

Address to the Nation by Chief Executive Islamic Republic of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf

Islamabad
August 14, 2000

My dear countrymen

I congratulate you on the 53rd Independence anniversary of Pakistan. About 53 years ago the same very day we shook off the shackles of slavery and Pakistan came into being. The same very day The Quaid-i-Azam gave us a beautiful country which was a gift for us. Without this country neither I nor you would have reached at this position where we are today. I salute the Great Quaid from the core of my heart because he changed the destinies of us Pakistanis and Muslims. But it was our misfortune that he expired merely after 13 months. After him we had to face many difficulties. We had no money, no resources and even no army. In spite of that a war over Kashmir was imposed on us and we fought that war. Despite all those hardships Pakistan survived and existed and it survived with the blessings of Allah Almighty who gave us this country.

After the Quaid's expiry, we continued to move on with the same spirit and enthusiasm for some time but unfortunately the country's leadership slipped into the hands of certain elements who instead of serving the masses became their masters. The British rulers were replaced by such politicians and feudals who, through their hand-picked and appointed DCs and SPs, continued to rule and control the masses. The people's condition remained the same and the govts continued without any change. The privileged class flourished and the poor masses continued to suffer.

Now it is time to change. I think the people have suffered enough and they have seen enough deprivation. This government is determined to change the present system of governance. We intend to give the people the right to rule over themselves. I wish to tell you that this day will prove to be a milestone in the life of common man. This government wants to come up to the people's expectations. The question is what do the people want; especially the poor people and what are their expectations? In my view the people want self-respect. They want equality in the society. There should be no discrimination between the rich and the poor. They want self-respect and equal status. Secondly they want their genuine rights. Thirdly they want justice from us, from this country. And lastly they want a proper income whether they earn it through farming or through some employment, so that they can provide a shelter for themselves and their families and can earn their bread two times a day.

Now how can all these expectations be fulfilled? First of all I would like to tell you about whatever this Government is doing to increase the income of common man. I would tell you how poverty can be removed or reduced.

We have formulated a Poverty Alleviation Programme in the beginning of this year. We have allocated Rs. 35 billion in this head. Rs. 15 billion will be spent till December this year and Rs. 20 billion till December next year. Then under a very detailed programme we specified certain projects which we think should be concentrated in the least developed areas. The least developed areas have been given priority under PAP. Committees comprising civil administration, army monitoring teams and local people were formed to specify. These developmental projects and Rs. 15 billion allocated for this year were distributed among the provinces through a fair system. The provinces further distributed this money to the districts. Now since May 30 work on all these projects has started. You might have watched on TV all these projects of poverty alleviation running in the country.

This year 5,500 projects have started in the whole of country and around four and a half lakh people have been employed to work on them. An unskilled daily wager is getting Rs. 3000 a month at the rate of Rs. 100 a day. You might have seen I went to DG Khan, I visited Vehari. There are projects such as brick-lining of the village, construction of schools, making of water-points, establishing a computer centre in DG Khan or construction of bridge in Chitral. All these schemes of poverty alleviation are continuing in every district of the country. Besides poor people directly working with these projects and earning income through them, these projects are also generating income. For instance tractor trolleys and furnaces are running and generating income. Hence a process of economic development has initiated.

Following are a few such projects I am mentioning

- Around 1500 farm-to-market roads are under construction
- Sixteen hundred water supply schemes are under completion
- Around 1200 schools are being constructed, renovated and expanded
- Twelve hundred projects of civic amenity
- 150 projects of electrification
- Around forty projects in Health sector are under execution.

All these projects are running under the supervision of civil administration, army monitoring teams and local people and as I have said people are getting jobs. Insha Allah when next year more projects will start with the allocation of Rs. 20 billion, more people will get jobs and their poverty will be alleviated. In addition to four and a half lakh people employed this year another 5 lakh people will be getting job opportunities.

Then we are starting a food support programme. The people who are very poor will be benefiting from this scheme. We will give them relief by distributing money for the increase in the prices of wheat flour. Around 12 lakh people will be benefiting from this scheme.

