

# Monthly FORESIGHT Islamabad

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## Chief Editor Note

In this special edition of Foresight, we journey through significant events that not only shape Pakistan but also cast a spotlight on regional dynamics.

As Pakistan celebrates its 76th year of independence, our lead feature takes us on a reflective journey, tracing the evolution of the nation's core principles: Unity, Faith, and Discipline. These principles continue to guide Pakistan through triumphs and trials.

In the realm of governance, the swearing-in of the caretaker government is a significant step towards ensuring fair elections. We explore Pakistan's path to transparent and democratic processes, critical to the nation's growth and stability.

Delving into current affairs, we examine Pakistan's unwavering battle against extremism, seeking to decipher the Jaranwala Outburst. This complex challenge requires a multifaceted approach, and we explore the nation's efforts to address it comprehensively.

Shifting our focus, we celebrate Pakistan's pioneering strides in disaster risk reduction through PEDRR 2023. This initiative showcases the nation's commitment to disaster resilience, vital in a world grappling with increasingly frequent and severe natural disasters.

Finally, we extend our gaze beyond Pakistan's borders to celebrate the 32nd year of Uzbekistan's independence. Through resilience and progress, Uzbekistan's journey serves as an inspiring example in the region.

We invite you to immerse yourself in these stories, to reflect on the journey of nations, and to engage in the conversations that shape our shared future.

Sincerely,



Tanveer Ali Maken

# 76 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

## Tracking the Journey of Unity, Faith, Discipline in Pakistan

Tanveer Ali Maken

Seventy-six years have passed since Pakistan's inception as an independent nation, guided by the visionary leadership of its founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The principles of "Unity, Faith, Discipline" were not just mere words but a profound vision for building a strong, prosperous, and harmonious nation. This year, as Pakistan celebrates its 76th Independence Day, it is an opportune moment to reflect on whether these founding principles are still embedded in the country's social fabric and governance. Has Pakistan managed to uphold the ideals of unity, faith, and discipline in its contemporary context?

Quaid-e-Azam emphasized the paramount importance of unity among the diverse communities that constitute Pakistan. The nation was created to provide a homeland for Muslims where they could enjoy religious, social, and economic freedom. However, over the years, Pakistan has struggled to maintain the unity envisaged by its founder.

Ethnic, linguistic, and sectarian divisions have often led to social and political fragmentation. Regional disparities persist, with certain provinces lagging behind in development indicators. Ethnic and sectarian tensions continue to undermine the unity that

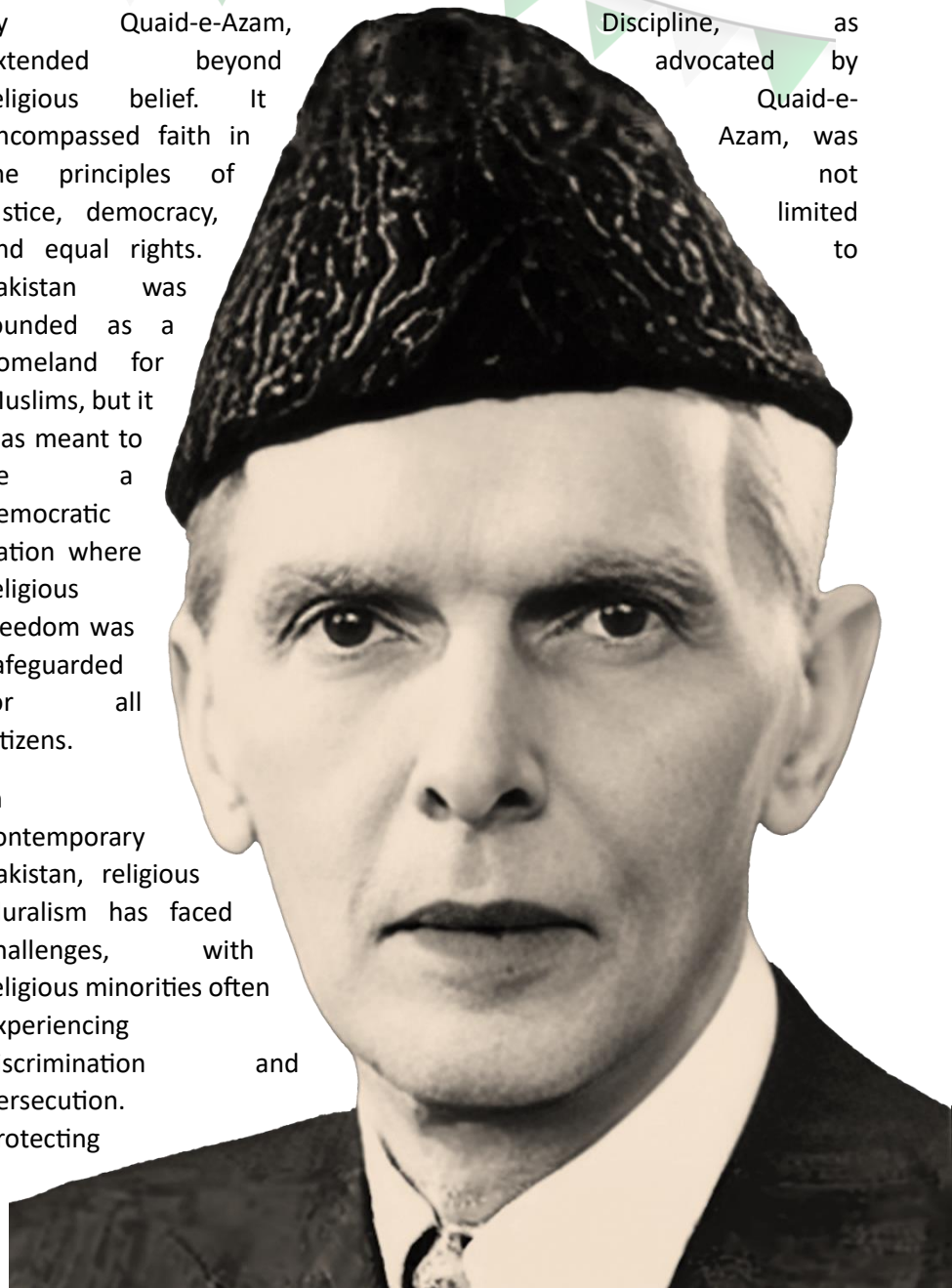
Quaid-e-Azam envisioned. To truly honor his vision of unity, Pakistan must work toward fostering inclusivity, celebrating diversity, and addressing the concerns of all its citizens.

