**Profile of a trailblazer**

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‘There is plenty of room in the world for mediocre men but there is none for mediocre women’. Secretary Albright perfectly embodies the substance of her sentiment, verisimilar to an iron law of politics. From Meir and Margaret to Angela and Arden, women in power have withstood the tribulations of leadership with a gravitas and genius that few men can measure up to, especially in a turf that is disproportionately hostile to them. In the inclement climate of the twenty-first century, female heads of state have rightfully earned medallions for leaving their countries better off in the face of crises as varied and daunting as global recession, terrorism and epidemic. Now, as the bulbs go dim at the shining city, will a woman be able to climb up the hill and restore the light?

Kamala Devi Harris is an accomplished collector of remarkable firsts. On January 20, 2021, she splintered the glass ceiling by becoming the first woman, first African American and first Asian American to assume the office of the Vice President of the United States of America. Previously, she blazed a trail as the first person of South Asian origin to have served in the US Senate. Her freshman term was distinguished for the lawyerly velocity she brought to the Judiciary Committee hearings that threw many Trump administration officials off balance. Similarly, when Harris was sworn in as California’s attorney general and the district attorney of San Francisco, she was the first black, Asian and woman to occupy that position. The latter was her first feat as a political contestant—knocking out a former boxer who had been her boss. First-born daughter to an Indian mother and Jamaican father, she is also a testament to Lady Liberty’s promise of refuge and opportunity to those who make it to her shores and dare to dream.

[US, Israel talk Iran, regional security issues](https://nation.com.pk/12-Mar-2021/us-israel-talk-iran-regional-security-issues)

For most of America’s history, the vice presidency has been a relatively insignificant appointment. The constitution stipulates that other than taking presidential powers in the event of an incumbent’s resignation, death or incapacity, the Vice President chairs the Senate but cannot vote except to break a tie. This changed with Walter Mondale who proposed a greater integration of his office with that of President Carter’s. Later administrations of Bill Clinton and George W Bush followed the trend towards influential vice presidents who at times differed with the President on various matters of domestic and foreign policy. Notably, Joe Biden’s vice-presidency was a big leap from the Carter-Mondale model because in agreeing to share the ticket with Number 44, he explicitly expressed his inclination to be the ‘last man in the room’ and extend his candid viewpoint. In contrast to earlier veeps, Biden’s political stature and prolific experience meant that his participation was instrumental to carrying through the critically important business of the Obama administration such as the enactment of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to deal with the fallout of the Great Recession and passage of the Affordable Care Act. Throughout both of his terms, he received major diplomatic assignments including his role as President Barack Obama’s chief adviser on Afghanistan policy. And now, President Biden’s VP, Kamala Harris is presumed to cast an impression as one of the most consequential vice presidents in the country’s history.

[Sadiq Sanjrani was ready to join PPP: Bilawal](https://nation.com.pk/12-Mar-2021/sadiq-sanjrani-was-ready-to-join-ppp-bilawal)

Current and former aides of both are of the view that Harris will serve as a governing partner to Biden on all of his top priorities. It partially owes to the fact that the present president has taken the reins of government at an inflection point in US history. There is just so much that requires to be put back together—an antipodal politics, fraught race relations, a debilitated public healthcare system, ailing economy, America’s alliances in jeopardy, its reputation at risk and a world in disarray. With a Senate evenly divided between the Democrats and Republicans and bipartisanship in short supply, Harris’s presence on the Capitol will be imperative to push through the administration’s agenda. But her role extends beyond acting as a 51st Senator to President Biden. The fifty-six-year-old attorney brings an array of skills to the White House that he can draw on; for instance, her high spiritedness complements the President’s low-key approach and the representation she offers to women and people of colour could do the work of his bridge to a diverse nation. In addition, Harris, a relative newcomer to Washington is likely to offer Biden, a consummate insider, a different perspective on the world—in many ways, an alternation of roles in the Obama-Biden administration.

[PTA orders service providers to block TikTok in Pakistan](https://nation.com.pk/12-Mar-2021/pta-orders-service-providers-to-block-tiktok-in-pakistan)

Because of her Indian roots, many Pakistanis were apprehensive when Harris was announced as the Democratic Party’s candidate for Vice President. However, from the Citizenship Amendment Act to the revocation of Article 370, she has been vociferous in her criticism of the heavy-handed policies of the BJP government. Harris also decried India’s foreign minister S Jaishankar’s refusal to attend a meeting with Congress delegates for Representative Pramila Jaypal’s presence, another democrat of Indian descent who raised a resolution urging India to lift restrictions in Kashmir. Her absence at the Howdy Modi rally did not sit well with a section of Indian Americans who accused her of being Hindu-phobic, anti-India and pro-Pakistan. Kamala’s lineage has not held her from denunciating the oppression perpetrated in her mother’s homeland which speaks volumes about the strong sense of justice and integrity she is imbued with. As a Senator, she lambasted Trump’s racist and discriminatory executive order that barred refugees from Syria and restricted immigration from Muslim-majority countries. She also introduced a bill that would guarantee legal assistance to refugees blocked from entering the United States of America.

[Third wave of Covid-19 linked to British virus strain: Yasmin Rashid](https://nation.com.pk/11-Mar-2021/third-wave-of-covid-19-linked-to-british-virus-strain-dr-yasmin)

A new administration determines its agenda in the initial few months. Biden is no stranger to Pakistan, its people and utility but as Harris embarks on her foreign policy briefings, it is vitally important for Islamabad to vigorously reach out and cultivate good working relations with her—apprise her of its vulnerabilities and constraints but also the opportunities this fifth-largest young country offers and possibly consider expanding the areas of Pak-US convergence and cooperation. Seeking her favour is doubly crucial because if President Biden decides not to re-run in 2024, he will pass the mantle to a wave of younger and racially diverse politicians. This leaves us with Kamala Harris as the most likely nominee for the President in the next election and the face of Democratic Party in the years to come.