The third scheme is regarding Zakat Fund. We have made a new plan in this regard. Previously we used to distribute Rs. 300/- per month among the deserving people. I increased this amount to Rs. 500/-. But this is not the right strategy. Under the new policy adopted after a study done by Dr. Mehmood Ghazi, we intend to drop the people from the category of deserving people. Instead of just Rs. 500 they should be given more money so they can start their own business and become self-reliant. After their economic condition is improved and they are able to stand on their feet they will not be in the list of deserving people any more. We will pinpoint such projects for the people and this new system of Zakat Fund will start in the whole of Pakistan.

You must have watched on TV about Micro Finance Bank, but I call it prosperity bank. We started it from the most underdeveloped area that is DG Khan which is also the central point of the four provinces. Through this bank the people will be given loans ranging from Rs. 3000 to Rs. 30,000. The important thing about this project is that the guarantors will be among the people of the same area. There will be no other guarantee required. A committee of the same area will be formed and on their guarantee loans will be given to the people at their doorsteps. This process will continue to expand further in the whole of Pakistan. People will be expanding their business with the help of loans, their income will increase and they will become prosperous.

The fifth important step which we took was for the farmers. We increased the wheat support price from Rs. 240 per 40 kg to Rs. 300. This has helped to have a bumper wheat crop by the Grace of God and the farmers have earned Rs. 60/- billion from this increase. I realise

that the price of wheat has risen in cities but poor people; poor farmers have earned Rs. 60/- billion.

The sixth thing which I want to do but I've not been able to implement on it due to certain difficulties. That is increase in the salaries of government servants. I realise that government servants are under pressure of rise in prices. I want to lessen their burden by significantly increasing their salaries. As far as survey and documentation of economy is concerned I think its purpose is the same that we should earn money and then spend it in the right manner. So we intend to increase the salaries of government servants quite substantially, especially of lower grade government employees. But I want to tell you that this is no complete solution of poverty alleviation. There is only one way to remove poverty and bring prosperity and that is economic development and industrialization so that people get jobs and prosper. Our government is doing its best in this regard. We hope that survey and documentation of economy would help generate Rs. 100 billion and we will utilize this money for the development of this country and people will prosper as a result of this.

We also intend to increase our exports. We have made a plan to increase the exports from \$ 8.6 billion last year to \$ 10 billion in the year 2000-001. Insha Allah we will achieve this target. There are a lot of things to tell but I will concentrate on "Textile Vision 2005" which we have constituted. We hope to take our existing exports in textiles from \$ 5 billion upto \$ 14 billion till 2005 under this plan. I am telling all this because all these efforts will generate economic activity leading to extensive industrialization and ultimately this will lead to the betterment of the common people. I fully realise that if common man has to be benefited and poverty has to be alleviated, his economic condition will have to be improved. And this will happen only when we will have resources and these resources will be used for the benefit of the common man. This is our first priority and we are concentrating on it.

Now I come to the most important topic of today and that is Devolution of Power or Local Government System. As I have said people want self-respect, their genuine rights and justice. I hope that Local Government-2000 will be able to provide them all these things. You may recall that in my speech of October 17 last year I had given a 7-point agenda. Its sixth point was; Devolution of Power to the Grassroots Level.

As far as importance is concerned it is my top priority. It will have far reaching effects to change the fate of the country. I had given its outline plan on March 23 this year and had promised to announce it on August 14 after analysing its details. I am meeting this target today as promised.

We exposed this plan to the public scrutiny. We presented it to the people through TV, Radio, Newspapers and we received their comments and opinions. Debates were organised from March to August. This process continued for six months. We analyzed it and thousands of comments were received by us and NRB. NRB brought them in every forum. We debated these proposals in NSC and Cabinet meetings. Besides they were also discussed in provincial cabinets. We examined and analyzed all the opinions received. I am really grateful to all those who sent these comments and proposals. We debated upon them and took the final decision on the 4th and 5th August in a meeting. There were many good ideas and we will be implementing them and we have made them part of our plan. There were certain proposals which were not implementable. We have left them out.

In the very beginning I've stated that I want to bring real democracy and I want to restore real democracy in the country, not sham democracy. I've been talking about essence of democracy. Sham democracy is just for the privileged class and their offspring. We want to wipe out this kind of democracy. We have started this democratic process from the lower strata, from the level of masses, common people. We have started it from District, Tehsil and Union level. Had we started it from the top it would have meant that we are handing over power to the same privileged people again and not the masses.

