

# Monthly FORESIGHT Monthly

Islamabad

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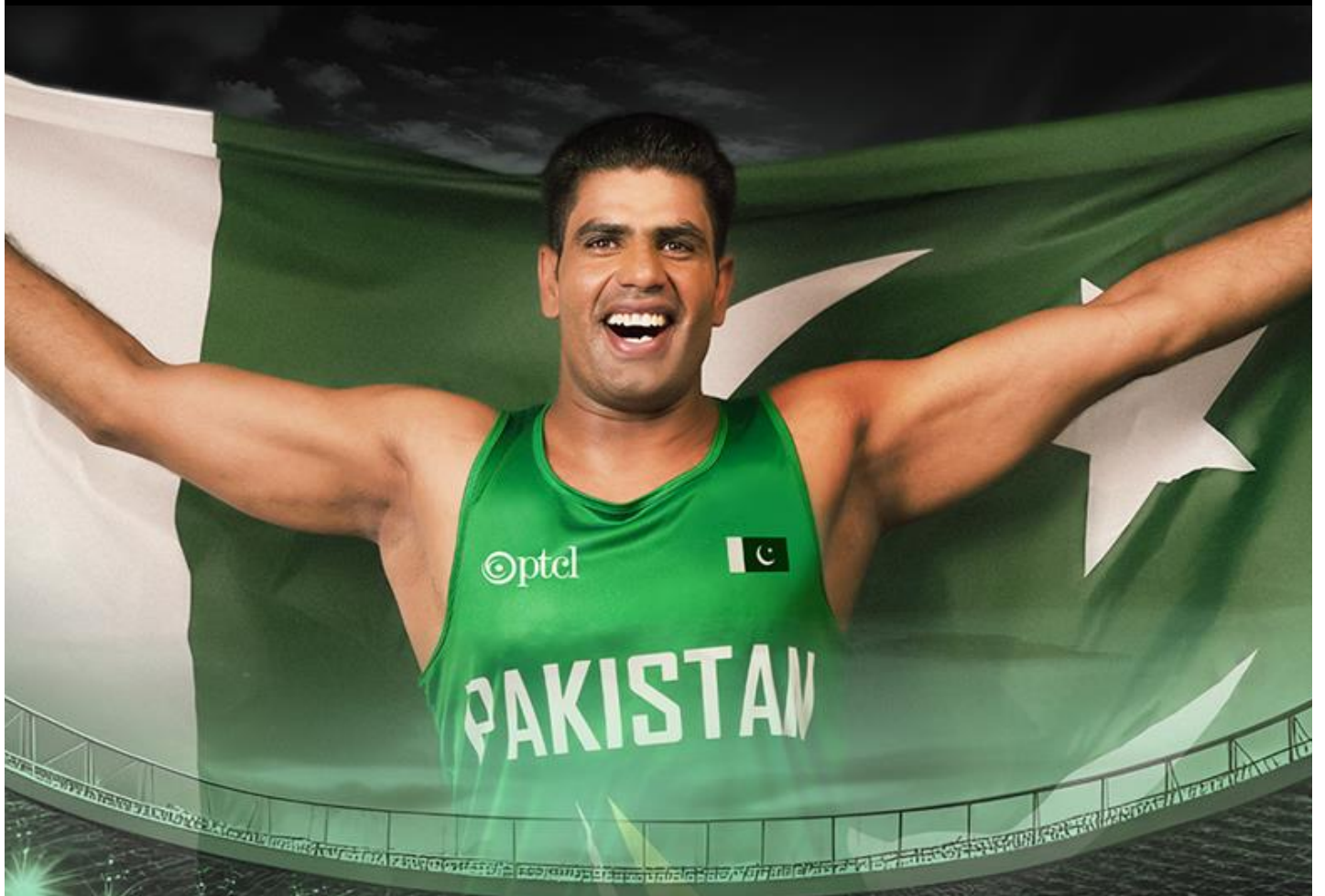


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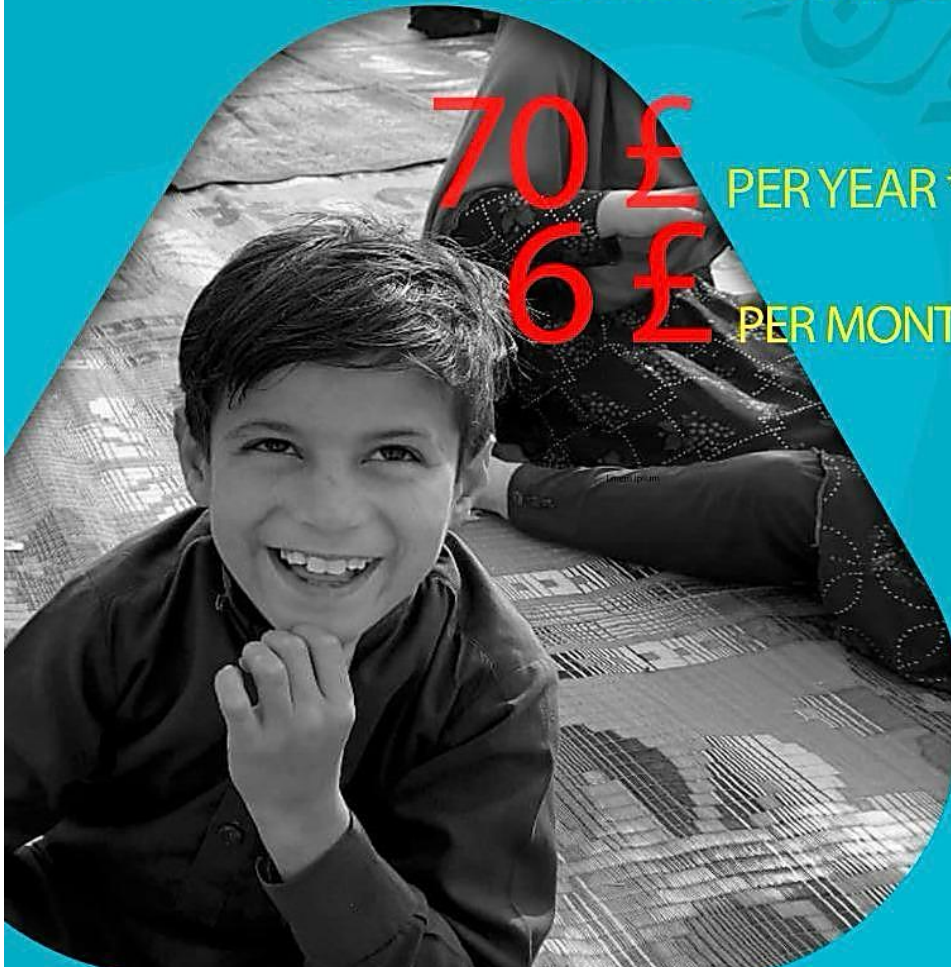
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**Chief Editor Note**

