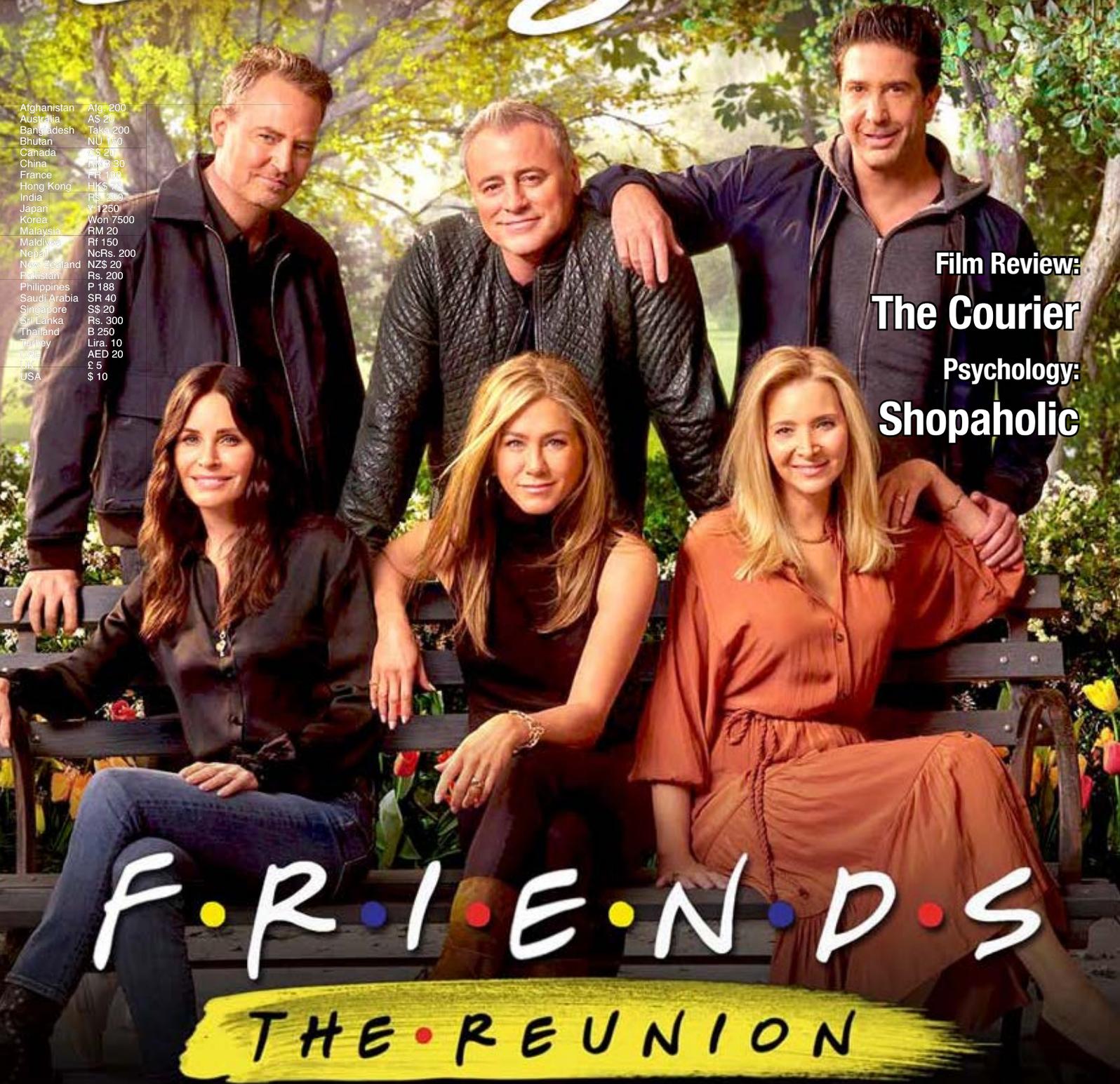


Slogan

Afghanistan	Afg. 200
Australia	AS 20
Bangladesh	Taka 200
Bhutan	NU 150
Canada	CS 20
China	RMB 30
France	FR 100
Hong Kong	HK\$ 55
India	RS 200
Japan	¥ 1250
Korea	Won 7500
Malaysia	RM 20
Maldives	Rf 150
Nepal	NcRs. 200
New Zealand	NZ\$ 20
Pakistan	Rs. 200
Philippines	P 188
Saudi Arabia	SR 40
Singapore	SS 20
Sri Lanka	Rs. 300
Thailand	B 250
Turkey	Lira. 10
UAE	AED 20
UK	£ 5
USA	\$ 10

Film Review:
The Courier
Psychology:
Shopaholic



FRIENDS
THE REUNION

'F.R.I.E.N.D.S - The Reunion' is here to entertain and to remind fans why they love the show. People across the globe are in awe of the return of Rachel, Monica, Phoebe, Joey, Chandler and Ross who are all back in the same room together for just the second time since the series ended in 2004.



June 2021

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Pakistan at the Olympics

Despite all odds, it looks like the Tokyo Olympics, originally scheduled to be held in 2020 but now postponed to late July, will eventually be held. While there is still some uncertainty, with calls increasing to cancel the Olympics due to the rise of the third wave in some countries, so far the chances of the international games to be held look brighter and brighter as countries assemble their teams.

On that front, despite lockdowns slowing down activity, Pakistan has also successfully managed to sort out a team. Our athletes achieved the entry standards, either by qualifying time or by world ranking in several track and field events. The Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) has completed the accreditation process of the players and officials. This includes Arshad Nadeem (javelin throw), Usman Khan (equestrian) and Gulfam Joseph and Khalil Akhtar (shooting).

This group has made headway for Pakistan — for the first time in history, Pakistan entered one rider in the Olympic equestrian competition by finishing in the top two. Our shooters have also achieved places for air pistol events by virtue of their best finishes at the ISSF World Championships and Asian Championships.

However, Pakistan's team is not complete yet — the POA still needs to place two athletes and swimmers and thus is still looking to recruit players.

While Pakistan has made progress in the Olympics, we have so far not had a memorable run at the international games, with the last time Pakistan having won a single medal in the Olympic games in 1992 at Barcelona. There are a number of reasons for the poor performance — including poor policies by our sports ministries and, unfortunately, it does not look like things are changing. POA recently expressed its dissatisfaction over the steps the federal sports ministry will adopt in the new national sports policy, as they fear that, if implemented, all the national sports federations will be banned by their respective international bodies.

