

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE 1973 CONSTITUTION OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

CONCEPT NOTE

"میرا آئین - میری آزادی کی ضمانت"

My Constitution --- Guarantee to My Freedoms

Background

April 10, 2023 marks the completion of 50 years of the unanimous approval of the 1973 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The 1973 Constitution - the supreme law of the country, drafted during the first democratically elected Government of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, with the meaningful participation of all political forces of the country, was passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan on the 10th April 1973 and assented by the President on 12th April 1973. It was promulgated on August 14, 1973. Ever since, this sacred Constitution is intended to guide Pakistan's law and its political culture, and system.

The Parliament of Pakistan, through the Constitution, determines the basic ideology of Pakistan which is based on fairness, fraternity and social justice. It provides a roadmap for a peaceful and prosperous Pakistan which makes it essential to abide by the priceless principles of democracy, liberty and fundamental rights.

The Constitution of Pakistan, being the vanguard of the individuals' rights, dignity and freedoms, reflects the true aspirations of the people while also ensuring that those who make decisions on behalf of the people fairly represent public opinion. Therefore, it is essential to uphold and promote constitutional values and protect its sanctity.

In the same spirit, the National Assembly of Pakistan plans to organize the Golden Jubilee celebration to commemorate 50 years of the 1973 Constitution, to begin on 10th April 2023 and culminate in a befitting manner on May 10, 2023 with a proposed 3-Day Constitution Convention.

This day will serve as a reminder to reaffirm our commitment to strive together to make Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision of a parliamentary and democratic Pakistan an instant reality, wherein Constitution, rule of law and social justice reign supreme.

Events and activities

In light of the above, the National Assembly Secretariat may organize following events and activities.

1. Inaugural of Celebrations on 10th April, 2023 and onwards

- a. Exhibitions:
 - i. Photographic Exhibition
 - ii. Painting Exhibition
 - iii. Manuscripts and Constitutional Documents
- b. Inaugural of the Constitutional Monument (Painting as well as the display of the Constitution Book at the main entrance)
- c. Special newspaper supplement
- d. Books Exhibition in liaison with National Book Foundation
- e. Mushaira to be organised by PTV/Radio Pakistan
- f. Special Documentary Film
- g. Theater: Sarmad Khoosat has agreed to adapt “Manto’s Naya Qanoon” as a theatre performance to mark the occasion
- h. Issuance of Special Stamp and Coin

2. Declamation contests among Students

The declamation contests may be arranged across the country on three different levels. The top three from each category may be invited to make the same speech in the International Symposium to be organised in Islamabad. The topic for the declamation may revolve around Constitution and its different sections. The three different categories may be as follows:

- a. Inter-university competition (to be organized by HEC)
- b. Inter-board competition (to be organized by Provincial Education Boards)
- c. Primary school competition (to be organized by Provincial Education Boards)

3. Focused Discussions/Seminars/Conferences with Civil Society Groups/Press Clubs/ Bars/ Trade Unions on the Need and Efficacy of Constitution

Owing to the importance of the occasion, it would be a good idea to have broad-based discussions in collaboration with various Civil Society organisations in order to widen the ownership of the occasion. The National Press Club, Pakistan bar Council, Human Rights Commission and similar possible partners may be identified.

4. 3-Day International Constitutional Convention on Overall Theme “The role and need of Constitution in protection and preservation of an effective democracy in changing times.”

Democracy and democratic processes in Pakistan have had a tough ride over the last 75 years. The parliamentary history of the country has had a checkered past with various disruptions through military coups and martial laws and overthrow of civilian governments. There have been numerous successful attempts since independence in 1947. Military coups and martial laws in Pakistan began in 1958 and the country had to undergo several decades under military rule in different intervals starting in 1958 and repeating in 1971, 1977, 1988, 1999 till 2008 when the Constitution of Pakistan was either held in abeyance or abrogated. The country witnessed first transition of power from one democratically elected civilian government in 2008 to another in 2013 and the democratic process continued in 2018.

The Golden Jubilee of the Constitution makes it more important than ever to initiate a dialogue on Inter-Institutional relations. In this regard, an International Convention on “The Need for Inter-Institutional Harmony in Pakistan As Envisaged in the 1973 Constitution” may be organized from 10th May 2023 where noted parliamentarians, constitutional experts, jurists, noted experts from the academia and civil society may come together to draw a roadmap for strengthening the Constitution and supremacy of Parliament where the chosen representatives may chalk out the destiny of the people through non-disrupted civilian rule and strong democracy. The following Sessions may follow:

SUB THEMES

- i. **“The Need for Inter-Institutional Harmony in Pakistan as envisaged in the 1973 Constitution”, 10th May 2023**
- ii. **“Role of Judiciary in protecting and upholding the Constitution**
- iii. **Constitution as Vanguard of Civil Liberties**