

From Route 79 to the 79th Independence Day of Pakistan

23 August 2026

A few days ago, while preparing for my upcoming presentation for Pakistan's 79th Independence Day, I suddenly realised that there was a connection between a place we stayed for just one night this year and the initiative that has now brought me to a community stage to share a visual presentation about history. It was one of those unexpected moments when an ordinary memory suddenly acquires a deeper meaning.

During this winter of 2026, while traveling from Christchurch towards Lake Tekapo in the South Island of Aotearoa, New Zealand, we decided to stay somewhere for one night along the way. We were not looking for anything elaborate. We simply thought we would find a place around an hour or so before Lake Tekapo, somewhere midway where we could rest before continuing our journey. As we travelled, we came across a holiday home that seemed to fit what we needed, so we stayed there for the night. At the time, it was simply part of a family journey. We arrived, settled in, enjoyed the surroundings, and continued our travels the next day. There was no thought that this small decision would later become connected to something much more meaningful.



Then came the preparation for Pakistan's 79th Independence Day.

As I began preparing my visual presentation for a community celebration, I noticed the number 79 appearing in two completely different parts of my life. One was Route 79, associated with a brief stop during a family journey in Aotearoa New Zealand. The other was the 79th

Independence Day of Pakistan, the country of my birth and a significant part of my history and identity.

Suddenly, that ordinary overnight stay felt different.

It made me think about how life creates connections that we do not always recognise at the moment they happen. Sometimes we plan the destination, but we do not plan the meaning that we will discover along the way. A journey can leave behind a small memory that only becomes significant much later.

There is also something deeply symbolic about staying in a holiday home. A holiday home represents choice, movement, and freedom. We were traveling freely, choosing where to stop, where to rest, and how to continue our journey. We had the freedom to take a route, find accommodation along the way, and create our own experiences.

And then I began thinking about independence itself.

Independence gives a nation the freedom to determine its own direction, to shape its identity, and to imagine its future. Yet freedom is not only something that belongs to countries and national histories. It can also be experienced in small choices of everyday life. The freedom to travel, to explore, to create, to remember, to tell stories and to share history with others is also part of what makes life meaningful.

For me, the connection between Route 79 and Pakistan's 79th Independence Day has therefore become more than a coincidence. It has become a reminder that history does not always announce itself. Sometimes it quietly sits inside an ordinary experience and waits for us to notice it.

On 22 August 2026, at Dunsandel Community Centre, I had the privilege of presenting history visually for the first time as part of the 79th Independence Day celebration of Pakistan, organised by the Pakistani Association of Canterbury New Zealand (PACNZ). I wanted to create a space where history could be seen, explored and experienced through a visual presentation.

In a way, I was bringing a piece of history into the celebration, allowing the past to become visible and part of the present.

Perhaps this is also why the Route 79 connection feels so special. A road took us from Christchurch towards Lake Tekapo. A number led us unexpectedly from a holiday home to an

Independence Day celebration. And now another route is opening before me, a route where history, memory, community, and visual storytelling come together.

Sometimes connections make their own way.

We do not always have to force them. We simply have to remain open enough to notice them.

A one night stay became a memory. A number became a connection. The journey became a reflection. And an Independence Day celebration became an opportunity to share history in a new way.

From a route in Aotearoa to the 79th Independence Day of Pakistan, the connection was not planned. It simply appeared.

And perhaps that is where the real significance lies.

We make our plans, but sometimes life adds its own meaning.

✦ **From Route 79 to 79 years of independence, some connections are not made by us. They find their own way to us.**

Image acknowledgement: Photo taken at Route79 Holiday Park, Geraldine, Canterbury, New Zealand.