Now what is the basic issue in this devolution of power plan. The basic problems are not debatable. Debatable are tactics of implementation. We have received your comments and as I have said we have included many of them in our plan

The main problem as I have been saying is rights of the people. How to give people their due rights. Empowering the impoverished. How to go about it. It has four or five basic elements. Firstly people should be allowed to decide their own destiny. Let the people be master of their own destiny. Secondly in the district all the government functionaries should be subordinate to the elected representatives. It means that civil administration should be brought under the political leadership. This is how power will be transferred to the masses. This will ensure transfer of power to the common people.

Thirdly financial autonomy should be given to the local government which has never happened in the past. And the fourth thing is speedy justice at the doorsteps of the common man. I hope that the dignity of the common man will be restored and his rights will be safe-guarded when all these things will be done

Now I want to discuss some details of the Local Government System-2000. This system consists of three tiers. That is the District level, Tehsil level and Union level. I will start from the lower strata that is the Union Council

Union Council will comprise many wards. It will have 21 members. 18 will be directly elected out of which 12 will be men and six women. Six seats will be reserved for peasants and workers. In addition if any peasant or labourer wants to contest on open seats he can do that. Union Council will be headed by a Union Nazim and assisted by a Naib Nazim. Both of them will be elected on the basis of joint candidacy as a team. Every Union Council will consist of three secretaries who will help run the Union administration.

Now I will come to the Tehsil Council. There will be a Tehsil Council in every Tehsil. The elections in Tehsil Council will not be held directly. The Tehsil Council will be headed by a Tehsil Nazim and assisted by a Naib Tehsil Nazim. They will also team up on the basis of joint candidacy and the Union Councils of the whole Tehsil will serve as the Electoral College. It means that all the Naib Nazims of the Union Council will automatically become members of the Tehsil Council. Besides five seats will be reserved for farmers and workers. The head of the Tehsil Council will be called Tehsil Nazim and its deputy Naib Tehsil Nazim. The Electoral College for reserved seats will be union councilors of the Tehsil. The Tehsil Council will be run through its municipal administration which will provide all the municipal services across the Tehsil. Municipal administration will be in all the Tehsil and the latter will have their writ to the entire area of the Tehsil including the villages. This I want to explain a little more.

Previously the municipal administrative responsibility of the Tehsil used to restrict only to the Tehsil headquarter and would not extend to the rural areas. There used to be a split between rural and urban areas. There used to be differences among them because rural areas used to come under the District Council and Tehsil Council would only look after the town. As a result the expansion of town used to be in an unplanned and haphazard manner parallel with the roads. Its responsibility did not rest with the municipal committee but the people used to depend on that town. Under the new plan there will be no split between the city and the village. This will put an end to the development disparity between the urban and rural areas. The rural areas which will now be under the Tehsil will expand in a planned way.

Every District will have a District Council. It will be headed by the District Nazim and Naib District Nazim who will be indirectly elected on the basis of joint candidacy. All the directly elected Nazims of the Union Councils will automatically become the members of the District Council. Nazim Union Council will become member of the District Council and Naib Nazim of

the Tehsil Council. So there will be no direct elections for the members of the District Council. Besides 5 per cent seats will be reserved for farmers and workers. The District Nazim will run the district administration with the help of a District Coordination Officer (DCO) who will be a grade 20 officer and will be subordinate to the District Nazim. All other District functionaries will be subservient to the DCO who will coordinate all the functions of the District be they in the sector of education, health or irrigation. Under this plan there will be unity of command and District functioning will be efficient and will run smoothly under the control of District Nazim.

However District Police Chief or SP will not be subservient to the DCO. They will directly report to the District Nazim. There will be District Police Safety Commissions in every district to monitor the functioning of the Police. In the District administration its development and financial management is very important. As I said earlier the District will enjoy financial autonomy. We are constituting a Provincial Finance Award and each District will receive funds by the provinces through this Award on the basis of its size and level of the backwardness. They will utilize this money after proper planning. The developmental planning will start from the Union level. After deciding about a project, they will send its feasibility report to the District upward where the decision will be taken after examining the proposal. The developmental activity of the Union and Tehsil Council will be consolidated at the District level and funds will be allocated accordingly. When these projects will be under execution committees of the Union Councilors will monitor and oversee them to root out any corruption or inefficiency.

