On eve of Independence Day, PM Shehbaz Sharif says nation needs to revive passion that led to creation of Pakistan

In address to nation, PM Shehbaz calls for economic independence

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ISLAMABAD: In his address to the nation ahead of Independence Day, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said a nation cannot be independent without economic self-reliance.

"There is no concept of a nation's independence without economic independence," the prime minister told the nation in a televised on Saturday.

"Most importantly, we will need to revive the passion that led to the creation of Pakistan," he said, noting that this passion will lead to the establishment of a great nation.

The prime minister's call for economic stability comes as the cash-strapped nation desperately seeks financial assistance from friendly countries and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The country's foreign reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan were recorded at $7,830.3 million, down $555 million compared with $8,385.4 on July 29, data released by the SBP on Thursday showed, which can cover fewer than 1.12 months of imports.

Shehbaz Sharif-led government came into power in April after the ouster of PTI Chairman Imran Khan — and since then, the incumbent rulers have been trying to stabilise the economy.

In his televised address, PM Shehbaz said that the nation has fought with terrorism and dealt with several challenges but today, it is facing hatred and anarchy.

“Attempts are being made to divide the nation and unity is being disturbed,” he said, adding the country’s economic crisis worsened following the previous government’s wrongdoings.

The PM added that the nation must look toward finding ways to take the country’s forward.

“Our government has been working day and night to save Pakistan from the economic crisis and default,” he said, criticising the previous government which led country to seek loans.

“The previous government left 48 billion in deficit — the worst in the history of Pakistan,” the PM said.

The PM added that his government has decided to start solar projects to deal with power shortage in the country.

“We have decided to take Pakistan toward economic progress, as there is no concept of Pakistan’s freedom without economic freedom,” the PM said.

While slamming the previous government, PM Shahbaz said that in 2017 and 2018 Pakistan was self-sufficient in wheat production, but the country is now forced to import wheat. He also criticised the PTI-led administration for not purchasing cheap LNG.

“Difficulties can be dealt with through economic stability and consistent policies,” PM Shahbaz remarked, adding that the nation can only progress if it overcomes challenges with passion.

He said that economic dependence has become the country’s identity, which our elders would've never thought about.

"As a prime minister, this has been my harshest experience," the PM added, questioning the PTI’s government whether on whose behest they halted the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), damaging the country's economy.

"Our [PML-N] government left the country self-sufficient in wheat, but the previous government's negligence led to the import of wheat," the premier highlighted.

At the outset of his address, the PM congratulated the nation on completing 75 years as an independent nation.

He said that the people celebrate Independence Day, Pakistan Day, Quaid-e-Azam Day, and Iqbal Day but the "truth" is, in the last 75 years, the nation has only only celebrated these days but not acknowledged the founding father's purpose.

The PM noted that the country failed to provide the young generation what they deserved.

"Why this nation is still lost even when God has blessed it?" he questioned.