The notion of faith, as articulated by Quaid-e-Azam, extended beyond religious belief. It encompassed faith in the principles of justice, democracy, and equal rights. Pakistan was founded as a homeland for Muslims, but it was meant to be a democratic nation where religious freedom was safeguarded for all citizens.

In contemporary Pakistan, religious pluralism has faced challenges, with religious minorities often experiencing discrimination and persecution. Protecting

the rights and freedoms of religious minorities is vital to upholding the principle of faith. Pakistan must ensure that its legal and social systems promote religious tolerance and equal rights for all citizens.

Discipline, as advocated by Quaid-e-Azam, was not limited to



individual behavior but extended to governance and the rule of law. He envisioned a disciplined and efficient government that would prioritize the welfare of its citizens.

In today's Pakistan, issues of corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability have plagued the country's governance systems. Transparency and accountability must be upheld to honor the principle of discipline. Implementing robust mechanisms to combat corruption, improve public services, and ensure the rule of law is crucial for achieving this goal.

As Pakistan marks its 76th Independence Day, the journey toward upholding the principles of unity, faith, and discipline continues. The nation faces formidable challenges, but it also possesses immense potential to realize Quaid-e-Azam's vision.

Unity can be achieved by fostering inclusivity and addressing regional disparities. Faith can be upheld by safeguarding religious freedom and promoting equal rights for all. Discipline can be instilled by strengthening governance and accountability.

Quaid-e-Azam's message to the nation remains a guiding light, reminding Pakistan of the path it must follow. The country's progress and prosperity lie in its ability to embody these principles in its laws, institutions, and collective consciousness. As Pakistan moves forward, it does so with the enduring hope that unity, faith, and discipline will continue to shape its destiny and contribute to a brighter future for all its citizens.



#### **14<sup>th</sup> August a Day of Celebrations**

The day began with a symbolic 31-gun salute in Islamabad, followed by a 21-gun salute in the provincial capitals. Change of guard ceremonies at the mausoleums of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah in Karachi and Allama Iqbal in Lahore added to the grandeur of the celebrations. The Convention Center in Islamabad hosted a flag hoisting ceremony, with President Dr. Arif Alvi as the chief guest, along with other distinguished guests.

#### **President Alvi's Call for Unity and Progress**

During his address at the Convention Center, President Alvi echoed the principles of Pakistan's founding father, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah,

emphasizing "unity, faith, and discipline." He expressed optimism about Pakistan's potential to become a developed nation in the near future.

President Alvi called upon political leaders and stakeholders to embrace forgiveness and uphold the core values of Islam. He stressed the importance of unity and urged the nation to break free from nepotism, promote meritocracy, and ensure comprehensive justice, particularly in the socio-economic sphere. He also highlighted the need for greater women's participation in economic activities and called on the affluent class to support the education of underprivileged children.

In his address, President Alvi paid tribute to the sacrifices of



Pakistan's forefathers, including Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Allama Iqbal, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, and Fatima Jinnah. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the fight against terrorism and called on the international community to address the issue of Kashmir in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions.

President Alvi expressed gratitude to friendly nations, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, China, Iran, and Turkey, for their support during challenging economic times. He also strongly condemned recent Islamophobic incidents in Western countries.

### Shehbaz Sharif's Reflections

Former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif acknowledged Pakistan's resilience and determination in the face of challenges. He paid tribute to the unsung heroes of the freedom movement and emphasized the importance of unity and action to advance the nation. Shehbaz Sharif called on

Pakistanis to make Quaid-i-Azam's motto of "work, work, and only work" their guiding principle for rebuilding the nation.

### Messages of Unity and Solidarity

The military leadership, represented by the Inter-Services Public Relations, called upon the nation to preserve peace, societal harmony, and unity. They pledged to defend the nation's territorial integrity and serve the people as per their aspirations. The day served as a reminder of the sacrifices made by countless individuals in the pursuit of freedom.

Former Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari emphasized the importance of forging a Pakistan where prosperity is accessible to all, irrespective of their circumstances. He vowed to carry forward the ideology that Pakistan belongs to everyone and that diversity strengthens the nation.





## SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM COAS Gen Asim Munir's Resounding Message

Amidst the grandeur of the Azadi Parade, marking Pakistan's 76th Independence Day at the prestigious Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir stood as a beacon of homage to the visionary founding fathers of the nation. In his resounding address, Gen Munir cast a profound light on the essence of Independence Day, firmly rooted in the ideology of the Two Nation Theory. His words reverberated with Pakistan's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the priceless gift of hard-earned freedom. With eloquence and pride, Gen Munir celebrated the enduring tradition of cherishing the principles of freedom, equality, and the pursuit of happiness that have defined Pakistan's journey.



Acknowledging the challenges Pakistan faces, both internal and external, Gen Munir adopted a defiant stance, quoting the words of the nation's great Quaid: "There is no power on earth which can undo Pakistan." He reaffirmed the army's readiness to safeguard Pakistan's sovereignty at any cost.

The COAS also expressed solidarity with the people of occupied Kashmir, condemning the international community's inaction regarding Indian actions in the region.

Gen Munir asserted that Pakistan had gained its freedom through immense struggle and knew how to protect it. He called upon Afghanistan to ensure its soil is not used against Pakistan and highlighted the importance of regional cooperation, mentioning strengthened ties with allies such as China, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Turkiye, Qatar, and Iran. In conclusion, he urged the nation to stand united and serve Pakistan selflessly, reminding all that "Pakistan is our identity, and the rationale to exist – Pakistan hai, to hum hain!"



As Pakistan finds itself at a crossroads amid economic and political turmoil, the nation witnessed a significant moment in its political landscape with the swearing-in of the caretaker government. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, an 18-member cabinet took the oath of office, marking the beginning of a crucial phase in Pakistan's journey towards the upcoming general elections. This caretaker government assumes the formidable responsibility of guiding the

address the pressing challenges facing the nation. The newly appointed ministers bring a wealth of experience and expertise to their respective roles. Notable appointments include former foreign secretary Jalil Abbas Jilani as Foreign Minister, Sarfaraz Bugti as Interior Minister, and renowned economist Shamshad Akhtar as Finance Minister. The inclusion of Lt Gen (retired) Anwar Ali Haider as Defence Minister and senior journalist Murtaza Solangi as Information

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## CARETAKER GOVERNMENT SWORN IN Pakistan's Path to Fair Elections

Desk Report

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country through these challenging times, ensuring a smooth and transparent transition of power. Administered by President Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the presidential house, this oath-taking ceremony signifies a pivotal moment in Pakistan's political landscape. With 16 federal ministers and 3 advisers forming the cabinet, all eyes are now on the caretaker government as it endeavors to steer Pakistan towards stability and democratic renewal.

