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Pakistan Salutes Youth on International Day of Education, Champions Co-Creation

On the occasion of the International Day of Education President of Islamic Republic Pakistan Mr. Asif Ali Zardari said in his message I extend my sincere greetings to the people of Pakistan, particularly our students, teachers, parents, scholars and all those engaged in the pursuit of education and learning.

This year’s theme, “The Power of Youth in Co-Creating Education,” highlights the importance of recognising young people not only as learners, but as thinkers, innovators and responsible citizens whose ideas strengthen educational systems and democratic societies.

Pakistan’s future is closely linked with its youth. As a nation with a rich cultural heritage and a large young population, we must ensure that education nurtures curiosity, competence and character. It should enable young people to think critically, act ethically and contribute positively to their communities. The constitutional guarantee of free and compulsory education under Article 25-A reflects our shared commitment to this fundamental right.

In a rapidly changing and interconnected world, education must combine academic excellence with practical skills, digital literacy, ethical values and respect for diversity. Efforts to strengthen higher education, promote research and innovation and expand digital learning reflect this evolving vision.

Measures such as expanded access to higher education, merit-based student support and improved access to technology are helping young people engage meaningfully with the knowledge economy.

Technical and vocational education and training play a vital role in equipping youth with employable skills and affirming the dignity of labour. National skills development initiatives are preparing young people for emerging technologies while aligning training with international standards, opening pathways for employment, entrepreneurship and global engagement.

Inclusive approaches that extend opportunities to women, madrasa students and youth from underserved regions promote social cohesion and ensure that progress is shared more equitably.

Education flourishes when families, communities, educators, institutions and the private sector work together, and when students themselves are meaningfully involved in shaping their learning environments.

On this day, I urge all stakeholders to reaffirm education as a national priority and to empower our youth as partners in building a skilled, enlightened and resilient Pakistan.

May our collective efforts continue to promote peace, progress and prosperity for generations to come.

Pakistan Zindabad!

Trump’s ‘Board of Peace’ or a New Global Order?

When U. S. President Donald Trump introduced the “Board of Peace,” it was presented not merely as a response to the war in Gaza, but as the foundation of a broader international mechanism for managing conflict and reconstruction across the world. Official charter documents describe a dual mandate: an immediate role in stabilizing Gaza through humanitarian coordination, institutional rebuilding, and transitional security oversight, and a longer-term ambition to evolve into a standing platform capable of engaging future post-conflict environments beyond the Middle East. This framing, reinforced by policy statements and diplomatic briefings, has placed the board at the center of a debate that extends far beyond one devastated territory.

The legal and institutional anchor for the board’s Gaza mission is a United Nations Security Council resolution adopted in November, which welcomed the initiative as a transitional administration through 2027. That resolution authorized the deployment of a temporary International Stabilization Force, required regular reporting to the Council, and framed the board’s role as preparatory to the return of authority to a reformed Palestinian administration. Yet the board’s own charter language leaves open the possibility of expansion into other conflicts, effectively positioning Gaza as the first test case for a wider experiment in global peace governance.

Several close U. S. allies have declined or hesitated. Norway and Sweden have refused. France has indicated it will not participate, citing constitutional and institutional concerns. Canada has agreed in principle but is seeking clarification.

Britain, Germany, and Japan have not taken definitive public positions. Ukraine has acknowledged the invitation while expressing unease about sharing a forum with Russia. Russia and China, both permanent members of the UN Security Council, have not committed, reflecting caution toward initiatives that could be seen as diluting the UN’s central role in global conflict resolution.

For the states that have joined, participation carries implications at home and abroad. In Israel, the prospect of a multilateral board shaping Gaza’s transition and potentially influencing security arrangements has sparked intense political debate. Some lawmakers and coalition partners view external oversight as a constraint on Israel’s freedom of action, particularly on sensitive issues such as border control and any future discussion of disarming Hamas. Others see international involvement as a way to share responsibility for Gaza’s future rather than leaving Israel isolated with the burden of governance and reconstruction.

In Iran, the board is widely interpreted through the lens of strategic rivalry with Washington. Political figures and media outlets have portrayed it as an extension of U. S. influence rather than a neutral peace mechanism, warning that participation by regional states could be read as endorsement of an American-led security architecture. This perception matters for governments in the Gulf and beyond that must balance relations with both Washington and Tehran.