The government needs to pay heed to the POA's concerns, and ensure that all Olympics requirements, particularly regarding Covid, are met strictly and on time, so that our athletes are not deprived of an international opportunity. On previous occasions, Pakistan made a name in field hockey, athletics and wrestling. Where are these sports now?



Rush



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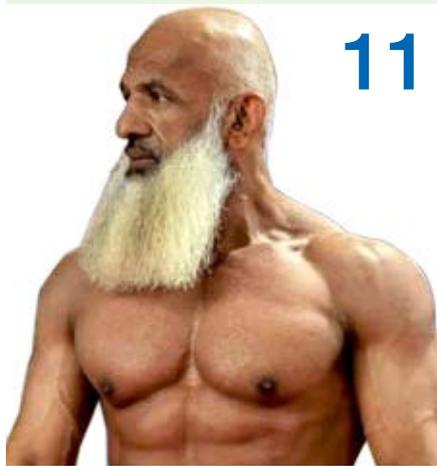
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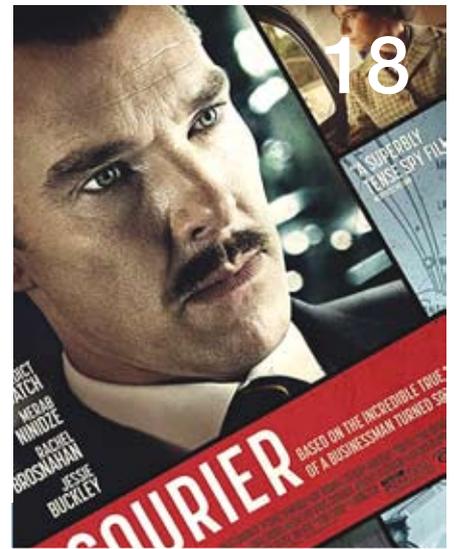
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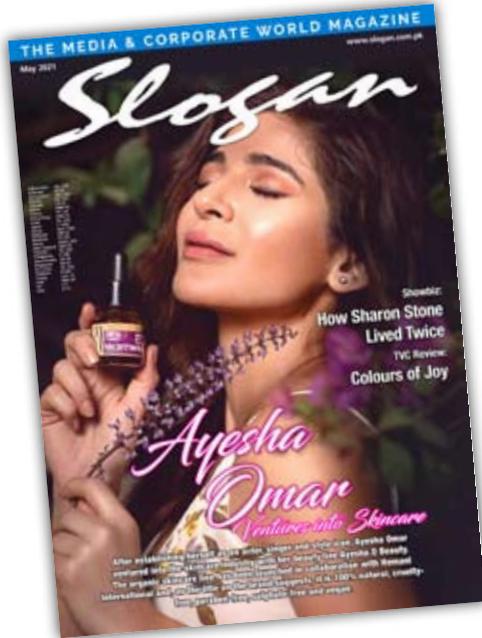
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New Venture

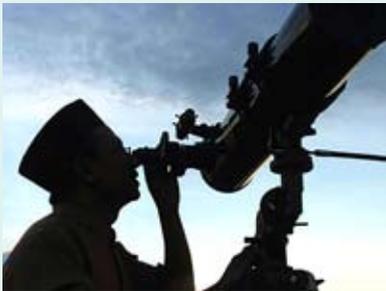
This is related to the last month's cover story titled 'Ayesha Omar Ventures into Skincare' where Ayesha showcases her newly launched skincare line.

After establishing herself as an actor, singer and style icon, Ayesha Omar ventured into the skincare industry with her beauty line Ayesha.O Beauty. The organic skincare line has been launched in collaboration with Hemani International and, as the title on the brand suggests, it is 100% natural, cruelty-free, paraben-free, sulphate-free and vegan.

Adnan Khan,
Islamabad, Pakistan

Moon Sighting Row

Like previous years, confusion was thick in the air on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr about moon-sighting. Traditionally, the Ruet-i-Hilal Committee used to announce the sighting, but a few years ago, the Ministry of Science and Technology launched a website for the purpose and the controversy has only intensified since then. Creating such confusion on religious occasions is totally uncalled for.



The moon-sighting authorities and any other authority interested in the matter should cooperate with each other in the interest of the people.

Laiba Khan,
Lahore, Pakistan

Violation of SOPs

The second wave of Covid-19 has turned out to be far deadlier in India. The number of people falling sick from the virus daily is increasing, apart from the number of daily deaths which has exceeded 4000+. Surprisingly, the public is not taking the situation seriously.

They are not following safety precautions. An overwhelming majority of people care a damn about avoiding the rush, like in shopping centres and public transport. Even those who are supposed to act as role models like the country's leaders and public office holders are themselves involved in violating the SOPs. There are many instances where government officials attended gatherings in sheer neglect of the Covid SOPs. While the vaccination process in India is proceeding pretty slowly, the authorities must focus on getting the public to comply with the SOPs. It's time for the public to cooperate or else many more casualties will occur in the near future.



Barkha Singh,
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Dowry Phenomenon

In the past, giving dowry was common among the aristocrats. They used to gift their daughters and sisters cash, lands and jewellery along with other precious items. The practice was soon adopted by the middle class and the poor strata too. Dowry does not only burden families financially but also has an impact on the relationship of a married couple. While the government has introduced many laws to stop the dowry system, the mentality of the people has not changed.

Sawera Anwer,
Maharashtra, India



Stand with Palestine

Palestinians suffer from deadly rocket attacks, airstrikes, the worst form of violence and barbarism by Israel. The various happenings caused the current chaos, mainly Palestinians faced teasing attitude of policing during the holy month of Ramadan, fake posts were viral on social media about Palestinians attacking Jewish people, anti-Arab slogans raised by Israeli people and all of this is happening against the backdrop of a high profile



court case surrounding the potential eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah. Will Palestinians ever be free?