As we step into August, a month resonating with the echoes of independence and the relentless pursuit of freedom, we at Foresight Magazine bring to you a collection of stories that reflect the ever-evolving dynamics of our region. This edition captures the essence of leadership, the unpredictability of power, and the enduring spirit of those who strive for democracy and justice.

Our first feature, "A Global Wake-Up Call," delves into the unexpected resignation and exile of Sheikh Hasina, a monumental shift in Bangladesh's political landscape. This youth-led revolution marks a turning point in the nation's fight for democracy, offering both a sobering reflection and a beacon of hope for the future.

The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, as discussed in our second piece, is a tragic event that has sent shockwaves across the Muslim world. The repercussions of this act extend far beyond Gaza, stirring regional turmoil and provoking a diplomatic crisis that challenges the very fabric of Middle Eastern geopolitics.

In "Jinnah's Legacy and Pakistan's Future," we pause to commemorate 77 years of Pakistan's independence. We reflect on the enduring message of hope, courage, and confidence that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah imparted to his nation—a message that remains as relevant today as it was at the birth of our country.

Finally, "Elections and Expectations" brings us to Iran, where Dr. Massoud Pezshkian's election as the next president marks the beginning of a new chapter. As the world watches closely, this leadership transition is laden with expectations, both within Iran and on the global stage.

As we navigate these complex narratives, we are reminded of the power of leadership, the impact of collective action, and the importance of steadfast hope in the face of adversity. This edition of Foresight Magazine is a tribute to those who dare to dream, to fight, and to lead—even when the path forward is uncertain.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement with Foresight Magazine. Together, let us continue to explore, analyze, and understand the intricate threads that shape our world.

With warm regards,



Tanveer Ali Maken



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# Bangladesh at A New Beginning

## A Global Wake-Up Call

### Hasina's Departure

**A Tale of Dictatorship's Demise and Youthful Rebellion**

Tanveer Ali Maken

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Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country, marking a dramatic turn in the nation's ongoing political turmoil. Hasina, along with her sister, departed from Ganabhaban, the official prime ministerial residence, seeking refuge in a secure location. Although she had intended to address the nation with a recorded speech, circumstances did not permit. In her absence, Bangladesh Army Chief General Vikaruzzaman announced the commencement of political change and the formation of an interim government. He urged citizens to uphold law and order, emphasizing that cooperation, rather than conflict, is essential for the nation's stability and progress.

General Waqaruzzaman called for an end to violence and for collective efforts towards the country's welfare. This unprecedented upheaval follows weeks of intense anti-government protests that have claimed nearly 100 lives and led to over 300 deaths in total. Despite facing mounting unrest and the tragic loss of many lives, including students advocating for civil service reforms, Hasina's authority remained seemingly unshaken until her final moments in power.

Hasina's refusal to listen to the people's desire was due to her long-standing belief in her own political invincibility. As the heir to Bangladesh's founding father, she portrayed herself as an

indomitable, almost deity-like figure. The 'Students Against Discrimination' group, which was at the forefront of protests against job quotas last month, was leading the latest protests. The protests for reforms in the quota system came to a halt after the Supreme Court scrapped most of the quota on July 21. Last week, however, protesters demanded a public apology from Hasina for the violence, restoration of internet connections, reopening of college and university campuses and the release of those arrested. By the end of the week, the protests had taken the form of a campaign demanding Hasina's ouster.

What Sparked the Student Protests?





Unemployment experts attribute the recent unrest in Bangladesh to the stagnation of jobs in the private sector, as about 32 million of the 170 million population are unemployed or without education. The world's fastest-growing economy is stagnant due to the country's rapidly growing garment sector. On the other hand, public sector jobs and their accompanying regular wage hikes and incentives are very attractive. In June last month, protests broke out on the university campus after the High Court reinstated the quota system for government jobs and set aside the Hasina government's 2018 decision. The supreme court had suspended the high court order following the government's appeal and then set aside the trial court's order last month and directed that 93 per cent of the jobs be opened for candidates on the basis of merit. - This quota system ignited anger and deprivation among unemployment-stricken students and youth.

Hasina's downfall began when a group of young people began

demanding an end to the unfair quota system in the distribution of civil services jobs, which was essentially giving preference to relatives of her political colleagues. In organizing their protests, the students formed a divided co-leadership structure, where leaders acted as coordinators. They called their alliance the Students Against Discrimination movement. The coordinators came from both public and private educational institutions. Just six years ago, many of them took part in another wave of protests as teenagers. The protests started when a commercial bus ran over two students. The vehicle that caused the deaths was owned by a company linked to a relative of a minister. In 2018 too, the student wing of Hasina's civilian militia, the Awami League Party, brutally beat up the youth. The use of violence was successful in suppressing the protests.

