yet, it faces a huge food crisis because of rapidly growing population and insufficient food productivity. Pakistan is currently at 92nd rank out of 116 nations in Global Hunger Index. A report by IPCINFO, which conducted survey in districts of Baluchistan, Khyber-

Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, highlighted that all these areas are facing high prevalence of food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty.

The unprecedented floods of 2022 have made the situation worse as one-third of the country went underwater, caused 1,700 casualties and affected around 33 million people, and the country needs \$16 billion to recover. "Around 17 million women and children are at risk of preventable disease," the report mentioned. Women are considered vital part of the agricultural sector in Pakistan, but gender-based inequalities are huge i.e., land

ownership, accessing inputs, extension and financial services. A study by the International Food Policy Research Institute found that, in Pakistan, climate change is projected to cause a decline in agricultural yields of up to 40% by 2050, further exacerbating food insecurity for women.

Women are one of the most affected by the 2022 floods as recounted in stories of different women. Asmat Jaskani, a farm worker said flooding destroyed wheat fields that used to provide her income. "After the floods, the earning from our wheat crop is now half, as we are thirty people in our house, and we don't have

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## FEEDING THE FUTURE

### Women, Girls Primary Victims of Growing Food Insecurity in Pakistan

Sania Arif

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any savings from the harvest, so how will we eat?" Another farm worker from Sindh, Sakeena Gadhi said that only one wheat crop is cultivated in their village, flood washed away our homes and after staying in tents for 10 months, we are back in our village but there is nothing here."

There are hundreds of such stories in the flood-hit areas and the situation doesn't seem to improve as Climate Risk Country Profile, projections for Pakistan for the next 10 years suggest, "yield declines in many key food and cash crops, including cotton, wheat, sugarcane, maize and rice". This means the country needs to work on emergency footings to counter the looming

threat of food insecurity. One of the solutions is to recognize women's informal labour.

"Provision of better and flexible financial services, withdrawing mobility restrictions, flexible access to markets, the introduction to technological and entrepreneurial skills and promotion of women's association in farm organization can improve the agricultural yields by 20% to 30%," suggested Nadia Agha, the director of the Institute of Gender Studies, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur.

Analysts insist that without recognizing the women's role and current plight in this serious issue, it would be impossible to find a

solution for the government. Hence, a recognized, independent and government policy-supported model for women in the agricultural sector especially is the primary way to resolve the issue and tackle the problem of food insecurity, and obviously a serious policy on climate change will resolve the overall problem.

"Our policymakers are aware of the problems related to food insecurity among our populace, but the most important elements, which include water, climate, and agriculture, do not find the right place on the priority list of our national objectives," notes analyst and author Dr Zia Ul Haque Shamsi.

The cultural colourful stalls at the annual 'Shandur Polo Festival' in Chitral Valley were attracting a

The polo festival is a unique historical sports played at the world's highest polo ground

festival. He mentioned that tourism police and guides have been deputed to assist tourists

## SHANDUR POLO FESTIVAL 2023

### Celebrating Heritage and Sports

Ahsan Mukhtar

large number of crowds Saturday including domestic and foreign tourists where visitors are taking a keen interest in the rich culture, handicrafts, and distinct traditions being showcased at Mela 2023. Shandur polo festival is one of the wildest and oldest polo festivals on earth, said a local, adding, the historical event is taking place at the Shandur polo ground since 1936. In recent years, the Polo festival Shandur has also attracted tourists and visitors from around the globe, said a domestic tourist.

Shandur, Upper Chitral, between Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan teams, said a district administration official. The festival has been jointly organized by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), the Pakistan Army, the Frontier Corps, and the district administration, he added. Commissioner Malakand also appreciated the efforts of KPCTA, Gilgit Baltistan and the district administrations of Chitral for arranging recreational activities during this colourful

and adequate accommodation facilities have been ensured for visitors. Tourists from various cities also admired that different colorful programs, including paragliding, food stalls, and traditional dances have also been arranged at the festival and colorful cultural stalls were the main focus of visitors where they are enjoying various artworks of local artists and skilled individuals from Chitral and Gilgit.





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# ENTERTAINMENT

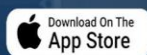
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