*Michael Scott,
New York, U.S.*

Suicide Rates

An increase in poverty and suicide rates go hand in hand. The considerable unemployment has certainly led to an increase in suicide cases. As many as six people have committed suicide in a day in Sindh, on 10 May 2021. A 50-year-old, father of 11 children, committed suicide over unemployment. In Sindh, suicide attempt cases are soaring relentlessly. In Japan, the suicide rate among women is on the rise, for which the Japanese Government has been forced to set up a ministry of Loneliness to combat suicide cases, by the same token, Sindh Government must establish an institute or ministry to obstruct the suicide cases. Therefore, time is of the essence to take stock of the situation because the lives of the masses are hanging by a thread.

*Shabir Jamali,
Nawabshah, Pakistan*

Truth is the power that will resolve our problems so we must speak the truth if we are to be a great nation.

– Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan



It's never too late to move from good words to good works, from sound bites to sound solutions.

– Henry Clinton, Former First Lady of the U.S.

My work tells the voiceless stories through miniature art brimming with misery and agony.

– Salima Hashmi, Pakistani Artist



I have learned that delivering the best possible palliative care to children is vital, providing children and their families with a place of support, care and enhancement at a time of great need is simply life-changing.

– Kate Middleton, Duchess of Cambridge

Tell me the direction of your thoughts and I will tell you the direction of your life!

– Mehmet Murat ildan, Turkish Author



My aim is to be the best in the world and perform in each of Pakistan's wins.

– Babar Azam, Pakistan Cricket Captain

Life will knock us down, but we can choose whether or not to stand back up.

– Jackie Chan, Martial Art Champion



The positivity that people now see in me is because I'm fighting my battles and I'm proud of overcoming them.

– Jacqueline Fernandez, Indian Actress

Which Fever?

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was interviewed in New York by CNN just a few hours before the Palestine-Israel ceasefire. His remark against Israel that it was controlling the media and had “deep pockets”



was construed by the female interviewer Bianna Golodryga as being anti-Semitic. Though anti-Semitism was hardly on Qureshi’s mind, he could have used the opportunity to talk about the West’s Islamophobia paranoia. ❏

Sofagate

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was left without a gilded chair at a meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Ankara. EU Council President



Charles Michel, took the only other gilded chair next to Erdoğan. Ursula von der Leyen got to sit on a nearby sofa. She suggested ‘sexism’ at the root of the seating blunder, known as “sofagate”. The meeting was arranged to repair strained relations between the EU and Turkey. ❏

Angry Burst

Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan, Punjab Chief Minister’s Special Assistant on Information, burst out in anger against Assistant Commissioner Sonia Sadaf when they visited a Ramadan bazaar in Sialkot. Firdous Awan got uncontrollably angry when some shoppers complained about substandard edibles being sold. Firdous asked the assistant commissioner if she had ever visited the bazaar and admonished her severely in front of the media. ❏



Fight Show

A fight started when comedian Basit Ali was enraged in a show on Neo TV and started shouting that society did not allow women dancing as it was vulgar. “This is my show,” said the host Nabiha Ijaz. “You’re on a morning show. You knew the format and that there would be women, singing, dancing and games.”

The question is, why did the producer not cut to a break and allowed the fight to go live? ❏



IMC Homage to Ali Habib



As a tribute to the late Ali Suleman Habib, Founding Chairman of Indus Motor Company (IMC), the company has pledged support to the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital & Research Centre (SKMCH), through a Rs. 60 million donation towards the hospital's under construction facility at Karachi.

Indus Motor's Vice Chairman, Shinji Yanagi and Chief Executive, Ali Asghar Jamali presented the cheque to Prime



Minister Imran Khan, in Islamabad.

The SKMCH in Karachi is the third and most modern cancer facility being built on 20 acres of land at DHA City where over 75 percent cancer patients will receive free cancer care. Construction is expected to be completed over three years at an estimated cost of Rs.13 billion with state-of-the-art diagnostic, radiation and treatment facilities under one roof, catering to patients in Karachi, Sindh and Balochistan. ❏

ARMEENA KHAN AWARDED

Armeena Khan who rose to fame through her performances in 'Bin Roye' and 'Janaan', recently took to Twitter announcing that she has been awarded a Certificate for Outstanding Public Service by the Mayor of Burnley in the UK.



She and her husband have been actively promoting the Palestinian cause in the UK. They also hosted and attended a vigil for Palestine in Manchester.

While it has not been mentioned what public service she received the certificate for, the actor has always been a believer in sending out positive messages through her platforms and by being associated with causes that demand attention. ❏

HBL and Katalyst Labs Partner for Startup Acceleration

HBL and Katalyst Labs have signed a strategic partnership agreement for Startup Acceleration and Women Leadership enablement. This will further build and strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the country.

HBL is shaping the future through a paradigm shift towards a 'Technology company with a banking licence'. The Bank aims to form ecosystem partnerships and deliver scalable solutions to customers. The end goal remains to be a customer centric bank that is quick to pivot as opportunities present themselves by being a Mobile first, Data enabled, inclusive and agile organization.

Katalyst Labs is a technology accelerator and innovation hub, founded by Jehan Ara, who along with her team, has played a key role in building the entrepreneurship ecosystem of Pakistan.

As part of the partnership, Katalyst Labs will develop and run a cohort-based fellowship program for women entrepreneurs, professionals, and upcoming business leaders with the purpose of training them and helping them develop into a high-powered network of women leaders across the country.

An acceleration program will also be run with an aim to have an increased focus on facilitating collaboration between



Jehan Ara, Founder & CEO Katalyst Labs (right) and Ali Habib, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, HBL (left) signing the agreement on behalf of their organizations.

start-ups and corporates for knowledge sharing and market exploration with special focus on Fintech, Food & Agri Tech, mCommerce, EdTech, Health Tech and other verticals.

Commenting on the partnership, Ali Habib, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, HBL, said, "We are delighted to enter into this partnership with Katalyst Labs. The programs will enable HBL to build and support a community of start-up founders, technology developers and service design experts with a special focus on Women Entrepreneurs. Interaction and knowledge sharing of the best talent within and outside HBL will help spark innovation. ❏

Good News for Female Cricketers

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has introduced its new Parental Support Policy intended to motivate and support Pakistani athletes in their journey to parenthood. Under the reform, female cricketers will now be granted 12-months maternity leave.

In accordance with global trends, the PCB has taken this much-awaited step. Athletes' tight training schedules and long game day schedules leave



little time for them to be able to plan parenthood despite their desire to start a family.

