

Slogan

7th HUM AWARDS



Afghanistan	Afg. 200
Australia	A\$ 20
Bangladesh	Taka 200
Bhutan	NU 150
Canada	CS 20
China	RMB 30
France	FR 100
Hong Kong	HK\$ 75
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
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HUM Awards 2024

A night of fashion faux pas

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2024



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Doors of opportunity

Malaysia and Pakistan strengthen ties through trade, tech collaboration, and shared regional interests. In times of adversity, the wise seek new opportunities. This adage perfectly encapsulates the recent diplomatic visit of Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to Pakistan. With both nations battling economic and political headwinds, their decision to deepen ties is more than timely to navigate through turbulent waters. This visit, while rich in ceremonial gestures and agreements, could mark the beginning of a strategically significant partnership, if both nations play their cards right.

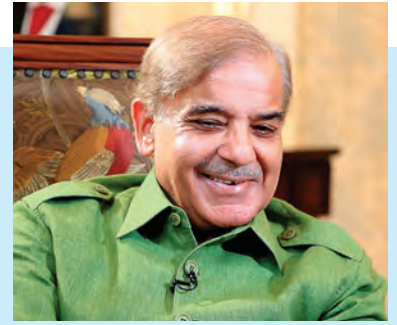
At the heart of the discussions was Malaysia's agreement to import 100,000 tonnes of halal meat and basmati rice from Pakistan. For Pakistan, whose economy is on life support, this comes as a lifeline. Prime Minister Ibrahim also emphasised on the need for skilled labour, especially in the tech sector. Considering that Pakistan's young, tech-savvy population is facing limited job opportunities at home, this presents a significant opportunity for much-needed workforce collaboration. The two leaders didn't either shy away from addressing global flashpoints. The Malaysian PM's unequivocal condemnation of Israeli aggression in Gaza and his support for Pakistan's stance on Kashmir reinforce the ideological alignment between the two countries. While such solidarity is expected between Muslim-majority nations, the consistency of this message demonstrates a unity of purpose that transcends trade and defence. In the realm of defence, Prime Minister Ibrahim's discussion with the Army Chief Gen Asim Munir reflects a recognition of shared regional challenges amid rising tensions in the Middle East. Ultimately, the two countries must look to balance their mutual interests to ensure stability in the geopolitically sensitive South Asian region.

Strengthening ties with Pakistan could give Kuala Lumpur an edge in regional diplomacy, considering Malaysia's role as the upcoming chair of ASEAN. But it will require sustained effort and constant commitment on both sides to ensure these agreements don't fall victim to shifting geopolitical sands.

Skillful Diplomacy

Pakistan needs to revisit its decades-long diplomatic approach in the ongoing transformed landscape. The modern era has paved the way for a growing multipolar world. The power equation is being redefined while intense competition for global influence among powerful nations is at its peak in a noticeable form. Currently, countries with robust economies and modern technologies have become central on a global scale. In the given scenario, Pakistan must consider its diplomatic policies since the country seems to have the international clout and heft it had once enjoyed a few decades earlier. Pakistan is no longer a country that could shape and influence geopolitics. In a word, a display of skillful diplomacy is needed to build multiple relationships with the leading nation and pursue national interests for the greater benefit of the nation.

*Syed Zaigham Naqvi,
Karachi, Pakistan.*



Remarkable Feat

Many people are concerned about the future of democracy in India. However, they need to see the positive side of New Delhi's continuing journey to democracy since its inception as an independent nation. Regarding the recent Lok Sabha election results, Rahul Gandhi's rise as a formidable political figure has reaffirmed the erratic nature of Indian politics. Even though Prime Minister Narendra Modi has secured a third term, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) miserably failed to achieve a parliamentary majority, falling well short of its 370 in the 543-seat Lok Sabha parliament. Damaging Narendra Modi's reputation as the face of the BJP party, the disappointing election results have also highlighted the democratic side of the world's largest democracy, a remarkable feat unseen in other parts of the world.

*Shakeel Raza,
Saharanpur, India.*

Future of Pakistan Cricket

Pakistan cricket is at its lowest point at the moment. Having recently been beaten on their home soil in both Tests by a cricket minnow like Bangladesh, the Pakistan cricket team has continued its never-ending spree of one-sided defeats, particularly in its home grounds. It's time to examine the collapse and revamp the depleting cricket infrastructure in Pakistan with an unbiased mind. Although the current PCB chief seems to have shied away from carrying out so-called surgery and making strong decisions, the need of the hour is to appoint someone on the cricket board who knows the game well and can run administrative affairs smoothly. So far, the future of Pakistan cricket is bleak.

