**Sino-Pak friendship: 7 decades of mutual love, respect and trust**

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This year marks the completion of 70 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the People’s Republic of China. Both countries have formally launched activities to commemorate their glorious journey of seven decades of very close and deep-rooted diplomatic ties. On this special occasion of the 70th anniversary, both sides have scheduled a series of activities and events for the whole year to celebrate this historic milestone in a befitting manner.

At a virtual ceremony which was simultaneously held in Islamabad and Beijing, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi reiterated their stance to further cement Pak-China ‘ironclad’ friendship.

A brief overview of this landmark historical journey indicates that Pakistan was one of the first few countries to recognise the People’s Republic of China when it was established on October 1, 1949. Both countries formally established their diplomatic relations on May 21, 1951. In the beginning, both countries faced some difficulties in the bilateral relationship. In the early 1950s, India enjoyed friendly relations with China. India and China started the era of ‘Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai’ in order to create good relations between them, while Pakistan decided to join the western bloc to counter security threats from India’s growing military power.

[6.9-Magnitude earthquake hits off Russia's Kamchatka peninsula](https://nation.com.pk/17-Mar-2021/6-9-magnitude-earthquake-hits-off-russia-s-kamchatka-peninsula)

During the Bandung Conference in 1955, then PM Pakistan Muhammad Ali Bogra met Chinese Prime Minister Chou Enlai and as a result, both countries succeeded to resolve their mutual concerns. The Bandung Conference built confidence between both countries and its successful conclusion paved the way for their smooth diplomatic, political, economic and defence relations.

Since the beginning of the 1960s, both countries started a new era of remarkable friendship. Pakistan and China inked the Boundary Agreement on March 2, 1963 and this agreement produced political, strategic and economic advantages for both countries.

Later on, both countries also signed the air service and trade contract. Under the Air Service Agreement, Pakistan played a crucial role in the elimination of China’s isolation and difficulties.

During the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971, China provided diplomatic, economic and military support to Pakistan. Pakistan always categorically supported China on its ‘One China Policy’ while China provided it support on Kashmir dispute. Pakistan always extended its full support to China on the issues of sovereignty over Tibet, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Pakistan also supported China to get its seat at the United Nations.

[PPP never intended to resign from assemblies: Rana Sanaullah](https://nation.com.pk/17-Mar-2021/ppp-never-intended-to-resign-from-assemblies-rana-sanaullah)

Pakistan played a crucial role in the normalisation of the China-US relationship and facilitated high level visits of then US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger to China in 1971, followed by US President Richard Nixon’s visit to China in 1972.

The Indian’s nuclear test in 1974 created security threats for Pakistan. The Indian nuclear test gave further push to Pakistan-China defence cooperation in 1974.

Pakistan with the cooperation of China, completed the construction of Karakoram Highway in 1978. This was a landmark initiative for the promotion of bilateral trade, people-to-people exchanges and tourism between the two countries. China supported Pakistan to manufacture Al-Khalid tanks and JF-17 fighter jets.

The strategic cooperation between Pakistan and China has grown over the past seven decades. In recent years, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is considered a basic pillar of China’s proposed Belt and Road Initiative, is turning these relations into strong economic relations and in the future, it will also shift Pakistan-China relations into industrial cooperation.

[PM Imran Khan to visit Lahore today](https://nation.com.pk/17-Mar-2021/pm-imran-khan-to-visit-lahore-today)

CPEC has, so far, produced real and tangible outcomes for the economy and the people of Pakistan. Due to the completion of major energy projects, the problem of Pakistan’s severe energy shortage has been resolved. Massive infrastructure projects under this initiative are not only improving connectivity but also providing thousands of new jobs. Now under CPEC, Pakistan needs to fully focus on the revival of industry because only export-oriented growth can lead Pakistan towards a path of greater development and prosperity.

The highlights above from the history of China-Pakistan relations show that both nations have been enjoying very cordial and close relations in the past. Pakistan and China have always stood side by side in testing times and helped each other on important issues at every forum. That’s why, close Pakistan-China ties and this deep-rooted friendship is best described as ‘higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the ocean, sweeter than honey and stronger than steel’.

[Kabaddi includes in World Nomad Games 2021](https://nation.com.pk/16-Mar-2021/kabaddi-includes-in-world-nomad-games-2021)

It is the responsibility of both governments to smoothly transfer this legacy of a sincere relationship to new generations. Both governments have already taken concrete steps to boost people-to-people contacts. In this regard, the Chinese government has offered thousands of scholarships to Pakistani students to study in the best universities of China. According to details, Pakistan has established seven sister-province and thirteen sister-city relationships with China. Seven Pakistan study centres and eleven Urdu language departments are also working in various Chinese universities. China has established four Confucius Institutes in Pakistan. Although these steps are bringing people of both countries closer to each other, this will not be enough and more exchanges are needed.

In the present era, full vigilance is required from both sides to protect these deep-rooted ties from emerging challenges. Enemies of both countries are using hybrid war or fifth generation war through social media to create mistrust and misunderstanding among the people of both countries.

[PDM's internal differences showed up to the fore: Asad](https://nation.com.pk/16-Mar-2021/pdm-s-internal-differences-showed-up-to-the-fore-asad)

It is believed that the relationship of both countries will further grow with the passage of time in the strategic, diplomatic, political and economic spheres because of common interest and a shared future. The legacy of love, respect and trust among the people of both the countries will continue with full enthusiasm in the future.