In a significant development, Pakistan's caretaker government, led by Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, has sworn in a diverse and capable cabinet to

Minister underscores the government's commitment to ensuring a balanced and effective administration during this critical period.

The cabinet further encompasses a broad spectrum of talent and knowledge, with Khalil George serving as Minister for Minorities, industrialist Gohar Ijaz as Minister for Industries, and academic Dr. Umar Saif as Minister for Information Technology. Other notable appointments include Ahmad Irfan Aslam as Law Minister, celebrated actor Jamal Shah as Minister for





Culture, and Aniq Ahmad as Religious Affairs Minister. Remarkably, Shamshad Akhtar stands out as the sole woman in the cabinet, highlighting the importance of gender diversity in Pakistan's political landscape.

This oath-taking ceremony, attended by Prime Minister Kakar, Punjab interim Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, and other dignitaries, marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's transition towards the upcoming general elections. With Pakistan grappling with a severe economic crisis, the caretaker government's formation is a critical step in ensuring a fair and transparent electoral process as mandated by the Constitution. The dissolution of the National Assembly on August 9 initiated this process, concluding the tenure of the previous government led by Shehbaz Sharif.

In the midst of these political changes, Pakistan faces a daunting economic challenge. To address this crisis, the

Pakistan government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reached a crucial staff-level agreement on June 29, injecting USD 3 billion through a Standby Arrangement (SBA) to stabilize the economy. The successful formation of the caretaker government is expected to pave the way for the forthcoming general elections, which are anticipated to be held within 90 days.

Notably, the inclusion of Mushaal, wife of jailed Jammu and Kashmir separatist leader Yasin Malik, as a "special assistant" to Prime Minister Kakar for human rights, adds a unique dimension to the caretaker government. Her appointment underscores the government's commitment to addressing human rights concerns and promoting dialogue on regional issues.

In the wake of the recent Jaranwala incident, where violent mobs targeted the Christian community over unproven blasphemy allegations, it becomes imperative to delve deeper into the root causes of

against non-Muslims. The blasphemy law, introduced during General Zia-ul-Haq's regime, made blasphemy punishable by death. While only 14 blasphemy incidents were reported between 1927 and 1986, this number

A more insidious issue is the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of religiously motivated violence. Extremist groups, such as the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), have been emboldened by state support, which is sometimes

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## PAKISTAN'S BATTLE AGAINST Extremism-Deciphering the Jaranwala Outburst

Aqeel Ahmad

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extremism in Pakistan. This disturbing episode serves as a grim reminder of the escalating religious violence that is tearing at the very fabric of the nation. To comprehend the factors contributing to this alarming trend, we must examine the laws, policies, and socio-economic dynamics that have fueled religious extremism, propelling Pakistan towards a perilous path.

One critical aspect lies in the laws and policies of Pakistan that systematically discriminate

surged dramatically after the law's amendment. Since 1987, over 2,120 individuals have been accused of blasphemy, with an increasing number of cases reported each year.

Although no death sentences have been carried out under the law, mere allegations can incite mobs to violence, leading to horrific incidents like the one in Jaranwala. This law is often exploited to settle personal scores and rivalries, further fueling social unrest.

leveraged for political ends. This encouragement allows these groups to act without fear of being stopped, caught, or punished for their violent actions.

When crowds believe they won't face consequences for their actions, they are more likely to indulge in extremist violence against religious minorities. The recent attack on churches and Christian homes in Jaranwala is a stark example of this trend, underscoring the state's failure to



protect marginalized minority communities.

Religiously motivated extremism is not solely a matter of faith; it is deeply intertwined with socio-economic disparities and deprivations. The urban underclass, particularly the youth, is increasingly drawn towards religious extremist ideologies as a response to their economic struggles.

In towns like Jaranwala, where opportunities for education, healthcare, and employment are scarce, and social networks that encourage interaction with people from different backgrounds are diminishing, religion becomes a refuge. Rising economic disparities and dwindling opportunities for improvement push a significant portion of the urban underclass towards intolerant, sectarian worldviews.

Violence against minorities serves as a manifestation of the socio-economic deprivations faced by a substantial portion of Pakistan's population, compelling them to embrace religious extremism as a solution to their life problems.

The Jaranwala incident is not an isolated occurrence but rather a symptom of a larger problem rooted in laws, policies, impunity, and socio-economic challenges. To combat extremism effectively, Pakistan must address these multifaceted issues, promoting tolerance, inclusivity, and socio-economic development. The path to a more harmonious and prosperous Pakistan requires a concerted effort to dismantle the factors breeding extremism and violence against minorities.





## SOUTH ASIA'S CALL For Climate Diplomacy and Collaboration

**Desk Report**

"The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it." - Robert Swan

In recent years, the undeniable reality of climate change has emerged in various guises, from melting glaciers and record-breaking heatwaves to erratic rain and snow patterns. This global challenge has not spared South Asia, impacting millions and entailing significant economic costs. As South Asia confronts the escalating consequences of climate change, a shift towards cooperative diplomacy becomes paramount to mitigate and adapt to these multifaceted threats.

Climate change, a phenomenon far from abstract, has inflicted

palpable damage upon South Asia. The region witnessed a staggering 48.3 million people affected by climate-related crises, with economic losses tallying up to a staggering 35.6 billion USD. Unprecedented climatic events have struck with relentless force, particularly affecting India and Pakistan. To grasp the enormity of the situation, it is crucial to delve into the repercussions of climate change on this diverse and populous region. Moreover, devising effective policies to curtail the impending disasters is a necessity.

Pakistan's ordeal in 2022 exemplified the dire impacts of climate change. Historic floods

disrupted lives, affecting over 30 million individuals and displacing 7.9 million. The agricultural sector bore a severe brunt, with 9.4 million acres of farmland submerged and devastating losses in cotton, rice, and sugarcane crops. The cumulative damage stood at a staggering 30 billion USD, a grim testament to the scale of destruction. Meanwhile, India grappled with shifting climatic patterns that thrust a fifth of the nation into drought conditions in 2021. Subsequent heatwaves ravaged crops, with a 50 percent drop in the mango harvest and 10 percent reduction in wheat yield. These events disrupted food supply chains, damaged exports,

and deepened food insecurity across the region.

Afghanistan, despite its tumultuous political landscape, grapples with its own climate-induced calamities. Frequent floods and prolonged droughts exacerbate an already vulnerable situation. Between 2015 and 2020, 50 million Afghan citizens were affected by droughts, testifying to the extent of the crisis. However, Afghanistan's diplomatic isolation on the global stage hampers its ability to seek international support to combat climate-related issues.