Under PCB's renewed Parental Support Policy, female cricketers will be entitled to a year long paid maternity leave, in addition to the option of switching to a non-playing role as they approach their maternity leave. Male cricketers are now allowed concessions

and will be entitled to a month-long paid paternity leave.

Only the Australian and New Zealand cricket boards have such powerful parental leave policies while other boards are said to be working on their policies. The reforms made by PCB in their Parental Support Policy met with a lot of appreciation from both former and current cricketers. ❏

QUDSIA NISAR REMEMBERED

Eminent artist Qudsia Nisar passed away on April 27. She was suffering from various ailments for the past several months.

As a highly prolific painter, Ms. Nisar was widely recognized in the art fraternity as a pioneer for using water colour to express abstract visions without using conventional figures and forms. Exploring this unusual dimension with courage and creativity, she produced hundreds of works of art in about four and a half decades of her illustrious career.



Her originality and ability to combine bright colours with subtle, pastel shades in innovative new forms and shapes received appreciation from renowned critics and fellow painters in Pakistan and abroad, when her work was exhibited. She received a number of national and international awards, including the President's Pride of Performance Award in 2018.

She served as principal of the Central Institute of Arts and Crafts at the Arts Council of Pakistan in Karachi for eight years. ❏

Hadid Sisters Protests for Palestine

Supermodels and sisters Bella and Gigi Hadid have been quite vocal about their opinions on the atrocities of Israel on innocent Palestinians. The two are amongst the very few Hollywood celebrities who have publicly raised their support for Palestine amid the ongoing tensions.

The models have been actively posting on social media to emphasize on the barbaric violence. Due to their international standing, the supermodels must have enormous pressure to align with the mainstream narrative, but they have put their careers at risk to support their homeland. They even posted pictures of their grandparents and their children, recalling their Palestinian heritage. ❏

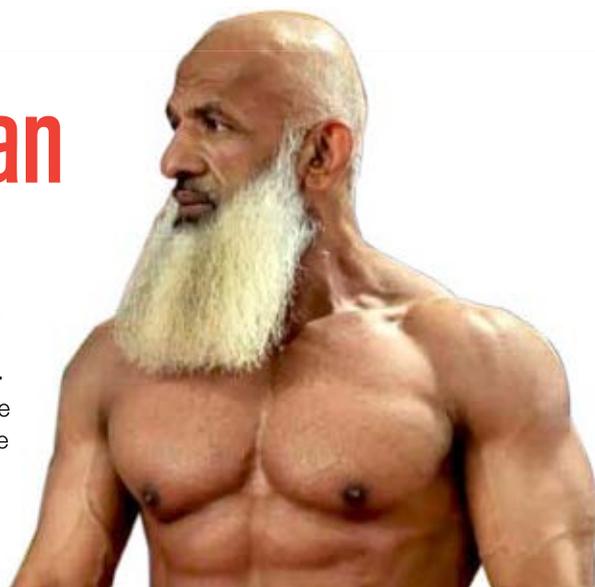


60 Year Old Mr Pakistan

Pakistan's 60-year old bodybuilder, Ustad Abdul Waheed, proved that age is just a number after he earned the title of Mr. Pakistan after winning the 2021 Bodybuilding Championship, breaking barriers and skyrocketing the bar.

Mr. Pakistan Abdul Waheed is a resident of Lahore. He won the Mr. Punjab title before being crowned Mr. Pakistan. He has now set his eyes on the Mr. Asia title. According to him, the Mr. Asia competition is scheduled to be held in India sometime next year. He is gearing up to win the competition and make a name for Pakistan.

As for now, Waheed runs a fitness club in Lahore and wants to produce Mr. Pakistan winners for the future. ❏



ARIANA GRANDE MARRIED

Ariana Grande and real estate agent Dalton Gomez have officially tied the knot in an intimate ceremony.

The couple first went public with their relationship with the release of Grande's song 'Stuck with U' in collaboration with Justin Bieber. Grande and Gomez are seen dancing together in the music video for the song.

They announced their engagement in December. Grande also shared a collection of personal photos with Gomez in early April. ❏



Cheeze, Inc. Appoints Cleslie Armstrong

Media & Entertainment industry veteran Cleslie Armstrong, has joined Cheeze, Inc. as Vice President of Content and as Executive Producer. Armstrong will head the Cheeze Content Studio, Originals Division and all things content-related for the company globally.

As an award-winning writer, journalist, showrunner and media and entertainment executive, she has created, packaged and produced content across all media for major networks, digital platforms, publishers, major venues and studios, featuring celebrities, experts, world leaders, authors, artists and icons.

She has created content with renowned photographers including Lynn Goldsmith, Henry Diltz, Francesco Scavullo, Billy Name, Patrick McMullan, Jack Guy, Jerry Avenaim, Mick Rock and many more. She has also been featured and quoted in hundreds of publications, including the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, Financial Times, WWD, Forbes, Fortune, and Entrepreneur. ❏



Saba Qamar's Next

After several hit serials and appearing in Pakistani and Indian films, Saba Qamar is now preparing for her next TV project titled 'Tumhare Husn Ke Naam'.

Directed by Saqib Khan, who also directed Saba's upcoming film 'Ghabrana Nahi Hai', the serial will mark Saba's return to television after two years. She last appeared in Cheekh (2019) in which she received a lot of praise for her strong performance.

