

## 72nd Independence Day Celebrated at Pakistan High Commission, New Delhi

The 72nd Independence Day of Pakistan was celebrated with national spirit and enthusiasm at the Pakistan High Commission, New Delhi, today.

The Pakistan flag was raised by High Commissioner Sohail Mahmood at an elegant and impressive flag-hoisting ceremony held on the Chancery's lawns.

High Commissioner Sohail Mahmood extended warm felicitations on Eid-e-Azaadi and lauded the zeal with which the broader Pakistan High Commission family, and Pakistani students and nationals in India, were participating in the festivities. Recalling the freedom struggle, the High Commissioner said the sacred day of 14th August 1947 dawned primarily due to the unflinching resolve, unprecedented struggle, and countless sacrifices of our forefathers. The whole nation, therefore, rightfully paid tributes on this day to the courageous and visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and other founding fathers.



The High Commissioner underlined that Quaid-e-Azam envisioned a democratic, modern, moderate, economically-strong, Islamic welfare state. Each successive generation had contributed to the realization of the Quaid's vision, he said.

High Commissioner Sohail Mahmood noted that this Independence Day coincided with another milestone on Pakistan's democratic journey. Another democratically-elected government had completed its constitutional term. Another peaceful transfer of power to another elected government was on the anvil.

He added that, along with deepening of democracy in Pakistan, impressive strides were being made in the fight against the scourge of terrorism. In this context, the nation deeply respected the sacrifices of the people of Pakistan and the personnel of armed forces and other law-enforcing agencies. High Commissioner Sohail Mahmood noted that peaceful relations with all of Pakistan's neighbors, including India, were accorded high priority in the foreign policy vision outlined by the incoming leadership in Pakistan. He added that the phone call by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Chairman PTI Mr. Imran Khan was another positive development. It was being hoped that such steps on both sides would create the space for betterment of ties between India and Pakistan.

The High Commissioner pointed out that the peculiar trajectory of India-Pakistan relations over the past 71 years had often led to political and military tensions and prevented the two countries from realizing their optimal potential in socio-economic development. "Our next generations deserve a better future – one marked by peace and opportunities for progress and prosperity," he said. He hoped that South Asia would turn a corner and would be known in the world, not for confrontation, but for cooperation.

Students of the Pakistan High Commission School presented national songs and tableau on the occasion. Mrs. Mahwish Sohail gave away prizes and gifts to the teachers and students from the school.

Earlier, Deputy High Commissioner Syed Haider Shah read out the Independence Day messages from the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Separately, a drawing/painting competition on the theme of 'World Environment Day' was organized among the students of Pakistan School. High Commissioner Sohail Mahmood distributed prizes to the winners and lauded the efforts of all participants of the painting competition.

An "Independence Cup" Volleyball Tournament was also organized among the officers and staff of the Pakistan High Commission as part of the celebrations. The Red team won the tournament and lifted the "Independence Cup."