A haunting specter looms over South Asia in the form of smog, which triggers hazardous levels of air pollution. Major cities, including Lahore and New Delhi, have been enmeshed in a battle to top the Air Quality Index. This toxic blend of pollutants leads to a range of health problems, diminishing life expectancy and incurring massive economic losses. In India alone, economic damage due to declining air quality accounts for a staggering 95 billion USD annually, demonstrating the far-reaching impact of this crisis.

These challenges intersect and culminate in multidimensional threats to national security, encompassing economic, food, and human security. It is no longer a matter of isolated security concerns; it is a question of survival. With agricultural productivity plummeting and public health in jeopardy, urgent action is imperative. The climate crisis has elevated to a regional security concern demanding collective, coordinated efforts.

To address this complex web of challenges, a paradigm shift in diplomacy is indispensable. While policies have been formulated, their implementation remains uneven due to a lack of collaboration. Effective climate diplomacy necessitates synergy among national institutions and regional cooperation. The unifying nature of the threat mandates cooperation akin to military alliances like NATO, focusing not on mutual benefit but on shared survival.

As South Asia enters a pivotal decade, climate diplomacy must assume center stage. For India and Pakistan, key stakeholders in the region, a realignment of priorities towards tackling climate change as a security issue is vital. This crisis requires transcending conventional disputes and uniting in the face of an existential threat.

The proposition may appear unconventional, but it aligns with the realist paradigm by focusing

on safeguarding states' survival. When states' very existence is imperiled, ideological differences and geopolitical conflicts pale in significance. Climate change, unlike political or territorial disputes, transcends borders and necessitates collective action.

In conclusion, South Asia stands at a crossroads. The repercussions of climate change underscore the need for transformative diplomacy that transcends national boundaries and political rivalries. A cooperative approach, involving all stakeholders, particularly India and Pakistan, is the way forward. Only by recognizing climate change as an existential threat can South Asia truly secure its future and protect the well-being of its people. As the region faces the growing specter of climate change, it is high time to acknowledge the urgency of action, break down barriers, and collaborate for the greater good.





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In a bid to fortify its disaster resilience efforts, Pakistan kicked off its inaugural Disaster Risk Reduction Expo (PEDRR 2023) at the Pak China Friendship Centre in Islamabad from August 16th to 18th. Organized by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), this groundbreaking event has drawn global partners, UN

with global partners and institutions.

### People-Centric Strategies for Disaster Risk Reduction

The expo underscores the importance of people-centric strategies in disaster risk reduction. It emphasizes the need to consolidate national

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## PEDRR 2023 Pakistan's Pioneering Efforts in Disaster Risk Reduction

Tanveer Ali Maken

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organizations, international and domestic NGOs, military responders, private sector entities, and diplomats, all united in their pursuit of comprehensive disaster risk reduction.

NDMA's partnership with the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) underscores the collective spirit driving this expo. With a packed agenda featuring multi-forum discussions, sideline events, green talks, paper presentations, and national art and graphics competitions centered around disaster risk reduction, the expo focuses on several critical aspects.

### Strengthening Disaster Forecasting and Warning Systems

One of the central pillars of the expo was the drive to establish robust and sustainable disaster forecasting and warning systems. These systems rely on the pillars of risk knowledge, risk monitoring and warning services, risk communication, and response capabilities. Given Pakistan's vulnerability to disasters, this endeavor aims to create a seamless and interoperable cooperation framework

institutions with expertise in disaster risk reduction, culminating in the establishment of a national think tank, the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) at NDMA. This move will enable the development of technology-driven forecasting for impending national emergencies and disasters.

### Aligning with Global Protocols and Sustainable Development Goals

Pakistan's significant contributions to global disaster risk reduction frameworks and the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are also





highlighted. The country is gearing up to craft its own National Development Goals (NDGs) in line with global disaster risk reduction protocols.

### **Enhancing Food and Energy Security**

Food and energy security, critical aspects of disaster resilience, are addressed through pre-planned strategies. Domestic responders will collaborate with national disaster risk reduction efforts to establish production goals that factor in disaster impact losses and future land availability.

### **Establishing Global DRR Financing**

A pivotal call is made for the establishment of a global disaster risk reduction financing fund in alignment with UN disaster risk reduction initiatives and financial modeling. This fund will play a crucial role in investment protection, ensuring robust resilience and stable insurance for disaster risk reduction efforts.

### **Refining Poverty Alleviation in Disaster Contexts**

Recognizing the intersection of disaster needs with poverty alleviation, the expo emphasizes the need for tangible action plans to enhance the attainability of SDGs for all countries, rather than just select developed ones.

### **The Role of Clean and Green Energy**

Clean and green energy access emerges as a key driver for enabling disaster resilience. It is a catalyst that empowers all other disaster risk reduction enablers.

### **Devolved Disaster Risk Reduction Model**

Pakistan's devolved disaster risk reduction model, operating at provincial and district levels, offers significant room for expansion. This approach ensures a blended response at all tiers of governance, enhancing the nation's overall resilience.

### **Knowledge Sharing and Smart National Audit**

The expo promotes high-end collation and dissemination of global standard technical knowledge, keeping all stakeholders and responders informed and engaged. This collaborative approach enables a smart national audit of disaster preparedness.

As Pakistan strides confidently into the future, it showcases its time-honored resilience and unwavering commitment to withstanding potential disasters and emergencies. The Disaster Risk Reduction Expo represents a significant milestone in the country's journey toward building a safer, more resilient nation, where disaster risks are mitigated, and communities are empowered to face adversity head-on.



19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST



# WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY

## WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY

**#NoMatterWhat**

### **Celebrating Courage, Compassion, and Commitment**

**Iqra Khalid**

World Humanitarian Day (WHD), observed annually on 19 August, is a momentous occasion dedicated to recognizing the extraordinary efforts of humanitarian workers and their unwavering commitment to alleviating the suffering of those affected by crises around the world. This day not only honors their courage but also serves as a reminder of the challenges they face and the critical importance of humanitarian work.

The significance of WHD is deeply rooted in a tragic event that occurred on this day in 2003 when a devastating bomb attack targeted the Canal Hotel in

Baghdad, Iraq. This appalling act claimed the lives of 22 humanitarian aid workers, including Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq. Five years later, the United Nations General Assembly designated 19 August as World Humanitarian Day to commemorate this solemn occasion.

Each year, WHD adopts a specific theme to unite partners across the humanitarian system in advocating for the survival, well-being, and dignity of people affected by crises, as well as the safety and security of aid workers.

This year's theme, #NoMatterWhat, underscores the enduring commitment of humanitarians to stand shoulder to shoulder with those in need, regardless of who they are, where they are, or the challenges they face.

