



**THE
MAJLIS-E-SHOORA (PARLIAMENT) OF PAKISTAN
BOTH HOUSES ASSEMBLED TOGETHER 2024**

Thursday, the 18th April, 2024

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MAJLIS-E-SHOORA (PARLIAMENT) OF PAKISTAN BOTH HOUSES ASSEMBLED TOGETHER 2024

Thursday, the 18th April, 2024

The Both Houses Assembled together for the purpose of address of President at 4:15 p.m. with the Honourable Speaker (Sardar Ayaz Sadiq) in the Chair.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

RECITATION FROM THE HOLY QUR`AN

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ - بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ -
وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا
بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾

(سورة العصر: آیات 1 تا 3)

[ترجمہ: پناہ مانگتا ہوں میں اللہ کی شیطان مردود سے۔ شروع اللہ کے نام سے جو بڑا مہربان نہایت رحم فرمانے

والا ہے۔

زمانے کی قسم انسان درحقیقت بڑے گھائے میں ہے سوائے ان لوگوں کے جو ایمان لائے اور نیک عمل کریں اور ایک دوسرے کو حق بات کی نصیحت کریں اور ایک دوسرے کو صبر کی نصیحت کریں۔]

RECITATION OF HADITH

(۱۰۷۴) وَعَنِ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَيُّ الْأَعْمَالِ أَفْضَلُ؟ قَالَ: "الصَّلَاةُ عَلَى وَقْتِهَا" قُلْتُ: ثُمَّ أَيٌّ؟ قَالَ: "بِرُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ" قُلْتُ: ثُمَّ أَيٌّ؟ قَالَ: "الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ." (متفق عليه)

[ترجمہ: حضرت عبداللہ ابن مسعودؓ سے روایت ہے کہ میں نے رسول اللہ ﷺ سے پوچھا کونسا عمل سب سے زیادہ فضیلت والا ہے تو آپ ﷺ نے فرمایا اپنے وقت پر نماز پڑھنا۔ میں نے عرض کیا پھر کونسا؟ آپ ﷺ نے ارشاد فرمایا والدین کے ساتھ حسن سلوک کرنا۔ میں نے کہا پھر کونسا عمل؟ آپ ﷺ نے فرمایا اللہ کی راہ میں جہاد کرنا۔]

RECITATION OF NAAT

کچھ نہیں مانگتا شاہوں سے یہ شیدا تیرا
 اس کی دولت ہے فقط نقش کف پا تیرا
 لوگ کہتے ہیں سایہ تیرے پیکر کا نہ تھا
 میں تو کہتا ہوں جہاں بھر پہ ہے سایہ تیرا
 دستگیری میری تنہائی کی تو نے ہی تو کی
 میں تو مر جاتا اگر ساتھ نہ ہوتا تیرا

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO BOTH THE HOUSES ASSEMBLED TOGETHER

جناب سپیکر: اَعُوذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ۔ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ۔

I invite the honourable President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, to address under Clause (3) of Article 56 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to both the Houses of Parliament, assembled together.

(At this occasion, the honourable Members of Opposition came in front of Speaker's dais, displayed placards and chanted slogans.)

President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Mr. Asif Ali Zardari): بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani, Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Members of the Parliament, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen! Assalam-o-Alaikum

As we embark upon the 1st Parliamentary year, let me extend my heartfelt congratulations to all honourable Members of the Parliament on their election to this august House. I would also like to compliment the Prime Minister, and both federal and provincial governments on their election victories, and assumption of their responsibilities.

Let me also take this opportunity to express my sincerest gratitude to all Parliamentarians and provincial assembly Members for their trust and confidence in electing me for a second time as the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. I am humbled by this opportunity bestowed upon me by the grace of Allah Almighty.

Mr. Speaker! Let me begin this parliamentary year by sharing briefly my vision for the future because much of it is based on the choices we make. In my particular role in the past too, I have made important choices that made history when I chose to give away my own powers, as President, to the Parliament of Pakistan.

I expect you as Parliamentarians to use those powers with the wisdom and maturity our country merits and needs.

I see my own role today as a unifying symbol of a joint, robust federation, where all people and provinces should be treated as equal before the law.

At the same time, in my considered view, it is time to turn a new page.

If we see today as a new beginning, which it is, then we can build on our strengths by investing in our people, by focusing on public needs, and by harnessing our resources to create pathways to inclusive growth.

