



AZEEM ENGLISH MAGAZINE

MONTHLY

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

As the year comes to a close, this November-December edition of Azeem English Magazine offers a rich tapestry of thought-provoking articles and insights. Each piece delves into a unique facet of life, sparking curiosity and reflection.

Themes in this edition range from reconnecting with childhood joy in 'Kidulting' to exploring the psychological challenges of Gamophobia. Topics such as gender-based violence, climate crisis, and sustainable innovations like Sugar Crete highlight pressing issues of our time. Cultural gems like Choimus, the Kalash winter festival, and the soulful tradition of Qawwali celebrate the beauty of heritage.

The issue also features explorations into spirituality, education reform, and finance in Pakistan, alongside intriguing scientific discussions on epigenetics and the shape of our planet. Whether through cinematic recommendations or daily mindfulness practices, this edition seeks to inspire and inform.

Happy Reading!

Thanks!

Muhammad Ali Farooqi
Editor-in-Chief

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THE LONG ROAD TO UNDERSTANDING





Imran Khan
PhD Scholar, Writer
Dramatist, Poet

10 MINUTES READ

Completing a PhD is a journey unlike any other- equal parts intellectual rigor and emotional endurance. For those who have undertaken it, the journey is familiar: long nights spent immersed in research, moments of doubt that threaten to derail progress, and the steady perseverance needed to cross the finish line. For me, this journey culminated last week with the completion of my PhD in South Asian History.

Reflecting on this achievement, my heart overflows with gratitude. First and foremost, I am thankful to Allah Almighty for His countless blessings. I am deeply indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Aman Ullah Khan, Assistant Professor at Department of History, QAU Islamabad, whose mentorship was an anchor during turbulent times; The faculty at my department, with their incisive insights, equipped me with the tools to think critically; my colleagues at IMPC H-8 Islamabad, who offered camaraderie and encouragement; and my friends and students, who reminded me of the importance of curiosity and learning. No achievement of this magnitude is ever solitary. My family- my parents, siblings, and most significantly, my wife- provided the foundation upon which this journey was built. My wife was my unwavering partner, shouldering countless sacrifices so I could focus on my work. My children, with their innocence and boundless love, became my greatest source of motivation. There must be a special thanks to my teacher, my mentor and my Murshid, Dr. Muhammad Azeem Farooqi, who shaped not only my academic journey but also my way of seeing the world.

But my gratitude extends beyond the people who walked this path with me. Some companions on this journey were unexpected yet profoundly impactful. The front seat of my car, often my solitary refuge, offered moments of reflection amid chaos, its leather absorbing my whispered thoughts and silent prayers. The serene lawns of AIOU Islamabad became a sanctuary where my fragmented ideas found coherence under the canopy of tranquility. And then there was the inspiration- an indefinable, ever-present force that transcended time and space. It stayed with me, whether in the stillness of a moonlit night or the oppressive weight of despair. Like a beloved who steadfastly supports and nurtures, this inspiration refused to let me falter, urging me forward, even when the road seemed impassable.

At the heart of my research was an exploration of resistance in Punjabi poetry against the British Raj, from 1849 to 1947. This study was an effort to unearth how poetry, often regarded as a realm of aesthetic beauty, served as a powerful medium of defiance and a repository of collective memory during one of the most tumultuous periods in Punjab's history.

Punjabi poets, often relegated to the margins of mainstream historical discourse, captured the essence of resistance in their verses. From the epic tales of Raja Rasalu to the biting social critique of Nath poetry, and from the revolutionary poetry of the Sufis of Punjab along with Bhagat Kabir and Guru Nanak to the poignant laments of Shah Mohammad witnessing Punjab's fall, their work revealed the spirit of a people determined to reclaim their dignity. The folk poets

and the rebellious voices of the 20th century added further layers to this intricate tapestry of cultural defiance, turning poetry into a mirror reflecting both pain and resilience.

My research positioned these poetic voices not just as literary artifacts but as historical documents. These verses critiqued colonial policies, mourned the loss of autonomy, and, most importantly, inspired collective action. In doing so, they preserved the cultural identity of a colonized people and provided a cry for resistance.

One of the most profound insights from my research is the realization that resistance is not just an act of defiance- it is an enduring legacy. The Punjabi poets who lived through the British Raj captured the spirit of their time, preserving not only their struggles but also the cultural ethos of a colonized society. Their verses transcend the immediate political context, offering lessons on resilience, identity, and the unyielding human spirit that are as relevant today as they were in their time.


Furthermore, this research holds potential for educational reforms. Introducing such poetry in curricula could inspire young minds to think critically about their heritage, instilling pride and awareness about the region's resistance history. It can also encourage scholars across disciplines to explore nontraditional sources, bridging gaps between literature, history, and cultural studies. By revisiting these narratives, we ensure their relevance in shaping a more equitable and informed future.

This work, I believe, makes a significant contribution to the historiography of resistance. By focusing on poetry, it challenges the traditional, state-centric narratives of colonial history and emphasizes the role of

culture as a form of defiance. It is a reminder that the fight for justice and dignity is waged not only in the political or military spheres but also in the realms of art and imagination.

Undertaking this research was as much a personal journey as it was an academic one. A PhD in History does not merely about understand the past; it is about learning to see the present and future in a new light. History is a dialogue- a conversation between the silences of the past and the questions of the present. My work gave me the opportunity to listen to the voices of Punjabi poets whose defiance continues to echo through the corridors of time.

This study has important implications for future scholarship. By highlighting the resistance encoded in Punjabi poetry, it opens new avenues for historians and literary scholars alike. It underscores the value of cultural artifacts- poetry, folklore, and oral traditions- as critical sources of historical understanding. It suggests to the researchers to move beyond conventional archives and consider the power of creative expression as a form of historical resistance. It teaches us to value the voices of the marginalized and to recognize that resistance often emerges from unexpected places, including art and literature. In a world grappling with issues of inequality, oppression, and cultural erosion, these poetic archives remind us of the importance of preserving and amplifying indigenous voices. This study of cultural resistance is more relevant than ever. By understanding the poetic defiance of Punjab, we not only honor the struggles of the past but also equip ourselves to confront the injustices of the present.

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‘KIDULTING’:

HOW GROWN-UPS CAN UNLOCK INNER-CHILD WITH PLAYFUL ACTIVITIES



Sheheryar Shahid
Integrative Psychotherapist
Psychologist, Artist

02 MINUTES READ

Amid the hustle of everyday life, taking a moment to recharge is crucial. But in a world filled with work and responsibilities, finding time for self-care can be challenging. Enter the latest trend that’s transforming self-care into something extraordinary: Kidulting.

What exactly is Kidulting? Born during the lockdown blues of the pandemic, Kidulting is all about adults embracing activities that were once reserved for kids.

Whether it’s playing video games, collecting toys, watching cartoons, or exploring theme parks, it’s about rediscovering the joy of youth.

According to Dr Dipra Agarwal, a mental health expert, Kidulting is a way to unwind, revive nostalgia, and channel creativity, breaking down age boundaries.

The concept states that, even as adults, people still enjoy things usually associated with a younger age group.

Kidulting spans a variety of activities, including playing video games, collecting toys, watching cartoons, reading children’s books, visiting theme parks, and indulging in various forms of playful and nostalgic entertainment.

It’s a response to the stresses of adult

life, a way for individuals to unwind, relive positive memories, and tap into their creative side.

Dr Agarwal explains that Kidulting reflects the blurring of traditional age boundaries, acknowledging that people of all ages can find joy in activities once exclusive to specific life stages.

Benefits of Kidulting Stress Escape

Step away from adult pressures and dive into carefree play for a stress-free breather.

Nostalgia Boost

Revisit childhood favorites to trigger nostalgia and uplift your spirits.

Fuel Creativity

Engage in imaginative activities to ignite creative thinking and problem-solving.

Mindfulness Moments

Kidulting promotes mindfulness, anchoring you in the present.

Break from Routine

Shake off monotony, recharge, and return to adult life with a fresh outlook.

Burnout Barrier

Prevent burnout by recharging, finding balance, and taking on challenges anew.

The Kidulting trend was evident in a 2021 Bloomberg survey, revealing that 58 percent of toy purchases by parents were for personal enjoyment.

📧 hello.sherry@zoho.com

IMAGE SOURCE: ITC/O

FACT OR FICTION: THE QUEST OF TRUTH



Naheed Anjum
Writer, English Literature Student

04 MINUTES READ

In today's globalized world, the centers of cultural and knowledge production are large and wide. Significantly, knowledge is everywhere and we consume it every second—from social media and electronic media, professors and lectures, Netflix and literature, and beyond. But how many of us try to verify it from any reliable source or more importantly what and where reliable sources of knowledge exist? Media is powered by the larger economies who, under the banner of sponsorship, present and misrepresent their ideas and beliefs. Thousands of opinions are shared on social media every day, with no way of knowing who is sitting behind the screens and articulating them. Literature and art, or books in general are

also published by few authorized publishers owned by big companies. So what is true knowledge and who is producing knowledge that we are consuming every second like oxygen? Let's assume, **Nothing is permanent. We mould ideologies to meet our needs!**

Knowledge is in the air. We no longer live in a world where we need to travel across seven seas to discover the next episode in the digest. We live in a world where the internet has become one of the biggest platforms for producing, consuming and sharing knowledge, with everything just a google search away. However, you may still be wondering if the internet is the most reliable source of knowledge?. No, it's not reliable as long as the information is not verified.

Here's a thing; every institute of knowledge and culture production tends to formulate your opinions and mould your narratives as it pleases them by using different techniques

IMAGE SOURCE - IRR.ORG

like interpellation. Stories and narratives are fabricated and tailored to meet the needs of major political parties and large entrepreneurs.

For the postcolonial world, former colonial powers continue to exert influence by controlling centers of knowledge production, including electronic and print media, text books and literature. Consequently, they keep reinforcing their power in a subtle manner i.e. Neo-colonialism.

Most of the books we are taught from childhood are built around certain narratives that reinforce specific ideologies. Just like we are so accustomed to seeing certain civilizations more 'civilized' and 'justified' in their colonial rules, as though they are responsible for 'uplifting' the rest of the world. But this concept of 'White-man Burden' only ensures the sustainability of existing hierarchies and power structures.

However, it did not end with decolonization, rather it persisted in more subtle forms in the Neo-colonial era. The post-industrial societies are working towards creation of more public spaces that can be used as areas for knowledge and cultural production. Moreover, they play a big game in the social media matrix, where they strongly work towards their visibility and growth to form people's opinions and narratives. If you see one side of the story on social media all day long, at the end of the day you might begin to believe at least 5% of it. Social media is another way for colonizers to make you believe in what they believe in and how they perceive life.

It becomes even more clear once you realize that the stories are subjective and fabricated to suit the needs of particular ideologies and so you no longer believe them. You begin to

understand how every news, textbook, piece of literature and art is rooted in the game of representation and misrepresentation to reinforce the power of larger power structures. Therefore, every piece of knowledge shared on social media is not reliable. In today's fast paced world, it becomes difficult to verify every single news to check its authenticity. However, we have all the right to choose what we would like to consume ourselves with from social media, electronic and print media. It is up to us to choose whether to trust or doubt the information presented to us. We need to seek sources of universal knowledge or spiritual knowledge that are not shaped by human biases. It is important to break the chains of slavery and question everything we see and hear to find out the truth. It is our duty to think out of the box by truly understanding that nothing is permanent and people mould ideologies to meet their needs!

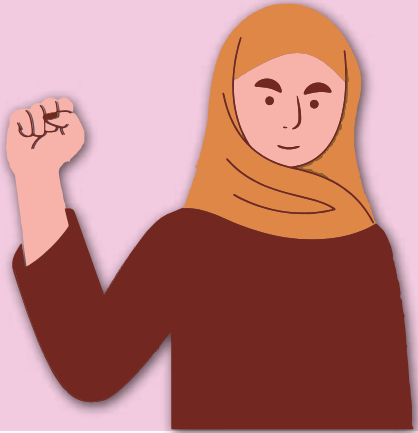
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Do You Know?



Football players spit so much because exercise increases the amount of protein in saliva. When you exercise, the amount of protein secreted into the saliva increases. A protein mucus named MUC5B makes your saliva thicker when you're exercising which makes it more difficult to swallow so we tend to spit more. It may occur during exercise because we breathe through our mouths more. MUC5B could activate to stop our mouths from drying out, therefore.

UNSEEN STRUGGLES: GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN PAKISTAN



Fatima Altaf
Psychologist, Painter, Humanist

04 MINUTES READ

The recent gang-rape incident in Hafizabad, Punjab, where a woman was brutally assaulted in front of her husband and three-year-old daughter, is a harrowing reminder of our society's collective failure to safeguard women from the depravity of ruthless individuals. The incident serves as a blunt wake-up call, highlighting the urgent need for intensive efforts to ensure women's safety and security in our society.

Recently a famous TV anchor **Ayesha Jehanzaib** was severely beaten by her husband. **Syeda Sania Zahra from Multan**, brutally murdered by her husband in her own home. She sustained severe injuries including a severed tongue and broken teeth. In accordance with the **National Commission for Human Rights (NHCR)** 47% of Pakistani women endure domestic violence.

Every year, thousands of women and girls in Pakistan suffer sexual abuse

and violence, yet only a small percentage of these cases are reported. **More than 40 separate cases of abduction and sexual violence against women were reported in Punjab's Mandi Bahauddin district alone in Dawn NewsPaper.** This is largely due to the societal shame and fear of judgment that surrounds victims of sexual assault, as well as a widespread lack of trust in the country's criminal justice system to effectively indict culprits and deliver justice. As a result, many cases go unreported, leaving victims without support or recourse, and allowing committers to go unpunished.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is inescapable and devastating issue in Pakistan, where women and girls are subjected to a range of heinous crimes, including domestic violence, honor killings, forced marriages, acid attacks, rape and sexual assault, female infanticide, and trafficking and forced prostitution.

According to a report released by the **Sustainable Social Development Organization**, in 2023, the report stated that on average, 28 women

IMAGE SOURCE: INTF

faced some form of violence every day in Punjab in 2023. Up to 6,624 rape cases were registered in 2023, meaning that **one woman was raped every 45 minutes**. Faisalabad topped the list and Lahore and Sargodha followed. **Up to 626 women were kidnapped, 120 were killed in the name of honor, and 20 were trafficked in 2023. Lahore, Faisalabad, and Rahim Yar Khan were among the hot spot districts for these crimes.** This was a **14.5%** increase from the cases reported in 2022.

These forms of violence are often continued with exemption, fueled by deeply ingrained patriarchal norms, societal attitudes, and inadequate legal frameworks.

The consequences are severe, with survivors often suffering physical and emotional trauma, stigma, and even death. Sobia Shah in Larkana was brutally tortured by her father and paternal uncles because she filed a case against her husband. Her father and uncles convinced her to take the case back. When they failed to convince her, they tortured her throughout the night and amputated her legs. Unfortunately, women who seek separation or divorce also suffer at the hand of the brutes who claim to be their protectors.

It is essential to acknowledge the gravity of GBV in Pakistan and work collectively to address its root causes, strengthen laws and enforcement, and provide support services for survivors to create a safer and more rational society for all.

Addressing GBV in Pakistan requires a comprehensive approach that confronts the primary factors and works to create a more equitable and just society.