The drama has been written by Sara Qayyum. ❏





F•R•I•E•N•D•S

THE•REUNION

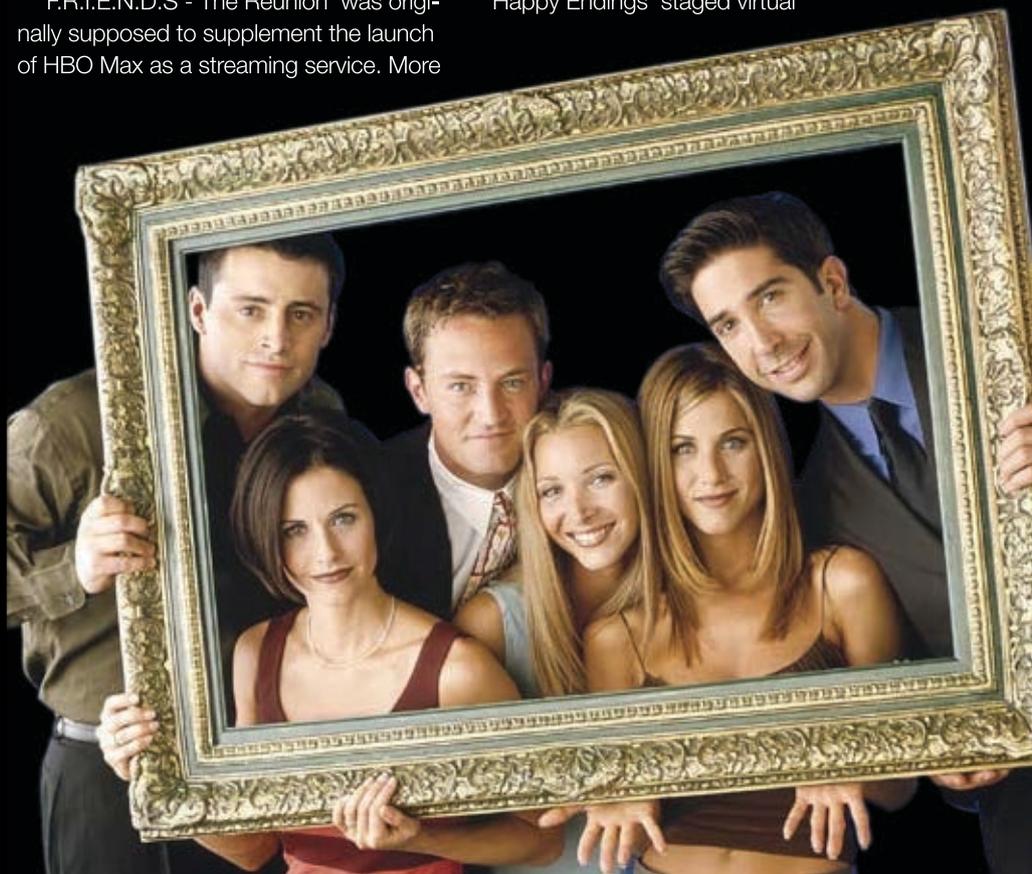
The most shocking revelation of the 'F.R.I.E.N.D.S.' reunion might be that the actors who are now six of the most famous in the world never met until their first table read. From their very first moments swapping jokes and stories around the squashy chairs of Central Perk in 1993, the chemistry between Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc, Matthew Perry and David Schwimmer was so immediate and so natural that it became very easy for audiences to imagine that these friends were here to stay. Recapturing that spark in a reunion special 17 years after the series finale without the smokescreens of their characters, was indeed a challenge.

The 'F.R.I.E.N.D.S.' walk onto the show's meticulously recreated set one by one, starting with a wide-eyed David Schwimmer and ending with a skittish Matthew Perry. Aniston, Cox and Kudrow still have an easy familiarity with each other that makes it clear that spending the Emmys together at Aniston's home last year wasn't completely unusual for

them. LeBlanc brings the most boisterous energy to the table from the moment he walks in to when he gleefully points at the message he left on the set wall after the finale.

'F.R.I.E.N.D.S. - The Reunion' was originally supposed to supplement the launch of HBO Max as a streaming service. More

specifically, it was meant to celebrate HBO Max exclusively acquiring the entire series from Netflix. Instead, the pandemic put the Reunion on hold. While other shows like 'Frasier', 'The Nanny' and 'Happy Endings' staged virtual



reunions, 'F.R.I.E.N.D.S' determined to make it a bonafide in-person event.

Earlier, Perry mentioned in the past about how his addiction struggles impacted his time on the show to the point that he had to enter rehab. 'The Reunion' ultimately declines to discuss any of his troubled experience.

The entire cast laughs about the takes they messed up and how the audience reacted, Perry remembers how he felt every night like he was going to die if they didn't laugh and acknowledges that it wasn't healthy for sure. The segment lingers just long enough on this moment for Kudrow to respond with concern that they never knew that, at which point it cuts to the next nostalgia trip.

Directed by Ben Winston, 'The Reunion' opts for a vibe that echoes Aniston's as she smiles through her perpetual happy tears. They wander around the set marveling at how small it feels now, give each other gentle grief for their inability to remember lines and reveal the trinkets they swiped (a mug for Aniston, a cookie jar for Kudrow). They do a few intimate table reads of pivotal moments from episodes like 'The One Where Everybody Finds Out' and 'The One Where Ross Finds Out That Rachel Likes Him'. Even in these short scenes, the actors manage to snap right back into their old

rhythm with an almost spooky recall.

In between these segments, come insights from producer Kevin Bright and creators David Crane and Marta Kauff-



man, as well as Corden weirdness that eventually devolves into a fashion show. More interesting and impressive is a montage dedicated to the international influence of 'F.R.I.E.N.D.S' as it was translated and regurgitated around the world to the point that many fans, including the Korean boy-band sensation BTS, used it to learn American English.

As per 'The Reunion', the outsized influence of 'F.R.I.E.N.D.S' was nothing but a good thing. People felt a kinship with these friends who treated each other like family. Women admired Monica's willing-

ness to propose to Chandler and Rachel's decision to raise her and Ross' baby without marrying him. Kudrow's character of Phoebe taught everyone that being a little different was okay.

'F.R.I.E.N.D.S' famously included so few non-white characters in its version of New York City that most every subsequent sitcom trying to capture its appeal feels obligated to include a joke about it. The series featured a surprisingly progressive storyline about Ross' lesbian ex-wife and new partner raising his son, but also included so many homophobic and transphobic jokes that it quickly became a cornerstone of Chandler's personality and family history. These shortcomings have also been viewed billions of times around the world and it would have been revealing to see the cast and crew reckon with its less sterling reputation now too.

'F.R.I.E.N.D.S - The Reunion' is here to entertain and to remind fans why they love the show. Fans across the globe are riding the sweet high of seeing Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc, Matthew Perry, and David Schwimmer — forever our Rachel, Monica, Phoebe, Joey, Chandler, and Ross — all back in the same room together for just the second time since the series ended in 2004. ■





THE SHOPAHOLIC

Shopping is a need. But Shopaholicism is a psychological malady that needs help. Here are some tips.

