

Positive Post

A Publication by Department of Mass Communication & Media Studies and the Diplomatic Academy



March in History

March 12, 1952: *Princely states of Kalat, Makran, Las Bela and Khairan agree, with the concurrence of the Central Government, to integrate their territories into Balochistan.*

March 15, 1955: *The biggest post-independence irrigation project, Kotri Barrage is inaugurated.*

March 23, 1956: *Constitution is promulgated on Pakistan Day. Major General Iskander Mirza sworn in as first President of Pakistan.*

March 23, 1956: *Constituent assembly adopts name of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and first constitution.*

March 8, 1957: *President Iskandar Mirza lays the foundation-stone of the State Bank of Pakistan building in Karachi.*

March 23, 1960: *Foundation of Minar-i-Pakistan is laid.*

March 21, 1965: *Pakistan and China sign a border agreement in Peking (Beijing).*

March 14, 1972: *New education policy enforced. Free education in all private and public schools.*

March 1, 1981: *National population census starts throughout the country.*

March 29, 1983: *Foundation-stone of Satellite Earth Station is laid near Rawalpindi.*

March 8, 1998: *Population census begins in the country.*

Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

Overview

Pakistan observed a slight improvement in the overall international rankings in 2018 covering socio-economic and political outcomes of the country. Several elements complemented the prospects including successful democratic transition, efficient counter-terrorism measures leading to enhanced peace and security, and foreign direct investment inflows under CPEC, among others. Albeit, decoupling economic growth from human development suggests that the country needs to enhance its scores in health, education and standard of living by ensuring political will, equitable financing and efficient governance to ensure parallel growth for marginalized segments as well. Civil and political liberties must grow hand in hand to ensure a conducive environment for democratic dialogue and accountability which ultimately supports its nation building process.

DEMOCRACY INDEX

Pakistan ranked 112th out of 167 countries in the Democracy Index scoring 4.17 out of 10 in 2018 compared to 4.26 in 2017.

Index from 0 (authoritarian regime) to 10 (full democracy)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Electoral process and pluralism, Civil liberties, Functioning of government, Political participation, and Political culture.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Pakistan ranked 150th out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index scoring 0.562 out of 1.000 in 2018 compared to 0.560 out of 1.000 in 2017.

Index from 0 (low development) to 1 (very high development)

Compiled based on indicators covering: life expectancy, education, and per capita income

PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 139th out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index scoring 43.24 out of 100 in 2018 compared to 43.55 in 2017.

Index from 0 (most press freedom) to 100 (least press freedom)

Compiled based on indicators covering: pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and infrastructure.

TERRORISM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 5th out of 163 countries in the Terrorism Index scoring 8.18 out of 10 in 2018 compared to 8.40 in 2017.

Index from 0 (lowest impact) to 10 (highest impact)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Total number of terrorist incidents in a given year, total number of fatalities caused by terrorism in a given year, total number of injuries caused by terrorism in a given year and the approximate level of total property damage from terrorist incidents in a given year.

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

Pakistan ranked 131st out of 180 countries in the Economic Freedom Index scoring 54.4 out of 100 in 2018 compared to 52.8 out of 100 in 2017.

Index from 0 (repressed) to 100 (free)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Market openness, Regulatory efficiency, Government size and the rule of law.

Positive Post is a strategic effort to project achievement and contributions of Pakistan. While showcasing Greenwich University's cultural diplomacy initiatives, it also encapsulates a compilation of different developments complementing Pakistan's socio-cultural, economic and Political outcomes.



United States, commonly known as America, is composed of fifty states, federal district, and various possessions. It is the third largest state in the world with an area about 3.8 million square miles and slightly smaller than the entire continent of Europe. The capital city is Washington D.C and most populated city is New York City. United States is one of the founders of United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and many other international organizations. It is the world's largest importer and the second largest exporter of goods. Although its population is only 4.3% of the world total, the U.S. has 31% of the total wealth in the world, the largest share of global wealth concentrated in a single country.

Government

United States is the representative democracy. The government system of the country is quite unique, when compare to other countries' government. The politics of the US takes place chiefly under a two-party system. Two major political parties, the Democratic and Republican parties, control the political scene of the US. The presidency usually alternates between the two political parties. The president is the head of the federal government of the United States. The most powerful figures in the states are the governors. The federal government of the US has three branches: the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary.