Earlier this generation of revolutionaries had not gained enough experience in organizing successful demonstrations,

creating alternative command structures, using modern communication techniques under internet blockade, and avoiding government surveillance, etc. All these skills helped him in his successful attempt to oust the most ruthless dictator in Bangladesh's history. What could have been suppressed by a few simple promises of reform in the future was fuelled by the prime minister's indecent statements and brutal repression by his security forces. But the organizers of the protest were at the test of war and knew what to expect. Sheikh Hasina's strong, dominant and brutal authoritarian attitude led the student group to reject Hasina's offer to negotiate a solution to the crisis.

Eventually, millions of young men chased him away with sticks and bricks, while his men had all the guns and fired indiscriminately. This spectacular withdrawal will make his future political comeback politically unacceptable. Hasina had to leave Bangladesh earlier as well. While she was living in Europe, in 1975



there was a bloody uprising against her father, President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in which almost all of her family members were killed. She extended her stay abroad and returned to the country only in the early 1980s. She soon rose to fame on the political scene and managed to create communal-like popularity among members of her father's Awami League.

In order to gain full power, they isolated their allies at home and abroad. From ailing former prime minister Khaleda Zia to the country's only Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus, he lashed out at them and placed them under house arrest. Numerous political activists, writers and intellectuals have either been imprisoned or disappeared in what could be called the "reign of terrorism". Even sympathizers who tried to advise his good faith were not immune to his wrath. With serious criminal charges being slapped against her political opponents

under Hasina, all other parties will also face legal difficulties to qualify her to contest elections. Among them is Tariq Rahman, the de facto leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, who is serving a life sentence for his alleged role in the conspiracy to assassinate Hasina in 2004. Bangladesh's largest Islamic political party Jamaat-e-Islami was banned on August 3 and banned from contesting elections since 2013.

Hasina's refusal to compromise, over-reliance on state violence, and deep patronage ties with the privileged client class had long cut her off from the Bangladeshi people. She may not have been able to see to what extent she had lost the support of the majority by the end, leaving her with no choice but to flee the country. The end of his 16-year rule is a cautionary tale for dictators around the world and a testament to the willpower of a nation's desperate youth.

India, which was Hasina's biggest protector globally, is shocked and

saddened by her passing away. It has security concerns about a possible law and order breakdown and targeted repression of the large Bangladeshi Hindu population. Gobind Chandra Pramanik, one of the most prominent leaders of Bangladesh's Hindu community, has sought to allay Indian fears, saying Hindus are currently facing chaos like the rest of the country and the situation is slowly calming down as volunteers from major political parties are coming forward to protect the Hindu community.

Sheikh Hasina's fall in Bangladesh is an important moment not only for the country but also for the broader global struggle between democracy and dictatorship, but Bangladeshi youth have strongly reprimanded those who try to undermine the democratic aspirations of the people. Their victory serves as a powerful response to dictators who believe their hold on power is insurmountable.





The News of Ismail Haniyeh's sudden martyrdom, (a respected leader of Hamas and a prominent figure in the fight for Palestinian rights), has cast a profound shadow over the Muslim World. Known for his untiring determination and courageous spirit, Haniyeh was not only a symbol of resistance but also a key diplomatic player, engaging in international talks including recent meetings with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Haniyeh was in Tehran for the inauguration of

of national mourning, underscoring the gravity of the loss and the escalating regional instability.

The killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh has drawn condemnation from various quarters. Iran's brothers Hezbollah and the Houthis, who are part of the "axis of resistance", condemned the crime, while Russia called it an "unacceptable political murder". On the other hand, China has said that it is "deeply concerned" while

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## Haniyeh's Assassination A Jolt to the Muslim World Triggering Diplomatic and Regional Crisis

Dr. Khalid Ahmed



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian when he was killed in a brutal attack early in morning. The attack, widely suspected to be carried out by Israel, has intensified tensions in the region, particularly in light of ongoing conflicts in Gaza. The Israeli government has not officially acknowledged responsibility for Haniyeh's death, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has asserted that recent actions against Iran's proxies, including Hamas and Hezbollah, are part of a broader strategy. The killing follows Israel's claim of a successful strike against Hezbollah's senior military commander. In response, Tehran has declared three days

Pakistan has criticized the "Israeli adventurism". The threat of tensions in the Middle East has caused concern in many international countries. Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif described Haniyeh's killing as a barbaric act and said that Netanyahu wants to destroy Palestine. He expressed these views while addressing a consultative meeting of coalition parties on the deteriorating situation in Palestine, where a joint statement was issued that the nation will observe a day of mourning on Friday (today) in memory of the slain Hamas leader. He added that the killing of Hamas' chief negotiator Haniyeh in the ceasefire talks had damaged any prospects of peace in Gaza.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday urged all parties in the Middle East to stop "provocative actions" and achieve a ceasefire in Gaza. He warned that the Middle East is moving towards more conflict, more violence, more suffering, more insecurity, and it is very important that we break this cycle.

South Africa's government says the killing threatens to plunge the Middle East into further chaos. "South Africa is concerned that the killing of Dr. Haniyeh and the continued targeting of civilians in Gaza will add to the already tense situation throughout the region," the South African government's Department of International Relations and Cooperation said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also spoke by telephone with Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Baqerikani, where both sides condemned the killing and pointed out the "extremely dangerous consequences of such actions".