The campaign for World Humanitarian Day is led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which emphasizes the importance of recognizing and celebrating the dedication, commitment, and sacrifices of humanitarians worldwide. These remarkable individuals venture into disaster-stricken regions and

conflict zones, often enduring danger and hardship to save and protect vulnerable populations.

The primary mission of humanitarian workers is to promote the well-being, dignity, and ultimately the survival of those affected by disasters. They also strive to ensure the safety and security of aid workers who courageously respond to crises, providing essential assistance such as food, shelter, and medical care.

In recent times, the role of humanitarians has become increasingly vital due to a surge in humanitarian needs worldwide. Factors like the climate crisis and conflicts, such as the ongoing situation in Ukraine, have pushed the demand for assistance to record levels. According to the United Nations, an estimated 360 million people globally require humanitarian aid, marking a 30% increase since the beginning of 2022.

However, this crucial work comes with inherent risks. In 2022 alone, 444 aid workers faced attacks, resulting in the tragic deaths of 116 of them. Furthermore, funding remains a significant challenge. UN Secretary-General António Guterres cautioned that by mid-2023, only 20% of the required funding for the Global Humanitarian Appeal had been received, highlighting the urgent need for increased support.

This year's WHD theme, #NoMatterWhat, reflects the unyielding dedication of humanitarian workers to serve and protect communities in need. It reaffirms their commitment to overcoming challenges and delivering life-saving assistance, emphasizing the core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence that guide their actions.

The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence serve as the foundation for humanitarian

action. These principles are essential for establishing and maintaining access to deliver assistance to those in need, whether facing natural disasters or complex emergencies like armed conflicts. They ensure that humanitarian workers can fulfill their mission effectively and efficiently, protecting the space needed for their critical work.

World Humanitarian Day is a powerful reminder of the invaluable contributions of humanitarians worldwide and the urgency of addressing the escalating humanitarian needs across the globe. It is a day to celebrate their courage, compassion, and commitment to making the world a better place, no matter the challenges they encounter. The theme of #NoMatterWhat encapsulates the unwavering spirit of humanitarian workers who relentlessly strive to alleviate human suffering and bring hope to those facing adversity.



J.  
FRAGRANCES

# A ROYAL AFFAIR



# TECH REVOLUTION

## Transforming Education in Pakistan

Aniq ur Rehman

In the not-so-distant past, education was a story confined within the four walls of a classroom. It was a narrative defined by the turn of textbook pages, the sound of chalk on a blackboard, and the physical presence of a teacher. However, the digital age has ushered in a new chapter in this narrative, a chapter that tells the story of how technology is revolutionizing education on a global scale. This transformation transcends borders and traditions, and nowhere is it more evident than in Pakistan.

In Pakistan, a quiet revolution is unfolding, transforming the education landscape. Traditional barriers to quality education, such as limited access to resources and skilled educators, are slowly fading away. Online education has emerged as a lifeline, reaching from the bustling urban centers to the farthest corners of the country, providing knowledge to those who once grappled with limitations beyond their control.

In this interconnected world, social media platforms have become hubs of knowledge sharing. Pakistan is at the forefront of this educational revolution, utilizing platforms like Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter to break down access barriers. These platforms,

originally created for sharing personal moments and thoughts, have evolved into conduits for a unique form of sharing—one that disseminates knowledge, sparks discussions, and brings together learners from all walks of life.

At the crossroads of education and technology, a groundbreaking partnership has emerged, exemplifying the remarkable potential of digital platforms. TikTok, in collaboration with Edkasa and Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), has given birth to the ExamReady initiative. Focusing on STEM education, this collaborative campaign addresses the persistent issue of educational inequalities in Pakistan. ExamReady's core lies in its educational videos, spanning subjects such as Chemistry, Biology, Physics, and Mathematics. These videos have triggered a paradigm shift in how students learn, with millions of views and scholarships for deserving students, demonstrating TikTok's commitment to democratizing education and making a tangible difference.

What sets ExamReady apart is not just its objective but also its innovative method. The educational videos are not ordinary lectures; they are beacons of light guiding



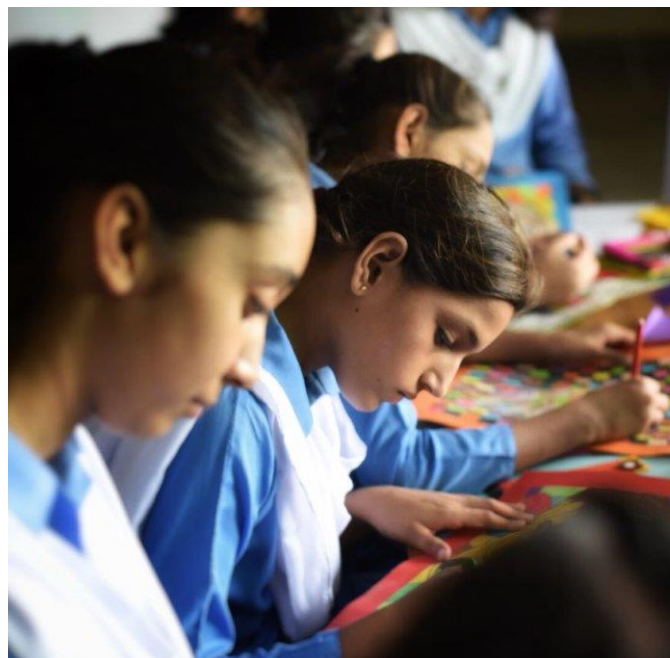
students through the intricate corridors of complex formulas, concepts, and equations. These videos combine entertainment and education, turning learning into an immersive and enjoyable experience. They unfold as captivating narratives enriched with real-life examples, making seemingly insurmountable learning barriers conquerable. By translating abstract theories into relatable real-world instances, ExamReady introduces a fresh dimension to education. Daunting formulas find their reflection in everyday occurrences, and enigmatic concepts morph into familiar stories. This innovative approach drives exceptional engagement and retention, extending its impact to marginalized provinces like Sindh, Balochistan, and KPK.

Crucially, ExamReady's influence transcends urban centers, reaching even the remotest corners of Pakistan. TikTok's expansive reach illuminates the path to knowledge for those previously denied its light. This marks a new era of education, one that surpasses boundaries and levels the playing field for students across the nation. The impact of ExamReady is felt not only within metropolitan classrooms but also in towns, villages, and communities, shaping lives and futures.

Leveraging the essence of short-form videos, TikTok ingeniously adapts its features to create an innovative mode of education. Complex subjects that once appeared distant are distilled into captivating, bite-sized lessons, making learning engaging and immersive.