The head of the executive branch is the president. He or she is the most powerful figure of the government. The president is limited to a maximum of two terms of four years each. The parliament of the U.S. is composed of two houses; the Senate and House of Representatives. The senate has 100 members while House of Representatives has 435 seats.

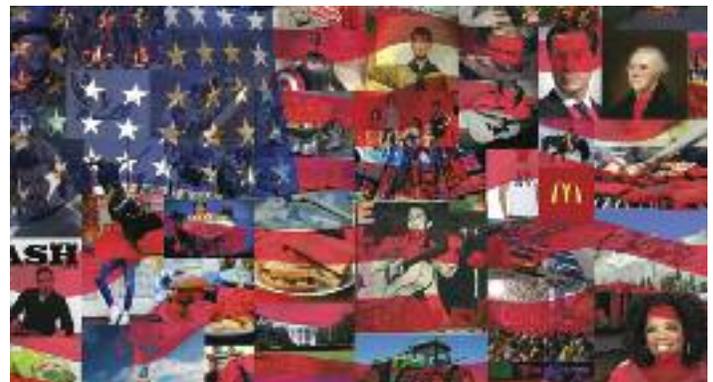
The judiciary is independent of influences of from the Legislatures and Executive. It is made of Supreme Court, federal courts and other minority courts.

Culture

Due to large number of immigrants, the culture of the U.S. is diverse. It is a home to many cultures with variety of ethnic groups, traditions and values. The major American culture is derived from the traditions of European immigrants. Immigrants from Asia have added to the mix culture of the country.

America is rich in art and literature. Avram Noam Chomsky (born December 7, 1928) is an American linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, historian, political activist, and social critic. Sometimes called "the father of modern linguistics", Chomsky is also a major figure in analytic philosophy and one of the founders of the field of cognitive science.

Twelve U.S. citizens have won the Nobel Prize in Literature, most recently Bob Dylan in 2016. William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway and John Steinbeck are often named among the most influential writers of the 20th century. The realist paintings of Thomas Eakins are now commonly celebrated. Major artistic movements such as the abstract expressionism of Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning and the pop art of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein developed largely in the United States. The tide of modernism and then postmodernism has brought recognition to American architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Philip Johnson, and Frank Gehry. Americans have long been significant in the modern artistic medium of



photography, with major photographers including Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, and Ansel Adams.

Sports

American football is the most popular sport. National Football League has the highest attendance than any other sports club. Baseball is regarded as national sport of U.S. with the Major League Baseball (MLB) on the top baseball league. Most major U.S. sports such as baseball and American football have developed out of European practices. Basketball, volleyball, skateboarding and snowboarding are American inventions, some of which have become popular internationally.



In soccer, the country hosted the FIFA World Cup 1994, the men's national soccer team qualified for ten World Cups and the women's team has won the FIFA Women's World Cup three times. The market for professional sports in the United States is \$69 billion, roughly 50% larger than that of all of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa combined.

Religion

The first amendment of the U.S Constitution guarantees the religious freedom of its citizens. Like other western countries, United States also going towards irreligious society. According to 2012 polls, the Americans dropped to 48% which represents Atheism believers. However, Protestants forms the largest religious group in the country and 5.9% population



is belonged to other religions; Judaism (1.9%), Hinduism (1.2%), Buddhism (0.9%) and Islam (0.9%)

Pakistan-US Relations

United States and Pakistan are allies since Pakistan became an independent state. On, October 20, 1947, U.S. established its relation with Pakistan and became one of the first countries to establish relation with new country. During the Cold war era, Pakistan sided with U.S. and was an active member of SEATO and CENTO.

Pakistan and the United States have developed a multifaceted and broad-based relationship, driven by cooperation in areas includes education, energy, trade and investment. This cooperation is rooted in shared values and convergence of interest on regional and strategic issues. Following the event of 9/11, Pakistan had joined hands with U.S. to fight against ter-



rorism and have significantly degraded the threat posed by other terrorist groups in the region. The United States today involves in wide-ranging economic, social, and scientific assistance as well as vibrant military relations with Pakistan, while Pakistan continues to occupy a planned position in the United States' interests in Central and South Asia. The United States is the second-largest supplier of military equipment to Pakistan after China, and is one of Pakistan's largest donors of foreign assistance. Between 2002–2013, Pakistan received \$25 billion in economic and military aid and sales of military equipment.

