

## Gilani now rakes up Kashmir issue

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani Friday urged the international community to help resolve the Kashmir issue for durable peace in the region.

Addressing a seminar on 'Democracy in Pakistan', the prime minister said: 'The Kashmir issue must be resolved keeping in mind the aspirations of its people. This would help ensure peace in the region and the world.'

Speaking to reporters after the seminar, Gilani said the Kashmir issue should be resolved according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people and the UN resolutions on the subject.

The seminar was participated by the visiting British members of parliament including James Devine, Mark Fisher, James McGovern and Mohammed Sarwar, representing as the Friends of Pakistan.

Gilani said democracy in Pakistan was not a new phenomenon, as the country's creation was also rooted in a long democratic process. He said dictatorship that lasted for almost three decades in Pakistan had weakened its infrastructure.

He said Pakistan was currently facing numerous challenges, including the rising current and fiscal deficit, inflation, terrorism and extremism. The prime minister said in the last eight years, terrorism flourished greatly, while Pakistan's relations with neighbouring countries, particularly Afghanistan, had also deteriorated to their lowest ebb.

He said the present democratic government immediately made efforts to bring normalization in the region and improve relations with neighbouring states.

The prime minister said Pakistan was in favour of improving relations with all neighbours, including India and Afghanistan, adding that with cooperation among the neighbouring countries, the region can experience robust development.

'The people of Pakistan and the region deserve a better future,' he said, and stressed the need for taking solid steps for ensuring peace in the region for the betterment of the people.

He said the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project had been fast tracked to meet the growing demands of the people.

Gilani said Pakistan was playing the role of frontline state in the war against terrorism and extremism and was following a multi-pronged strategy in this regard.

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