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in education is another transformative force. Khan Academy, a non-profit organization, has harnessed the power of AI through its cutting-edge tool, Khanmigo. Powered by GPT-4, Khanmigo is not just a tool; it is a learning companion that transforms the role of AI from mere automation to that of a tutor. Khanmigo fosters critical thinking skills among students while providing contextual support for Khan Academy's content. As it gradually rolls out, it has the potential to become a virtual mentor, guiding learners through complex concepts, offering explanations, and adapting the learning journey to suit each student's pace and learning style. This personalized approach has the potential to revolutionize education in Pakistan, where classrooms can be overcrowded, and resources constrained.

AI applications like Khanmigo complement the role of educators by automating certain tasks, freeing up teachers to focus on inspiring and guiding students.



Educators can leverage AI insights to gain a deeper understanding of individual learning patterns and preferences, enabling them to tailor their teaching strategies effectively. Moreover, these AI applications are a significant boon for students in rural and underserved areas of Pakistan, bridging the gap in access to quality education.

While the benefits of technology-driven learning are vast and undeniable, challenges persist. Ensuring reliable internet access, maintaining student engagement in virtual environments, and safeguarding against misinformation and content quality issues are ongoing concerns. Balancing technology's promises with its pitfalls is crucial.

As the digital revolution continues to unfold, the horizon of education beckons with promises of unprecedented innovation and transformation. From virtual reality classrooms that immerse students in new worlds to AI systems that cater to individual learning needs, the next frontier of education is replete with uncharted territory. However, ensuring accessibility, equity, and quality remains essential.

The fusion of technology and education is reshaping the learning landscape, breaking down barriers, and casting a radiant light on the path to knowledge. This journey is about an inclusive, accessible, and empowering education for all. As we embrace this future, let's ensure that innovation benefits everyone. The symphony of progress continues, leading us toward a future where technology and knowledge unite to create a brighter world of education for generations to come.

As Pakistan grapples with a recent economic crisis, one alarming reality stands out – the increasing burden of energy expenses on its citizens. Recent fiscal data

supply, perpetuating a vicious cycle.

As the current fiscal year progresses, it is anticipated that the per-unit price of electricity,

international funding agencies, can ensure that vulnerable citizens receive adequate support while those who can afford energy pay the full price.

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# NAVIGATING PAKISTAN'S ENERGY CRISIS

## A Path to Sustainability

Ahsan Mukhtar

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indicates that energy costs now consume a significant portion of household incomes, ranging between 30% to 40%. A study reveals that a staggering 82% of households and 86% of shop owners have seen their energy bills surge by 20% to 50% between FY22 and FY23.

This surge in energy tariffs can be attributed to several factors, including macroeconomic pressures, post-Covid-19 economic recovery, and the global energy price shock resulting from the Russo-Ukraine war. Notably, this issue is not confined to Pakistan alone; countries like the United States, the UK, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Australia, and Indonesia are also grappling with energy-related challenges, with over 20 million homes in the United States falling behind on their energy payments.

In Pakistan, the consequences of exorbitant energy prices are twofold: increased use of illegal connections and non-payment of bills, exacerbating governance challenges, and contributing to the circular debt problem. This, in turn, affects the ability of Distribution Companies (Discos) to provide uninterrupted energy

also known as the base tariff, may see further hikes, ranging between 3 and 7 rupees. Alongside Fuel Adjustment Charges (FACs), quarterly adjustments, and PHL surcharges, this could significantly burden more electricity customers.

Addressing energy poverty and ensuring access to affordable energy are vital for socioeconomic development. However, Pakistan also needs to reassess its energy consumption patterns. Solutions range from immediate actions to long-term strategies.

Urgently, the National Energy Conservation Policy announced in December 2022 needs swift implementation. Encouraging the adoption of energy-efficient appliances to reduce wastage at an individual level and lowering demand by closing markets earlier in the evening can play a significant role.

Enforcing public service announcements and strictly implementing the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Policy of 2023 should be prioritized by all levels of government, from federal to local. Smart power subsidy programs, supported by

Addressing theft of electricity by working closely with communities and local influencers is essential to prevent losses that drain the national budget and disrupt DISCOs' operations.

Furthermore, the government must plan strategically, reducing Pakistan's reliance on imported fuels and increasing the utilization of renewables and indigenous resources in the energy mix. Localization of the manufacturing base for the power sector, focusing on renewable energy solutions, is crucial.

Internationally, Pakistan can learn from countries with similar economic profiles and demographics to develop localized and customized energy solutions. Knowledge exchange and technical expertise can provide valuable support in this endeavor.

Solutions to mitigate energy poverty and reform the energy sector exist. What is now essential is the political commitment and wisdom to implement them. Pakistan's economic stability and the well-being of its citizens depend on finding sustainable solutions to its energy crisis.



## CELEBRATING 32 YEARS OF UZBEKISTAN'S INDEPENDENCE

### A Journey of Resilience and Progress

Syed Nadir Abbas

Uzbekistan, a vibrant and culturally rich nation nestled in the heart of Central Asia, commemorates its 32nd Independence Day on September 1st. This auspicious occasion marks the nation's liberation from the shackles of the Soviet Union in 1991. As Uzbekistan proudly celebrates its journey towards freedom, it reflects on a remarkable history, diverse culture, and the challenges it has overcome.

#### A Land of Diversity

Situated at the crossroads of the historic Silk Road, Uzbekistan's unique heritage is a product of its strategic location, connecting

Europe and China. The nation's population is a mosaic of ethnic groups, with Uzbeks forming the majority. Russian, Tajik, and Kazakh communities add to the country's cultural tapestry.

Islam permeates Uzbekistan's festivals, traditions, and daily life, with Navruz, the celebration of spring's arrival, holding special significance. While Uzbek serves as the official language, Russian exerts considerable influence, particularly in urban areas.

The country's culinary offerings are a testament to its multicultural heritage, boasting flavorful dishes like pilaf, samsa, and laghman. Uzbekistan is also

renowned for its traditional handicrafts, including intricate carpets, exquisite embroidery, and fine ceramics, passed down through generations.

#### A Glimpse into History

Uzbekistan's history is a tapestry woven through time, with its influence spanning millennia. It can be divided into three phases: before the U.S.S.R., during the U.S.S.R., and after gaining independence. The country's roots trace back to the first century B.C. when it played a pivotal role in the Silk Road, connecting China and the Middle East.



The region witnessed Arab conquests in the seventh and eighth centuries, followed by Persian and Turkish influences. By the 19th century, independent Uzbek states like Bukhara, Kokand, and Samarkand had risen, with Islam emerging as the dominant religion.