American culture is heavily penetrated in Pakistan. In past decades, the introduction of U.S cinema, cuisine and fashion have flourished in Pakistan. Due to this, several American companies has invested in Pakistan such as Hardee's, Pizza Hut, Mcdonalds, Burger King, KFC and many more.

Ambassador Profile

Paul Wayne Jones is the current U.S. ambassador to Pakistan. He has also served as an ambassador in Poland (2015-2018) and Malaysia (2013-2015). He regarded as one of the foreign services' experts in Europe and East Asia.



Jones was born and raised in Yorktown Heights, New York. He earned his B.A. from Cornell University. His post-graduate work includes a Masters of Arts in Public Administration from University of Virginia. He speaks Russian, Spanish, and some Polish.

He joined U.S foreign services in 1987 and served as consular and political office in Bogota, Colombia for two years. After returning to U.S, he worked in the State Department's 24-hour Operations Center during the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, U.S. military operations in Panama and coup attempts in the Philippines. Jones' career began to focus on Asia in 2005, when he was assigned as Chargé d'Affaires and Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Manila, under Ambassador Kristie Kenney. Ambassador Jones alongside served as the Deputy Commandant and International Affairs Advisor at the National War College, National Defense University, in Washington, D.C. He is a career member of the State Department's Senior Foreign Service. His awards include the Presidential Meritorious Service Award, the Robert C. Frasure Memorial Award for peace building, and several Superior Honor Awards.

United States Consulate General Karachi organized a talk on "Civil Rights Movement in USA"

United States Consulate General Karachi organized a talk on "Civil Rights Movement in USA" at Greenwich University on February 27, 2019. Mr. Jimmy Mauldin, Head of Political and Economic Affairs, contextualized the movement with insights on the situation of civil and political rights in Alabama, significant contributors like Martin Luther King Jr., and the impact of the movement on the overall quest for equality and social justice for the African-Americans.



During his interaction with the students in the Question & Answer session, he elaborated

the important lessons that could be drawn from the movement as guiding principles to strengthen democratic narratives around

the world.

Ali Jillani, Head of Diplomatic Affairs, highlighted Greenwich's contribution to the democratization process through its think-tank, and cultural diplomacy initiatives through its Diplomatic Academy in presenting a softer image of Pakistan to the world.

Dr. Susan Ross, Cultural Attache at the Consulate, also graced the occasion and expressed her willingness to explore avenues for educational and cultural exchange.

PM Khan announces Rs162bn development package for Karachi

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday announced a Rs162 billion development package for Karachi, which includes grants for 18 projects, which will be focused on priority areas like transportation and water provision.

The premier, who is on an official trip to Karachi, made the announcement during a meeting of the Karachi Transformation Committee, chaired by him.

He said that out of the 18 proposed projects, 10 are related to the development of the public transport network in the city. Seven other projects are related to the water and sewerage infrastructure.

He laid particular emphasis on the importance of water conservation in Karachi. He regretted that no plan to preserve water had been formulated by previous governments and urged the committee to start a campaign to conserve the resource.

The premier also said that while a master plan for Karachi was essential, an interim plan for the city should be put in place to address the pressing challenges that the metropolis is facing. He promised that he will cooperate with provincial authorities in every way to en-



sure the development of Karachi, which, he said, was vital for the progress of the country.

He also said that further horizontal expansion of the city must be stopped and the slum areas of the city should be developed.

Prime Minister Khan announced that a university will be built in Hyderabad and reverse osmosis plants will be installed in areas of Tharparkar. Earlier this month, the premier had announced a health package for Sindh, under which as many as 112,000 families will get Insaf Health Cards.

Later in the day, the prime minister

inaugurated Bagh Ibne Qasim, where he stressed the importance of planting trees and "saving the green areas" in Karachi.

Prime Minister Imran Khan plants a sapling at Bagh Ibne Qasim. — Photo courtesy: Imtiaz Ali

He regretted that Karachi had become a "concrete slab", and said the government will allow the construction of more high-rise buildings in the city in order to prevent them from expanding and taking over land that can be used to plant trees.

The premier pointed out that Pakistan was among the top 10 coun-

tries that were most vulnerable to climate change.

"Our coming generations will never forgive us if we don't save our green areas," he warned.

The premier also commended Karachi Mayor Waseem Akhtar for "building and preserving" the Ibne Qasim park.