According to the Iranian news agency Fars, Hania was martyred by a missile from the air, after which speculation started about a possible missile or drone attack. Iranian media said the attack, which took place at 2:30 a.m. local time, targeted the special residences of veterans in northern Tehran, where Hania was staying. Whatever the cases, Tehran needs to conduct a thorough internal investigation to determine how such a high-profile person was targeted. It is believed that this is not the first time that Israel has attacked inside Iran. Iran's top nuclear scientists and generals have been targeted in a similar way. However, whatever the investigation revealed, security was apparently weak, and the Iranians should have strengthened their defenses given the series of previous killings. - Iran's supreme leader has stressed that "it is our duty to avenge his blood" in reference to Haniyeh's murder, and that the possibility of a ceasefire in the Middle East in the near future seems to have been buried after Haniyeh's murder. However, the United States can still urge Israel to stop its assassination campaign. But in an election year, it will be very unlikely as both candidates will compete for the blessings of the Zionist lobby in Washington.

Israel now appears to be trying to engage Iran in a war aimed at containing a country that has consistently refused to accept U.S. and Israeli hegemony in the Middle East. The death of the head of Hamas involved in peace talks in the same country is a desperate attempt to push the country towards a broader war. On the other hand, the provocation is so serious that Iran has no choice but to respond. Ahmed Zeidabadi, a leading Iranian analyst, told AFP news agency that Tehran "expects a stronger response" than the last direct

confrontation with Israel in April. "Hopefully, Iran and Hezbollah don't want to play into Netanyahu's hands and give him the fodder or ammunition they need to push the United States into war," said Amal Saad of Cardiff University, another analyst. He will likely try to avert war, but will also respond to Netanyahu.

Although Israeli officials say they do not want war, they are certainly doing everything they can to create a major chaos in the region. The United States, Israel's biggest foreign beneficiary, is sending mixed signals. On the one hand, the US Defense Secretary said that there are "opportunities for diplomacy", on the other hand, Washington has sent more fighter planes and ships to strengthen Israel's defense against the expected Iranian attack. While the United States may have an edge in firepower and technology as a party to this war, it will not be easy to defeat Iran because despite its recent intelligence failures, Iran has systematically expanded its influence in the region from Iraq to Syria and Lebanon. Despite differences in Yemen, Iran has tried to normalize relations with Saudi Arabia. But this is Iran's background, and its coalition forces are present throughout the region. So, any confrontation will be long and messy.

Despite Israeli aggression, world leaders are advising Iran to exercise patience and patience to reduce tensions and establish world peace.





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# Celebrating 77<sup>th</sup> Year of Independence

## Azam e Istehkam and Quaid's Decree

With Hope, Courage and Confidence, Let's mobilize in a systematic and organized way

**Bashir Ahmed**

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“My message to you all is of hope, courage and confidence. Let us mobilize all our resources in a systematic and organized way and tackle the grave issues that confront us with the grim determination and discipline worthy of a great nation.”

As Pakistan commemorates its 77th Independence Day on August 14, 2024, it is a moment ripe for reflection and renewal. This year's theme, "Azam-e-Istehkam" aligns deeply with Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's timeless message of hope, courage, and confidence. Jinnah's call to systematically mobilize resources and tackle serious issues with steadfast determination and discipline is as relevant today as it was at the dawn of Pakistan's freedom movement.

In celebrating this significant milestone, we honor the sacrifices of those who turned the dream of an independent nation into reality. It is also an opportunity to renew our commitment to the core ideals of liberty, equality, and justice. Pakistan's journey since 1947 has been marked by remarkable achievements, but also by numerous challenges. As we stand at this crossroads, it is essential to assess where we are and what more needs to be done.

The path forward is not without its obstacles. The nation faces a myriad of issues: political instability, economic hardship, and security concerns, compounded by a general erosion of trust and unity. Jinnah's vision for Pakistan was one of a disciplined and organized state, yet in recent times, the principles

of discipline and unity seem to be in short supply. Political volatility and corruption undermine progress, while economic difficulties and a deteriorating law and order situation challenge the nation's stability and growth.

In his iconic speeches, Jinnah urged Pakistanis to harness hope, courage, and confidence to overcome adversity. His directive to mobilize resources systematically and confront issues with the resolve of a great nation serves as a beacon of guidance. Even as we grapple with contemporary challenges, Jinnah's words remind us of the potential within our grasp if we remain disciplined and determined.

German-born British economist E.F. Schumacher once said, "The







art of living is always to make good things out of bad things." This sentiment is particularly pertinent for Pakistan today. Despite the myriad challenges, the nation has not reached the end of its potential. By fostering a spirit of resilience and creativity, we can restore confidence and reignite hope among our youth and the broader population.

The youth, in particular, hold the key to Pakistan's future. Many nations have successfully transformed their young populations into drivers of economic growth and innovation. Pakistan must follow suit by investing in its youth, creating opportunities, and preventing brain drain. This involves providing quality education, embracing modern technology, and nurturing entrepreneurial spirit. Our younger generation deserves leaders and mentors who can guide them towards

enlightenment and excellence in fields like Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

In a rapidly evolving knowledge-based economy, ignorance is indeed a crime. We must ensure that our youth are equipped with the skills and knowledge to thrive in today's world. By fostering an environment that encourages innovation and creativity, Pakistan can leverage its youthful energy to propel itself forward. We need new ideas, fresh approaches, and a commitment to leveraging advancements such as artificial intelligence to drive societal progress.

Reflecting on Pakistan's independence journey underscores the significance of Jinnah's vision. He envisioned a sovereign state where justice, equality, and democracy would flourish—a vision that was not just about achieving freedom, but about

building a nation grounded in hope and systematic organization. As we celebrate our 77th Independence Day, embracing Jinnah's message of determination and discipline is essential for navigating the complexities of today's world.