I also feel that we have little time to waste. The country needs us to move on from the polarization so common now to contemporary politics.

This joint House must play a leading role in rebuilding public confidence in the parliamentary process and establish a foundation for the uninterrupted sustainable development of our nation.

Let us not confuse constructive disagreement and the healthy noise of a growing democracy with the pursuit of zero-sum thinking.

The country needs us to take pause and reflect on what we prioritize in our goals, our narratives and our agendas.

I believe we can reset the political atmosphere to reflect more light than heat if we really want to, but it will need all of us

to step back and decide what matters the most, and I mean all of us. At the end of the day, it is up to all of us to turn challenges into opportunities, because that is what robust nations do.

I have always drawn inspiration and guidance from great leaders such as Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who spent their lives being advocates for democracy, tolerance, and social justice.

I firmly believe that by embracing the vision of these leaders, we can effectively tackle our challenges and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and political reconciliation.

The challenges we face are not impossible to overcome. They just require the fundamentals of meaningful dialogue, parliamentary consensus and a time-lined implementation of rigorous reforms aimed at addressing the underlying issues, both old and new, confronting us. I strongly believe that in order to align our country with the 21st century, it is imperative that we move forward on reforms to promote good governance for the provision of optimal social entitlements to our citizens.

Let's begin with a vision that strives to leave no one behind. For this thought to move beyond an idea, the political leadership gathered in this House must prioritize the specific needs of marginalized communities and underdeveloped areas.

By focusing on the needs of these regions, we can bridge the gap between them and the more developed areas of the

country, moving the needle towards an inclusive growth model that emphasizes equality of opportunity.

While there are many economic reforms the government will drive in spurring jobs, reducing inflation and expanding the tax net, I want to underscore the importance of promoting positive working relationships and effective coordination, within our Constitutional framework, between the Federal Government and the Provinces. This is absolutely essential for promoting an inclusive national development agenda and rolling out policies that execute tangible actions on the ground.

I firmly believe that by driving seamless collaboration and fostering institutional coordination with intention and regularity, we can harness the full potential of our federal system to deliver positive change for the benefit of the people of Pakistan.

Mr. Speaker, honourable Members of the Parliament!

Pakistan needs all hands on deck to revitalize its economy. Without shedding all caution to the winds, our primary objective should be to attract foreign direct investment.

I, therefore, urge the government to intensify its efforts in implementing comprehensive ease-of-doing-business reforms and simplifying the existing forest of regulations to provide an enabling environment for both foreign and domestic investors.

I commend the establishment of the Special Investment Facilitation Council aimed at attracting and facilitating

investments in key sectors, which is a step forward in the right direction.

At the same time, we must accelerate our endeavours to diversify exports, enhance the competitiveness of our products in global markets, introduce value addition, and venture into new markets. Similarly, the huge, untapped potential in the Agriculture, Marine Life, Information Technology and Textile sectors should be exploited to earn foreign exchange.

Any global or national stocktake will tell us that the world is changing fast under our very feet. Pakistan has been serially devastated by different impacts of climate change, especially in the shape of catastrophic floods in 2022. We urgently need to invest in climate-friendly and climate-resilient infrastructure to mitigate the rapidly compounding risks of climate change.

At the same time, we need to ensure that clean energy technologies form the core component of our national energy mix as they would not only create opportunities for green economic growth but would also make energy more affordable for our people.

Mr. Speaker! The provision of primary & secondary education is a fundamental right, and its current state should keep all governments awake at night.

We must acknowledge the fact that in Pakistan there is a massive number of children who are out of school in Pakistan,

and given our growing population, that number is growing faster than the facilities we have been providing.

I, therefore, urge all provincial governments to bring focus and energy on transformative reforms in the education sector, not just on improving access to primary and secondary education for all children, but for ensuring quality as well.

Mr. Speaker, Respected Parliamentarians!

I am sure you all agree that our health sector is in urgent need of rebuilding and scaled-up expansion.

Regular investments in the primary and secondary health infrastructure, as well as human resources, are needed to ensure that every citizen has access to quality healthcare services and that no citizen lacks medical care.

Mr. Speaker! A combination of factors has come together to create what I see as a crisis of income and food insecurity for many of our people. I am pointing of course, to the large number of our population that has been slipping into poverty, either through climate impacts on their incomes and assets, or sheer cost-of-living pressures on their families.