Yesterday, the prime minister had visited Quetta, where he performed the groundbreaking of the new Balochistan Health Complex. He also visited Gwadar, where he laid the foundation stone for a new international airport and addressed the closing ceremony of an expo taking place in the city.

Gwadar International Airport will have the latest equipment and facilities and is expected to be one of the country's largest airports.

He arrived in Karachi on Friday night and was received by Sindh Governor Imran Ismail.

He had met with the leadership of the government's coalition partner, Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), and promised to address their concerns regarding the development of Karachi.

Courtesy: Dawn

Rahat Fateh Ali Khan will receive an honorary degree from Oxford University



Oxford University has announced to confer an honorary degree to the Pakistani singer Rahat Fateh Ali Khan.

He will be awarded the degree in recognition to his invaluable services to the music field. The event will be held on June 26. The honorary degree will be awarded to seven others for their invaluable services in respective disciplines.

According to the Oxford University management, Khan was born into a family which has become the recognition of South Asian music. He began studying music at the age of seven and has released over 50 albums till date.

The annual event, known as Encaenia, the O Re Piya singer will receive this honour by the university in London. Khan will be introduced as a "Pakistani singer, primarily of Qawwali, a devotional music of the Muslim Sufis."

"Born into a family whose name has become synonymous with South Asian musical tradition, he began formal training at the age of seven and has since released more than fifty albums, performed in numerous high-profile concerts across the world, and amassed a global following, achieving over one billion views online," a statement by the university reads.

It further stated, "He has sung more than fifty title tracks of television serials and over one hundred film songs in both Hollywood and Bollywood."

Khan has performed at numerous concerts across the world. He has also been a playback singer for Pakistani, Bollywood, Hollywood movies and sung title songs for 50 serials.

Courtesy: The Express Tribune

Indian Sikhs to visit Pakistan on schedule for Besakhi Mela

Indian Sikhs will visit Pakistan on schedule for the Besakhi festival despite ongoing border tensions with India, for which around 3,000 visas are expected to be issued.



Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Deputy Secretary Shrines Imran Gondal told Dawn at Gurdwara Punja Sahib on Tuesday that the visit has not been rescheduled and the number of visas has not been reduced.

The pilgrims are scheduled to visit Pakistan on April 12, he confirmed. He said the ETPB, the Gurdwara Prabandhak committee and other departments have expedited arrangements to provide the visiting pilgrims better facilities.

However, the government has told its embassy in New Delhi that visas should be issued even if more than 3,000 requests are received, he said. Mr Gondal added that pilgrims will travel to Pakistan aboard special trains to the Wagah railway station.

They will be driven to Gurdwara Punja Sahib in Hassanabdal the same day he said.

"The main Bhog Akhand Paath ceremony will be held at Gurdwara Punja Sahib on April 14, and the Sikh pilgrims who will come from all around the world will also celebrate the Khalsa Janam Din here," he said.

The pilgrims will leave for the Gurdwara Janam Asthan in Nankana Sahib on April 15.

Indian pilgrims will visit Lahore on April 20, and return to India April 21. He said the groundwork for the distribution of free meals, accommodation, medical and travel facilities has been accelerated.

Courtesy: Dawn

British PM welcomes Pakistan's release of Indian pilot, stresses de-escalation



British Prime Minister Theresa May on Sunday welcomed Pakistan's release of Indian Air Force (IAF) pilot Abhinandan whose MiG 21 Bison aircraft was shot down by the Pakistan Air Force after it violated Pakistani airspace as a gesture of peace.

In a telephonic conversation with Prime Minister Imran Khan, May also stressed the need for both India and Pakistan to "de-escalate" the recent tension between them, the Foreign Office (FO) said in a statement.

She added that her country "was in touch with both sides in this regard", according to the statement. A statement issued by May's office said she had "welcomed [Khan's] commitment to reducing tensions with India", and that the two leaders discussed the "need to address the causes of this conflict".

"The Prime Minister [May] emphasised the importance of Pakistan taking action against all terrorist

groups, in support of global efforts to combat terrorism," the spokesperson for 10 Downing Street added.

Prime Minister Khan meanwhile apprised his UK counterpart of "Pakistan's perspective" on the developments that have transpired since the bombing in Indian-occupied Kashmir's Pulwama area, which left more than 40 Indian paramilitaries dead, the Pakistan FO said.