The theme of "Azm-e-Istehkam" encapsulates the spirit of resilience and stability that Pakistan must embody. By adhering to the principles laid out by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and harnessing the collective strength of our people, Pakistan can overcome its current challenges and build a future marked by prosperity and unity. The journey ahead is long, but with unwavering resolve and a commitment to Jinnah's vision, Pakistan can indeed secure a bright and promising future for all its citizens.





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# SECURING FUTURES

## World Day Against Trafficking in Persons A Global Commitment to 'Leave No Child Behind'

Desk Report

In a compelling demonstration of international solidarity and commitment, stakeholders from across the globe and the Government of Pakistan convened today to mark World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. The event, held under the global theme "Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Human Trafficking," emphasized a unified drive to combat human trafficking, with a particular focus on safeguarding children and upholding their rights and dignity.

Organized through a collaborative effort by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Centre for Migration Policy

Development (ICMPD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO), in partnership with Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the event highlighted the urgent need for intensified global and national actions against human trafficking.

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, observed annually on July 30th, aims to raise awareness about the pervasive issue of human trafficking and advocate for the protection of victims' rights. This year's campaign has placed a sharp focus on

accelerating efforts to end child trafficking and labor issues, reflecting a growing concern over the exploitation of children within increasingly complex trafficking networks.

Children, particularly girls, represent a significant proportion of trafficking victims worldwide, with new forms of slavery emerging as globalization and rising inequalities fuel sophisticated trafficking operations. The proliferation of online platforms has further exacerbated these challenges, exposing children to heightened risks of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence, and enabling traffickers to exploit







victims across borders with alarming ease.

The event in Islamabad served as a crucial platform for raising awareness about the impact of child trafficking and labor in Pakistan, while also showcasing the collaborative efforts and commitments of various organizations dedicated to combating human trafficking. It provided an opportunity to recognize and honor the significant contributions of national partners and stakeholders in the fight against trafficking.

Throughout the day, UN agencies and partner organizations reiterated their pledge to addressing human trafficking through inclusive and collaborative approaches at all levels. The event featured a series of presentations, expert panels, and discussions designed to share knowledge, strategies, and best practices. These exchanges aimed to foster a deeper understanding of the issue and to build stronger, more effective responses to combat human trafficking,

reinforcing a collective determination to protect the most vulnerable members of society and end the scourge of modern-day slavery.

In his opening remarks, the Additional Director General of FIA, Abbas Ahsan, urged that our society as a whole and practitioners, including law enforcement, must acknowledge what constitutes trafficking; its prevalence in Pakistan and the impact it has on the lives of people, especially children.

Country Representatives from UNODC, ICMPD, ILO, IOM, SSDO, and FIA underscored the importance attached to the protection of children and stressed that targeted measures are essential to reduce their vulnerability to trafficking.

Jeremy Milsom, Representative UNODC Country Office Pakistan, invited Shahida Gillani, Programme Officer, Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling, to read the message of UNODC Executive Director

Ghada Waly with the audience. Gilani highlighted in her message that this year's theme focuses on child victims, which have tripled over the past 15 years. She also shared, "According to UNODC's data, globally, children account for one-third of trafficking victims, suffering unspeakable abuse – whether they are forced into labour, sold off as brides, recruited as soldiers, or coerced into criminal activities.

Geir Tonstol, Country Director for the ILO Pakistan, said, "The ILO recognizes the urgent need to combat human trafficking, a grave issue disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable, especially children. With a staggering 3.3 million children trafficked worldwide, it is crucial for state systems to adopt integrated approaches that prioritize child protection. By leveraging forums like this, we can expand partnerships and collaborate with like-minded organizations to support Pakistan's progress towards a fairer and more equitable society."



Vincent Matteau, Senior Programme Coordinator at IOM, emphasized the urgent need to combat child trafficking by establishing stronger partnerships and improving migration management. “IOM is committed to expanding safe and legal migration channels while addressing trafficking and smuggling through a comprehensive approach. This multifaceted strategy focuses on improving migration management, raising awareness, strengthening legal frameworks and victim support mechanisms,

under the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (PTPA), better labour inspections for child and bonded labour, and enhanced stakeholder capacity. Additionally, he stressed the need for greater public awareness and data-driven strategies to effectively address and prevent trafficking. SSDO is committed to implementing these measures and ensuring that all efforts to combat trafficking are comprehensively supported, he added.

Closing the high-level segment, Director General FIA Ahmad Ishaque Jahangir (PSP) emphasized, “Human trafficking, particularly child trafficking, is a serious human rights violation that demands our unwavering attention and action. In Pakistan, the FIA has been leading efforts to combat this heinous crime. Our work is significantly enhanced through collaboration with our esteemed partners. This joint event is a testament to our unified response and shared commitment to eradicating trafficking in persons.”

Fawad Haider, Head of Office at ICMPD, emphasized, “The theme

'Leave no child behind in the fight against human trafficking' underscores the critical need for collaborative efforts to safeguard children's rights and dignity. At ICMPD, we stress the importance of cooperative frameworks that facilitate cross-border and multi-agency collaboration to combat the trafficking of human beings (THB) and ensure victim protection. Our goal is to ensure that no child falls through the cracks and that every child is protected from exploitation and harm.”

Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson of the National Commission on Rights of Child (NCRC), said, “Today, on the World Day Against

Trafficking in Persons, we gather to confront one of the gravest violations of human rights: child trafficking. This day serves as a reminder of the pervasive threat that traffickers pose to the safety and dignity of children, and it also presents an opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to combating trafficking.

UNODC, ICMPD, ILO, IOM, SSDO, and FIA reaffirm their collective commitment to eradicating human trafficking in Pakistan and a future where every child is safe and free from exploitation.

and facilitating safe mobility, return, and reintegration.”