One of the most sensitive issues

surrounding the board’s Gaza mandate is the question of disarmament, particularly with regard to Hamas. Official frameworks emphasize stabilization and the return of governance to a reformed Palestinian authority, but they are less explicit about how armed groups would be neutralized. The reality that even the combined military and intelligence capabilities of the United States and Israel have not eliminated Hamas’s operational capacity has fueled skepticism that a multilateral board, however well-funded, could succeed where sustained kinetic campaigns have not. For member states, association with any enforcement or inspection role carries the risk of domestic backlash and regional pressure.

All of this unfolds against the backdrop of a multipolar international system. China’s emphasis on non-interference and development-led stability, the European Union’s focus on legal norms and humanitarian standards, the Global South’s sensitivity to perceived Western dominance, and the United States’ strategic framing of diplomacy shape how the board is perceived. An institution seen as aligned with a single worldview risks becoming a coalition forum rather than a neutral mediator. States that feel excluded or marginalized can respond by strengthening parallel mechanisms, from regional organizations to alternative development banks, producing a fragmented peace architecture rather than a unified one.

Formally, the Board of Peace does not replace the United Nations. It lacks treaty-based authority to issue binding resolutions or to authorize force beyond

what the Security Council permits. Its influence is practical rather than juridical, flowing from its ability to coordinate funds, support transitional administrations, and shape policy frameworks through diplomacy and expertise. Yet practical influence can shift the balance of global governance if major donors and diplomatic energy flow through a selective forum rather than the UN’s universal framework. The tension is between efficiency and legitimacy, between the speed of smaller, well-funded bodies and the broad acceptance conferred by universal institutions.

Whether the board will collapse or endure is likely to depend on how it navigates this tension. Without sustained participation from all major power centers, it may find its role narrowed to technical coordination and reconstruction rather than political settlement in the world’s most contentious conflicts. A hybrid approach, pairing a transparent, multi-donor reconstruction fund with a rotating and inclusive governance structure while recognizing major contributors without granting permanent political control, offers a possible path toward balance.

The Board of Peace now stands as a test of how global governance adapts to a changing balance of power. Its legacy will not be measured only by what it achieves in Gaza, but by whether it can persuade a divided world that peace can be pursued with both effectiveness and legitimacy, rooted in cooperation rather than ownership, and in shared authority rather than exclusive influence.

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Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Awsat)

Pakistan’s Re-emergence as a Global Player

Pakistan’s place in global politics has always been linked to its geographic importance, complex political history, and evolving economic and security challenges. After several years of internal instability, economic pressure, and diplomatic difficulties, Pakistan is once again striving to establish itself as an effective global player. This re-emergence is not sudden; rather, it is the result of gradual changes in foreign policy, the promotion of regional connectivity, economic diplomacy, and active participation in multilateral global forums. In a global system where competition among major powers and regional alignments are rapidly shifting, Pakistan’s role is also taking on a new form, reflecting both its constraints and its enduring strategic significance.

Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsous has emerged as a decisive turning point in Pakistan’s recent history, bringing about a notable change in how Pakistan is perceived internationally. This operation gave a clear and organized expression to the state’s resolve, with its effects visible across security, politics, the economy, and social psychology. In this context, it is fair to say that Pakistan has entered a new era after Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsous. The state’s message was clear: no compromise would be made on national security. Politically as well, the effects of the operation are evident. Despite political differences, the national security narrative helped generate a sense of national consensus.

At the same time, Pakistan has sought to restore and expand its relations with major global powers. Although relations with the United States have experienced ups and downs, they remain important in areas such as trade, environmental cooperation, and regional security. Pakistan’s diplomatic engagement with the European Union, particularly through trade arrangements like GSP Plus, has helped strengthen economic

ties and highlight Pakistan’s role in global supply chains. A cautious improvement in relations with Russia can also be seen, reflecting Pakistan’s multipolar foreign policy in line with shifting global power balances.

Pakistan’s active participation in international organizations further underscores the revival of its global role. Its involvement in the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) provides platforms to present its views on global affairs, whether related to conflict resolution or economic development. By hosting and participating in multilateral dialogues, Pakistan is presenting itself as a responsible state committed to international cooperation and the collective resolution of shared challenges.

Pakistan’s contribution to global peace and security is another important aspect of its growing international significance. Pakistan has been among the largest contributors of troops to United Nations peacekeeping missions, earning recognition for its professionalism and commitment. This role enhances Pakistan’s soft power and portrays it as an active contributor to global stability. In addition, Pakistan’s counterterrorism measures and its evolving strategy regarding peace in Afghanistan also shape its strategic role on the global stage.