The premier also extended an invitation to May to visit Pakistan which was reciprocated by the British prime minister.

The phone call between the two leaders comes as Pakistan and India reel from a week of high tensions which had raised fears of an all-out war. The situation de-escalated to a certain degree after Pakistan released the captured Indian pilot on Friday evening.

Courtesy: Dawn

Qatar's emir appreciates Pakistan's release of Indian pilot

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani in a telephone call with Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday appreciated Pakistan's release of Indian Air Force (IAF) Wing Commander Abhinandan — whose MiG 21 Bison aircraft was shot down by a Pakistan Air Force (PAF) jet after it violated Pakistani airspace — as a gesture of peace.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Dr Mohammad Faisal in a tweet on Sunday said that the emir had un-



derscored the importance of "immediate deescalation" in the situation between India and Pakistan and "offered his facilitation in this regard".

Courtesy: Dawn

Pashto poetry book credited for championing women's rights

Dr Roshan Kalim Sarhindi's 'Khamosha Chaghy' contains her taboo-breaking poetry that empowers women

Speakers termed a new Pashto poetry collection by Dr Roshan Kalim Sarhindi a strong voice for women rights in the society.

The Pohantoon Adabi Stori, a literary organisation, conducted the launching ceremony of a maiden Pashto poetry volume titled Khamosha Chaghy (silent cries) at Khana-i-Farhang Iran, Peshawar, on Friday. A number of poets, writers and bibliophiles attended the event. The speakers said that women should be given space to bring out their talent and also opportunities be created for them to raise voice for their genuine rights.

They said that taboos and so-called traditions had choked the voice of women to speak out their heart and mind. They said that Ms Kalim's poetry had broken taboos prompting women to give a poetic shape to their feelings.

Chairing the function, noted writer Prof Salma Shaheen termed the new Pashto title as a valuable addition to Pashto literature especially



of woman writer Dr Roshan Kalim Sarhindi hailing from Malakand.

She said that though her poetry did not follow the conventional rules of rhyme scheme in Pashto poetry, but poured out her emotions and thoughts. She said Ms Kalim's poetry sounded a strong voice for the rights of Pakhtun women and touched a number of other social issues prevailing in the society.

Prof Yar Mohammad Maghmoom Khattak pointed out that the new Pashto poetry collection could be termed a reflection of typical Pakhtun society which was still reluctant to give women their due place and rights. He said her poetry was a resistance against injustice and misconduct being meted out to

womenfolk everywhere.

"The poetry is autobiographical sketch of the hard time she might have been through during struggle for women rights as she is also a rights activist and an advocate of humanism," Mr Khattak added.

Prof Abaseen Yousafzai while appreciating the new title stated that woman poets and writers had achieved big milestone in KP by bringing out their literary works over the last decade. He said Ms Kalim was one of those poets who advocated rights of women, including education, healthcare and role in decision making alongside men in the society. "Dr Roshan Kalim is brave enough to say everything she has come across in her life in a

straightforward manner using simple diction so that her cries could be heard," he maintained.

Prof Sher Zaman Seemab in his paper said that Ms Kalim belonged to a respectable family in Malakand having a scholastic and literary background while she being a highly educated woman struggled hard to bring out her poetry to pave way for other young writers of her area and women at large.

On this occasion, Dr Roshan Kalim said that she had got inspiration from her two poet brothers – Hasham Khan and Noorul Haq who had authored several books. She said the basic objective of publication of her poetry was to raise a befitting voice for the women rights. "I gift my maiden title to all those women whose rights have been usurped and their services not being recognised," she said.

Senior Urdu writer Syeda Atiya Hidayat, Tahira Kalim, Afsar Afghan, Sohail Jan and Nasim Mandokhel also shed light on the new Pashto title, while young poets, including Asma Ikhlas, Shaukat Swati and Rashid Khan, rendered a few poems of Ms Kalim.

Courtesy: Dawn

Karachi-based education startup SABAQ makes it as finalist for EdTech Prize in Dubai

SABAQ, a Karachi-based tech startup working towards revamping the education sector in Pakistan, finished as one of the top six finalists for the 'Next Billion EdTech Prize' in Dubai.

The competition concluded on March 24 at the Global Education and Skills Forum in Dubai, where 30 edtech (educational technology) startups presented their innovative solutions to revolutionise education.

"The forum recognises the most innovative use of technology that has the potential to radically improve education in low-income and emerging economies," a press release issued by the startup said.