Firstly, and most importantly, providing support services for survi-

vors is necessary to ensure they receive comprehensive care, including counseling, medical and legal aid, shelter, and economic support. **Secondly,** strengthening laws and enforcement is vital to ensure culprits are held accountable and survivors receive justice.

Thirdly, empowering women and girls is essential to reducing their vulnerability to GBV. This involves increasing access to education, skills training, and economic opportunities, as well as promoting women's participation in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, collaborating with community leaders, religious scholars, and influencers to promote gender equality and organize community-based initiatives.

Lastly, promoting education and awareness is key to challenging harmful norms and behaviors.

“The beginning is the most important part of the work”

-Plato

So by taking this initiative and addressing GBV through these interconnected strategies, Pakistan can create a safer, more equitable society for women and girls.

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Do You Know?

The fear of long words is called Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia. The 36-letter word was first used by the Roman poet Horace in the first century BCE to criticize those writers with an unreasonable penchant for long words. It was American poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil, possibly afraid of their own surname, who coined the term how we know it in 2000.



SPIRITUALITY THE UNIVERSAL PULSE



Laiba Khalid
Writer, Poetess and Columnist

04 MINUTES READ

Spirituality can be characterized generically as a search for the divine, a process of human transformation, and a desire for a deeper meaning in life. Spirituality, which is often described as the connection beyond the material world, transcends personal beliefs and cultural barriers. Spirituality is seen as a universal human experience because it addresses fundamental concerns about existence and purpose. Its expression is profoundly individualistic, influenced by personal ideas, experiences, and cultural circumstances. At its core, spirituality is the search for deeper understanding—a link between the physical world and the fundamental mysteries of life.

Spirituality is a common line that runs through all religious traditions, though it is expressed differently. In Buddhism, spirituality is deeply

rooted in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, providing a framework for understanding and overcoming suffering to achieve enlightenment. The Four Noble Truths teach that suffering is an inherent part of life, caused by craving and ignorance, but it can be overcome by following the Eightfold Path. This path consists of eight interconnected practices: Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

These principles guide practitioners toward ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom, fostering spiritual growth. Christian spirituality centers on a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, embracing His teachings as a model for love, humility, and compassion. Practices like prayer, worship, scripture meditation, recitation of Bible and sacraments deepen this connection, offering hope through eternal life and inspiring believers to trust in God,

IMAGE SOURCE: KEALAKAI

find peace in challenges, and embody Christ-like virtues. Hindu spirituality is a personal journey to understand the self and its connection to ultimate reality, rooted in concepts of duty, action, and liberation.

Practices like meditation, yoga, devotion, selfless action, and pursuit of knowledge, guided by texts like the Vedas and Bhagavad Gita, lead to self-realization and harmony with the universe. Islamic spirituality is centered on a deep connection with Allah, emphasizing submission, devotion, and moral integrity. Through practices like prayer, fasting, charity, and Quran recitation, Muslims cultivate mindfulness, compassion, and inner virtues such as humility, patience and gratitude. The goal is to attain closeness to Allah, live according to His guidance, and achieve peace in both this life and the hereafter. Jewish spirituality centers on the relationship between God and humanity, focusing on covenant, prayer, and ethical living.

Through commandments, prayer, Torah study, and observing Shabbat, individuals align with divine will and create holiness in daily life. It also emphasizes repairing the world, fostering moral responsibility, community, and closeness to God. T.S. Eliot's poem *The Hollow Men* is a stark critique of modernity, portraying the spiritual emptiness of contemporary humanity. Eliot describes modern individuals as "hollow men" and "stuffed men," filled with meaningless rituals and devoid of spiritual depth. The lines, "We are the hollow men / We are the stuffed men / Headpiece filled with straw," highlight the superficiality and lack of purpose that define modern existence. It explores spiritual emptiness as a universal and personal

experience, transcending religious or cultural boundaries. The "hollow men" symbolize existential despair, disconnected from both divine transcendence and inner life. Spirituality in ancient philosophy was a profound exploration of the self, the cosmos, and the pursuit of a meaningful life. Philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in ancient Greece emphasized the cultivation of the soul, ethical living, and the search for truth as pathways to spiritual fulfillment.

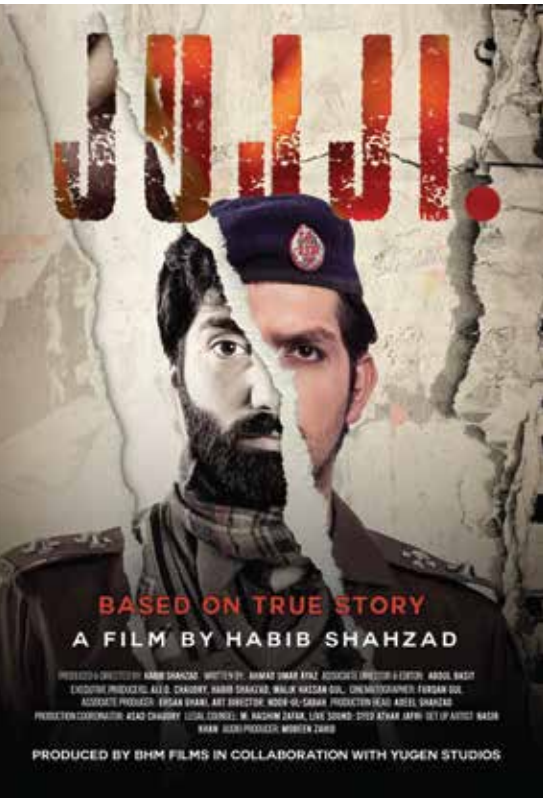
Plato's philosophy viewed the soul as eternal, striving to transcend the material world and align with the ideal realm of forms, while Aristotle focused on achieving flourishing through virtuous living. The Stoics, such as Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, emphasized inner peace and resilience through rationality, acceptance of nature's order, and living in accordance with universal reason (logos).

خود کو کر بلند اتنا کہ ہر تقدیر سے پہلے
خدا بندے سے خود پوچھے بتا تیری رضا کیا ہے

This verse from Allama Iqbal reflects a profound connection between Khudi (selfhood) and spirituality, illustrating that true spiritual growth involves cultivating one's inner self to align with the divine. For Iqbal, Khudi is not the ego in a materialistic sense but the realization of one's inner potential and connection to the Creator. Khudi is achieved through self-awareness, moral development, and a deep connection with God. Khudi elevates a person spiritually, becoming a co-creator with God and contributing to humanity's betterment, bridging the individual and the divine in transformative ways.

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DIVY FILM FESTIVAL 2024: CELEBRATING SOUTH ASIAN CINEMA IN ISLAMABAD



21 and 22, the event showcased a carefully curated selection of 19 independent films that captivated audiences with their thought-provoking narratives and diverse genres. Marking its fourth year in Pakistan, the Divy Film Festival has become a platform for storytelling that explores resilience, heritage, women empowerment, and self-expression. This year's festival also followed its successful debut at London's ICA earlier in 2024 and the Lahore edition titled *Ecologies & Indigenous Traditions*. In Islamabad, the festival continued to shine, bringing films from both acclaimed directors and emerging talent to the forefront.

A Thoughtful and Immersive Lineup
The 2024 lineup featured an eclectic mix of **fiction features**, **short films**, and **documentaries**. From nostalgic tales of old cinema to gripping crime thrillers, the films spanned genres and themes designed to leave a lasting impression.

Among the standout films was "**CIN-E-RAMA**" by Misrah Fatima Nizami, a heartfelt ode to Karachi's historic cinemas, and "**In Flames**" by Zarrar Khan, a Cannes-premiering feature about survival in the face of real and supernatural threats. Other highlights included "**JUJI**", a gritty crime thriller set in Rawalpindi by director Habib Shahzad, and "**A Clay Horse**", which delved into the journey of an Afghan refugee navigating trauma and resilience.

A special mention goes to "**Marblous Four**" by Hamza Baig, a whimsical and visually stunning story about an

AEM

05 MINUTES READ

Islamabad recently witnessed the vibrant world of South Asian cinema at the **Divy Film Festival 2024**, hosted by **Foundation Art Divvy** in collaboration with the **Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA)**. Held over two evenings on November

outcast named Guddo, who must rally three children to save their village through the magical game of five stones. The film, infused with charm and fantasy, showcased Baig's mastery of storytelling and highlighted the potential of young filmmakers to merge traditional themes with modern cinematic techniques.

Bringing Cinema to Life

Creative Director Zahra Khan of **Foundation Art Divvy** shared her enthusiasm for the event, saying, "Partnering with PNCA again this year was a privilege. We were thrilled to present such stellar films that celebrate our shared histories and unique stories." This dedication to storytelling shone through in the selection of films, each one designed to engage and inspire.

The festival not only brought cinematic art to life but also created a platform for filmmakers to connect with audiences. The carefully curated schedule allowed viewers to experience the creativity of both seasoned directors and emerging talent, making the festival a truly inclusive event.

The **Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA)** has always played a crucial role in fostering artistic expression in Pakistan. By partnering with events like the Divvy Film Festival, PNCA reaffirms its commitment to making the arts accessible while nurturing local talent and preserving the country's cultural heritage.

Films Lineup

This year's festival featured an impressive array of 19 independent films, each bringing a unique perspective and narrative to the screen. From nostalgic tales to gripping dramas, here is the full

lineup that captivated audiences:

CIN-E-RAMA

Director: Misrah Fatima Nizami

Synopsis: A film critic documents the final screening of Karachi's historic cinema, CINERAMA, uncovering enchanting stories that challenge his biases and rekindle his love for cinema.



The Trunk

Director: Fahad Shaikh

Synopsis: In a remote town, a feudal lord's loyal servant suspects his master's wife of hiding a secret inside a trunk.

The Clown

Director: Kamil Chima

Synopsis: A clown dances on Lahore's streets to escape his reality, until a harsh truth threatens to unravel his disguise.

Karachi Begums

Directors: Amatullah Rahat Saeed and

Aqsa Abdul Qadir

Synopsis: A safe haven for women in

the heart of Karachi offers hope and unity in a challenging urban landscape.

Impatientes

Director: Quentin Delcourt

Synopsis: Three women in a psychiatric hospital find friendship and strength in their shared journey of healing.

The Send Off

Director: Amina Imran

Synopsis: An estranged daughter returns home to face her ailing father and unresolved familial tensions.

Araaf – The Purgatory

Director: Habib Shahzad

Synopsis: A former clown wakes up in a sinister place, uncovering a reality darker than he imagined.

From Rocks to Gold, Doch – The Art of Balochistan

Director: Zainab Younas

Synopsis: A journey into Balochistan's cultural revival through the eyes of a visionary leader empowering women.

In Flames

Director: Zarrar Kahn

Synopsis: A mother and daughter face supernatural threats and societal challenges in modern-day Karachi.

Raaz O Niaz

Director: Ali Aabid

Synopsis: A spirited woman races against time to confront her doubts before her wedding in this romantic comedy.

What Will You Take With You

Director: Adil Sher

Synopsis: A self-absorbed father and his wife confront their failures as parents after a tragic event.

Lost Time

Directors: Aleena Nabeel Mir, Sara Taj, and Tabinda Mustersad

Synopsis: A caretaker helps an Alzheimer's patient retrieve a sentimental item, learning about loss and memory.



Akhri Saaz

Director: Sarmad Sabir Khan

Synopsis: A poignant documentary about the fading art of Sarangi and the struggles of its remaining players.

Out Beyond

Director: Salman Alam Khan

Synopsis: A teenager secretly pursues his passion for drumming, defying familial expectations.

A Distant Traveler

Directors: Nayantara Abul Fazal and Mona Abdollahshahi

Synopsis: A young rhino migrates to a foreign city, searching for belonging and connection in an unfamiliar

world.

One Step Too Many

Director: Mehroz Amin

Synopsis: Two individuals with disabilities form an unlikely bond through their shared love for music and motivational speaking.

The Marbleous Four

Director: Hamza Baig

Synopsis: Guddo rallies three children to play a magical game of five stones and save their village from a malevolent wizard.

A Clay Horse

Director: Abdullah Khan

Synopsis: A 12-year-old Afghan refugee journeys to Karachi, navigating trauma and seeking a voice in a noisy world.

JUJI

Director: Habib Shahzad

Synopsis: A gritty crime thriller following two police officers on a hunt for a ruthless serial killer in Rawalpindi.

This diverse and captivating lineup offered festival-goers a profound exploration of resilience, culture, and storytelling, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.

As the festival concluded, it left behind a legacy of collaboration and storytelling, further cementing its role as a vital platform for South Asian filmmakers to share their work with the world. This fourth edition in Pakistan added another successful chapter to the Divvy Film Festival's growing narrative.



Do You Know?

Pine trees can tell if it's about to rain. Next time you see a pine cone, take a close look. If it's closed, that's because the air is humid, which can indicate rain is on its way.



FAROOQI'S GUIDE TO SUFISM

ENERGY POINTS OF LATAIF E A'LME AMR (METAPHYSICAL WORLD)-I



Dr. Muhammad Azeem Farooqi
Religious Scholar, Academician,
Researcher

07 MINUTES READ

Conscious Adherence to Sunnah and Shariah:

A deliberate and conscious adherence to Sunnah (Prophetic traditions) and Shariah (Islamic law) is the true sign of traversing the spiritual path of refining the self. Often, we see individuals giving lengthy lectures on Sufism and religion. However, when asked why they themselves do not follow these teachings, they respond, "These are matters to be spoken of; practicing them is far more difficult." In the Holy Quran, Allah Almighty

says:

"Indeed, prayer is difficult, except for those who are humble before Allah."

(Surah Al-Baqarah: 45)

The Issue of Religious Scholars and the Beard:

Once, a respected religious scholar was delivering a speech on the importance of Sunnah and Shariah. Someone sent him a note asking, "Could you please clarify the prescribed length for a sunnah beard?" Coincidentally, this scholar himself had a short beard, leaving him in an uncomfortable position. Unable to provide a clear answer, he responded, "It shouldn't be too long or too short; whatever length is in between is acceptable. Neither should

it be as long as a handspan, nor shaved entirely." Thus, when it comes to practice, many often seek excuses and escape routes.

Yeh masa'il-e-tasawwuf yeh tera bayan
Ghalib

*Tujhe hum wali samajhte jo na badah
khwar hota*

"These matters of mysticism, this discourse of yours, Ghalib; we would have counted you among saints, if only you weren't a lover of wine."

Ghazi IIm-ud-Din Shaheed and Rajpal:

At the time when Rajpal was killed by Ghazi IIm-ud-Din Shaheed, the hearts of Muslims across the Indian subcontinent were deeply hurt, yet no one had the courage to confront that wretched man. When Ghazi IIm-ud-Din finally sent this vile person to his fate, someone informed Allama Iqbal, saying, "Rajpal has been killed by Ghazi IIm-ud-Din." Iqbal, moved and surprised, spontaneously uttered:

*Asi gallan karde reh gaye aan te
tarkhan da munda bazi le gaya e.*

*"We kept talking, while a carpenter's
son seized the honor."*

This signifies that one's outward and inward selves should align; one's words and actions should be united. There should be no contradiction between what one says and does. In simple terms, becoming a true Muslim means that one has reached the level of refining the inner self.

*Khird ne keh bhi diya La Ilaha to kya
hasil,*

*Dil o nigah Musalman nahi to kuch bhi
nahi.*

"Simply uttering 'La Ilaha' (There is no god) brings no benefit if the heart and sight are not truly Muslim."