BY ZARA MAQBOOL

Our mental health defines our thoughts, emotions and behaviours. The healthier our mind is, the better choices we will make in our life. Depression, anxiety and unresolved trauma takes the shape of unhealthy tendencies like addiction,

self-harming behaviour and physical illness, to name a few. Shopping addiction is a real thing, a more acceptable addiction but an addiction nonetheless.

It is usually acceptable because, by the look of it, it doesn't harm anyone other than your pocket and there is a very thin line between shopping based on needs and shopping which is an outcome of unmet psychological needs.

Any addiction is a compulsive psychological need to do something again

and again and is usually an avoidance of addressing repressed emotional distress and finding a sense of pleasure in something.

The psychology of a shopaholic isn't any different. The compulsive need to shop again and again without any need is an addiction and a compensation of something within you that people don't want to address. Just to feel 'good', the compulsive shopper visits the mall again and again.

What is this addiction rooted in? One factor that would be common is to present a false sense of self. Alfred Adler, a psychotherapist, was known for his theory around how every human being is born with a sense of inferiority and they spend their entire life driven by a need to strive for superiority to compensate for the sense of inferiority. In some people, this inherent sense of inferiority is amplified by factors such as body shaming, failures in early life and being put down by parents - all leading to low self-esteem.

So such people, while struggling inside, will present a persona to the world that looks happy and successful and what better medium to convince the other but a few Gucci bags or a fancy watch or two.

But after they acquire something, the temporary sense of achievement and pleasure quickly dissipates which naturally it would as it's a deflection and not exactly need fulfilment and they would try to get another material thing to feel the same again. Slowly, it turns into an addiction as the need for more intensifies.

Low self-esteem is one of the most common factors and shopping becomes a way to improve self-esteem. It is also validation-seeking because when you adorn expensive clothes and display branded possessions such as a watch or mobile phone, you expect people to validate you. It is almost as if the person borrows a sense of self from what they have in the form of material goods to compensate with powerful inner feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness.

Shopping addiction is also a distraction from overwhelming feelings of sadness, anger, fear or stress, which is often considered 'retail therapy.' Retail therapy is a short-lived habit as a source of comfort once in a while. But if compulsively repeated, it would classify as addiction.

Most shopping addicts would most likely be suffering from undiagnosed depression and anxiety is a given. Amna was a shopaholic for years until she started therapy. She related how she was never interested in owning anything she would buy. Through therapy she found out what obsessive shopping did

for her. "Having experienced helplessness most of my life, I felt powerful when I would go and buy almost anything I wanted." Shopping gave her an inauthentic sense of empowerment to compensate for the helplessness she experienced in childhood. It gave her an

really needing them or perhaps you cannot afford them. Do you feel a sense of anger and frustration if you don't get what you had thought of getting? It is most likely that frustration is a cue to what really troubles you.

Ask yourself what you are really



illusory sense of control.

Psychotherapy can play an important part in asking some of the questions posed here and help you to resolve an unhealthy addiction, which, on the look of it, seems pretty harmless. It is not that it doesn't harm anyone but it is the cycle of addiction that you are stuck in, where an impulse rooted in distress leads you to visit the mall or go for online shopping. After some momentary pleasure, you start feeling low again and the urgency to get more to seek the same sense of happiness kicks in.

You have a shopping addiction if you buy things again and again without

avoiding in your life that is rooted in pain. How consciously or unconsciously is this simple behaviour of 'I want this' or 'I need this' actually a distraction from your real need. It is the need to process your wounds, to reflect on your inner self and connect with your innermost triggers that enhances your self-awareness. Can you sit with the anxiety that gets triggered if you don't submit to the impulse to get the next thing on your list? That's the anxiety that can lead you to the root cause of your real issue and guide you on how to heal yourself from within rather than depend on the outside. ❏

THE FRAGRANCE OF TEARS

TEARS OF SILENCE

Sound journalist Victoria Schofield was a good friend of Benazir Bhutto's while both were college-mates at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Both held the honour of being presidents of the Oxford Union. The flamboyant and emotional Benazir found a sensible and loyal counterpart in Schofield, who has just published this account of her long association with the late, former prime minister of Pakistan. Schofield is clear about underscoring that the book is emphatically not a biography. Rather it is an intimate, often emotional portrait of a complex woman seen through the lens of a talented writer and dear friend.

Schofield remembers the tall, Westernized Pakistani who befriended her at Oxford, with nostalgia and consistent fondness. They both enjoyed shopping for Anna Belinda dresses while students, but their intelligence and drive led them to follow far less frivolous pathways as well. She also notes that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto demonstrated a loving and encouraging attitude towards his daughter. This aspect of him was brought home far more forcefully to Schofield when she journeyed to Pakistan during the time of the fraught Bhutto trial. I was struck to find reproduced in the text some of her hand-drawn sketches of people as diverse as traditionally garbed peons and indeed Mr Bhutto himself.

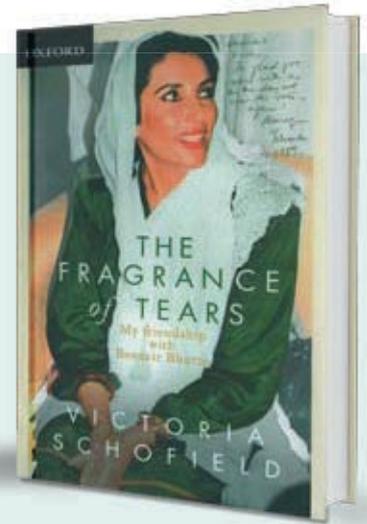
Based predominantly at Flashman's Hotel, she consistently acted as a source of moral support for Benazir, and along with her dear friend helped transcribe documents as important as Bhutto's rejoinder to the charges against him (the original was handwritten in prison). In spite of being hounded by shady members of the intelligence service, she persisted in supporting Benazir through thick and thin, and indeed collected enough material to write her own account of matters, *Bhutto: Trial and Execution*.

Given that Schofield's sympathy

as well as her loyalty was unwavering, Benazir continued to regard her highly during the tense years of the Zia regime, many of which Ms Bhutto spent under house-arrest. Readers will be partly perplexed and partly amused to discover that she was considered enough of a threat by the Zia regime to be deported from the country at one point. A Sikh airport official in India couldn't believe that this 'little girl' was allegedly considered the source of so much trouble.