We are introducing a new system of City Districts. I will tell briefly about this plan. You must have seen an over expansion of many cities in Pakistan. They have expanded to the level of Tehsil. For example Gujranwala, Multan, Faisalabad, Hyderabad, Peshawar and Sukkur etc. All these cities have expanded to the extent that they are occupying the whole of a district. The idea is to introduce the City Districts in a Tehsil which has become too big to be properly and efficiently managed. Now we intend to give all these cities the status of district. Like Gujranwala, if it has four Tehsils then the area of Tehsil where Gujranwala city is located will be made a District and Gujranwala will become a City District so that its growth and expansion is done in an organised manner and parks, play grounds and other civic facilities will be provided according to some planning. All the people will be benefiting from this scheme.

Initially the idea was to change twelve cities into City Districts but when we examined this proposal we saw that two cities—Karachi and Lahore—have come out of this scope and many districts have been formed within these two cities. So for the time being we have decided that only Islamabad and provincial capitals will be given the status of City Districts. After the success of this experiment we will examine changing the status of more districts. But I am sure that under this plan the development in these City Districts will be in an organised manner and they will expand according to a planning and there will be no haphazard construction according to the whims of the people.

Now I will touch some other topics of Local Government. Under the new system what will be the duties of the office of DC? DC has three responsibilities—magisterial powers, financial powers and administrative powers. We want to separate all these three powers. Magistracy will come under a judicial chain which will be extended from centre to provinces and down to districts. Similarly financial chain will spread from top to bottom. So the DC will now be re-designated as DCO whose administrative responsibility and administrative authority will be immense. He will coordinate the work of all the twelve or thirteen institutions of the government. He will have far more responsibilities in the District.

As far as divisions and commissioners are concerned we found them redundant, therefore, we have decided to abolish them and devolve their responsibilities to the District level. As

far as the system of election is concerned all the elections will be on non-party basis. Because we want that the elected representatives should look down to the people and not up to their party leaders. We have reduced the voting age from 21 to 18 years. I hope that the young leadership will bring about more dynamism, stronger nationalism and a national spirit in the politics of the country.

Now since there will be no direct elections at the District and Tehsil level in view of their expansion and the heavy expenditure involved we have decided to hold run-off elections there. It means that in case some pair of Nazim and Naib Nazim of Tehsil or District elected on the basis of joint candidacy, polis less than 50 per cent votes, there will be a run-off election between the highest two pairs. Therefore they are elected polling more than 50 per cent votes. Run-off elections are meant to make the mandate and authority of the elected Nazims and Naib Nazims stronger. The government is also considering making the voting for Union Councilors for the elections of Nazims and Naib Nazims compulsory. We will decide about it till the elections of District level in the year 2001.

As to the electoral system for minorities we have thoroughly examined **it** and have decided to retain the separate electorate system for them. Had we not retained this system and gone for joint electorate system no minority candidate would have got representation in these bodies. Therefore by separate electorate system we have not only guaranteed their representation but have increased it. When we are saying five per cent seats it means there will be a representative of minorities in every Union, Tehsil and District Council. The minorities will have representation in local bodies even if they have less than one per cent population in a constituency. They will get representation proportionate to their population if it exceeds 10 per cent of the total population. I think this system is in the interest of minorities. They will have representatives everywhere who will solve their problems.

We have deliberated upon women representation in detail. Women should get their rights. They constitute 50 per cent of our population. We have also increased their representation. In Union Councils women will have one-third seats reserved for them as against two-thirds for men. Besides, women can also opt for general seats and can also contest for the elections of Nazims and Naib Nazims. This representation will be at the level of Tehsil and District. I will request men to encourage women to participate in elections. I would also like to tell that the seats reserved for women will be kept vacant if no woman is elected on these seats. Bye- elections will be held every year on these seats to fill them. These are some very important changes we are bringing about in the women representation in the society.

g Now I come to the system of justice. Speedy justice at the doorstep of the people. The question is how we can restore the dignity and self respect of every Pakistani. How can we provide him his due right and do justice to him. I think the injustice emanates from the police action at the SHO level. Therefore the Police and Judiciary need to be reorganized and reformed. National Construction Bureau and Ministry of Interior have jointly prepared a new plan for police reforms. I will dilate on the salient features of this plan.