*Yeh shahadat gah-e-ulfat mein qadam
rakhna hai,*

*Log aasaan samajhte hain Musalmaan
hona.*

"To step into the field of love's martyrdom is no simple feat, yet people assume being a true Muslim is easy."

*Chun mey goyam Musalmanam be
larzam,*

Keh danam mushkilat-e-La Ilaha ra.
"When I say, 'I am a Muslim,' I tremble, for I know the immense trials that lie within the words 'La Ilaha.'"

I Accept! I Accept! I Accept!

Once during a sermon, my honorable Sheikh, with a touch of humor, narrated a story: A young man was attending his own wedding ceremony. The officiating Maulvi (religious scholar) asked him, "Do you accept this woman, daughter of so-and-so, as your wife with the agreed dowry?" The young man, full of excitement, responded, "Yes, sir, I accept!"

The scholar asked again, and this time, the young man replied even more proudly, looking around to everyone as he said, "I absolutely accept, sir!" On the third time, he confidently declared, "Yes, sir, I accept." The marriage took place.

Some time later, as life went on, his wife began requesting various things: "Bring some bread, bring flour, we're out of sugar, we need groceries. Now we have children; there are school fees, expenses, and visits to relatives that require money." Bewildered, he finally responded, "I didn't sign up for all this; all I said was 'I accept.'"

The Sheikh commented, "When you said 'I accept,' you embraced all that came with it. There is no turning back now." He went on to explain, "When we recite the Kalimah (declaration of faith), we often act confused when the scholars insist we observe what is halal (permissible) and avoid what is haram (forbidden), pray, fast, refrain

from interest, bribes, uphold modesty, patience, gratitude, and truthfulness. We question where all these obligations came from. The truth is, the moment you declared 'La Ilaha Illallah' (there is no God but Allah), you accepted all of it. Either accept it fully, or renounce it and be free like those outside the fold of Islam. If you choose to remain muslim, then you must fulfill its requirements. You cannot expect to have everything your way while still holding onto the luxuries of life without commitment." The Colonel, His Fashionable Wife, and Mitho Ram:

There was once a newly married Colonel whose wife had very modern, fashionable sensibilities. The Colonel had employed a batman (assistant), but this batman had become infatuated with the Colonel's wife, often trying to sneak glimpses of her. One day, the Colonel's wife complained that the batman was making her uncomfortable.

The Colonel called in his batman and said, "Listen closely, Mitho Ram. I spend around 800 rupees a month on my wife's upkeep. I've hired a swimming instructor to teach her, whom I pay separately..."

The Colonel continued, "I have also employed a tutor. An instructor comes to teach her the sarangi (a traditional musical instrument), and I pay each of them separately." Turning to Mitho Ram, he asked, "Tell me, how much is your salary?" Mitho Ram replied, "Sir, it's 26 rupees." The Colonel responded, "If you can manage to pay 800 rupees monthly, then take her with you. But since you earn only 26 rupees, stick to your place and make do with what you have. And if you ever look at her improperly again, I will not hesitate to kill you."

Allama Iqbal says:

*Chahte sab hain ke hon ooj-e-surayya
par maqam,*

*Pehle waisa koi paida to kare
qalb-e-saleem.*

"Everyone desires to reside at the heights of greatness, but first, let them cultivate a pure and sound heart."

True Honor Belongs to the Noble:

A person may desire all the honors and want to be the greatest, but if they continue to perform only minor tasks, how can they expect recognition? As the Punjabi saying goes, "Sarodhy sardaraan dey"—"True honor belongs to the noble." When one seeks a high position, they must fulfill the greater responsibilities and conditions that come with it. Only by meeting these demands can one achieve that higher rank.

Similarly, when one claims to be a Muslim and a believer, the Latifah Nafs (lower self) often becomes an obstacle, pulling one toward wrongdoing, while the commands of Allah and His Messenger (PBUH) guide toward goodness. Thus, those who continually follow Allah and His Messenger (PBUH) are the true spiritual warriors. For them alone are the real honors and ranks reserved. These individuals are elevated to the state of Nafs al-Mutma'inna (the tranquil soul) and are blessed with the good news of the hereafter.

*Ki Muhammad (PBUH) se wafa tu ne
to hum tere hain,*

*Yeh jahan cheez hai kya, loh-o-qalam
tere hain.*

"If you remain loyal to Muhammad (PBUH), then we are yours; what is this world? Even the tablet and the pen are yours."

Dr. Muhammad Azeem Farooqi





THE MARRIAGE TRAP: GAMOPHOBIA IN A PSYCHOLOGICAL LENS



Hafsa Shahzada
Freelancer, Writer, Social Activist

04 MINUTES READ

Friend 1: *“Sach mei yaar. Single life mei hi sakoon hay.”*

Friend 2: *“Haan bilkul. Suna nahi kitnay humaray dost na’khush hogaye hein apni commitments ke baad? Lagta hay nahi unhay ke “azaadi” aur “apni marzi” ke naam ki koi cheez kabhi hoti bhi thi aik arsay phelay.”*

Friend 3: *“Ufff, ye sab sun ke tou ab dar hi lagta hay “relationships” ke alfaz se.”*
All three in unison: *“Shaadi aik azaab hay. Aqalmand us se jitna door hi rahey, utna behtar hay!”*

With the winter chills finally setting in; wedding bells are in the air, and the desi shaadi season is upon us. From memes covering life post-matrimony, news headlines about intimate partner violence, and stories about the patterns of marriage life within our family and friends, Gamophobia is a social phenomenon spreading widely amongst the masses.

Overview

Gamophobia, or the fear of marriage or commitment, is derived from the Greek word gamos, or marriage. Individuals who carry this fear are chronically reserved about entering into relationships; even contemplat-

IMAGE SOURCE: FORBES

ing the idea of marriage or long-term unions makes them feel guarded. Instead, they hop from one casual hookup to the next.

Note: Gamophobia is an interpersonal tendency. It is not a diagnosis and it is not listed in the DSM V-TR.

How Gamophobia Affects you?

People with Gamophobia, may:
Unable to form lasting intimate relationships.

Experience extreme anxiety when in a relationship and constantly worry about it ending.

Feel anxiety when they see a happily committed couple.

Push people away or end relationships abruptly.

Risk Factors

Family history: Growing up with a parent or loved one who has a phobia or anxiety disorder may lead you to develop the same or similar fears.

Biological sex: People designated female at birth (DFAB) tend to develop specific phobic disorders more often than those designated male at birth (DMAB).

Genetics: Preliminary research suggests that certain people have a gene change (gene mutation) that increases their risk for anxiety or phobic disorders.

Causes

Genetics and Family Influences: Research suggests that genetics plays a part in the onset of phobias and other anxiety conditions. Inherited traits may make a person more prone to this fear, but attitudes learned through family influences might also play a part.

Insecure Attachment Styles:

Children raised by responsive caregivers are more likely to form secure attachment styles, while children who don't have their needs met are more likely to develop an

insecure style.

Negative Experiences: For some people, negative or traumatic experiences in the past can contribute to an intense fear of commitment.

Cultural Context: Certain cultures arrange marriages without taking love and other emotions into consideration. In South Asia specifically, the prevalence of lifetime intimate partner violence is 35% higher than the global average. The reasons are complex and include a combination of socio-economic structures, patriarchal attitudes, and prevalent social norms that define gender roles.

Symptoms

Gamophobia can lead to both physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms. .

- Impending feelings of doom
- Choking sensations
- Nausea and dizziness
- Chest pain
- Excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis)
- Rapid heart palpitations
- Shortness of breath(dyspnea).
- Trembling/ shaking.
- Upset stomach/ indigestion (dyspepsia).

To Overcome Gamophobia:

Treatment

CBT (Cognitive Behavior Therapy):

A form of psychotherapy where the underlying cause of the thoughts that make you fear commitment are identified. An individual with gamophobia then learns to replace their negative thoughts with more positive cognitions. You also learn how to best communicate with your loved ones about this phobia.

Exposure Therapy:

Exposure therapy is a treatment that helps people gradually become more comfortable with relationships and commitment by overtime exposing

them to the source of their fear. This is also paired with relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, visualization, and progressive muscle relaxation (PMR).

EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing): A type of therapy that involves focusing on trauma while engaging in bilateral eye movements. It may be effective in cases where symptoms of gamophobia are connected to past traumatic experiences.

Medications (a last resort): In some cases, medications may be useful if other mental conditions such as co-occurring anxiety or depression are also present. In most scenarios, these medications will be used alongside some form of psychotherapy.

- Coping with Gamophobia
- Recap your history
- Ponder about your needs
- Journal
- Give Relaxation Strategies a go

Conclusion:

Commitment-phobic people are not always honest with themselves, and if they are in a relationship, they may not be honest with the other person, either. It may help to pinpoint the root cause—a fear of abandonment, negative beliefs about relationships, or other sources. In addition, being exposed to healthy relationships can be a helpful example of role modeling. Being open and honest will promote security and stability. A therapist can also help a person overcome their fears.

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Shibam:

The Ancient Skyscraper City

In the heart of Yemen's Hadhramaut desert lies Shibam, a mesmerizing city that defies time and imagination. Dubbed the "Manhattan of the Desert," it boasts towering mudbrick buildings that rise up to 11 stories high. Remarkably, Shibam's structures date back over 2,000 years, making it the oldest vertical city in the world.

Built entirely from sun-dried mud bricks, Shibam was ingeniously designed to adapt to its harsh desert environment. Thick mud walls provide insulation, while white lime plaster on the upper floors protects against rain and reflects sunlight, showcasing a sustainable architectural marvel. Each building's floors serve specific purposes—storage and livestock occupy the lower levels, while living spaces and kitchens are situated higher up.

Shibam's strategic location in the wadi Hadhramaut, a fertile riverbed in the desert, made it an essential hub for ancient trade caravans carrying spices and incense. The city's unique design was also shaped by necessity; devastating floods in the 13th and 16th centuries forced inhabitants to build upward on a small elevated mound.

Today, Shibam remains a UNESCO World Heritage Site, symbolizing human resilience and ingenuity. However, it faces threats from natural disasters and conflict, underscoring the need for preservation efforts to safeguard this architectural treasure.

VOICE OF THE VOICELESS



Sobia Naeem
Writer

03 MINUTES READ

We often hear the saying, "Money is not everything; true happiness lies in meaningful relationships and a healthy environment." But how true is this statement? Let's unravel this notion and analyze its validity, particularly from the perspectives of different social classes.

For the voiceless and marginalized—those deemed insignificant by society, often classified as the poor or lower class—the harsh reality is that money is everything. Their lives are a relentless struggle for survival, and they often die unnoticed, without dignity, simply because they lack wealth. Their voices go unheard; even when they try to speak, society ignores them. To say that money is not everything feels like an insult to their daily battles.

A wealthy individual might find it easier to accept this statement, but a poor person, struggling tirelessly to make ends meet, would strongly disagree. For them, the concept of being unhappy despite having wealth is incomprehensible. Their primary concern is survival amidst rising

inflation and deepening poverty. As the gap between the rich and poor widens, the wealthy continue to thrive while the underprivileged remain shackled, much like the colonized societies of Africa and the subcontinent.

In these situations, the rich impose their burdens—such as heavy taxes—on the poor, perpetuating a system of exploitation and hierarchy. The poor work under the commands of the wealthy, much like the oppressed laborers of colonial times. To the rich, the poor are often invisible, dismissed as insignificant. Those sleeping on streets, train stations, or vacant plots are rarely acknowledged as human beings with dreams, feelings, and potential. Their only shortcoming? A lack of money. For them, money isn't just important—it's everything.

Shifting focus to the middle class, the perspective changes. While they have some financial stability, it's never quite enough. For them, the phrase "money is not everything" acts as a consolation, a way to find peace in their struggles. Caught between the extremes of wealth and poverty, the middle class faces unique challenges. They possess the potential to drive

IMAGE SOURCE: DEPOSITPHOTOS.COM

societal transformation, yet they often lack the critical vision or resources to break free from this cycle.

Unlike the wealthy, whose excess wealth can lead to complacency, and the poor, whose struggles are all-consuming, the middle class exists in a state of constant flux. They hold the power to turn the tide, yet their progress depends on embracing struggle, not just financial gains.

For the elite, money's omnipresence becomes a double-edged sword. While it provides comfort and security, excessive wealth often hinders personal growth, fostering complacency and a lack of resilience. The rich rarely understand the struggles of the poor because they've never lived through them. To them, money may not seem like everything, but it's an essential foundation upon which their lives are built.

The analysis reveals that the truth behind "money is not everything" is deeply class-dependent. For the rich, the statement might hold some merit; for the middle class, money isn't everything, but it still matters significantly. However, for the poor, money is undeniably everything—it defines their survival, identity, and voice in society.

As individuals, we must recognize the value of prioritizing the poor, not out of pity but out of respect for their resilience and struggles. They possess clear hearts and unmatched determination. Supporting them can build a more balanced and compassionate society, giving voice to the voiceless and creating opportunities for all to thrive.

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Time in the Sky:

The Makkah Tower's Story

The Makkah Royal Clock Tower is a remarkable feat of engineering, standing 600 meters tall and costing an estimated USD \$16 billion. It houses the world's largest clock and is the highest occupied space in any building. Despite its grand scale, the construction faced challenges due to the sacred location in Mecca, where only Muslims are allowed. Some engineers converted to Islam to be able to work on-site.

Located near the Ka'bah, a holy site for Muslims, the tower's construction was crucial for accommodating the millions of pilgrims visiting Mecca for Hajj. The tower serves not only as a hotel but also as a spiritual symbol, with the design evolving to incorporate a clock tower and minaret. Originally intended to be 450 meters high, the building's height was extended to 600 meters, surpassing other skyscrapers like the Burj Khalifa.

A unique engineering challenge arose when half of the tower was already built before the extension was planned. To support the added height, a lightweight structure similar to the Eiffel Tower was used. The clock's massive hands, made of carbon fiber, were another innovation. With its intricate mosaics, LED lighting, and the iconic crescent moon atop, the tower now stands as one of the most impressive buildings in the world.

ART AND EMOTIONAL RESTRAINT



Aqdas Ali Hashmi
Lecturer, PhD Scholar,
Ghazal and Sufi Vocalist, Researcher

05 MINUTES READ

Art, in its many forms, serves as a powerful medium for self-expression, reflection, and emotional release. It enables individuals to communicate feelings and experiences that are otherwise difficult to articulate in words. However, in a world increasingly preoccupied with productivity, superficial interactions, and emotional suppression, many individuals suffer from a phenomenon referred to as "emotional restraint." This term metaphorically describes the inability or unwillingness to express one's emotions in a healthy manner, leading to a buildup of suppressed feelings. Emotional restraint is becoming more prevalent in modern societies, and its relationship with art offers an intriguing lens through which we can understand its impact and potential remedies.



Emotional restraint, though not a clinical term, resonates with the lived experiences of many people. It is akin to emotional repression but implies a more personal or cultural hesitation to fully engage with or release emotions. In an age where vulnerability is often viewed as a weakness, individuals are conditioned to stifle their true feelings, either to maintain social decorum or out of fear of judgment. The suppression of emotions can lead to mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress-related illnesses. When individuals experience emotional restraint, they become detached from their own emotions and may find it difficult to connect with others on a deeper, more authentic level. Emotional restraint often manifests in an inability to cry, laugh, or express anger openly. It creates a state where people are emotionally "stuck," unable to process their inner turmoil.