Economic stability and reforms are fundamental to Pakistan’s global ambitions. Although the country continues to face serious challenges such as debt, inflation, and structural weaknesses, recent measures to stabilize the economy reflect an effort to restore confidence in international financial markets. Engagement with international financial institutions and efforts to attract foreign investment indicate an understanding that sustainable economic growth is essential for lasting global influence.

Environmental diplomacy has also emerged as

a new arena in which Pakistan is raising its voice globally. As one of the countries most affected by climate change, Pakistan has sought to highlight issues of environmental injustice and global responsibility for adaptation. Following devastating floods, Pakistan’s advocacy at international environmental forums has drawn global attention and strengthened its moral standing in climate negotiations. By presenting itself as both a vulnerable country and an active partner, Pakistan is expanding the scope of its global role.

Thus, Pakistan’s re-emergence as a global player is not a one-dimensional or sudden shift, but a multifaceted process. It involves the reconfiguration of diplomatic strategy, strategic partnerships, economic linkages, and active participation in global governance. Although challenges such as political instability and economic fragility remain, Pakistan’s efforts to redefine its role demonstrate a serious attempt to move from the periphery of global politics toward a more central position.

In conclusion, Pakistan’s increasing engagement with the world is the result of both necessity and opportunity. In this era of global uncertainty and regional change, Pakistan’s geographic importance, diplomatic balance, and growing emphasis on economic and environmental diplomacy give it the potential to become more prominent internationally. How far this re-emergence translates into sustainable influence will depend on internal stability, policy continuity, and the alignment of domestic reforms with global ambitions. Nevertheless, clear signs of Pakistan’s renewed activity on the global stage are visible, signaling a cautious yet meaningful return to international relevance. If Pakistan had not inflicted a humiliating defeat on India in Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsous, it is possible that Pakistan would not be viewed today in the way it is by the world and major global powers. May God always keep Pakistan dominant over its enemies.

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Chalk Dust to Clicks: Economy Finds a New Voice

The transition from traditional economies based on physical goods and services to digital economies driven by technology has been a defining feature of the 21st century. In this age of rapid technological advancement, the economy has found a new voice, moving from the tangible remnants of chalk dust in business rooms to the virtual realm of clicks and online transactions.

This shift has not only transformed the way businesses operate but has also revolutionized how consumers engage with products and services. The implications of this transition, analyzing the impact on various sectors of the economy and examining the opportunities and challenges that come with this digital transformation.

The rise of e-commerce platforms, online marketplaces, and digital payment systems has revolutionized the way businesses reach their customers and conduct transactions. With just a few clicks, consumers can now purchase goods and services from anywhere in the world, opening up a world of possibilities for businesses to expand their reach and tap into global markets.

Furthermore, the digital divide remains a persistent barrier to full participation in the digital economy. While online transactions offer unparalleled convenience and accessibility, there are still segments of the population lacking the necessary skills or resources to take full advantage of digital opportunities. Bridging this gap requires investment in digital literacy programs, affordable internet access, and inclusive technology solutions to ensure that everyone can benefit from the fruits of the digital age.

Start-ups and small businesses now have the opportunity to reach a global audience through online platforms, leveling the playing field and

democratizing access to markets. This has led to a wave of innovation and creativity, with entrepreneurs harnessing the power of technology to disrupt traditional industries and offer unique solutions to contemporary challenges.

In addition to its impact on businesses, the digital economy has also transformed the way we work and interact with each other. The rise of remote work and digital collaboration tools has enabled individuals to connect and collaborate on projects regardless of their location, leading to a more decentralized and flexible work environment. This has not only increased productivity but has also allowed for greater work-life balance and autonomy.

However, with these opportunities come challenges. The digital economy has raised concerns about data privacy and security, as the proliferation of online transactions and interactions has made individuals more vulnerable to cyber threats. Additionally, the digital divide the gap between those who have access to technology and those who do not remains a pressing issue, with marginalized communities being left behind in the fast-paced digital world.

The shift from chalk dust to clicks marks a significant transformation in the economy, ushering in a new era of digital innovation and connectivity. While this transition has presented numerous opportunities for growth and development, it has also brought about challenges that must be addressed to ensure a more inclusive and sustainable digital future. By embracing technology, fostering innovation, and prioritizing digital literacy and inclusivity, we can harness the full potential of the digital economy and build a more resilient and equitable society.

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