**Unfinished efforts**

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First, today, may I congratulate all Pakistanis and friends of Pakistan on the occasion of the country’s Independence Day on August 14, celebrating freedom from direct British colonial rule (1858-1947), after a bitter independence struggle, dividing the Indian subcontinent into two separate states, India and Pakistan. Several essential issues were left unresolved, and still remain so, indeed the future of the Kashmiri people and territories. Also, Punjab was divided between India and Pakistan, and the Durand Line border separates the Pashtun people between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Other issues were also not given the right attention by the mighty colonial power at independence, still haunting these countries as well as other former colonies. There have been wars between India and Pakistan and there is still not good cooperation between the two countries, delaying prosperity, diverting money and personnel to the military rather than development. I believe though, that in the case of the next decades, should we say at least within half a century or earlier, the issues that I have mentioned will have found solutions by young leaders and a new dayspring of independence, peace and prosperity can emerge—provided all good preparations and prayers made, also seeking forgiveness and asking for a better and just future for all men and women.

[US cutting staff at Kabul Embassy to 'core diplomatic presence'](https://nation.com.pk/13-Aug-2021/us-cutting-staff-at-kabul-embassy-to-core-diplomatic-presence)

At independence, Pakistan’s first leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah said: “You are free; you are free to go to your temples. You are free to go to your mosques or any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion, caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the state.”

As in domestic and international development fields, there are also issues to be addressed in the religious and cultural fields, and the superstructures. In our time, over seven decades after independence, Pakistan can do better in many fields. There is room for better dialogue and contact within and between religions. This is not only a demand on Pakistanis; it is certainly a demand on Europeans and people everywhere. Yet Pakistanis can show the way too, providing good examples of peaceful and prosperous coexistence in religious and other fields; Muslims, Christians, Hindus and others, including freethinkers, should be referred to internationally when they do good work, not only given headlines in negative cases.

[PM to inaugurate new 66 NADRA offices today](https://nation.com.pk/13-Aug-2021/pm-to-inaugurate-new-66-nadra-offices-today)

In our time, when we see the emergence of extremist groups, including those that use religion and ultra-conservative views for justification, it is particularly important that we all consider these issues and develop balanced views, and that we talk about it. Hence, I wish that Muslim and Christian leaders, the world’s two largest religions, always advocate the fundamentals of their faiths and the right of others to practice their faith. We can use religion to emphasise moral and other values, realising that they belong to all religions. I wish that all religious leaders spoke more clearly about universal rights and values.

I have recently spent time listening to sermons and speeches on YouTube by the gigantic American civil rights leader Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr. Earlier, I thought of him mainly as an orator and preacher, which he certainly was, but I now clearly see him more as a political and moral leader, with universal messages. He had drawn lessons from Gandhi’s non-violence philosophy, ‘satyagraha’. King always showed respect and understanding for all opponents, and yet, underlined his own views clearly.

[Soldier martyred, terrorist killed in South Waziristan: ISPR](https://nation.com.pk/13-Aug-2021/soldier-martyred-terrorist-killed-in-south-waziristan-ispr)

Such important values belong to unique people like Gandhi, Jinnah, King, Nelson Mandela, and others. We must revisit them and make use of their teachings in our time, in religious and cultural fields, and in secular fields—which are built on moral foundations. In this connection, I have recently realised, when listening to Dr Martin Luther King Jr, that he talks about the moral and political aspects of justice and equality—again and again. Had he lived today, he would not have been very happy with the state of world capitalism, rich countries and individuals getting richer, and the poor getting poorer. He stressed many times that the world had become very advanced in technological fields, including space technology, building skyscrapers, highways, ships and bridges—but that we lagged behind in giving the same priority and attention to the human and social dimensions, which after all, are the most important and lay under all undertakings.

In several speeches and lectures, King drew attention to the fact that when slavery was formally abolished in USA in 1963, it was not followed up by giving land and other resources to the blacks. This was a terrible mistake and a reason for much suffering that followed, and of many of today’s political and social inequalities and problems. He said in speeches that the blacks were asked to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps—and yes, many did that miraculously—yet, many failed simply because they didn’t even have boots, no less bootstraps.

[NCOC reports 4,619 new COVID-19 cases in one day](https://nation.com.pk/13-Aug-2021/ncoc-reports-4-619-new-covid-19-cases-in-one-day)

I spent time in Tanzania in East Africa as a student in the 1970s, and later as a researcher and diplomat, and I recall that many even that time, and perhaps more so today, would criticise the country’s development and lack of progress, not having some basic facts, such as knowing that at independence in 1961, the country only had a few hundred secondary school and university graduates, and just a few thousand had gone to primary school. When I was there in the late 1970s, they introduced universal primary education, thanks to President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and the people’s demands. It was very impressive, although schools were often of poor quality in one of the world’s poorest countries.

Tanzania and all former colonies including Pakistan, have been expected to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. When I was young, some had read Walter Rodney’s book “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa” (1972), but today not many may even have heard of the book or remember the content. We have been lulled into believing that development aid was of importance; it was, sometimes, but it was usually too little and not politically integrated. True, there has been corruption and mismanagement. Yet, slow development has as much been caused by the arrogant and ignorant ‘bootstrap philosophy’ that King used as analogy about black Americans after the end of slavery; we can also use it for the independence of countries after colonial rule. King said that often people have been told to be patient and that time will solve issues; however, only people and leaders will solve issues.

[Mass shooting in southwestern UK leaves six dead](https://nation.com.pk/13-Aug-2021/mass-shooting-in-southwestern-uk-leaves-six-dead)

As we mark Pakistan’s Independence Day on August 14, 2021, let us be proud of all achievements that have been made and let us also admit mistakes when that has been the case. Let us be hopeful and optimistic for a better, more prosperous, more peaceful and more equal future, where all people can live in justice—as God wishes. Let us be constructive in our support, and critique, of the leaders, and let us pray that the Prime Minister, Government and other leaders, achieve the good things they want to achieve. The international community must also fulfil more of its responsibility, and today that means that the superrich multinationals share more of the profits they draw out of people’s labour and the world’s common resources. Today, the multinationals are in many ways the new colonial powers and slave owners—thus, the struggle goes on.

Again: Congratulations on Pakistan’s Independence Day, August 14, 2021.