Art often reflects the societal condi-

tions of the time, and in contemporary works, there is an increasing portrayal of emotional disconnection. Many modern artists, whether consciously or unconsciously, grapple with themes of isolation, fragmentation, and emotional numbness. The paintings of Edward Hopper, for instance, depict lonely figures in urban landscapes, symbolizing modern man's emotional detachment in a fast-paced world. The rise of minimalism in art can also be interpreted as a reflection of emotional restraint. In this style, simplicity and restraint dominate, mirroring the suppression of emotional complexity. This artistic movement can be seen as a response to the overwhelming chaos of emotions, choosing instead to present a controlled, muted representation of the world.

Similarly, films and literature often highlight characters who struggle with emotional expression. In contemporary cinema, characters with subdued emotions or internal conflicts are prevalent. This trend could indicate an underlying societal discomfort with vulnerability, where characters mask their true feelings beneath a facade of indifference. Films like *Lost in Translation* and *Her* focus on protagonists who are emotionally disconnected from their surroundings and struggle to articulate their internal worlds.

While art can mirror emotional suppression, it also offers a powerful outlet for emotional release. Engaging with art, either as a creator or an audience, can provide a cathartic experience that alleviates the tension of emotional restraint. This release, often referred to as catharsis in psychological terms, is a way of purging pent-up emotions, allowing

individuals to confront and process their inner feelings. Art therapy, for example, is a widely recognized therapeutic approach that helps individuals express emotions they may not be able to verbalize. Through the process of creating art, patients can externalize their internal struggles, gaining insight into their emotional states. Art therapy is particularly beneficial for those who have difficulty communicating their feelings, as the act of creation itself provides a non-verbal avenue for self-expression.

In addition to creating art, simply engaging with existing works can also help people confront their emotional blockages. Viewing a piece of art, reading poetry, or listening to music can evoke emotions that may have been suppressed. For instance, the melancholic tones of a Beethoven symphony can stir feelings of sadness or longing, allowing individuals to connect with emotions they may have otherwise avoided. Artists, both historically and contemporarily, have often been viewed as conduits for collective emotional expression. They take the raw materials of human experience—joy, pain, love, fear—and transform them into works that resonate with a wider audience. In this sense, the artist serves as a mediator, helping to release the emotional restraint of both themselves and their audience.

Vincent van Gogh, for instance, famously used painting as a way to cope with his emotional turmoil. His works, characterized by intense colors and dynamic brushstrokes, convey a deep emotional intensity that resonates with viewers. In his letters, Van Gogh often spoke about how painting allowed him to express emotions that he could not articulate

in words. In modern times, artists like Yayoi Kusama, who suffers from mental health issues, use their art as a form of emotional release. Kusama's repetitive patterns and immersive installations reflect her obsessive thoughts and emotions, offering both the artist and the audience a way to confront overwhelming feelings.

In today's digital age, emotional restraint is exacerbated by social media and the pressure to present an idealized version of oneself. Platforms like Instagram and Facebook encourage individuals to curate their lives, often leading to the suppression of negative emotions. People are less likely to express sadness, anger, or fear online for fear of being judged or seen as vulnerable. Art in the digital age, however, offers a potential remedy for this phenomenon. Digital artists and creators are increasingly using online platforms to challenge the superficiality of social media, creating works that emphasize authenticity and emotional depth. Artists like Marina Abramović have used performance art to challenge emotional suppression, often confronting the audience with raw and uncomfortable emotions. Moreover, the accessibility of art in the digital age—through platforms like YouTube, Spotify, and online galleries—means that individuals have more opportunities to engage with art that resonates emotionally. This democratization of art allows for a more widespread cathartic experience, helping to alleviate emotional restraint on a broader scale.

Art and emotional restraint are deeply interconnected. While the modern world fosters emotional suppression, art provides a necessary outlet for emotional release. Whether through creating art or engaging with

it as an audience, individuals can confront and process emotions that may have been long suppressed. In this sense, art serves as both a reflection of emotional restraint and a remedy for it, offering individuals a path toward emotional freedom.

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How to Overcome the Cold in Freezing Places?

Here are some tips on how to overcome the challenges of winter.

Dress in Layers: Wear thermal undergarments, sweaters, and insulated outerwear to stay warm.

Stay Active: Engage in indoor or outdoor activities to boost mood and energy levels.

Embrace Winter Sports: Try skiing, snowboarding, or ice skating to enjoy the season.

Eat Well: Maintain a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables to strengthen your immune system.

Create a Cozy Atmosphere: Use warm lighting and blankets to make your living space inviting.

Maintain Social Connections: Organize indoor gatherings with friends and family to share warmth and joy.

SUGARCRETE:

TURNING SUGARCANE WASTE INTO SUSTAINABLE BUILDING MATERIAL

Hashem Al-Ghaili

02 MINUTES READ

Scientists have created a new building material called Sugar Crete, which is made from sugarcane waste, also known as bagasse. This material could be a better alternative to traditional building materials like concrete and clay bricks.

Sugar Crete is made by combining sugarcane waste with special binders. This new material is lighter and cheaper than regular building materials, but it's also stronger. It has good qualities like being fire-resistant, durable, and able to conduct heat well. It also takes less time to harden, is lighter, and costs less to make. This makes it an attractive option, especially in sugarcane-growing areas, where it turns agricultural waste into a useful building resource.

Sugar Crete is better for the environment than regular concrete. It has a much smaller carbon footprint, only 15% to 20% of the carbon footprint of concrete. This means using Sugar Crete could help reduce global CO₂ emissions. Experts say that it could reduce emissions by up to 1.08 billion tons worldwide.

Sugar Crete has shown impressive results in testing. For example, prototype floor slabs made from this material require up to 90% less steel than concrete alternatives and are less likely to crack. This makes it not only stronger but also more eco-friendly, as it uses fewer materials.

Scientists are also working on self-healing concrete, which could make buildings last even longer. This type of concrete can repair cracks that form over time. It contains special agents, such as bacteria or microcapsules, that are activated when cracks appear. These agents work to fill in the cracks, helping to prevent further damage and increasing the material's lifespan.

Sugar Crete and self-healing concrete are two important innovations that can help make construction more sustainable. They use less harmful materials, reduce waste, and improve the durability of buildings. These new materials offer a way to build structures that are better for the environment, more cost-effective, and last longer.

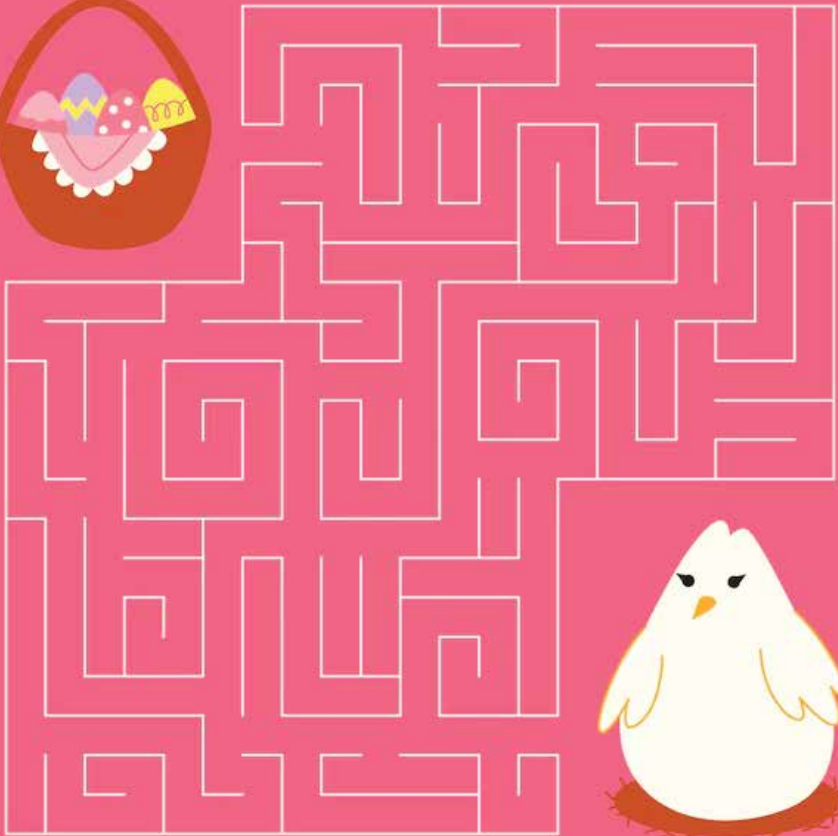
Sugar Crete: Turning Sugarcane Waste into Sustainable Building Material



HELP THE LITTLE ASTRONAUT TO REACH HIS FRIEND AND THE ROCKET



HELP THE CHICKEN FIND THE EGGS





DIY: WINTER SCENE JAR

AEM

02 MINUTES READ

Bring the charm of a snowy winter wonderland indoors with this fun and easy DIY Winter Scene Jar! It's a perfect project for kids and adults alike to get creative and festive.

Materials Needed:

- Mason jars (clean and dry)
- Cotton balls
- Small figurines (miniature trees, snowmen, animals, houses)
- Loose glitter (white or silver for a snow effect)
- Glue (hot glue or strong craft glue)
- Tweezers (optional for placing tiny items)

Instructions:

Prepare the Snow Base: Take a handful of cotton balls and fluff them up to create a soft, snowy base. Place them at the bottom of the mason jar, ensur-

ing they cover the entire surface evenly.

Arrange Your Figurines: Select your small figurines and decide on their placement. Use glue to attach them to the bottom or sides of the jar for stability. Allow the glue to dry completely before proceeding.

Add Glitter: Sprinkle a generous amount of glitter over the cotton snow to create a sparkling effect. You can use a mix of white and silver glitter for added dimension.

Seal the Jar: Once everything is dry and secure, tightly close the lid of the jar. Shake gently to enjoy the shimmering snow effect!

Display Your Jar: Place your winter scene jar on a shelf, windowsill, or table as a festive decoration.

This DIY project is a delightful way to add a touch of winter magic to your home!

IMAGE SOURCE: COMPLETELY CHRISTY



DIY: CARDBOARD PUPPET THEATER

AEM

02 MINUTES READ

Transform an ordinary cardboard box into a fun and creative puppet theater that kids will love! This DIY project encourages imaginative play and storytelling.

Materials Needed:

- A large cardboard box (appliance or delivery box)
- Paints and markers
- Scissors or a box cutter (adult supervision required)
- Tape or glue
- Old socks, paper, or felt for puppets
- Scrap fabric (optional for curtains)

Instructions:

Prepare the Box: Take a large cardboard box and turn it so one of the longer sides is facing you. Cut out a large rectangle in the center to act as the “stage.” Ensure the edges are smooth and safe.

Decorate the Theater: Paint or color

the box with bright, fun designs. Use markers to draw patterns or shapes, like stars, curtains, or lights. For added flair, glue scraps of fabric on the edges to mimic real theater curtains.

Create Puppets: Use old socks or draw puppet characters on paper. Decorate them with googly eyes, felt, or markers to give each puppet its own personality.

Set Up: Place the box on a table or floor and have kids stand behind it to operate their puppets.

Perform: Encourage kids to create stories, rehearse, and put on a puppet show for family and friends.

This cardboard puppet theater provides hours of creative entertainment!



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THE BUSINESS OF THE SEAS: HOW CONTAINER SHIPPING DELIVERS BILLIONS

AEM

02 MINUTES READ

Container shipping is a business with high rewards but also significant initial investments. Let's break down the costs and profits of purchasing and running a large container ship on the profitable Asia to U.S. route.

Consider buying a massive container ship, like the one Hyundai Merchant Marine launched recently. This ship, with a capacity of 24,000 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent units), costs around 150 million dollars to build. However, with potential discounts, it might be available for about 140 million dollars.

With a depreciation period of 25 years, the annual depreciation cost of the ship comes to roughly 4.5 million dollars. Now, focusing on the West Coast route from Shanghai to Los Angeles, this ship has the potential to generate significant earnings.

On this route, the shipping rate is approximately 15,000 dollars per container. Although the ship can carry 24,000 containers, it can realistically carry around 20,000 containers per trip due to weight and utilization factors. This means the ship could generate a total of 300 million dollars in freight revenue per trip.

To carry the containers, purchasing 20,000 containers, rather than renting them, would cost an additional 80 million dollars, at 4,000 dollars per container. However, the earnings from the ship will quickly cover this expense.

The journey from Shanghai to Los Angeles takes around 13 days. During this time, the ship uses 220 tons of fuel per day. With fuel priced at 420 dollars per ton, the total fuel cost for the entire trip is approximately 1.1 million dollars. Additional expenses such as daily crew wages, port fees, and miscellaneous costs add up to about 350,000 dollars for the trip. Therefore, the total cost of one journey amounts to roughly 1.45 million dollars.

After accounting for these expenses, the gross profit from a single trip would be around 298 million dollars. This means that, after covering the costs of the ship, containers, fuel, labor, and other fees, there's still a profit of 50 million dollars per trip.

With such profitable returns, setting a goal to earn 1 billion dollars doesn't seem far-fetched. A few successful trips could easily help achieve that target, making container shipping an attractive business option with great potential for growth.

IMAGE SOURCE - WILLOX

ISLAMIC FINANCE IN PAKISTAN:

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



Tariq Mahmood
Chartered Accountant

04 MINUTES READ

Islamic finance has gained significant traction in Pakistan, reflecting its deep-rooted Islamic heritage and growing market potential. Despite substantial progress, the sector faces several challenges, including regulatory inconsistencies, limited product diversification, and integration issues with conventional finance. This article examines the current state of Islamic finance in Pakistan, identifies key challenges, and proposes strategies for enhancing its growth and effectiveness.

Introduction

Islamic finance in Pakistan has evolved considerably since the introduction of Shariah-compliant financial products and institutions in the 1970s. With a predominantly Muslim population, the demand for Islamic

financial services has been strong, leading to the establishment of numerous Islamic banks and financial institutions. However, the sector continues to face various challenges that hinder its potential. This article provides an overview of Islamic finance in Pakistan, discusses the challenges faced by the industry, and offers recommendations for its improvement.

Overview of Islamic Finance in Pakistan

1. Historical Context

Islamic finance in Pakistan started with the incorporation of the first Islamic bank, Al Baraka Bank, in 1991. This was followed by the introduction of the Islamic Banking Ordinance in 2001, which provided a legal framework for Islamic financial institutions. Since then, the sector has witnessed significant growth, with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) playing a key role in regulating and

promoting Islamic finance.

2. Current Landscape

As of 2024, Pakistan's Islamic finance sector includes several fully-fledged Islamic banks, such as Meezan Bank, Al Baraka Bank, and Dubai Islamic Bank Pakistan. Additionally, conventional banks offer Islamic banking windows, and there is a growing range of Shariah-compliant products, including Sukuk, Takaful, and Mura-baha financing. Despite this progress, the sector's market share remains modest compared to conventional banking.

Challenges Facing Islamic Finance in Pakistan

1. Regulatory and Shariah Compliance Issues

The regulatory framework for Islamic finance in Pakistan, while established, faces challenges related to Shariah compliance and standardization. Variations in interpretations of Shariah principles can lead to inconsistencies in financial products and practices. Furthermore, the regulatory framework sometimes lacks clarity and cohesion, affecting the sector's stability and growth.