Schofield met Indira Gandhi at one point and, being familiar with the area of Kashmir herself, discussed the matter with the late Indian Prime Minister. But what struck me the most in terms of her interviews was that Schofield was the very first Western journalist to interview the legendary Asif Ali Zardari after his marriage to Benazir. The wedding itself is described in the book in colourful, exotic, and affectionate terms, but Zardari and Schofield pulled no punches when it came to delineating that his position as the male spouse of a female prime minister often resulted in him being viewed in unfavorable terms by arch-conservative and/or unfriendly individuals alike.

But then Schofield would be the first to admit that Benazir's multiple terms in power made her a singularly unique figure on both the international stage as well as on her home front. Schofield intimates that the late prime minister was always sharply aware of this, perhaps at no point more so than when her brother Murtaza (whom she loved but with whom she had undeniable political tensions) was killed. The author believes that such moments were incredibly difficult for a fundamentally loving woman who adored her family, seniors, peers and juniors alike. Like Schofield, Benazir had three children who were deprived of a strong-willed mother far too soon. There is an especially touching moment recounted when Bilawal got ready to attend Ox-



Title: *The Fragrance of Tears*
 Author: Victoria Schofield
 Publisher: Oxford UP
 Pages: 324

ford and was missing a bit of paperwork affiliated with acquiring membership of the Oxford Union. Schofield and Benazir were both present and the latter leaned forward and quipped that two former Union presidents should be enough to vouch for the young man. The move worked!

Readers will be amazed to discover that at one juncture President Musharraf met and asked Schofield to use her influence with her friend on a political stance, whereupon the author firmly noted that though undeniably close to Ms Bhutto, she never intervened. But regretted connecting Benazir with notable historian William Dalrymple, whose piece on the prime minister ended up being far less flattering than anyone expected. After that Schofield declined all journalistic requests. Although Schofield asserts that Benazir's legal action against Christina Lamb for defamation was well-justified.

The book is rich, dense and makes for very satisfying reading. I was impressed to see that the author has taken the trouble to have a comprehensive index of significant names and details compiled. There are many accounts of Benazir around today but Schofield's is certainly one of the warmest and sincerest. Her late friend, whose life was tragically and violently cut short too soon, would most likely have approved of this literary endeavour. ❏

CHUPKE CHUPKE

JOINT FAMILY PHENOMENON

By Ibra Aamir

Pakistan's TV serial industry offers delightful stuff to watch. Danish Nawaz's 'Chupke Chupke', with Ayeza Khan and Osman Khalid Butt, has won the hearts of elders and youth alike. The serial highlights some major issues in Pakistani society through a filter of humour and laughter.

The story is set in today's times in a joint family system. While the world, including Pakistan, is making moves towards developing a nuclear family system, the revival of the extended family has transported us back to the good old days, questioning why we were shifting away from joint families in the first place? It can be said without doubt that living in an extended family is a fun-filled experience for children. But what about when these children grow up? Adults require privacy, which is not possible when your cousins and other family members are constantly nagging you. Your life doesn't remain yours. Apart from your parents, the entire family has a say in the decisions of your life and that's where the problem lies. Privacy and decision-making of the family are disturbed and that's what pushed us to start inhabiting nuclear families.

Furthermore, the serial's story outlines that the grandfather, Nawab Sahab, had two wives and that's the root of the rivalry between the two families. In the initial episodes, it is clearly stated that both wives were given separate houses and businesses and both had an equal number of children. The setting story sets a brilliant example of how a man should treat his wives if he is married to more than one woman. Equality between wives is imperative and that's where the stigma ends. As long as the

husband has treated his wives and their families equally, there's no need for the women to have bitterness between them.

By marrying off Meenu with Faazi bhaiya, 'Chupke Chupke' reflects on the problems associated with cousin marriage. Growing up in a joint family household, all cousins are taught



by their parents to call each other 'Behan' and 'Bhai'. While these titles imply the bond of siblings between the cousins, marrying them without their consent, results in their newly-named relationship of spouses that could be a potential root cause for arguments within the family.

While perceiving a girl as your sister your entire life, how is it possible to develop an intimate relationship with her when she is your wife now? Furthermore, science has discovered that cousin marriages often lead to genetic disorders in future generations and Pakistanis are yet to acknowledge this serious issue.

Extending the problem, once they

are married, there is a lack of privacy for them to build an understanding. As said earlier, privacy has become a serious issue in Pakistan when it comes to families. While we have moved towards living in nuclear families, our minds are still confined by stereotypes, thinking that we are obliged to have a say in every matter of the household.

In addition, some focus also needs to be made on the precious bond of siblings the serial represents. However, as we grow up, we form our own families; siblings need to maintain some boundaries and not invade the privacy of each other's families. While teasing each other in childhood seems playful, interfering in personal matters in adulthood is just wrong and needs to stop.

It is high time that as Pakistanis, we ponder over these issues that prevail in our society and hold us back from prospering as a nation. They might seem trivial at the moment, but every step counts no matter which aspect of life it is. No doubt the serial has given our evenings laughter and family bonding, but the audience expects such serials to be broadcast all round the year instead of just in a particular period.

The actors in the serial have unrivalled acting skills. Indeed, every actor portrays their character with excellence and Saima Akram Chaudry has served her audience with yet another story to remember. ❏



THE COURIER

ESPIONAGE THRILLER

By Muhammad Ali Khan

Often in a dangerous situation, one wants to believe that he/she might respond as a hero and that's probably because of the films we see that show normal people making bold moves when they are in a similar situation. It would feel amazing if we react similarly to those protagonists in our own lives when facing threat or oppression. It is empowering to watch films with such messages and it's particularly true when it comes to stories about real people.

Based on a true story, 'The Courier' is about a British businessman Greville Wynne who gets recruited into one of the greatest international conflicts in history. Though his actions benefit his country, what then follows is a dangerous partnership that leads to his imprisonment and torture.