It is our responsibility to ensure that they move out of extreme vulnerability, with the ability to access opportunities for jobs, and resources to reinvest in farms, livestock and small businesses.

I am proud to say that I come from a political background that has a rich legacy of empowering and protecting all those at the bottom of the social pyramid, including women.

Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was a champion for women's rights and always went an extra mile in advancing women's causes, just as she sought entitlements for the economically and socially vulnerable groups of Pakistan.

I am very proud of the fact that the Benazir Income Support Programme has been providing a lifeline to millions of vulnerable women across the country, offering them financial assistance and social protection, while giving many women the incentive and seed capital to start up small businesses.

I am glad that the number of beneficiaries of this poverty alleviation programme has risen to over 9 million but we need to bring more underprivileged women into this social safety net. I am hopeful that the new government will actively work to reduce social and economic fragility while aggressively promoting girls education and health, including programmes to reduce maternal mortality and enhance mother and child nutrition.

Mr. Speaker! You are aware that the menace of terrorism is again rearing its ugly head and is threatening our nation's security as well as regional peace and prosperity. Pakistan believes that terrorism is a shared concern that requires collective efforts. We expect neighbouring countries to take

strong notice of terrorist groups who are involved in launching attacks against our security forces and people.

Today, I reaffirm the nation's resolve to eliminate terrorist elements. My late wife, the twice-elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed, gave her life standing up to terrorists, so you will never find me wanting in building the unity and momentum behind such an effort.

We are proud of our Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies who have rendered immense sacrifices and played a heroic role in the fight against terrorism and defence of our national frontiers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our friendly countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, UAE, China, Turkiye, and Qatar, who have always supported Pakistan in difficult times.

It is important also to recognize that the US, EU and UK have all been established trade partners, with a history of cooperation in many sectors, which we hope will grow further.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to China for its unwavering support to Pakistan in various fields.

The enduring strategic and all-weather friendship between Pakistan and China is a cornerstone of stability in the region. We remain steadfast in our commitment to collaborate with China to advance our shared goals of fostering regional peace, promoting connectivity, ensuring prosperity, and maintaining

stability, which includes the completion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. We will not allow hostile elements to jeopardize this vital project or undermine the strong bond between our two nations. We will take all necessary measures to ensure the security of our Chinese brothers and sisters.

Before I conclude, I must remind the world of the unsung sacrifices of our Kashmiri brethren in their ongoing struggle for the freedom of Indian Illegal Occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

The revocation of Articles 370 and 35A is part of India's strategy to reduce Kashmiri Muslims to a minority in their own homeland. Pakistan rejects the one-sided Indian action and calls upon India to reverse all illegal measures taken on or after 5th August 2019.

I assure our Kashmiri brothers and sisters that Pakistan will continue to provide moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of occupied Kashmir until they get their right to self-determination.

Pakistan believes that the key to durable peace in South Asia is the resolution of the dispute in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

Similarly, we are deeply concerned over the tidal wave of indiscriminate killings of innocent Palestinians and large-scale genocide committed by the Israeli forces. Pakistan strongly condemns the brutality and impunity of the occupation forces and remains steadfast in its principled support for the

establishment of an independent and viable state of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Mr Speaker, honourable Parliamentarians!

I have complete faith in the capability of our political leadership, public institutions, civil society and youth, to successfully overcome the multiple challenges facing our nation today.

This is based on my unshakeable belief in the resilience of our people, knowing that whenever we unite to make common cause, we deliver on our promises. Today too, I believe we can pull together to draw on our moral and political capital in steering our country out of its complex but not impossible, social, climate and economic challenges.

Once again, let me entreat you all to think of this great country as your driving motivation for service in these Houses of Parliament. Let us demonstrate in spirit and word a renewed political ethos of collaboration and consensus-building as the guiding principles to lay the groundwork for a more prosperous Pakistan.

I am certain that together in a fresh start, we can chart a course towards a strong and prosperous Pakistan. May Allah be our Guide and Supporter in this journey. Ameen! Pakistan Painsdabad.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Mr. President. “In exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 54 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan”, I hereby prorogue the Session of both Houses summoned to assemble together on Thursday, the 18th April, 2024 on the conclusion of its Business.

Signed/xx
(Asif Ali Zardari)
President
Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

(The sitting of both Houses assembled together was prorogued.)