2. Limited Product Diversification

The Islamic finance sector in Pakistan is characterized by a limited range of products compared to conventional finance. Although there have been innovations such as Sukuk and Takaful, the sector lacks sophisticated and diverse financial instruments that could cater to a broader range of consumer needs and business requirements.

3. Integration with Conventional Finance

The integration of Islamic finance with conventional banking systems in Pakistan is challenging due to differ-

ences in regulatory frameworks, accounting standards, and operational practices. This lack of integration creates inefficiencies and barriers to seamless financial operations and cross-border transactions.

4. Awareness and Education

Awareness and understanding of Islamic finance principles and products remain limited among the general population and even among some financial professionals. This gap in knowledge can lead to misconceptions and reduced adoption of Islamic financial products.

5. Infrastructure and Technological Advancements

The infrastructure supporting Islamic finance in Pakistan is still developing. There is a need for enhanced technological solutions and infrastructure to support the growth of digital Islamic financial services and improve operational efficiencies.

Strategies for Improvement

1. Enhancing Regulatory Frameworks

To address regulatory and Shariah compliance issues, it is essential to develop a more cohesive and standardized regulatory framework. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) should work closely with Shariah scholars, industry stakeholders, and international bodies to create uniform guidelines and standards. This can help ensure consistency in Shariah interpretations and enhance the sector's stability.

2. Diversifying Financial Products

To expand the range of available products, Islamic financial institutions should focus on innovation and diversification. This includes developing new financial instruments, such as structured products, derivatives, and sustainable investment options. Collaboration with interna-

tional financial institutions and fintech companies can drive innovation and introduce new products to the market.

3. Improving Integration with Conventional Finance

Efforts should be made to harmonize regulatory frameworks and accounting standards between Islamic and conventional finance. This can involve creating guidelines for hybrid products that combine elements of both systems and facilitating smoother interactions between Islamic and conventional financial institutions.

4. Increasing Awareness and Education

To enhance awareness and understanding of Islamic finance, targeted educational initiatives are needed. These could include public awareness campaigns, professional training programs, and integration of Islamic finance principles into academic curricula. Increasing knowledge among consumers and professionals can help dispel misconceptions and promote informed decision-making.

5. Advancing Infrastructure and Technology

Investments in infrastructure and technology are crucial for the growth of Islamic finance in Pakistan. This includes developing digital platforms for Islamic financial services, enhancing cybersecurity measures, and adopting advanced data analytics tools. Technological advancements can improve service delivery, operational efficiency, and customer experience.

Conclusion

Islamic finance in Pakistan has made notable progress, but several

challenges need to be addressed to unlock its full potential. By enhancing regulatory frameworks, diversifying financial products, improving integration with conventional finance, increasing awareness, and advancing infrastructure and technology, Pakistan can strengthen its Islamic finance sector. These strategies will contribute to the sector's growth, stability, and effectiveness, ultimately supporting a more inclusive and equitable financial system.

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Did You Know?

- The world's oldest cat lived to 38 years and three days old. Creme Puff was the oldest cat to ever live.
- Our solar system has a wall. The heliopause – the region of space in which solar wind isn't hot enough to push back the wind of particles coming from distant stars – is often considered the "boundary wall" of the Solar System and interstellar space.
- Octopuses don't actually have tentacles. They have eight limbs, but they're arms (for most species). Technically, when talking about cephalopods (octopuses, squids etc), scientists define tentacles as limbs with suckers at their end. Octopus arms have suckers down most of their length.
- Most maps of the world are wrong. On most maps, the Mercator projection – first developed in 1569 – is still used. This method is wildly inaccurate and makes Alaska appear as large as Brazil and Greenland 14 times larger than it actually is. For a map to be completely accurate, it would need to be life-size and round, not flat.

THINK IT CAN GOOD COMMUNICATION SAVE YOU?



Muhammad Saeed Babar
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03 MINUTES READ

To me communication is to convey your thoughts to others as you perceive it. Misunderstanding occurs because of a lack of conveying your thoughts to others as you have perceived it which results in adverse outcomes. For example, when a dog follows us, we see it as a dangerous thing that he might bite us so we try to avoid it by running away or beating him but he may be calling our attention to something or asking for food etc and in either case the outcome would be adverse. Take the case of interaction with a computer, you have to communicate with the computer to do something that you want it to do and if you fail to do so then you will get nothing or garbage as a result.

First of all communication involves some kind of language that both the parties in communication need to

understand. Second thing is the clarity of conveying and understanding each other. In the example of a dog, the dog could not convey in a language that human beings can understand and in the case of a computer human beings have to convey to the computer in the language that it understands and in both cases have to clearly and precisely convey what you want. So in any type of communication two things are important namely Language and Clarity.

In an emergency situation your call for help if others can understand then it is life saving. Same is true in negotiation. In business one has to negotiate almost daily many times, for example with vendors, customers, employees, employers etc. One of the biggest causes of failed negotiations is miscommunication.

Communication has many aspects viz. (1) Verbal Communication (2)

Non-verbal Communication (3) Written Communication and (4) Visual Communication. In verbal communication you need to have clarity i-e what you want to say and tone i-e how to convey your thoughts - angrily, softly, jokingly etc. Selection of the right words and tone of your voice can give you an edge in any situation. In non-verbal communication your face expressions, your body movements convey important messages that can have favourable or unfavourable outcomes. So be mindful of your face expressions and body language. In written communication, structure of your letter or report i-e introduction, body, closing etc. , grammar, choice of words and spelling matters. You must take care of all these things as they convey a very strong impression about your personality i-e who you are. In visual communication, design, relevance to what you are saying and of course simplicity so that the other people can understand the visual message clearly.

In business effective communication is an important tool. If you could not effectively communicate to others then the results would be unfavourable to you. You may not get what you want not by fault of others but by miscommunication. This is very important when you are dealing online. In this case you have to be very clear and precise in your order taking or taking delivery. In either case, the result of miscommunication can be bad.

Good communication can be a lifesaver in many situations. It's a skill worth developing and refining throughout life.

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The Ingenious Water System of the Alhambra Palace

On a cold, rainy night in medieval Spain, the city of Cordoba fell to Christian forces, ending Muslim rule. Yet, Granada and its magnificent Alhambra Palace remained unconquered for 200 years, thanks to its strategic location and advanced engineering.

The Alhambra's most fascinating feature is its water system, a marvel of medieval engineering. Water flowed from the Royal Canal, a channel built 6 kilometers upstream from the Darro River. Engineers used precise slopes and clever designs to bring water to the palace. They built storage pools and pressurized systems to power fountains, thermal baths, and even underfloor heating. One highlight was the Lion Fountain, which worked as a water clock. A central bowl filled slowly, activating each of the 12 lions one by one, marking the hours. Another invention, using whirlpools and air pressure, allowed water to travel uphill without external power.

The palace's baths featured heated floors, steam rooms, and star-shaped vents for temperature control. Fountains and pools cooled the air, making the palace comfortable in Granada's heat.

Centuries later, much of this system still functions, showcasing the brilliance of medieval Islamic engineers who combined beauty with practicality.

The Alhambra's water system is a brilliant example of how smart and creative people were in the past. Even after hundreds of years, it amazes everyone with its clever design and beauty.



HOW AIRLINE DINING IS CHANGING?

AEM

04 MINUTES READ

In-flight dining has evolved dramatically, mirroring the changes in air travel. In the mid-20th century, flying was a luxury, and onboard meals reflected this opulence. Airlines like Pan Am and British Airways served gourmet dishes on fine china with silverware, offering delicacies like lobster, caviar, and champagne. Dining was a highlight of the journey, evoking the elegance of first-class train travel.

Over time, however, the rise of budget airlines shifted priorities, replacing lavish multi-course meals with simpler, cost-effective options. This transformation reflects changing passenger expectations and the growing emphasis on efficiency in modern aviation.

This golden age of airline dining began to change with the rise of budget carriers in the late 20th

century. As air travel became more accessible to the masses, cost-cutting became a priority for airlines. Elaborate meals were replaced by simpler offerings such as pre-packaged sandwiches and snacks. Today, the quality of airline food varies widely depending on the airline, route, and class of service. While some airlines continue to prioritize culinary excellence, many have shifted focus to efficiency and cost savings, often at the expense of quality.

Creating food for consumption at 30,000 feet presents unique challenges. The pressurized cabin environment impacts passengers' ability to taste, with studies showing a 30% reduction in the perception of sweetness and saltiness. Low humidity further dulls taste buds, while the constant noise of the engines influences how textures and flavors are perceived. To overcome these challenges, airline chefs and food

IMAGE SOURCE: FANTASYFOOD.ORG

scientists design menus with bold, pronounced flavors. Ingredients rich in umami, such as tomatoes, mushrooms, and soy sauce, are commonly used to enhance taste. Spices like ginger and chili are also employed to make dishes stand out, even under the sensory limitations of high-altitude dining.

Behind every airline meal is a highly organized logistical operation. Catering companies such as Gate Gourmet and LSG Sky Chefs produce thousands of meals daily in facilities located near airports. These meals are typically prepared up to 24 hours before a flight and then chilled to maintain freshness. On the day of departure, they are loaded onto the aircraft, where the cabin crew reheats them before serving. Efficiency and safety are paramount, with strict health standards governing every step of the process. Meals must also be designed for ease of handling by flight attendants, ensuring they can be reheated and served quickly in the limited space of an aircraft galley.

The difference between economy class and premium class dining experiences is stark. In economy class, meals are mass-produced with a focus on affordability. A typical meal might include a pasta dish, a bread roll, and a small dessert, served in disposable containers. These meals are functional but lack the flair and variety of higher-class offerings.

In contrast, passengers in premium cabins enjoy a far more sophisticated experience. Airlines like Emirates and Singapore Airlines provide multi-course meals featuring high-quality ingredients such as fresh seafood, prime cuts of meat, and artisanal desserts. In first class, dining reaches an even higher level, with chef-designed menus and fine

wines, sometimes served by dedicated on-board chefs.

Airlines also draw on regional and cultural influences to create unique menus that reflect their identity. For example, Japan Airlines serves sushi and miso soup, while Qatar Airways offers Middle Eastern dishes such as lamb kofta and tabbouleh. This cultural connection not only enhances the passenger experience but also allows airlines to showcase their heritage. Dietary inclusivity is another important aspect, with airlines now offering vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and halal meals to cater to diverse passenger needs.

Sustainability is a growing focus in airline catering. Airlines are reducing single-use plastics, minimizing food waste, and sourcing ingredients locally. For example, Scandinavian Airlines partners with local farms to reduce the carbon footprint of their meals. Biodegradable and compostable materials are replacing plastic trays and utensils, and surplus food is donated to food banks.

As technology advances, airlines are researching ways to create meals that retain flavor and texture at high altitudes. Freeze-dried and vacuum-sealed meals are becoming more common, offering long shelf lives without sacrificing quality, promising a more sustainable and efficient future for in-flight dining.

As airline food evolves, it reflects broader trends in aviation and consumer behavior, adapting to meet changing demands. With advancements in technology, sustainability, and personalization, the future of in-flight dining looks dynamic and innovative.

Apples, pears, peaches, plums, strawberries, cherries and almonds all belong to the rose family(Rosaceae).



MARRIAGES ARE MADE IN HEAVEN: PRESERVE & MAINTAIN IT!



Nikita Kumawat
Yoga Trainer & Amateur Writer

04 MINUTES READ

All romantic relationships go through ups and downs and they all take work, commitment, and a willingness to adapt and change with your partner. But whether your relationship is just starting out or you've been together for years, there are steps you can take to build a healthy relationship. Even if you've experienced a lot of failed relationships in the past or have struggled before to rekindle the fires of romance in your current relationship, you can find ways to stay connected, find fulfillment, and enjoy lasting happiness. Every relationship is unique, and people come together for many different reasons. Part of what defines a healthy relationship is sharing a common goal for exactly what you want the relationship to be and where you want it to go. And that's something you'll only know by talking deeply and honestly with your partner. However, romantic relation-

ships require ongoing attention and commitment for love to flourish. As long as the health of a romantic relationship remains important to you, it is going to require your attention and effort. And identifying and fixing a small problem in your relationship now can often help prevent it from growing into a much larger one down road.

What Makes a Relationship Healthy?

Emotional Connection: A healthy relationship includes a meaningful emotional connection where both partners feel loved and valued. Being loved and feeling loved are different; the latter involves feeling truly understood and appreciated. Relationships that lack emotional engagement may seem stable but create distance over time.

Healthy Conflict: Disagreements are natural and don't need to be feared. In a healthy relationship, you should feel safe expressing concerns without fear of retaliation. Resolving conflict respectfully, without humiliation or insisting on being right, is crucial.

Outside Interests: No partner can

IMAGE SOURCE: FELLOWSHIPSQUARE

meet all your needs, so it's important to maintain friendships, family ties, and hobbies outside the relationship. This reduces pressure and keeps your relationship stimulating.

Open Communication: Honest communication builds trust. When partners can comfortably share their needs, fears, and desires, it strengthens their bond. Miscommunication often leads to distance, but good communication can resolve most issues.

Falling in Love Vs. Staying in Love

For most people, falling in love usually seems to just happen. It's staying in love - or preserving that "falling in love" experience - that requires commitment and work.

The following tips can help you to preserve that falling in love experience and keep your romantic relationship healthy.

Tips for a Healthy Relationship

Spend Quality Time Together: Regularly set aside distractions and focus on connecting with your partner. This quality time strengthens your emotional bond.

Communicate Clearly: Don't expect your partner to read your mind. Share your needs directly and pay attention to nonverbal cues like tone, eye contact, and body language. Be a good listener—actively engage and show understanding without necessarily agreeing.

Manage Stress: High stress can lead to miscommunication and conflict. Learn to manage stress quickly so you can remain calm and handle relationship challenges effectively.

Keep Physical Intimacy Alive: Touch is essential for bonding. While Intercourse is an important part of intimacy, affectionate gestures like holding hands or hugging can also strengthen your connection. Be aware of your

partner's preferences and communicate openly about physical needs.

Compromise and Resolve Conflicts Fairly: No relationship is conflict-free. Healthy relationships involve compromise and understanding. Focus on the issue at hand without attacking your partner. Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements to avoid blame. Aim to resolve conflicts by listening and respecting each other's views, not by "winning" the argument.

Navigating Ups and Downs

All relationships experience highs and lows. Stress, health problems, job loss, or other challenges can create tension. It's crucial not to take out these stresses on your partner. Instead, find healthy ways to cope and remember you're a team working through challenges together. Reflect on what initially brought you together and how you can rekindle those feelings.

Be open to change—it's a natural part of any relationship. Flexibility allows you to grow together, especially during tough times. If things become overwhelming, consider couples therapy or seek support from trusted friends or advisors.

Healthy relationships don't just happen—they require ongoing attention and effort. By focusing on emotional connection, clear communication, compromise, and maintaining a balance of independence and togetherness, you can build a strong, lasting relationship that supports both partners through life's ups and downs.

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Do You Know?

Sharks can detect a single drop of blood in millions of gallons of water.

DAILY MINDFULNESS PRACTICES



Muhammad Shoaib Khan
Life Sciences Reseacher, Writer

04 MINUTES READ

In our busy lives, we often find ourselves between worrying about the future and thinking about the past. This leaves us little time to enjoy the present moment. Mindfulness is a simple way to take a break and focus on what is happening. Small practices can bring peace and relaxation into your daily routine. In this article, we will talk about easy ways to practice mindfulness and make life a little calmer and happier.