Syed Kausar Abbas, Executive Director of SSDO, highlighted the importance of a systematic approach to victim identification and referral, especially for vulnerable groups, and ensuring they receive tailored support. He called for increased prosecutions







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## **ELECTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **Dr. Massoud Pezeshkian**

### **Becomes Iran's Next President**

### **A New Era or More of the Same**

**Dr. Abdul Rauf**

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According to a statement issued by Iran's interior ministry, Pezeshkian has become the next president of Iran by securing the majority of the votes. After the results were announced, small groups of Pezeshkian supporters took to the streets and celebrated. Of the four candidates contesting in Iran's recent elections, the only moderate candidate was Dr. Massoud Pezeshkian, while his opponent was former nuclear negotiator Jalili, a strong supporter of strengthening Iran's relations with Russia and China. 49.8 percent of the voters participated in the tough fight between the two candidates.

In Iran's recently held elections on June 28, the historically low turnout was about 50 percent, in last week's election, Pezeshkian got 42.5 percent and Jalili got 38.7 percent of the vote. According to analysts, about 50 percent of Iranians did not vote because some did not believe that the election would bring any change, whether the winner was conservative or reformist. "This is a silent protest by the Iranian people. "We respect

anyone elected by the Iranian people," Jalili said in a statement. I think not only should they be respected, but now we should use all our strength and strength to move forward and help the new government move forward strongly. It is expected that Dr. Masood Pezeshkian will take over his responsibilities within 30 days. Since he is still a member of parliament from Tabriz, the institution will first vote on his resignation. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has been formally confirmed by the country's 9th president-elect.

Several world leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, have congratulated Pezeshkian on his election, but western leaders have so far seen silence. Pakistan Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has also congratulated Dr. Masood Pezeshkian on the victory of Iran's presidential elections, saying that I look forward to working with the newly elected President Dr. Pezeshkian to further strengthen bilateral relations between Pakistan and Iran and promote regional peace



and stability. The Prime Minister said that Pakistan and Iran have close and historical relations as neighboring countries. "We have to ensure a bright future for the people of the two countries through mutually beneficial cooperation," he added. Masoud Pezeshkian won Iran's presidential election in July 2024 by defeating more hardline candidates, it seems that he will change the hardline direction of late President Ebrahim Raisi.

After completing his education and holding leadership positions in the medical sector, Pezeshkian entered politics as deputy health minister during President Mohammad Khatami's first term. This is the period that Pezeshkian's international supporters point to as evidence of his reformist credentials and reiterate the claim that he sided with students protesting for political change in 1999. After the election of Ibrahim Raisi, Pezeshkian began to act as a secure "moderate" spokesman for the government, a role he had retained under Ahmadinejad. She has received credit among international supporters for her "outspoken criticism" of harsh moral laws and repression against the "woman, life, freedom" movement in 2022.

According to some Western commentators they have received wrong credit among international advocates. Instead of condemning the moral laws that led to Maha Amini's death, they argued that the government was inadequate in "educating" women, due to which they were not "complying with the rules and regulations." He

accused the protesters of beating policemen, forcibly removing hijabs from women's heads and burning the flag of the Islamic Republic. According to Pezeshkian, these crimes were committed at the behest of foreign influence to hinder a proper investigation into Amini's death and lead to civil war. It is worth mentioning that Pezeshkian has proudly stated that he played a key role in the implementation of the mandatory hijab and Islamic dress for women in hospitals and universities in the early years of the Islamic Revolution. This negates Pezeshkian's position on the issue.

During the 2024 parliamentary elections, Pezeshkian was initially disqualified as a candidate, but the decision was later reversed. Some have speculated that this is due to Khamenei, which appears to be due to his control over the Guardian Council. Meanwhile, Pezeshkian pledged full loyalty to the government, pledging support for the IRGC's missile and drone programs, pledging the Supreme Leader's "aims and policies", and emphasizing the importance of continuing Raisi's agenda. He also offered support for the foreign policy of Khamenei and the IRGC, including the Iranian regime's aggressive stance against the United States and its allies. All this shows his suitability for the role of president in Iran. Soon after his victory, Pezeshkian raised his voice for his presidency by praying at the shrine of Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of the 1979 Islamic Revolution – an opportunity to reaffirm his commitment to the







government and its ideology. He is the leader of Hezbollah and the Islamic Republic...

After the recent elections, Western media immediately portrayed Pezeshkian's victory as an opportunity for new agreements with Europe and the United States, claiming that he would bring liberalization changes within the government. However, it is unlikely that the U.S. policy toward the Islamic Republic will change after Pezeshkian comes to power. According to analysts, the electoral victory of Massoud Pezeshkian does not mean that he also has the power to change the direction of the country. The foreign policy file in Iran is decided by the entire establishment, especially in the Supreme National Security Council, where the government as well as representatives of the armed forces, Iran's supreme leader and parliament, much will depend on the outcome of the US presidential election in November. The political uncertainty in Washington does not leave much room for the United States, Iran and other European countries to reach new agreements immediately or improve the situation, while there are many problems in between. Some of which can be mentioned:

There is also bloodshed between Iran and Trump, who ordered the killing of General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Revolutionary Guards' powerful Quds Force, in 2020. Meanwhile, the United States suspects that Iran is planning to kill senior U.S. officials

in retaliation. The extension of the war in Gaza to the Middle East could also affect Pezeshkian's ability to negotiate constructively with the West. If conflicts between Israel and Hezbollah escalate in Lebanon, it could make Iran more dangerous in the West at a time when arms transfers to Russia, continued nuclear expansion, and the imprisonment of dual and foreign nationals have already pushed relations into decline. If the Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen resume cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates, Iran and its Gulf Arab neighbors may change the path of de-escalation over the past few years.

