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## Pakistan Council Marks Independence Day with Students

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Islamabad, Pakistan, The Nazriya Pakistan Council (NPC), in collaboration with Bazeecha Welfare Foundation, Sunshine Gharana Foundation, and Pakistan Girl Guides, celebrated Pakistan's Independence Day with a special ceremony honoring students and youth.

The event began with a flag-raising ceremony at Aiwan-e-Quaid, continuing a tradition established by NPC's founding chairman, the late Zahid Malik. Senator Irfan Siddiqui, a

veteran journalist and Parliamentary Leader of the PML-N, participated and planted a commemorative sapling as part of a seasonal plantation initiative.

After the formal commencement, Irum Mumtaz, Chairperson of Bazeecha Welfare Foundation, welcomed guests and highlighted the collaborative efforts of organizations supporting youth and special needs education.

In his address, Senator Siddiqui praised Pakistan's founding principles, referencing Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision, the Two-Nation Theory, and the efforts of Pakistan's early leaders. He also emphasized the country's progress toward economic stability and the role of the armed forces in national security.

Former Ambassador Salahuddin Chaudhry, a senior Executive Council member, highlighted the contributions of children with special needs, describing them as "multi-colored balloons" symbolizing innocence and potential. He encouraged young people to follow the principles established by Quaid-e-Azam for Pakistan's continued growth.

International Labour Organization (ILO) Country Director Geir Thomas Tonstol, attending his third Independence Day in Pakistan, expressed admiration for the country's youth and their achievements, particularly among young girls. He noted Pakistan's progress along developmental and social fronts.

Advocate Humaira Masihuddin emphasized the importance of education and training for special children, stating that today's support could help them become the leaders of tomorrow. NPC Chairman Mian Muhammad Javed lauded the children's performances, recalling their historical role in supporting the Pakistan Movement alongside adults during periods of political restriction.

The ceremony featured various activities, including speech competitions, patriotic songs, painting, gymnastics, and tableaux. Participants included children with disabilities, showcasing their talents and resilience. Muhammad Ansar, who uses a wheelchair, delivered a speech asserting equality for all students. Blind fifth-grade student Fawad Alam from Gilgit-Baltistan performed on the rabab, earning applause and recognition.

Other attendees included Shahid Mehmood Khokhar, Chairman of the Implementation Tribunal for Newspaper Employees; former Senator Razina Alam Khan; Positive Pakistan

Chairman Abid Iqbal Khari; social leaders; lawyers; and members of the Council's Executive Committee.

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of awards and certificates to students and participating institutions, celebrating the achievements of both special needs children and their peers.