Mindful Breathing: It is a useful practice to get freedom from the anxieties and overthinking of the world for some time. In this practice, you sit in a comfortable seated position with your spine straight and take deep breaths. Focus on the gentle rise and fall of your belly as you inhale and exhale. You can also count your breaths or feel the sensation of your body as the air leaves into and out of it.

Mindful Walking: Walking is a wholesome experience when you do this with your entire mind. Instead of

scrolling your phone, listening to the songs in the headsets, or just overthinking what might come next, if you focus on the sound of the ground/street when you place your foot on it, the movement of your legs and contraction and relaxation in its muscle, and the effort they produce by doing a subtle shift of the weight of your body and noticing the surroundings with all your senses will be an energizing and refreshing experience for you.

Body Scan Meditation: Instead of feeling everything in your heart or keeping your head busy all the time, you can also feel other areas of your physical being by doing a body scan meditation. In this type of meditation, you lie on your back or sit comfortably keeping your spine straight, and begin feeling from your toes by focusing all your attention on that part of your body. Feel the sensation in that area, if there is any tingling or tightness. Take breaths and allow that area to relax and soften. Then move up to the next part of your body in line, that is the feet, before coming to the rest of the part of your body. Spend more time on parts, which are uncomfortable or tense.

IMAGE SOURCE : MINDFUL.ORG

Journaling: We as humans having a very complex mindset think a lot. Our brain is continuously thinking about the actions and possible reactions of many things we have done in the past and what we are going to do in the future. Sometimes, this leads to overthinking and anxiety, which overwhelms some of us. The best thing in this regard is journaling, in which we copy, on the page, every thought that comes into our mind. Dedicate a few minutes of your day (maybe before going to bed at night) to this practice. The idea is to write everything that you are thinking at the moment, how rough or wild it may be. Do not care for sentence structure or grammatical mistakes. Do this every day. Then analyze the difference between your thoughts after some days. You might also get to know your evolution of thought process or the directions in which your thoughts are going on the different days of the week and month.

Mindful Eating: No doubt, food is what keeps us going but sometimes we take it for granted. In the morning, at noon, and in the evening we eat food most of the time only to keep ourselves energetic so that we can continue working. This is a productivity-obsessed world and we take meal breaks just as our fuel stops and do not think about appreciating the food that we eat. Instead, we must understand our food every time we sit to eat. You can feel its aroma, and notice its texture, and color. When eating, take small bites, and chew them slowly and deliberately to enjoy the taste of each bite you take in. You should avoid any distractions like mobile phones or TVs but fully focus on the experience of nourishing your physical being. Your soul will also be delighted in this process.

Living in the Present: It is an interesting experience when you schedule your day according to a set routine. Getting fully involved in the work, play, prayers, domestic chores, social relationships, etc. gives a better feeling when these are done with full focus. Thinking about past events and worrying about the future too much just waste your time, ruin that time of your day and you do not get to live and feel your life according to your will.

Apart from these practices, you can also cultivate gratitude and a positive mindset, develop a love for yourself, practice self-care, visualize a peaceful place, do compassion meditation, and access nature to let go of your wild thoughts and enjoy your life fully and rightfully. Mindfulness is a powerful way to bring peace and focus into your daily life. By practicing simple techniques, you can stay connected to the present moment and reduce stress. Start small, and you will see how these habits can make your life more balanced and joyful.

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Do You Know?

You could sweat when you're anxious to alert others. One theory suggests we've evolved to sweat whilst anxious to alert the brains of other people around us so they are primed for whatever it is that's making us anxious. Brain scans have revealed that when you sniff the sweat of a panic-induced person, regions of the brain that handle emotional and social signals light up. When you're anxious your sympathetic nervous system releases hormones including adrenaline, which activates your sweat glands.

The Fading Embers of Tradition: A Lament For a Lost Era



Areeba Altaf Kanasro
Writer, Columnist

03 MINUTES READ

As we are gradually moving towards in life, we often hope for the best and the best to come, but in this period we don't realize that what we are losing, at that time we are being selfish, we know that we are losing the traditions and culture, gradually we are not moving to advancement, whereas we are moving to a collapsing era. No one is realizing it; we lost that era where everyone was always available for each other, where neighbors were like family, where we cared for each other's emotions, where we respected elders, where everyone's heart was pure, and where elders were obeyed, but unfortunately, we lost it! In the era that belongs to our ancestors, they were used to being with each other through thick and thin. At their tea,

they used to share their memories. They wanted to create a great example for youngsters, and they wanted to convert that love to their generations. One of their most loved traditions was "mach kachehri." But this is a dark reality: our traditions and that era, which was filled with purity and sincerity, have been lost.

Those long-lasting nights of winter, enjoying the tea on ("Mach kachehri"), an old Sindhi winter tradition in which a group of people sit around a bonfire during winter. It's usually held in villages where the elders sit around and tell proverbs, riddles, and stories, and sometimes problems are discussed during the time. At that time, villagers close their work and go back to their homes; it's a sign of brotherhood among each other. But it's sad to witness that it's gradually dying. Whereas the elders were used to sit every night, now it's occasional-

IMAGE SOURCE : REWINDLIFE.NET

ly held, like at any wedding or occasion in the winter.

At that time, when someone from them was in difficulty, they used to be with each other; if he couldn't sleep, others would sleep. They were always ready to sacrifice for each other, but now, no one can care, in what difficulty the other person is or what he or she is facing. That's the true reality of today's world. At that time, there was no gossiping, no ego, no aggression. They used to be calm and patient. And always fun-loving and sensible.

WEDDINGS

At times, weddings were the pure source of happiness for them. They were very simple and composed without showing off; everyone would become mad and do jhumar (a traditional dance) selflessly, and their celebrations were held till the night, including antakshari (a musical game), jokes, and rasams (traditions) with an actual smile, laughter, and happiness.

These days, everyone is irritated with one another, doesn't give a damn about what's going on, and is connected to one another through mobile devices, which is damaging people's mentalities and creating an environment that is so bad for future generations. Those people didn't have cell phones or any other kind of modern communication equipment in the 1990s. In the past, they would write letters to one another, which would arrive after three or seven days. They waited several days to meet each other and to see each other. At that time, they used to travel by train. As intercity transport, they used tanga (horse carts) despite a lack of facilities. At that time, education facilities were not that furnished, but

they were used to be very happy with that, and they were grateful for that. They couldn't celebrate Eid without each other; they all used to gather at their hometown to celebrate Eid. Their lives were not full of facilities, but they were happy and enjoyed those things. At times, there was no jealousy or envy, which is why they were happy and peaceful.

IMPACTS

And now, where we have everything but not that tranquilly, where we have every convenience but not that joy, where we have every connection but not that love, because this progress has destroyed human positivity, in this so-called modernisation we have lost every quality that was present in the lives of our ancestors because there is now only hatred, envy, and jealousy among people in this world. We are far from peace, love, and stability even with these amenities and technological developments.

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Do You Know?



Bananas are radioactive. Due to being rich in potassium, every banana is actually slightly radioactive thanks to containing the natural isotope potassium-40. Interestingly, your body contains around 16mg of potassium-40, meaning you're around 280 times more radioactive than a banana already. Any excess potassium-40 you gain from a banana is excreted out within a few hours.



Choimus:

THE KALASH FESTIVAL OF WINTER CELEBRATIONS



Saif Uddin
Writer, Musician

04 MINUTES READ

In my journey to the stunning valleys of Chitral, I experienced the vibrant Choimus Festival of the Kalash community. Held from **December 15 to 22**, this celebration of joy, music, dance, and ancient rituals showcases their rich cultural heritage. **On December 15**, the festival begins with lively drums echoing through the valleys, inviting the community to honor their spirits and join in the festivities.

December 15 - The Opening Rites

The Choimus Festival begins on December 15, as the crisp winter air envelops the Kalash valleys. The community gathers with joy as drums echo through the hills, marking the start of a vibrant celebration. The first rituals honor the spirits, weaving together tradition and anticipation.

December 16 - Dance of the Ancestors

On the second day, the Kalash people wear colorful attire, each hue representing heritage and pride. They perform the rhythmic dance of the ancestors, their synchronized steps paying homage to those who came before. Laughter and melodies blend, creating an atmosphere of timeless celebration.

December 17 - Songs of Celebration

Day three resonates with harmonious songs as Kalash voices rise in devotion amidst offerings to the deities. The melodies echo through the valleys, symbolizing unity and hope. As the sun sets, these songs weave a sense of solidarity, connecting the community.

December 18 - Feast of Abundance

A feast of traditional delicacies marks the fourth day. Families gather to share food, stories, and gratitude, celebrating their blessings. Generations unite over recipes passed down,

IMAGE SOURCE: GUIDE TO PAKISTAN

filling the air with camaraderie and joy.

December 19 - Candlelit Vigil

On the fifth night, candlelit vigils illuminate the Kalash valleys. The serene glow reflects the community's resilience and hope. Prayers and wishes are shared, creating a peaceful and uplifting ambiance.

December 20 - Rituals of Renewal

The sixth day is dedicated to renewal. Offerings of fruits and flowers symbolize fresh starts, prosperity, and health. These rituals embody the Kalash people's collective hope for harmony and brighter days ahead.

December 21 - Bonfires of Unity

Bonfires light up the penultimate night, drawing the community together. Around the flames, stories are shared, dances enliven spirits, and a deep sense of unity emerges, reinforcing bonds and shared dreams.

December 22 - Closing Ceremonies

The festival concludes with gratitude and reflection. The final day celebrates the traditions and connections forged during Choimus. Remarkable leaders like Imran Kalash

shared insights into the festival's significance, leaving an indelible impression of resilience, joy, and cultural preservation.

Dancing is an integral part of the Choimus Festival, with intricate and energetic movements that pay homage to nature, ancestors, and the divine. The graceful twirls and synchronized steps of the Kalash dancers add a dynamic element to the festivities, weaving a tale of tradition, resilience, and community bonding through the art of movement.

Rituals play a central role in the Choimus Festival, symbolizing renewal, gratitude, and the cyclical nature of life. From offerings to the deities to ceremonial practices that honor the changing seasons, each ritual holds deep spiritual significance for the Kalash people, connecting them to their roots and ancestors in a profound and sacred manner.

As I witnessed the rituals unfold before my eyes, I felt a sense of reverence and awe at the dedication and devotion with which the Kalash community upholds their age-old customs and beliefs. The blending of

IMAGE SOURCE : PLOT GUIDES



ancient traditions with modern-day celebrations during Choimus serves as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the Kalash culture in the face of external challenges.

My conversations with Bakhtawar Khan, the esteemed principal of Kalasha Dur Museum and School, shed light on the urgent need to protect and preserve the fragile cultural heritage of the Kalash people. Bakhtawar's impassioned plea to national and international organizations for support resonated deeply with me, emphasizing the critical importance of safeguarding the unique traditions and way of life of the Kalash community.

The beauty and magic of the Choimus Festival transcend mere festivities, offering a glimpse into the heart and soul of the Kalash culture. It serves as a beacon of hope and resilience, reminding us of the preciousness of cultural diversity and the need to cherish and protect the heritage of indigenous communities like the Kalash.

In conclusion, my journey to Kalash and encounters with leaders like Imran Kalash and Bakhtawar Khan greatly impacted me. The Choimus Festival, with its music, dances, and sacred rituals, embodies the essence of Kalash identity and their commitment to preserving cultural roots amid change. This celebration highlights the resilience and beauty of the Kalash community, offering a powerful reminder of the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage. Let us honor their legacy by supporting efforts to protect their traditions for future generations. May the spirit of Choimus inspire a future where diversity, tradition, and unity flourish in harmony.

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Toregem Biopharma: Regrowing Teeth

Toregem Biopharma is revolutionizing dental care with a groundbreaking discovery that can regrow human teeth. Founded by three visionary doctors, the company has developed a drug that targets a protein called USAG-1, which naturally prevents teeth from growing. By blocking this protein, Toregem Biopharma has found a way to stimulate the growth of new teeth in the exact spots where they were lost.

The discovery was first tested on mice, where it successfully regenerated teeth. This remarkable achievement has now been extended to humans, offering the potential for people to grow a third set of teeth. This innovative treatment involves a single injection of an antibody that blocks the USAG-1 protein, triggering the body's natural ability to regenerate teeth.

Teeth are essential not only for eating but also for overall health. Poor dental health is linked to increased risks of heart disease, diabetes, and dementia, and 69% of adults lose at least one tooth due to decay or disease. With this new advancement from Toregem Biopharma, individuals can potentially restore their teeth and improve their health. This is the first-ever drug capable of regrowing teeth, marking a significant milestone in dental and medical science.



The Baloch and Balochistan-II



Zubair Bajoi
Student, Analyst

04 MINUTES READ

Language: Balochi and Brahui

The Balochi language has a significant repository of Arabic words. It is divided into two main dialects: Sulemani, spoken in Dera Ghazi Khan, some areas of Sindh, and the Mari and Bugti regions; and Makrani, spoken in southwestern Balochistan and Iranian Balochistan, which is closer to modern Persian. The Brahui language, spoken in central Balochistan, is a blend of indigenous languages such as Dravidian, Saraiki, Jadgali, and Pashto, and was adopted by the Baloch. Its name is derived from the Baloch, either from “*Al-Borzkuhi*” or “*Abrahami*”, which was later shortened or corrupted to

“*Brahui*”. The local population referred to the Baloch as *Al-borzkuhi* or *Abrahami*. This language also has an abundance of Arabic words. Whether the Baloch speak Sulemani Balochi, Makrani Balochi, or the Persian-infused Balochi of Kharan, or the unique blend of languages that is Brahui, it makes no difference to their ethnic unity. Speakers of Brahui are just as Baloch as those who speak Sulemani, Makrani, or Kharani Balochi.

The Brahui-speaking population includes Pathans, Syeds, Jadgals, Rinds, Marris, and Bugtis. Brahui is not a separate caste or ethnicity. The British, as part of their divide and rule policy, raised the issue of Baloch-Brahui distinction to weaken the united Baloch front. This conspiracy still lingers, despite being entirely

IMAGE SOURCE : BALOCHISTAN ARCHIVES

irrelevant and insignificant. Tribes like Ahmedzai, Raisani, Muhammad Hassni, and others, who are considered part of the Brahui group, have Balochi as their native language and are also referred to as Brahui. As for language, Baloch people speak not only Balochi but also Persian in Iran, Arabic in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia, Pashto in Afghanistan, Sindhi in Sindh, Punjabi and Saraiki in Punjab, Urdu in India, Russian in Turkistan, and Chinese in Xinjiang.