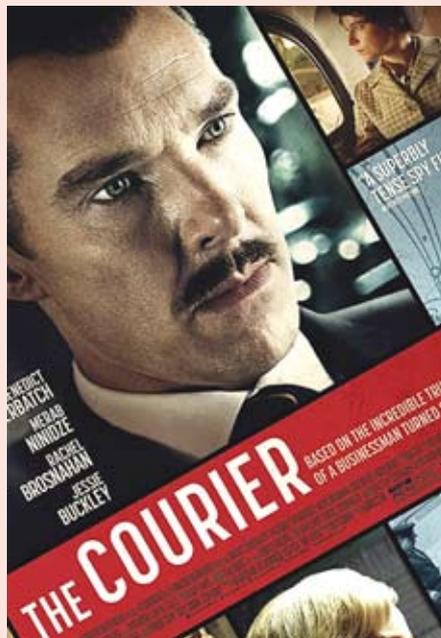
Set in the early 1960s, the spy-thriller begins with Oleg Penkovsky (Merab Ninidze), a Soviet military intelligence colonel, who makes a rather bold move by sending a secret word to the American embassy in Moscow that he is willing to provide military secrets to the United States and Great Britain.

As soon as the embassy receives the news, American and British agent Emily Donovan (Rachel Brosnahan) takes control. She, along with Dickie Franks (Angus Wright), taps a British businessman Greville Wynne (Benedict Cumberbatch) to act as a courier for Penkovsky. Since Wynne travels to and forth to eastern European countries for work, the CIA and British intelligence think that it won't be difficult for him to be a courier. And because he is a businessman with no connection to the intelligence services, it is easy for him to convince Russia that he is just another greedy capitalist.

When Wynne is asked about it, he turns them down as he has no formal training in espionage. He's a family man with a young son Andrew (Keir

Hills) and a loving wife Sheila (Jessie Buckley). But he obliges out of duty to his country with the promise that his wife and son would be taken care of should the worst occur.

Soon Wynne starts pursuing new contracts in the Soviet Union and while doing so regularly takes packages from Penkovsky and smuggles them out of the country. As he continues to



make regular trips, his relationship with Penkovsky enhances. As the two family men spend more time together, their guards lower and the two become close friends. But when Donovan and Franks tell Wynne that his assignment is complete, he refuses to leave Penkovsky without an exit plan.

Cumberbatch and Ninidze do a very good job conveying their newfound bond which helps the viewer swallow the unbelievable decision that sets the second half of the film in motion.

Benedict Cumberbatch is quite appealing as Greville Wynne. With his little moustache, neatly-parted hair, trench coat and slouching gait, he looks every bit the middle-class

businessman. His ordinary look makes him stand out as the businessman-turned-spy.

The real attraction is the great Georgian actor Merab Ninidze who plays Oleg Penkovsky. He definitely can relay an entire novel's worth of information with just a couple of glances.

Rachel Brosnahan's performance as the CIA operative Emily Donovan feels completely action-packed. The way she executes the entire operation is commendable.

Though Jessie Buckley, as Wynne's suspicious wife, and Rachel Brosnahan, as an amusingly pushy CIA operative, add welcome jolts of female energy, 'The Courier' is essentially the story of an extraordinary male friendship.

Directed by Dominic Cooke, 'The Courier' recreates the era of the 1960s perfectly from the clothes and cars to JFK's speeches on the radio.

Tom O'Connor's screenplay for the film heavily depends on the two self-aggrandizing books 'The Man from Moscow' (1967) and 'The Man from Odessa' (1981) where British electrical engineer Greville Wynne, who was never formally acknowledged by the British government, shares his experiences. The film explains how correctly these books tell the story. There are plenty of thrills for spy thriller buffs.

The film is appealing from its outset and draws one into its tale of ordinary men doing extraordinary things to save the world. The credit goes to Sean Bobbitt's moody cinematography and Abel Korzeniowski's engaging score. Their work gives the illusion that the film could be made in the timeframe it is set in.

It's one of the most remarkable espionage stories of the 20th century, a tale of personal loyalty instead of geopolitics or spycraft. The film gives a strong message making 'The Courier' worth seeking out. **S**



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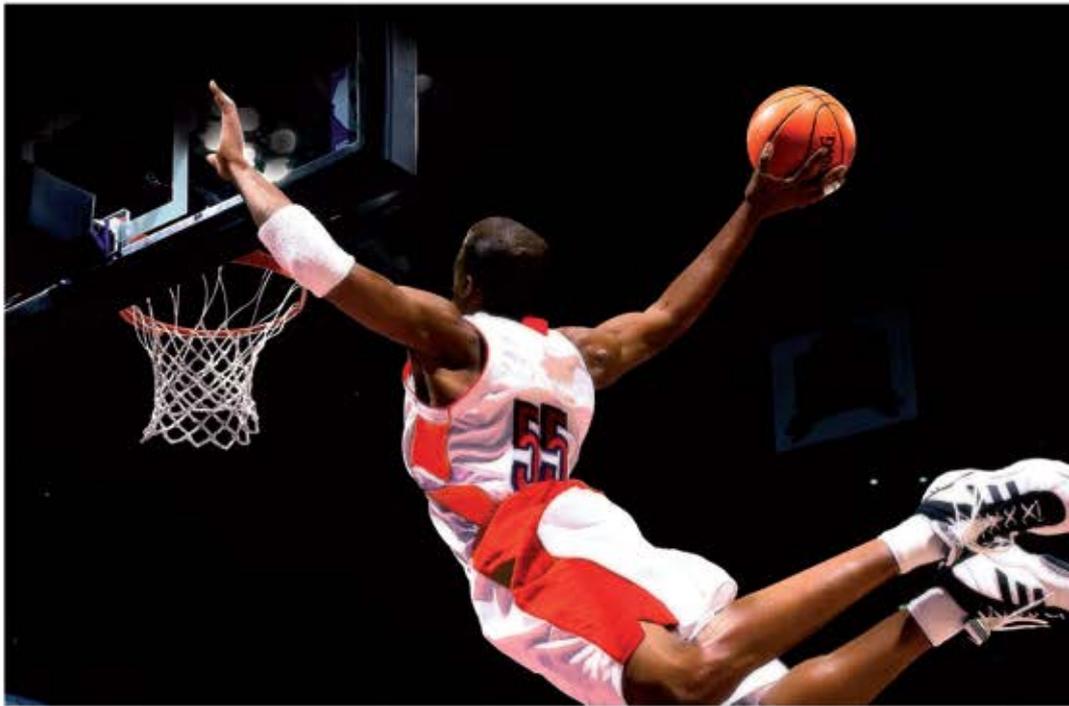
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