Elections in the United States and chaos in the region do not provide much opportunity for the United States and Iran to reach a new agreement in the short term, but the two countries should at least try to restore some of the informal agreements reached in 2023. In exchange for some access to Iran's frozen assets abroad. This will help the United States reduce tensions with Iran and give Pezeshkian little economic relief after taking office. With Pezeshkian now in office and facing numerous domestic and foreign challenges, it would be a good idea for the United States and Europe to constructively engage President Pezeshkian, provide him with some limited economic relief, and at least try the suggestion that his administration can change Iranian policy at home and abroad.





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The US Embassy in Islamabad hosted a vibrant and festive reception to commemorate the 248th anniversary of the United States' independence. Held under the theme "Made in the USA," the event was a testament to the enduring partnership between the two nations.

The reception was graced by the presence of Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, who served as the chief guest. Distinguished guests from Pakistan's government, corporate sector, academia, civil society, and diplomatic community gathered to celebrate the shared values of freedom, democracy, and economic prosperity that unite the United States and Pakistan.

The evening was a dazzling spectacle of American culture, featuring traditional music, delectable cuisine, and a spectacular fireworks display. The event showcased the rich diversity of the United States, highlighting the contributions of people from all walks of life.

The United States and Pakistan have a long history of cooperation in various sectors. The United States has played a pivotal role in supporting Pakistan's infrastructure development, with several major dams constructed with US assistance. In the private sector, numerous US companies have created employment opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis, contributing to the country's economic growth.

The United States is also Pakistan's largest export market, providing a significant boost to Pakistan's economy. The "Green Alliance" Framework between the two nations aims to strengthen Pakistan's climate resilience and promote clean energy, reflecting the shared commitment to addressing global challenges.

US Ambassador Donald Blome delivered a powerful address, emphasizing the promising trajectory of the bilateral relationship. He acknowledged the challenges that the two nations have faced together, such as floods, war, a pandemic, and economic setbacks, but stressed

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## US INDEPENDENCE DAY Celebrates Continued Partnership with Pakistan

Desk Report

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that the partnership has always been a journey towards increased prosperity and security.

The reception underscored the strength of the US-Pakistan bilateral relationship, highlighting the shared commitment to deepening economic ties, promoting cultural exchange, and fostering collaboration in areas of mutual interest. As the United States celebrates its independence, the two countries pledged to continue working together to address shared challenges and seize opportunities for a brighter future.

**Remarks by U.S. Ambassador Blome at the U.S. Independence Day Celebration, U.S. Embassy, Islamabad**

AMBASSADOR BLOME: Good evening. I would like to warmly welcome all of you to this celebration of the 248th anniversary of the United States' independence. I am especially pleased to welcome our Chief Guest, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives for being here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen, one of the characteristics of the moment we are passing through is global re-ordering, where entities and organizations that had not reached their potential are emerging to stake their rightful claim, and demand their place on the world stage. And I think you guessed, I am talking about cricket. I won't dwell on what I saw in Dallas, but I am a true convert to the excitement of the T20 game!

And I will tell you this — I travel a lot in Pakistan, through the length and breadth of this beautiful country. And when I see every patch of open ground on a

weekend crowded with cricket bats and wickets, I know Pakistan will always be well represented in those big moments.

Today, we gather to celebrate the Fourth of July. I know today is July 2nd, but what not everybody knows is that the Continental Congress actually voted for independence on July 2nd, and the text of the Declaration of Independence adopted two days later on July 4. So, we have an argument for having it today. What they voted for over those two days, what the Declaration called the "truths" that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed with certain "unalienable rights," are what we celebrate as our national ideals. The 248 years that have followed have been the story of our struggle to realize them in full.

Pakistan is a country that, like the United States, emerged from its own hard-won struggle for independence, and like the United States, is still writing its own story. And one characteristic that our countries share is an obsession among our thinkers and leaders with discussing the very purpose of our societies and politics. This idealism is healthy and it provides the basis for renewal and growth.

And it also provides a basis for shared understanding and partnership. It has become commonplace to observe that the United States and Pakistan have sometimes struggled to understand each other. But that observation can obscure the long history of partnership and cooperation between our two countries. In Urdu you say: "Humaray safer ka her eik qadam ahmiet rakhta hay," "each step of the journey is important."

While at times we have had to tackle great challenges – such as floods, war, a pandemic and economic setbacks – those of us who have worked together to strengthen this relationship have always recognized that the partnership is, and has always been, part of a longer journey toward increased prosperity and security for our two nations, and that each step on this journey is important.

American businesses have played a leading role in Pakistan since independence, and not as foreign entities implanted on Pakistani soil. U.S. firms overwhelmingly employ Pakistanis from top to bottom, training them to the highest technical and management levels, and these employees go on in turn to found and run their own global firms. They bring American values of openness, transparency, and community citizenship to the private sector here and they provide hundreds of thousands of jobs, and critical research and development assets.

Or consider U.S. assistance. You can start with infrastructure: Mangla, Tarbela, Gomal Zam, Satpara, and Golen Gol. These dams provide clean, affordable energy to millions of homes, prevent water shortages, and mitigate the damaging effects of flooding. Today we are upgrading Mangla and Tarbela with new GE turbines. The originals lasted for 50 years, and the new versions will last another 50 years – a 100 year investment in Pakistan funded directly, not through loans. That's what we mean by commitment.

At the same time, Pakistanis are benefiting tremendously from our trade relationship, supplying billions of dollars worth of exports to the U.S. market annually. The U.S. is proud to be Pakistan's largest export market globally.

We are also proud of the U.S.-Pakistan "Green Alliance," a





transformative initiative committed to support Pakistan as it strengthens climate resilience, pursues energy transformation, and fosters inclusive growth.