The Migration and Settlement of Baloch Tribes in Balochistan

The arrival of the Baloch in Balochistan occurred in various stages. Their ancient abode was Aleppo and Syria. Their migration began around the 4th century AD. The Kurd and Baloch were two brothers who led separate tribal organizations. The Kurd, being the younger brother, moved towards Iraq due to internal conflicts and eventually spread to northern Iran, Turkey, and Sinkiang. The Baloch, facing drought and famine, migrated to Iran with their tribes and settled in the foothills of Mount Alborz. The ancient and civilized empire of Persia, Iran, included present-day Afghanistan, Balochistan, parts of Iran, Iraq, and Arabia. The Sasanian dynasty ruled from 230 AD, with their capital in Madain, on the banks of the Tigris River. The Baloch, also known as Abrahamis due to their Abrahamic faith, were accustomed to adventure and conquest. They began to occupy fertile pastures and water sources, leading the local population to seek the justice of the Persian emperor, Noshervan (Khosrow I). Consequently, in 531 AD, Khosrow launched a massive army against the Baloch settlements, ordering their extermination. The Baloch, fighting bravely,

were forced to leave Alborz and split into two groups, settling in Makran and Zabul. Mir Jalal Khan settled in Makran with 24 tribes, while Mir Ibrahim Khan eventually moved to the Chaghi and Kharan areas, where he passed away. His successor, Mir Qambar Khan, brought his people to the Jhalawan area. These Baloch were referred to as Alborzkuhi or Abrahamis, later corrupted to Brahui or Brohi. Over time, the Baloch adopted different names based on their tribal leaders. A third group of Baloch, residing in Aleppo, supported the Ahl al-Bayt in the Battle of Karbala and faced persecution from the Umayyad ruler, forcing them to migrate. Some dispersed in Arabia, while a large number followed their brethren's footsteps to Balochistan, where they were welcomed and eventually forgot their past hardships, adopting a new life.

The Downfall of the Sewa Dynasty and the Rise of the Balochi State

The state of Kalat was established in 1512 AD, prior to which Hindu rulers, known as Hindu Sewa rulers, ruled the region. After defeating the Hindu Sewa ruler in battle, Mir Qambar took control of the area, marking the beginning of Baloch rule in Kalat. The state of Kalat was divided into an upper house and lower house, with tribal leaders serving in both. Seats were allocated for the leaders of Jhalawan and Sarawan in their court. All Baloch states came under the Khan of Kalat's umbrella, including the states of Makran, Kharan, Lasbela, Hyderabad, Mirpur Khas, Khairpur, and others. The Baloch populations in Sindh and Punjab faced threats from Maharaja Ranjit Singh, founder of the Sikh Empire in Punjab. The Punjabi (Sikh) army sought to occupy Baloch territories, and the

Khan of Kalat remained prepared to defend these states. When Ranjit Singh launched a surprise attack on Sardar Jafar Khan's government in Khushab, the Khan was unable to reach in time, leading to Sardar Jafar Khan's defeat. The Punjabi Sikhs celebrated this victory for fifteen days. Sardar Jafar Khan's sword is still in the Punjab Museum today.

The history of the state of Kalat spans over five hundred years. The Khan of Kalat gave the Baloch states of Balochistan, Sindh, and Punjab a framework for a Baloch Confederation. Kalat was the capital of the Kalat Khanate. Historically, Kalat was known as Qiqan. At the time of Pakistan's establishment, Balochistan was not a regular part of British rule like East Bengal, Sindh, Punjab, and the North-West Frontier Province, but consisted of the states of Kalat, Kharan, Makran, and Lasbela, which were under British agents' supervision. The ruler of the state of Kalat, Khan Kalat Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, had declared complete independence for his state two days before Pakistan's establishment and offered to negotiate special relations with Pakistan. All other Baloch leaders supported Khan Kalat's move and emphasized maintaining Balochistan's separate status. However, Pakistan considered Khan Kalat's action a rebellion and took military action against him and his state. Eventually, in May 1948, the state of Kalat and Khan Kalat were forced to join Pakistan. However, his younger brother, Prince Mir Abdul Karim, led an armed rebellion against Kalat's merger with Pakistan and eventually fled to Afghanistan.

This was the first military operation against the Baloch in Pakistan, and thus, the foundation of relations between the Baloch and Pakistan was

laid with a distorted brick. Understanding this history is crucial for grasping the complexities of the tensions in Balochistan and finding a path towards healing and peace in the region, where the wounds of the past are acknowledged, and the voices of the Baloch people are heard and valued, their rights and dignity respected, and their future secured through a more just and compassionate relationship with the Pakistani government, bringing solace to the affected families, hope to the youth, and prosperity to the land, ultimately leading to a more harmonious and prosperous future for all.

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Interesting Facts:

- The fashion industry is one of the largest polluters in the world, but it's also one of the fastest growing in adopting sustainable practices.
- In Japan, the traditional tea ceremony, "Chanoyu," is a highly ritualistic process involving precision, respect, and mindfulness.
- The slow tourism movement emphasizes immersing yourself in a place's culture for a longer duration rather than rushing through multiple destinations.
- CRISPR-Cas9 technology is already being used to treat genetic disorders like sickle cell anemia, and scientists are experimenting with editing genes to improve crop resilience.
- The ancient Egyptians used the stars to align their pyramids and temples, with the Pyramid of Giza aligned with the constellation Orion.

Epigenetics: The Hidden Code of Life



Rizwan ullah Khan
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04 MINUTES READ

Imagine a situation when your lifestyle, actions, surroundings, and life events impact not just your own health but also that of your offspring and future generations. Greetings from the interesting field of epigenetics, where the complex combination of genes, environment, and destiny is revealed as the hidden code of life. **Epigenetics is the study of gene expression, focusing on how environmental factors influence gene behavior without altering the DNA sequence itself.** Think of it as a light switch; the DNA sequence is the wiring, but epigenetic changes flip the switch, turning genes on or off. Epigenetic modifications, such as DNA methylation and histone modification, create a unique code that

determines which genes are expressed and when. This code is dynamic, changing in response to internal and external cues, including diet, stress, and exposure to toxins.

Recent groundbreaking research has demonstrated the possibility of transgenerational epigenetic inheritance, the ability to inherit altered epigenetic modifications. This implies that circumstances influencing your parents or grandparents can have an effect on your health as well as the health of your progeny. Epigenetics has far-reaching implications for our understanding of disease susceptibility, development, and treatment. By recognizing the role of epigenetic changes in disease, we can develop targeted therapies to reverse harmful epigenetic modifications, create personalized treatment plans based on individual epigenetic profiles, and understand how lifestyle choices impact gene expression and disease risk. During World War II, the

IMAGE SOURCE: IORSTANVCOM



Dutch population experienced a severe famine, known as the Dutch Hunger Winter.

Studies have shown that children born during this period had changes in their epigenetic markers, leading to increased risk of diseases like diabetes and schizophrenia. This demonstrates how environmental factors can shape gene expression and impact health. Epigenetic therapies, such as histone deacetylase inhibitors, have shown promise in treating certain types of cancer. These therapies work by reversing epigenetic changes that contribute to cancer development. A study on identical twins found that despite sharing the same DNA sequence, they had distinct epigenetic profiles.

This highlights the impact of environmental factors on gene expression. New technologies, such as CRISPR, allow for precise editing of epigenetic markers. This holds promise for treating diseases caused by epigenetic changes. Epigenetics will revolutionize many fields in the future. For example, epigenetic profiling will revolutionize personalized medicine by allowing customized therapies and treatments based on individual epigenetic signatures. Epigenetic therapies will also benefit cancer treatment by focusing on specific epigenetic modifications to prevent cancer from developing and progressing. Finally, epigenetic reprogramming will advance regenerative medicine by enabling the creation of induced pluripotent stem cells for tissue repair and regeneration. Epigenetic modification will also significantly improve agriculture by increasing crop yields, disease resistance, and nutritional value. Epigenetic techniques will be useful in synthetic biology as they will allow the

creation of new biological circuits and pathways. Moreover, epigenetic studies will identify novel therapeutic targets for neurological conditions including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's.

Epigenetic research will also shed light on the effects of environmental pollutants on human development and health, contributing to a better understanding of environmental health. In the near future, expect increased use of epigenetic editing tools like CRISPR, development of epigenetic-based diagnostics and therapeutics, and integration of epigenetics into precision medicine and personalized healthcare. As research continues to advance, expanded knowledge of epigenetic mechanisms and their role in diseases will lead to innovative treatments and therapies. In the long term, anticipate epigenetic engineering of complex biological pathways, widespread application of epigenetic principles in agriculture and biotechnology, and potential breakthroughs in regenerative medicine and tissue engineering.

Did You Know?



Hippos can't swim. Hippos really do have big bones, so big and dense, in fact, that they're barely buoyant at all. They don't swim and instead perform a slow-motion gallop on the riverbed or on the sea floor. In fact, hippos can even sleep underwater, thanks to a built-in reflex that allows them to bob up, take a breath, and sink back down without waking.

IS THE EARTH FLAT, OR DOES ITS CURVATURE EXIST? EXPLORING THE SHAPE OF OUR PLANET



Saira Batool

Nature Photographer, Blogger,
Media Student

04 MINUTES READ

Have you ever stood on a beach, staring out at the vast ocean, and wondered about the shape of our planet? Is the Earth truly a giant ball floating in space, or could it actually be flat, as some people insist? It's a question that sparks both curiosity and lively debate—and today, we're diving deep into the mystery with a spirit of exploration!

Let's rewind to ancient times. Imagine standing under a sky full of stars, looking at a seemingly flat horizon. For early civilizations, the idea of a flat Earth made perfect sense. The ground felt steady beneath their feet, and the oceans stretched out like endless carpets. Who could blame them for thinking the Earth was flat? But as curious humans do, people began to question what they saw. Ancient Greek thinkers like Pythagoras and Aristotle observed clues that suggested otherwise. Aristotle

noticed that during a lunar eclipse, the Earth's shadow on the Moon was always round. Could it be that the Earth wasn't flat after all? This realization was just the beginning.

Fast-forward to the Age of Exploration. Sailors like Ferdinand Magellan and explorers journeyed across the globe, proving you could travel in one direction and end up where you started. These daring adventures offered undeniable evidence that the Earth is not flat—it's round! LETS EXPLORE

The Science Behind the Curvature

If the Earth has a curvature, how can we prove it? Lets dwell into some compelling observations:

1. The Horizon

If you've ever stood on a beach and watched a ship sail away, you'll notice it doesn't just shrink—it disappears from the bottom up. This phenomenon occurs because the ship is moving over a curved surface.

2. The Shadow on the Moon

During a lunar eclipse, the Earth casts a shadow on the Moon. This shadow is always round, which aligns with the shape of a sphere.

IMAGE SOURCE: BBC SCIENCE FOCUS

3. Views from High Altitudes

Pilots and astronauts can see the Earth's curvature. From commercial airplanes, the horizon appears slightly curved, while astronauts in space clearly see a round planet.

4. Time Zones

The existence of time zones is a direct result of the Earth's spherical shape. As the Earth rotates, different parts of the planet experience daylight and darkness at different times.

5. Satellite Imagery

Modern technology has given us thousands of satellite images showing a round Earth. These images aren't just artistic interpretations; they're based on real-time data and observations.

Proving that the Earth is flat presents a unique challenge. To engage with this perspective, let's explore arguments commonly made by flat Earth believers. It's important to note that these points have been consistently hidden by scientists, but understanding them allows us to examine how ideas are debated and interpreted. Common Arguments for a Flat Earth:

1. **The Horizon Always Appears Flat**
Flat Earth proponents argue that the horizon looks flat when viewed from the ground or even an airplane. They suggest that if Earth were truly curved, we should see a noticeable curve at all times.

2. No Observable Curve Over Long Distances

Some flat Earth supporters claim that large bodies of water, like oceans, appear flat over great distances, which would be impossible if Earth were a sphere.

3. Airplanes Don't Account for Curvature

Flat Earthers argue that pilots don't constantly dip their noses to adjust for the curvature of the Earth when

flying, implying a flat surface.

4. **The "Flat" Appearance of Maps**
Flat maps are often cited as evidence that the Earth itself must be flat.

5. Water Always Finds Its Level

Flat Earth proponents argue that water, when undisturbed, forms a flat surface and cannot curve around a sphere.

6. Antarctica as an Ice Wall

The flat Earth models depict Antarctica as a massive ice wall surrounding the known world, holding oceans in place.

If you're intrigued by these ideas, the best approach is to investigate further. Science thrives on questioning and evidence, so take the opportunity to explore experiments, data, and history. Curiosity is key—but remember, solid evidence always outweighs speculation!

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Did
YOU
know?



You could sweat when you're anxious to alert others. One theory suggests we've evolved to sweat whilst anxious to alert the brains of other people around us so they are primed for whatever it is that's making us anxious. Brain scans have revealed that when you sniff the sweat of a panic-induced person, regions of the brain that handle emotional and social signals light up. When you're anxious your sympathetic nervous system releases hormones including adrenaline, which activates your sweat glands.

BIO-IMPERIALISM:

The Struggle Against Patents on Indigenous Knowledge

AEM

02 MINUTES READ

For decades, multinational corporations in industries such as pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and agritech have been claiming intellectual property rights over biological materials, using patents as a primary tool. Patents provide companies that invest time and money in research the exclusive rights to their innovations for a limited period. This allows them to recoup their investment and profit from their work. In agriculture, companies often patent genetically engineered seeds, asserting ownership over the modified genetic traits. However, this practice becomes problematic when it involves traditional knowledge. Vedana, a prominent figure in this fight, refers to what is happening in agriculture as "bio-imperialism." She has dedicated her work to combating the patents placed on seeds, particularly those that are part of indigenous knowledge and biodiversity.

Vedana's interest in intellectual property and its impact on indigenous knowledge began with the rise of the life sciences industry. She warned that, before long, companies would start patenting indigenous knowledge and biodiversity. Her concerns led her to write a book called Bio-Piracy, highlighting the issue of biopiracy, where traditional biological resources are patented by corporations without consent or fair compensation.

One major case involved neem, a plant used in traditional medicine as a natural bio-pesticide. Despite its longstanding use in India, the US

government and a corporation, Grace, patented neem. Vedana and her team fought the case for 11 years and succeeded in overturning the patent. Similarly, basmati rice, a staple from her valley, was patented by a Texas company, prompting another legal battle that resulted in the patent being nullified.

The battle also extends to traditional wheat varieties. Some ancient wheat strains, which do not cause gluten allergies, became targets for multinational companies aiming to profit from the growing market for gluten-free products. These companies, which had contributed to the creation of gluten allergies by promoting monoculture wheat cultivation with chemicals, sought to patent and control Vedana's traditional wheat varieties. After a prolonged struggle, the patent was revoked.

Vedana's work highlights a critical issue in the world of intellectual property: the patenting of life. She argues that this practice crosses a line, one that benefits powerful entities with the privilege, financial resources, and legal frameworks to impose their claims. They often disguise these efforts as being for the collective good, but the reality is that certain things, such as seeds and traditional knowledge, cannot and should not be owned. The ongoing fight against bio-imperialism continues to raise important ethical questions about the ownership and commercialization of life.

HOW SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS ARE COMBATING MALNUTRITION IN ISLAMABAD'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

AEM

02 MINUTES READ

In Islamabad, a new program is making wonderful big changes in public schools to improve the health, nutrition, and education of children. This initiative is addressing the malnutrition challenges students face and is helping them live healthier lives while learning better.

School Meals to Fight Malnutrition

A major issue in Pakistan is that many children are physically weak. Nearly 48% of children in the country suffer from stunting due to poor nutrition. To address this, all primary schools in Islamabad now provide free hot meals five days a week. The meals include rice, salad, and roti, prepared in a central kitchen and delivered to schools during lunchtime.

The program has enhanced children's health, increased school enrollment by 25%, improved attendance from 60% to 95-98%, and created a need for evening shifts to accommodate more students.

Helping Children with Vision Problems

To help children with vision issues, a program called "Ice-Cleaning" has been introduced. Students who have problems seeing are given free glasses. A database is kept to track how this helps students in the long term, making sure they can see clearly and learn without difficulty.