Russian expansion into Uzbekistan commenced in the 1860s and lasted until 1990. By the 1870s, Russia had conquered Tashkent and absorbed vast territories in Central Asia. The Bolsheviks continued this conquest, gradually taking over Turkestan, Bukhara, and Khiva between 1917 and 1920.

In 1991, Uzbekistan, under the leadership of Islam Karimov, declared its independence and joined the Commonwealth of Independent States. Despite facing threats from various challenges, including terrorism and civil unrest in 2004, Uzbekistan has demonstrated unwavering resilience and the spirit of Central Asia.

### President Mirziyoyev's Vision

On August 31st, Uzbekistan celebrated its 32nd Anniversary of State Independence in Tashkent. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev marked the occasion by extending his heartfelt congratulations to the nation.

Acknowledging the arduous journey to sovereignty, President Mirziyoyev praised the heroes who fought for freedom and were oppressed. He emphasized the collective pride and honor of independent Uzbekistan.

Education was underscored as a fundamental driver of progress, recognizing Uzbekistan's historical contributions to world civilization through labor and intellect. The President also stressed the importance of equal opportunities for women, referring to them as the "mothers of the nation."

In the face of global challenges, President Shavkat emphasized the power of unity and strong

collective will as essential factors for steady development. He concluded his speech with well-wishes for the Uzbek people, expressing the hope for eternal peace, prosperity, and independence.

### Global Felicitations

Uzbekistan's Independence Day receives heartfelt wishes from across the world. Pakistan, Russia, Poland, Turkey, Canada, Sri Lanka, and numerous other countries extended their congratulations, highlighting the successful partnerships and development between nations.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan's Independence Day is a testament to the nation's resilience, rich heritage, and commitment to progress. As Uzbekistan looks back on its 32-year journey towards independence, it stands as a beacon of hope and prosperity in Central Asia, a land where diverse cultures unite, and the spirit of freedom endures.





## SUFI SAINTS OF PAKISTAN

### Bulleh Shah and Data Ganj Bakhsh

Nadeem Aslam

Syed Abdullah Shah Qadri (1680–1757), known popularly as Bulleh Shah (or Bullhe Shah), was a 17th-century Punjabi revolutionary philosopher, reformist, and Sufi poet universally regarded as the "Father of Punjabi Enlightenment" and the "Poet of the People." He spoke against powerful religious, political, and social institutions. He was born in Uch Gillanian near Multan, and his family moved to Kasur. After his early education, he went to Lahore, where he met with Shah Inayat Qadri. Bulleh Shah practiced the Sufi tradition of Punjabi poetry established by poets like Shah Hussain (1538–1599), Sultan Bahu (1629–1691),

and primarily employed the Kafi verse form.

There was enmity between Mullahs and pundits as Mullahs did not like Baba Bulleh Shah. It is depicted in his poetry that Bulleh Shah did not like Mullahs. According to one of his verses, he says that these Mullahs waste their lives in the mosque, their inner side is filled with filth, they are unable to promote unity, and they are used to making loud noises.

During that time, he was a ray of hope and an instrument of peace for the inhabitants of Punjab. Bulleh Shah always preached that if violence is answered with violence, it will lead to strife only.

He propagated non-violence and did not support either Muslims or Sikhs in the bloodshed.

His notable works include "Makkeh gaya," "Gal Mukdee Nahee," "Bulleya Ki Jana Main Kaun," "Main Jana Jogi De Naal," "Bas Karjee Hun Bas Karjee," "Gharyali Diyo Nikal Ni," and "Ek Nukta Yaar Parhaya Ae."

Among Sufi poets, Bulleh Shah's writings highlight his supernatural spiritual journey through the four stages of Sufism: Shariat (Path), Tariqat (Observance), Haqiqat (Truth), and Marfat (Union). Bulleh Shah's writings symbolize him as a humanist, providing solutions to the sociological problems of the world around him

as he lived through it while concurrently searching for God.

Bullah preached fearlessly that the guidance of a Master was indispensable for spiritual realization, and the caste of the Master did not matter at all in this pursuit. Even if he belonged to the lowest caste, his help would remain indispensable. Thus, he proclaimed that pride in being a Sayyid would lead to hell, and the one who held the skirt of a Master like Inayat Shah would enjoy the pleasures of heaven.

He did not get married and remained celibate for the rest of his life. He died in 1757 at the age of 77. He was declared non-Muslim by religious fundamentalists of Kasur, who claimed it was prohibited to offer prayers at his funeral. His funeral was offered by a few transgender individuals. He was buried in an uninhabited area of Kasur, which has now become the most populated area of Kasur, honoring the great saint called Bulleh Shah. Recently, his death anniversary was observed from August 25th to August 28th, 2023, with a large number of his followers participating to pay tribute to the friend of God.

Hazrat Syed Ali Hujwiri, better known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, was a Muslim ascetic, saint, missionary, and author of *Kashf-ul-Mahjoub*. He was a follower of Junaid Baghdadi, and his shrine is in Lahore, Pakistan.

Data Saheb was born in Ghazni and was highly brilliant and studious since his childhood. He received initial education in Ghazni and extensively traveled to various Muslim countries, including Azerbaijan, Turkey,

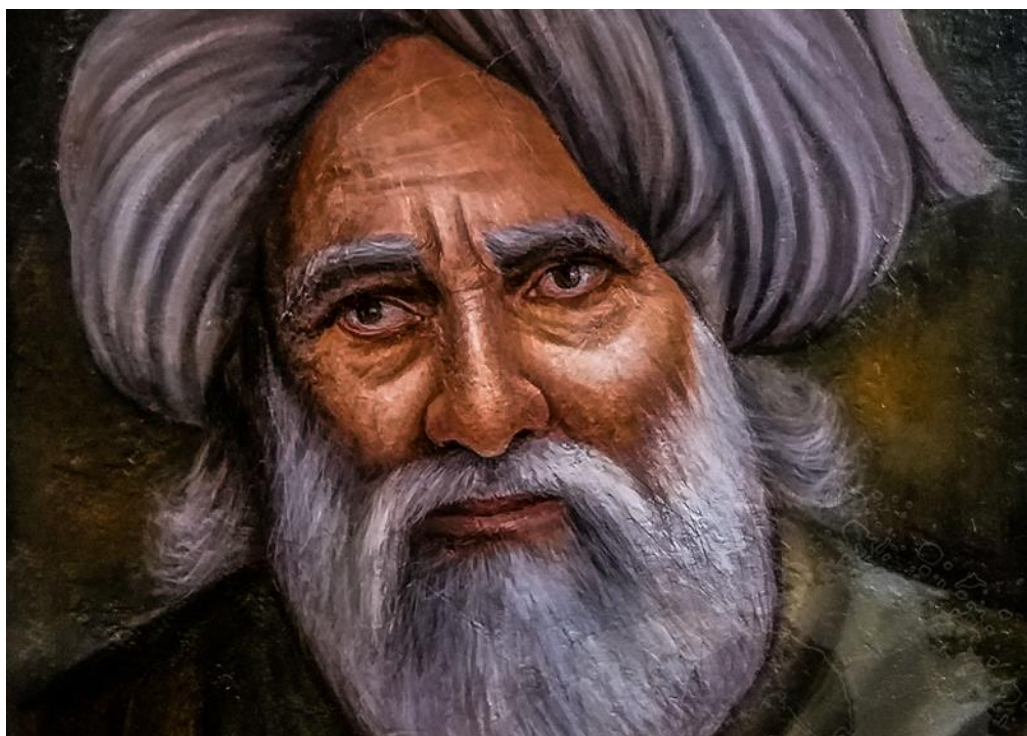
Levant, etc., before reaching his final destination in Lahore to carry out missionary work. He was a mureed of Hazrat Abul Fazal Khutli Rahmatullah Alaih. Scholars claim that it was Data Saheb's Pir's order that led him to move to Lahore, where he spent 30 years of his life until his death.