We have contributed \$1 billion to the Green Climate Fund and have unlocked millions of these dollars in climate mitigation and adaptation projects to enhance Pakistan's resilience to climate change. This summer, we will launch a new climate-smart agriculture program to help farming families adapt to the climate challenge and prepare the agriculture sector for a new era of sustainability.

And the United States is a steadfast supporter of Pakistan's healthcare system. In May 2024, the U.S. and Sindh government launched a groundbreaking initiative with an investment of \$9 million, aimed at addressing tuberculosis. The U.S. provides more than \$85 million in funding to address malnutrition in Pakistan, including \$12 million to treat acutely malnourished children. In education, our programs have constructed hundreds of new schools and rehabilitated thousands more.

The U.S. Mission proudly sends more than 500 Pakistanis to the United States each year on educational, professional, and cultural exchanges. We also support the exchange of U.S. and Pakistani artists, musicians,

and experts on topics such as climate change and entrepreneurship.

The United States has continued our commitment to the preservation of Pakistan's rich cultural heritage, supporting 35 cultural preservation projects over the past 20 years. Through the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation and other grants, the United States has supported the conservation of Gandhara archaeological treasures, Mughal architectural heritage such as the Wazir Khan Mosque, the restoration of Sufi shrines and Hindu monuments such as Hazrat Shah Shams Tabraiz and Varun Dev, and supported the preservation of Buddhist monasteries such as Takht-i-Bahi.

In sum, I want to stress the strength and durability of the U.S.-Pakistan partnership and as we celebrate Independence Day, we also celebrate the steps we have taken together.

As I said earlier, "Humaray safer ka her eik qadam ahimiet rakhta hay," "each step of the journey is important."

Thank you all for joining us this evening. Shukria, and please help us celebrate a happy Independence Day!





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On this 157th Canada Day, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to our Canadian friends from across the globe. Celebrating this milestone from Pakistan, we reflect on the remarkable journey of Canada and its vibrant tapestry of cultures and achievements. This day symbolizes not only Canada's rich heritage and unity but also the enduring spirit of friendship and

values that define Canada: pluralism, inclusion, and fairness. He highlighted the ongoing efforts to confront past injustices and pursue reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, acknowledging that these values are the glue that binds Canadians together. Trudeau emphasized that Canada's strength lies not in the absence of differences, but in embracing them. He praised the

place where people from all walks of life can live in harmony and safety.

In a written statement, Governor General Mary Simon echoed these sentiments, reminding Canadians of the diverse perspectives that shape the nation. She encouraged everyone to celebrate the multitude of voices and stories that make up the Canadian fabric.

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## 157<sup>th</sup> CANADA DAY

### Reflections on Inclusion, Freedom, and Shared Responsibility

Syed Nadir Abbas

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cooperation between nations. As we join in the festivities from afar, we are reminded of the bonds that connect us and the shared values that inspire our collective progress. Here's to celebrating Canada's achievements and looking forward to continued collaboration and mutual respect

On Canada Day, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivered a heartfelt address celebrating the

country's commitment to learning from its past and striving for a more inclusive future.

Trudeau's speech also paid tribute to the tireless efforts of healthcare workers, first responders, and the armed forces. He reminded Canadians that the freedoms they enjoy are not a given but are protected daily by those who serve the nation. Their dedication ensures that Canada remains a

Simon urged Canadians to lead with empathy, curiosity, and dialogue, and to make reconciliation a part of their daily lives. She emphasized that reconciliation is a lifelong journey and a shared responsibility, and that by working together, Canadians can build a more inclusive nation.

As Canada celebrated its 157th birthday, Trudeau and Simon's





messages resonated across the country. From coast to coast, Canadians came together to mark the national holiday, reflecting on the progress made and the work that still lies ahead. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the day also held special significance as people observed Memorial Day, honoring those who have served and sacrificed for the nation.

Overall, Trudeau and Simon's addresses on Canada Day highlighted the importance of unity, inclusion, and continuous learning in shaping Canada's future. Their words served as a reminder that while Canada has come a long way, there is always more to be done to ensure that every voice is heard and every story is valued.

**Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has released a video message to Canadians on Canada Day. Here's what he had to say, in his own words.**

"Hello everyone, happy Canada Day. No matter where you are, I hope you're celebrating the

incredible people, the land and the story that is Canada.

It's a story that began more than 157 years ago, with Indigenous Peoples who called this land home since time immemorial.

It's a story of sacrifice. When Canadian soldiers stormed the beaches of Normandy, they knew they were risking their lives, but freedom — even for those across an ocean, even for generations of people they'd never meet — was worth fighting for.

Our rights and freedoms are never guaranteed. They're safeguarded every day by trailblazers, journalists, activists, organizers — people who want to keep building a country where we can disagree, sometimes passionately, but where we always come together in the pursuit of something greater than ourselves. A country where everyone has a fair shot, no matter who they are, where they come from, how they pray or whom they love.

Those are the values that hold us together as Canadians. It's the

reason so many people around the world save up everything they have and leave behind everything they know to be part of our story.

It's a story that includes injustices, ones that we're confronting on our shared path of reconciliation. It's a story of learning. Learning that we're stronger not in spite of our differences, but because of them.

And it's a story that's still being written by incredible Canadians who step up for their community and country.

From the workers and volunteers who cared for our most vulnerable in the long days of the pandemic, to the brave first responders who, even now, race towards danger to protect homes from wildfires to the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces who stand on the front lines, fighting for democracy and freedom.

People — brave, kind, resilient people — that is the story of Canada. That's what makes our country the very best place on Earth, so let's keep making it even better. Happy Canada Day."





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