Addressing Anemia in Girls

Many girls in schools suffer from anemia due to a lack of iron. To help, a special program has been launched to provide hygiene kits and include iron-rich foods like dates in their

meals. This is aimed at improving their health and reducing the risk of anemia.

Health Centers in Schools

To further improve health, 125 health centers have been set up in schools. These mini-dispensaries provide basic medical services, including diagnostic tools and medicines. The staff in these centers are trained to handle students' health needs and can also help their families, ensuring that everyone in the community has access to basic healthcare.

Evening Shifts to Handle Overcrowding

With the success of these programs, more students are enrolling in school. To manage overcrowded classrooms, evening shifts have been introduced in some schools. This helps ensure that all students get enough attention and space for learning.

A Better Future for Children

These programs show how important it is to link health and education. By improving nutrition, eye care, and addressing anemia, children in Islamabad are getting the support they need to succeed in school. The federal government deserves appreciation for its commitment to implement these innovative initiatives which not only are tackling immediate health challenges but also laying the foundation for a healthier, more educated future for generations to come.



IMAGE SOURCE - BUSINESS RECORDER



FROM THRILLERS TO FEEL-GOOD FLICKS: MUST-SEE MOVIES TO END THE YEAR



Ayesha Mustafa Malik
Writer, Researcher

03 MINUTES READ

As a final showstopper, the end of the year frequently delivers a cinematic extravaganza. In an effort to keep spectators enthralled as the year comes to a close, filmmakers and studios always have some of their most ambitious and eagerly awaited movies saved for the very end. These films frequently cover a wide variety, from exciting blockbusters and touching family flicks to suspenseful dramas and award contenders, all of which are intended to have a profound impact on audiences.

Year-end releases become more than simply motion pictures; they become cultural icons that unite us and provide the ideal atmosphere for both holiday celebration and introspection. They are the ultimate showstoppers in many respects, bringing the year to a close with events and tales

that we will remember long after the credits have rolled.

Gladiator 2

Gladiator (2000) wasn't just a movie; it's an all-out thrill ride through ancient Rome, complete with betrayal, revenge, and plenty of sand flying in the Colosseum. Our hero, Maximus Decimus Meridius was a Roman general who was loved by his troops and trusted by the Emperor. But when the emperor's devious son, Commodus, decides he wants the throne, things go south fast. With jaw-dropping battles and a revenge plot that hits all the right notes, Gladiator isn't just cinema—it's a coliseum-level spectacle had the world gasping for air all the way to the final fight.

The upcoming film, which will be set fifteen years after the first, will focus on Lucius Verus, the grandson of the former Roman emperor. Like Maximus before him, Lucius is adamant on battling the new young emperors Caracalla and Geta in the arena as a gladiator in order to get revenge on

his family. Overall, the Gladiator 2 narrative appears to be dense. To be completely up to date on the background and politics of ancient Rome, we honestly suggest seeing the first film again.

Wicked (Part One)

The musical phenomenon “Wicked” premiered on Broadway 21 years ago, based on the novel by Gregory Maguire, *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* by Gregory Maguire is a creative reimagining of the world of Oz, told from the perspective of Elphaba, the so-called Wicked Witch of the West. The novel explores the complexities of good and evil, questioning the black-and-white morality of L. Frank Baum’s classic tale.

The next films, which will be directed by Jon M. Chu of *Crazy Rich Asians* and *In the Heights* fame, will feature Tony Award winner Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba and megapop sensation Ariana Grande as Glinda respectively. The plot of the *Wicked* films centers on Glinda and Elphaba at Shiz University students, navigating friendship, magical training, and even romance while coming to terms with who they are. But when Elphaba is mistakenly labelled the “wicked” witch, the alternative perspective on the Oz universe takes a different direction. It is anticipated that the films would document her transformation into the villain we know today and examine her relationships with other well-known Oz characters.

Mufasa: The Lion King

The prominent media firm, known as Disney will allow all of *The Lion King*’s fans to relive their youth through the film. Disney also explained the narrative of the next movie in addition to providing a preview of the universe of

the *Lion King* remake.

“Exploring the unlikely rise of the beloved king of the Pride Lands, ‘Mufasa: The Lion King’ enlists Rafiki to relay the legend of Mufasa to young lion cub Kiara, daughter of Simba and Nala, with Timon and Pumbaa lending their signature schtick.”

The plot, which is told in flashbacks, begins with Mufasa as a wandering and lonely orphaned cub until he encounters Taka, a lion who is compassionate and the heir to a royal family. The chance meeting sets in motion an expansive journey of an extraordinary group of misfits searching for their destiny—their bonds will be tested as they work together to evade a threatening and deadly foe. It appears that the white-haired lion will cause Mufasa a lot of grief, and his behaviour undoubtedly influenced the leader. Furthermore, since Kiros appears to be just as vicious as Mufasa’s brother was in earlier episodes, we cannot overlook the idea that he will act as a Scar of sorts.

Regardless of your preference for tension, humor, or a little nostalgia, these year-end releases are sure to provide you with unforgettable moments and stories. Prepare to immerse yourself in these cinematic journeys by grabbing your popcorn and settling into your preferred seat. After all, there’s no better way to end one year and start a new one than with the ideal movie night.

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Do You Know?

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is estimated to be around 1.6 million square kilometers – more than twice the size of Texas.



PROFITS OVER PRESERVATION: THE DILEMMA OF MODERN QAWWALI

AEM

04 MINUTES READ

Qawwali, an integral part of Sufi mysticism, has been an essential aspect of spiritual expression in the Indian subcontinent for centuries. Combining poetry, music, and devotional fervor, Qawwali's essence lies in its ability to communicate a deep spiritual message through heartfelt melodies and profound verses. Though this art form has endured throughout history, it continues to evolve and adapt to the changing times.

Qawwali is often considered a classical form of music, but it also incorporates elements from folk traditions, classical music, ghazals, thumris, and songs, making it a rich and varied genre. Classical Qawwali is an umbrella that encompasses various forms of poetry and music, including instrumental compositions. The traditional structure of Qawwali, its connection to the Sufi tradition, and

its spiritual undertones remain unaltered, but the modern adaptations have brought new dimensions to this genre.

The poetry that forms the backbone of Qawwali is written by renowned Sufi poets like Baba Bulleh Shah, Khawaja Ghulam Farid, Hazrat Amir Khusro, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh, Hazrat Jami, Hafez Shirazi, Hazrat Moinuddin Chishti, Haji Qutubuddin, and Baba Farid. These poets, whose works focus on themes of divine love, brotherhood, and the search for truth, have made Qawwali a medium for spiritual and emotional connection. While the works of these poets, particularly those written in Punjabi and Saraiki, are easy for people to understand, their profound meanings transcend linguistic barriers. It is in the simplicity of these languages that the depth of their spiritual message can be easily conveyed, as opposed to languages like Arabic and Persian, where the essence is often lost in translation.

IMAGE SOURCE: WILBOX

The primary goal of Qawwali has always been to deliver a message, a mission that remains intact even today. The passion and devotion in the poetry resonate with audiences, regardless of time and place. While the instruments used in Qawwali may have evolved with technological advancements, the fundamental structure and emotional depth of the art form remain unchanged. Good poetry, a skilled voice, knowledgeable listeners, and the right spiritual context are essential for Qawwali to maintain its integrity. If any of these elements are weak, it risks losing its authenticity and becoming something else entirely, far removed from the traditional roots of Qawwali.

Qawwali, as we know it today, was formalized and popularized by Hazrat Amir Khusro. Prior to him, Sufi musical gatherings were called "Sama," focused on facilitating a spiritual connection. Khusro introduced the term "Qawwali" and structured it into the form we recognize today, bringing the poetry of Sufi saints into the courts of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. However, modern Qawwali performances, such as "Qawwali Nights," often focus more on entertainment than spiritual engagement. While this shift helps popularize Qawwali, it risks reducing it to a spectacle rather than maintaining its deep spiritual and cultural significance.

The blend of traditional Qawwali with pop and Western music, seen on platforms like Coke Studio, has made Qawwali popular among younger people. However, using modern instruments and pop beats can sometimes take away from the original spiritual meaning of Qawwali. Despite these changes, Qawwali still holds onto its core values of emotion, spirituality, and connection. Its global

popularity continues to grow, with performances attracting audiences worldwide, from South Asia to Europe, the U.S., and the Middle East. Through these performances, Qawwali spreads messages of love, devotion, and spiritual awakening to people from different cultures.

There is a growing trend where younger generations from Qawwali families are turning towards pop music and Bollywood instead of continuing the traditional path of classical Qawwali. While this shift might worry some, it reflects broader changes in culture and the influence of modern media. It's important to remember that music isn't passed down through birth, but through learning and practice. Young artists who move away from traditional Qawwali may lose touch with their artistic roots, but if they work on their skills, they can still find success in modern music. The real keepers of Qawwali are those who strive to preserve and understand its deep spiritual message.

In conclusion, while Qawwali has changed over time, it must stay true to its core values of spiritual connection, deep emotion, and meaningful expression. It remains an important part of the Sufi tradition, offering a powerful way to experience love and devotion to the divine. As long as Qawwali keeps its authenticity, it will continue to inspire and enrich listeners, bridging the gap between the past and present, the sacred and the secular. Whether through traditional performances or modern adaptations, Qawwali's lasting legacy will ensure it remains relevant for future generations.



PAKISTAN AND THE CLIMATE TIPPING POINT



Haveerus Mughal
Columnist, Engineer, Theatre Artist

04 MINUTES READ

The climate crisis is no longer a distant threat; it is a harsh reality, particularly for Pakistan. This nation of over 220 million people finds itself at a critical juncture where the impacts of climate change are already visible and devastating. Pakistan stands at the crossroads of survival, grappling with the paradox of facing both severe flooding and acute water scarcity. The dichotomy of experiencing excessive water and yet lacking it epitomizes the complex challenges of climate change, requiring immediate and multifaceted solutions.

In recent years, Pakistan has experienced an alarming increase in extreme weather events. The

catastrophic floods of 2010 affected over 20 million people, causing economic damages estimated at \$10 billion. These floods were a grim reminder of the country's vulnerability to climate-induced disasters. Conversely, Pakistan is classified as one of the most water-stressed countries in the world. According to the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), the country may run dry by 2025 if the present conditions persist. This twin water crisis is a stark illustration of the broader climate emergency facing Pakistan, where the mismanagement and unpredictability of water resources are threatening livelihoods and the environment.

Pakistan's geographical and socio-economic context exacerbates its susceptibility to climate change.

IMAGE SOURCE: NBC NEWS

The Indus River, lifeline of the country's agriculture and economy, is heavily dependent on the glacial melt from the Himalayas, which are receding at an alarming rate due to global warming. This shrinkage not only diminishes water availability during critical growing seasons but also increases the risk of glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), adding another layer of peril to the already volatile situation.

Adding to this environmental conundrum is the persistent menace of atmospheric pollution and smog, which has emerged as one of the most pressing urban crises in Pakistan. Cities like Lahore, ranked among the most polluted globally, bear the brunt of hazardous air quality. In 2022, Lahore's Air Quality Index (AQI) frequently exceeded 300, a level deemed "hazardous," causing widespread respiratory ailments and reducing visibility. According to a World Bank report, atmospheric pollution costs Pakistan approximately \$47 billion annually, equating to almost 5% of its GDP. Smog, exacerbated by vehicular emissions, industrial discharge, and crop burning, disrupts daily life, halts transportation, and amplifies health crises. This toxic blend of pollutants not only degrades the environment but also undermines public health, increasing morbidity and mortality rates.

Moreover, the country's rapid population growth and urbanization are intensifying the demand for water, while inefficient irrigation practices and outdated agricultural methods lead to substantial water wastage. The irrigation system, which consumes over 90% of the available water, is riddled with inefficiencies. According to the World Bank, water productivity in Pakistan is among the lowest in the

world. This inefficiency is compounded by a lack of modern infrastructure and poor management, resulting in significant losses and the inequitable distribution of water resources.

Deforestation adds another critical layer to Pakistan's environmental challenges. The country's forest cover, alarmingly low at less than 5% of its total land area, exacerbates soil erosion, reduces natural water retention, and diminishes biodiversity. Efforts like the Billion Tree Tsunami project aim to address this issue, yet their long-term success requires consistent implementation and community involvement.

In urban centers, the situation remains equally dire. Cities like Karachi and Lahore face acute water shortages, affecting millions of residents. Karachi, for instance, requires approximately 1,200 million gallons of water per day, yet receives less than half of that. Groundwater extraction has significantly declined the water table, worsening scarcity. Simultaneously, untreated wastewater contaminates water bodies, posing severe health risks to urban populations.

The socio-economic impacts of climate change extend beyond the environment. Agriculture, employing nearly 40% of Pakistan's labor force, is particularly vulnerable. Erratic weather patterns, prolonged droughts, and unexpected floods disrupt farming cycles, leading to reduced crop yields and food insecurity. The reliance on water-intensive crops like rice and sugarcane compounds the crisis, trapping farmers in poverty and inhibiting adaptation to changing conditions.

Addressing Pakistan's environmental and climatic crises requires a multi-pronged approach. Compre-

hensive water management reforms are paramount. Modernizing irrigation infrastructure, promoting water-efficient technologies, and implementing equitable water distribution policies are crucial. Expanding reservoirs and dams to capture excess floodwater for use during dry spells could mitigate water scarcity.

Efforts to combat smog and atmospheric pollution demand stricter enforcement of emission standards and a shift towards renewable energy sources. Transitioning public transportation systems to electric and hybrid models, coupled with rigorous industrial regulations, could significantly reduce air pollution levels. Public awareness campaigns emphasizing the importance of reducing emissions and adopting cleaner technologies are essential.

Reforestation efforts must be scaled up and sustained. While initiatives like the Billion Tree Tsunami are commendable, they must be complemented by community-based forest management programs to ensure long-term viability. Urban afforestation and green spaces should also be prioritized to improve air quality and mitigate urban heat islands.

To tackle the urban water crisis, expanding wastewater treatment facilities, improving supply system efficiency, and promoting rainwater harvesting are necessary steps. Public awareness initiatives can encourage water conservation and responsible usage, reducing overall demand.

On the agricultural front, promoting climate-resilient farming practices is vital. Investments in research and development to create drought- and heat-tolerant crop varieties are necessary. Farmers must be equipped with resources and training to diversify crops and adopt sustainable

farming techniques, reducing dependence on water-intensive practices. Strong climate governance is essential to implement these measures effectively. Integrating climate adaptation and mitigation strategies into national development plans, backed by adequate funding, can drive meaningful progress. International collaboration is equally important; Pakistan must actively participate in global climate forums to secure financial and technical support while advocating for vulnerable nations.

Pakistan's survival amidst the climate crisis hinges on immediate and decisive action. The interplay of water scarcity, atmospheric pollution, deforestation, and socio-economic vulnerabilities demands a holistic, inclusive approach. By prioritizing sustainable development, leveraging innovation, and fostering community engagement, Pakistan can overcome these challenges and chart a resilient path forward. The stakes are immense, but so too is the opportunity to safeguard the future for generations to come.

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Do You Know?

Mercury, not Venus, is the closest planet to Earth on average. On average, Mercury is 1.04 astronomical units (AU) away from Earth compared to the 1.14 AU average distance between Earth and Venus. One AU is equal to the average distance between the Earth and the Sun. Venus still comes closest to Earth as part of its orbit around the Sun, however.



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