

Ambassador's Speech at Pakistan's Cultural Festival at Qingdao

16 October 2021

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
My Dear Friends,**

It is a matter of great honour for me to participate today in Pakistan's Cultural Festival at Qingdao Olympic Sailing Centre.

I am grateful to the municipal government of Qingdao city, Qingdao Tourism Group and SCO Demonstration Area for organising this event to celebrate the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties between Pakistan and China.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pakistan and China are all-weather strategic cooperative partners, iron-brothers and closest neighbours. In the last seven decades of our historic friendship, our two countries have stood by each other in difficult times and proved to be a source of strength and succour for each other.

In 2013, our two countries decided to aggressively expand our trade and economic ties by linking our two countries via CPEC which is the flagship project of President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative. CPEC has proved to be a transformative experience which has unleashed the trade and economic potential between our two countries. Besides, CPEC has brought our people closer and provided us an important platform to enhance our ties in people-to-people exchanges, two-way tourism and cultural cooperation.

Distinguished Guests,

There is a natural affinity between the cultures of Pakistan and China. Our two countries boast of ancient civilizational roots which have fashioned the modern day cultural tapestry of our respective nations. Our common Asian values, time-honoured family ethos and appreciation of diversity is the hallmark of Pakistani and Chinese civilizations.

As we celebrate 70th anniversary of establishment of our diplomatic ties, our two countries have mainly focused on highlighting our cultural cooperation and strengthening people-to-people bonds between our two countries.

This year, we have organized first Pakistan-China Women Forum; first Pakistan China Puppet Festival; Young Artists Exhibition; Pakistan Film Festival; Pakistan's participation in China Fashion Week and Light Show at the Great Wall of China. Today's events at Qingdao would add to this tally of celebratory events and make our 70th anniversary celebrations more meaningful whose memory we would always cherish fondly.

Dear Friends,

Today's Cultural Festival serves to remind us that the younger people are the true ambassadors of our respective countries. They are our most valued asset. It is our duty to bequeath to our younger generation this sacred and ancient story of Pakistan-China friendship. While passing on the legacy of this relationship, we need to remind them of the untiring efforts of our preceding generations for strengthening these strong ties of friendship and respect. I am confident that they would shoulder this responsibility and take our friendship to new heights.

In pursuit of this objective, we look forward to the continued support of Qingdao's Government and its people for maintaining the momentum of our mutually beneficial cooperation and shaping the Community of Shared Destiny between our two countries.

Long Live Pakistan-China Friendship!