According to the statement, more than 1,500 delegates from around the world gathered in the Emirate to discuss "the most pressing issues

in global education".

Hassan Bin Rizwan and Mariam Khan from SABAQ among the top 6 In their initial pitch, SABAQ CEO and co-founder Hassan Bin Rizwan had highlighted how storytelling and engaging digital content is instrumental in igniting a child's imagination.

"He talked about how SABAQ's flagship product 'Muse' uses storytelling and animations to make lessons fun and engaging," said the statement issued by SABAQ.

Rizwan commented: "Technology has been a great disruptor of our times. We will be lagging behind if we do not employ it in education. We at SABAQ aim to make learning fun through our captivating digital content.

"Our content is aligned with the na-

tional curriculum. With nearly 22 million children out of school in Pakistan, SABAQ intends to reduce this number by providing a digital learning solution and making educational content more accessible to kids."

When asked about his vision for SABAQ, he said: "By 2020, we aim to educate one million students across Pakistan. We believe we have the right people on board to achieve that goal. We will also be creating content for secondary-tier education. The idea is to keep pushing the envelope and bringing that much-needed change in the Pakistani education system".

Ever since it first started out three years ago, SABAQ has reached more than 90,000 children and their application, Muse, has been implemented in over 1,000 schools across the country.



Muse is an android-based digital learning solution that teachers use in a learning environment seeking to infuse technology into the teaching methodology.

"Using the power of storytelling and captivating digital content, it is a seriously-fun digital learning solution that makes lessons engaging and increases student performance. It currently has more than 1,500 digital lessons and tests," said SABAQ in its statement.

Courtesy: Dawn

Despite challenges, the Karachi Literature Festival celebrates its 10th year

The 10th edition of the Karachi Literature Festival kicked off Friday evening.

With recent tensions in the country, the event was expected to be called off or postponed. However, the team behind KLF did not back down. As Ahmed Shah mentioned in a session, they "debated whether we should cancel the festival but the turnout proves they made the right decision, business goes on as usual and people are in good spirits, shows that we won't let fear dominate our lives."

That is not to say that everything went smoothly for Day 1 of KLF. Keynote speakers Deborah Baker and I.A. Rehman were not able to attend due to the cancellations of flights while the session on Ahmed Faraz has been postponed to Sunday.

Nevertheless, KLF proceeded, making sure the hiccups caused by the current circumstances would not cause any problems overall to the event or the attendees.

Opening ceremony

It was difficult not to address the current circumstances of the country at KLF, especially since most expected it to be cancelled due to it. Sindh Governor Imran Ismail was the chief guest of the event and spoke about the peace that Pakistan has achieved and will continue to do so in the future.

"We have brought Karachi back to normalcy... People now realise that war is no solution to problems."

OUP Managing Director Arshad Saeed Hussain also addressed the situation, speaking about how the board pondered over postponing the event but decided it was better to go through with it. "Pakistan stands for peace and this is the message the KLF wants to get across."

He added, "The KLF which draws from the Oxford University's vast resources of knowledge is not just an event. It is a social movement." In place of the two keynote speakers who could not attend, Zehra Nigah and Muneeza Shamsie made the keynote speeches.



Nigah's speech was also connected to the recent events. She commented, "Pakistan has seen good and bad days. We've seen bad governments we've seen dictators and we've seen fragmented democracy. But what happened recently - what our PM did, how he advocated for peace - is something so memorable. We're hearing our general say 'No one wins in war, only humanity loses,' and this really is the Tabdeeli you'd been talking about. This step will go down in history."

Muneeza Shamsie spoke about the importance of freedom of speech and journalism without censorship. "Freedom of creative expression is not something people stand up for... Now we can't tell the difference from free speech and free propaganda."

She added, "We have to guard against disinformation in the name of information."

Post speeches the Infaq Foundation Prize for Urdu literature was awarded to Sabir Zafar for his book, *Rooh-e-Qadeem ki Qasam*. Sheema Kermani and her team performed *Aao Humwatno Raqs Karo* as a closing to the ceremony and before the sessions kicked off.

Session on Pakistani cinema

In the main garden, a session on Pakistani cinema took place with Fahad Mustafa, Yasir Hussain, Munawar Saeed and Asif Raza Mir. Mehwish Hayat was supposed to be one of the speakers but didn't show up so there was a lack of female representation on the panel. Fizza Ali stepped in for Nabeel Qureshi in the panel, being the

only female present. She was also introduced as "yeh hamari bachi ha" by Munawar Saeed while others were introduced by their names.