First of all the existing status of the police should be improved. They should be provided with transportation, they should have mobility so that they can be able to reach on the spot where some incident has occurred. They should not be asking for transportation from the person who has come to them for registering an FIR. Then they should be equipped with communication facilities so that the investigation team is able to contact with their base. Thirdly they should have proper accommodation. They don't even have sufficient police stations. Especially in rural areas the police stations are in a very deplorable condition. Therefore their condition needs to be improved. Besides their intake method should be improved and nobody should be taken on recommendation. With an improvement in the system of intake, better qualified ASIs will come. Fifty percent of Asst. Sub-Inspectors

(ASIs) will be recruited directly while the rest 50 per cent will come up through departmental promotion.

We are bringing about a basic revolutionary change in the recruitment of ASP. Previously Inspector or SHO used to be in charge of police station. From now on ASP will be in charge of the police station that will be recruited through FPSC. We are starting execution on this plan immediately and within three years time it will be completed.

I hope that with the induction of an officer recruited through FPSC who has undergone proper training at the academy, a visible cultural change will be introduced in all the police stations. A properly trained ASP will have a broader vision and improve the working of police station and will bring about a qualitative change in Thana culture. If he is sufficiently provided with transportation, communications and accommodation and he has better qualified staff taken on merit working under him then definitely this would lead to an improvement and basic change in the police system. Monitoring and overseeing committees would be set up to take corrective measures against corruption in police department. Police Safety Commissions will be constituted in the Centre, provinces and at the District level. They, together with committees of Union, Tehsil and District Councils, will monitor police's performance and take corrective action against any excesses of the police. I have told you salient features of this plan. Details will be announced later.

Judicial reforms are being looked into by the Chief Justice himself. A reorganized judicial system will be formulated at the District level and we hope to put this new structure in place by July next year. The basic thing is that in order of quick disposal of cases the number of judiciary should be enhanced. Besides Reconciliatory Courts are being revived. Therefore I hope that the restructuring of police and judiciary will result in the betterment of common people. It will have far reaching consequences to provide justice to the people.

My dear countrymen

This was a brief review of the Local Government Plan. This plan has been formulated for the betterment of you all. I know that many people are opposing this plan and violating it. Who are these people? They should be identified. They should be exposed. They are those people who want to continue ruling the masses while sitting in Islamabad and 11 provincial capitals. They want to keep the people in darkness and they want them always subjugated and suppressed. They want to continue with looting the public money, the exchequer. They want to deprive the people from their right to rule themselves. These opposing forces say that this system of Local Government is beyond the comprehension of common man. They say that the people are not mature enough to take on this responsibility.

All these arguments are meaningless. We have seen that how the people opposing this plan have run governments in Pakistan. They have put Pakistan on the road to destruction. Common people are not responsible for this poor state of the country. They are the same people who are raising objections against this Devolution Plan or Local Government Plan. They are those people who consider themselves gods and they want to impose their power and will upon the people. Our government believes in the masses. I am sure that the people are mature. They know their good and bad much better than the others. I request you that you give your vote to the right people. This is your responsibility. Who are the right people to be given vote it is he who is patriotic, who is honest, upright and straight forward and who is trustworthy and lastly he is so courageous that he can withstand any undue pressures. These should be the qualities of the leader. Only then he will be able to understand what is better for you and then he will be able to work for your betterment and for the welfare of Pakistan.

I also want to tell you that some people think that all these reforms that we are bringing in will be null and void after we go. This is not right. This will never happen. We will ensure

through a system, their continuity and sustainability. These reforms will be lasting and nobody will be able to reverse them.

My dear countrymen

With the Devolution of Power Plan we will try to change that dream of the Quaid into a reality which he referred to in a statement on 11 August, 1947, merely three days before the Independence and I quote "Now if you want to make the real state of Pakistan happy and prosperous we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people and especially the masses, the poor."

This means that if we want to see Pakistan prosper then our attention should be focused on the prosperity of common man, specially the poor. I want to translate his dream into reality and make Pakistan prosperous according to his wishes Insha Allah. You have a great responsibility towards this country. Move forward and fulfill your responsibility. Don't disappoint Pakistan.

May God look after us all
Pakistan Paindabad
(May Pakistan live for ever)