A Dargah is constructed over the shrine of Data Ganj Bakhsh, and it is said that no one can remain hungry at his place due to the 24/7 free food facilities.

The Urs festival of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh is a three-day-long event comprising many seminars on Sufism and spiritualism. One can witness the unique tradition of distributing free milk as *Tabarruk*, along with free food during Urs. The tradition of distributing milk started in 1962, and the Punjab government looks after Urs's security arrangements. The *Mahfil-e-sama* or the *qawwali* Sufi songs gathering during the Urs is the largest gathering in Pakistan, attracting brilliant singers from all over the country.

Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin performed *chilla* in the shrine of Data Ganj Bakhsh before settling in Ajmer, India. He praised Data Ganj Bakhsh as "*Ganj Bakhsh e Faiz e Aalam*," "*Mazhar e Noor e Khuda*," "*Nakisaara Peer e Kamil*," and "*Kamil aara Rehnuma*."

Different scholars have stated various points regarding Hazrat Syed Ali Hujwiri's married life. However, the main source of information has been his book, "*Kashf al-Mahjub*." According to the book, after God had preserved him for eleven years from the dangers of matrimony, he fell in love with the description of a woman whom he had never seen, and for a whole year, his passion absorbed him to the point where his religion was nearly ruined. However, God, in His bounty, eventually protected his heart and mercifully delivered him. [Source: *Kashf al-Mahjub*, Page 364.] His experience of married life was not pleasant, and he died in 1072 CE. His death anniversary (Urs/feast) will be observed from September 5th to September 7th, 2023, at his shrine in Lahore.





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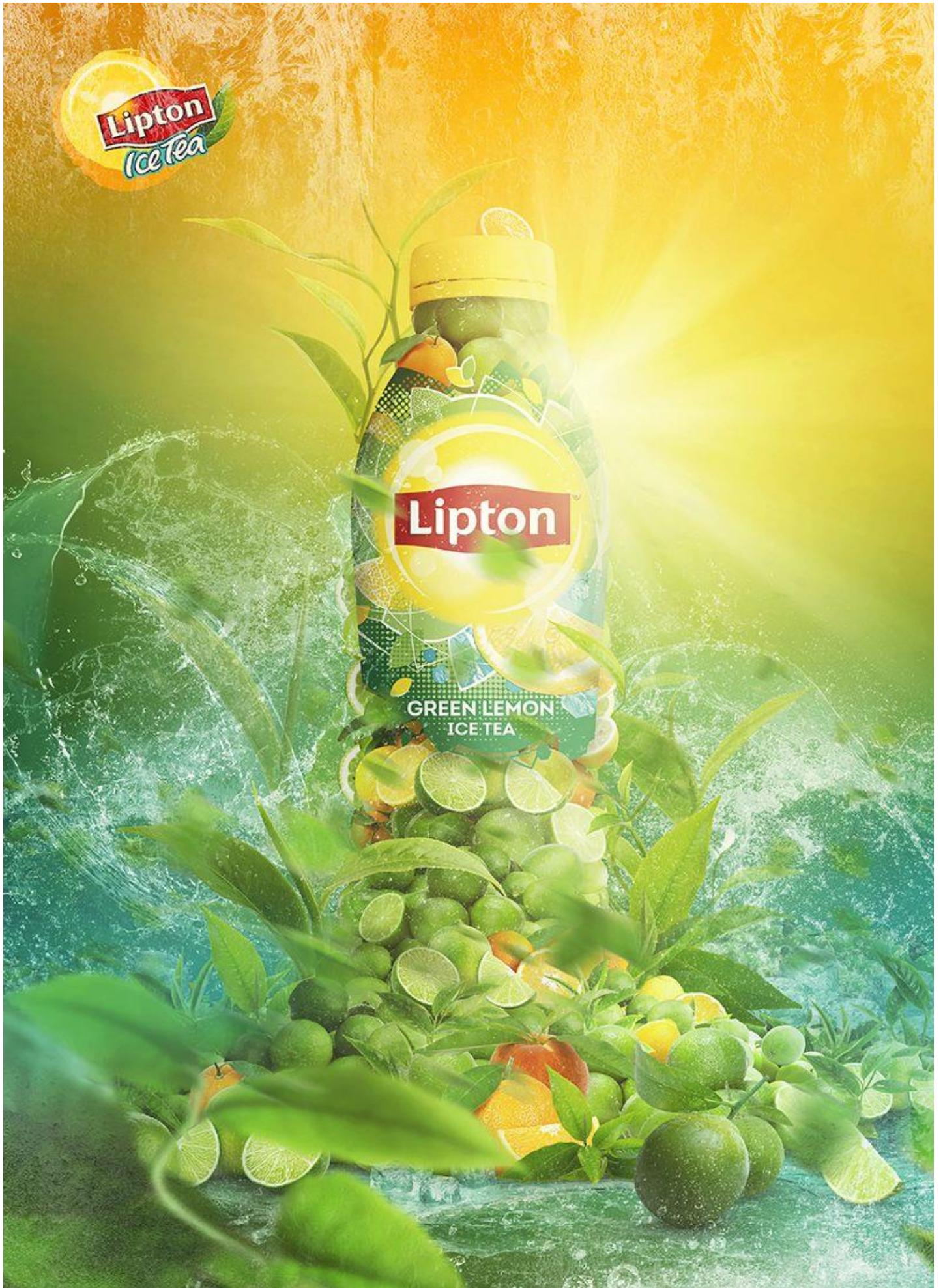
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