The session was all over the place unfortunately. There was lots of talk about the golden era of cinema before Zia gutted the thriving film industry. They were missing young voices in the discourse; Yasir Hussain and Nabeel didn't really say much. Fizza said that bringing female protagonists to the forefront is her duty as a woman who's a producer which she hasn't fulfilled yet but added that *Load Wedding* was a step in the right direction, which was a story women could relate to.

Asif Raza Mir said that celebrity doesn't mean the same thing as it did back in the day: "In those times, film actors weren't so visible, they were mysteries and stars in the true sense. Now, television has its own exposure and then of course there's social media."

Book discussion on The Begum: A Portrait of Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan

At the discussion about this new biography of Begum Ra'ana, moderator Muneeza Shamsie was in conversation with her son Akbar and nephew Jawed Aly Khan. Airport closures resulted in the book's coauthor Tahmina Aziz and Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan Jr's absence.

Jawed Aly Khan described the book as a singular addition to the literature on Begum Ra'ana, saying that it comprises research carried out on both sides of the border. About the two authors, he said, "Both

ladies did deep research on her and as they researched, they fell in love with the subject. And that love comes out in the book."

At the session, Begum Ra'ana's devotion to education and social welfare was traced back to her careful upbringing in India. Her son Akbar shared that he feels it is only due to her endeavours that Pakistani women enjoy positions at companies, the foreign office and government today. Jawed said that being the wife of Pakistan's first PM, she could have just behaved like a First Lady. But in the first three months of Pakistan's existence, she worked tirelessly for the rehabilitation of vulnerable women in the newly formed Pakistan and repatriation of abducted women to India.

It was said that she shied away from laurels and publicity, which is why her brainchild APWA enjoys little fanfare for its contributions to this day.

Akbar also described his recollection of his father's assassination: Believe it or not, every year when 16 October comes around, I feel very odd. I don't like going to the grave but I force myself. Because I remember being around 10 years old and 1000s of people pushing and shoving and that smell of death - actually it was sweat - it was a hot day and the feeling I still have in my mouth. After nearly 70 years, I still have that feeling."

Voices from Far and Near: Poetry in English

Poetry lovers enjoyed hearing different poets on the panel performing readings. The panel consisted of Adrian Husain, Arfa Ezazi, Athar Tahir, Farida Faizullah, Harris Khalique, Ilona Yusuf, Jaffar Khan, Mehvash Amin, Moeen Faruqi and Shireen Haroun. Salman Tarek Kureshi sat as moderator and called out each person turn by turn to share their work.

Ending day 1

Post the sessions, KLF ended their first day with a puppet show by Thespianz.

Courtesy: Dawn

New novel Pureland is inspired by Dr Abdus Salam's journey from a village to Nobel prize victory

"A human being is multi faceted. To differentiate based on ideology is the most absurd thing," says author Zarrar Said

Landing in the US at the age of 18, Zarrar Said was all set to pursue a degree in physics. Lost in the headiness of college life and the beauty of youth he discovered an uncomfortable reality – Dr Abdus Salam, father of Pakistan's nuclear program, an Ahmedi who won the Nobel Prize in Physics but was shunned by his nation.

Fascinated by this man who hailed from a village in Jhang, Said found himself on a journey leading up to his debut novel, *Pureland*.

"I was obsessed with his life and surprised that not many people had actually heard about him I found him universally appealing. He had never seen a lightbulb till the age of 15," explains Zarrar of his inspiration. Feared by his father to be a mute at the age of three, Dr Salam was taken to a local soothsayer, a Pir who told his father that he was a gifted child and that one day he would speak so loud the entire world would hear him.

Although inspired by Dr Salam, *Pureland* is a fictional story about a village boy Salim and how he rises from the mud of his village to becoming a Nobel prize winner. It is a fictional tale filled with remarkable characters who turn by turn illustrate how societies falter and destroy themselves through a historical lens.

An extraordinary story, it is a beautiful fusion of rural and urban life spanning elements that shape lives and carve destinies including love, self sacrifice, destruction, identity, spirituality, suffering, ambition and hatred. *Pureland* opens a new chapter in literary fiction in Pakistan. While rural life has been documented in fiction and on television there is always the feeling of it being



caricaturised and that Pakistani literature was never going to move forward from the usual tropes of a fallen woman, honour killings, terrorism. Zarrar's book finally breaks the mould.

Zarrar weaves a narrative about the realities and absurdities of South Asian culture – often lost in translation – with great wit, cutting observation and beautiful prose.

Sparkling with magic realism that nods to Salman Rushdie with V S Naipaul's deceptive simplicity, superb satire that pokes fun at Pakistani idiosyncrasies and borrowing heavily from defining historical and cultural events, Said spans a tale that offers a delicious view of the awkwardness of being stuck in a post colonial country that the urban dwellers are prone to romanticise and the rural masses are left unable to comprehend, let alone experience.

Consequently, he offers villagers for whom life is to be taken literally with names like Cut-Two Naii, Pappu Pipewalla and Khassi Kasai. In contrast, when Salim is adopted by General Khan and starts a new life in the city of Lorr – again, a poke at how people are prone to speak colloquially – he is sent to the elite school, Blisschesterson (where cricketing fellow Mitti Pao eventually finds a career in politics).

Picking up on the South Asian leaning towards spirituality he juxtaposes how the rural interpret religion and spirituality when Salim is taken to the Floating Pir who predicts Salim's future somewhat ambiguously. Keeping up with the continuous theme of parallel interpretations spirituality finds itself in an urban context in a slightly more refined but misunderstood form in the shape of two brothers Khalil and Gibran, neither of whom lives upto the peacefulness of spirituality but interpret faith in their own destructive ways.

Offering female characters who sparkle in their own right whether it is the headstrong Laila Khan or the evil Witch who exerts control over the Khan household, Zarrar also breaks the stereotypical assumptions that females are just sitting around lamenting their lives. They're fighting for control over destinies – their own and others – and yet, in their own stories are they heroines? Or are they expected to pay a higher price even for what is the simplest of things like love?

Through Salim's life the reader is taken on a journey of how societies thrive and lose when they reject their own in their blindness for glory confusing it with hatred. "The theme is that societies suffer from the prejudices they keep," says Zarrar.

At a time when the world is war weary and Pakistan faces tougher challenges with heroes far and few between, this is a most necessary book that reminds us it's time to find the 'magic' we have all lost on a national level.

The novel is a literary journey through time, a journey that makes one weep of what has been lost and the ultimate destruction that reduces mankind to nothing but

bloodlust. It is through this journey that one sees the transformation of *Pureland's* characters.

Loss of magic is the point Zarrar seeks to make through the various characters' transformation. Connected through varying relations, touching on differing levels of achievement and success, the end result is that without magic in lives – in human form or other - there is nothing left and as a collective whole, a society will crumble.

"Dr Salam's life was full of magic," adds Said. And what a magical journey it was. Being the last recipient of the Indian Peasants Fund (because World War 2 broke out) paved the way to an academic career in Cambridge. Still success eluded him as he struggled to have his papers published at times and was burdened by the fact that he was a Pakistani in a discipline dominated by Europeans and Americans. He eventually returned to Lahore where he was made football coach at Punjab University. His ultimate victory as a Nobel Prize winner was preceded by many hardships and rejections.

"At the Lahore Literary Festival, in the middle of my session, this European man came stood up and said that he was in Lahore teaching science. He was from Abdus Salam's International Centre for Theoretical Physics. He mirrored the notion that Salam still gives back to his country even after his death; a country that didn't give him anything in return," recalls Zarrar.

At a time when the world is war weary and Pakistan faces tougher challenges with heroes far and few between, this is a most necessary book that reminds us it's time to find the 'magic' we have all lost on a national level.

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Patron:
Ms. Seema Mughal
Vice Chancellor
Editor:
Rizwana Amin
Assistant Professor
Graphics & Layout:
Shazia Anwar

Greenwichians interested
in contributions!
Shoot an email to the editor,
including your name,
roll number and your work at
rizwana@greenwich.edu.pk

 Greenwich University

Pakistan - Mauritius
Greenwich University, DK-10, 38th Street, Darakshan, Phase VI,
Defence Housing Authority, Karachi-75500, Pakistan
UAN: (021)111-202-303; Tel: (021) 35840397-98; Fax: (021)35851910
Email: gu@greenwich.edu.pk ; URL: www.greenwich.edu.pk