*Shazia Baloch,
Hyderabad, Pakistan.*



Significant Achievement

The rise and rise of electoral democracy in Bhutan is praiseworthy. In a short span of time, both policymaking and governance in the small country have made significant strides. Bhutan recently elected two female members to the National Assembly, including one elected member to the National Council, which is indeed a significant achievement in the history of a small Himalayan nation. This suggests that the country's legislative bodies and lawmakers are open to creating a level playing field by offering both its men and women equal opportunities in all spheres of life. This achievement will go a long way towards addressing missing links and identifying existing gaps that must be addressed to strengthen governance and democracy.

*S. Tandin Wangmo,
Dagana Dzongkhag, Bhutan*



Who Said That!

Hasty Exit Fallout

As the recent turn of events suggests, the United States seems to have learned little from history, especially recent ones. More's the pity: War-ravaged Afghanistan has been mired in acute disorder and chaos for more than five decades in a row owing to America's self-interested policies and cherry-picked approaches, corroborating



the flawed U.S. policy towards Afghanistan, not just that of the former President Joe Biden-led administration. Other than the ill-managed withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Afghanistan, the hasty U.S. exit was almost a face-saving act in an abortive attempt to mitigate losses and exit Afghanistan while keeping some dignity intact as the Taliban has been able to regain power. Unfortunately, the people of Afghanistan are still paying the price of a hasty U.S. departure.

Najeeb Akhundzai,

Suicide Prevention Efforts

To address the increasing number of suicides in the country, the Nepal government, in association with local NGOs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), has taken significant steps that must be supported and acknowledged. Moving beyond the standard approaches to suicide prevention, the Nepal government has adopted a multifaceted strategic approach that recognizes the complex nature of suicide and engages relevant stakeholders. In this regard, the National Planning Commission is developing a national suicide prevention action plan aimed at ensuring joint efforts among key institutions and stakeholders and institutional accountability, coupled with sustained state commitment to mental health promotion and suicide prevention.

Arjan Dhruva,
Kathmandu, Nepal.



"I will quit if I need to, but I will not come under any pressure. I want that to be loud and clear."
Shehbaz Sharif,
Prime Minister of Pakistan



"We are not opposed to Islam *and* Muslims."
Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister of India



"If India wants to keep Hasina Wajid until Bangladesh wants her back, the condition would be that she has to keep quiet."
Muhammad Yunus,
Head of the Bangladesh Caretaker Government



"Our politics needs to be cleaner, and the people have called for a different political culture"
Anura Kumara Dissanayake,
President of Sri Lanka



"Our work is urgent, and we begin it today."
Keir Starmer,
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom



"What should be clear is that there are no shortcuts to rebooting Pakistan's global influence."
Maleeha Lodhi,
Pakistan's Former Ambassador



"Women of all ages are obsessed."
Atiqa Odho,
Veteran TV Actress



A Maulana for All Occasions!

If politics is the art of making things possible out of impossible, Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman, chief of the Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F), embodies every characteristic of a consummate politician. Nobody can beat him when it comes to dealmaking (and breaking) and political brinkmanship. Someone who knows how to stay relevant despite all odds, Fazal-ur-Rehman has, once again, emerged as the most influencing figure, nay, a binding force that could bring the worst adversaries to the negotiation table and also operate as the man-in-between. However, the country needs him more than ever as far as Maulana's proven ability to end the political stalemate is concerned. ❏

Land of VIPs and IPPs

It would not be logically wrong or off-base to refer to Pakistan as the land of VIPs and IPPs. However, the added term of IPPs has come out to be more significant and damaging to the millions of people known as Pakistani, bearing the brunt of both the VIPs and IPPs at the expense of their own well-being. As expected, the incumbent government is unwilling to show the contract signed with the holier-than-thou IPPs or disclose their complete list as it must be against the national interest to know their names, including the identities of their frontmen. ❏



Pakistan's Cricket Debacle

Winning or losing, the Pakistan cricket team always grabs the headlines mainly for the wrong reasons. This happened again when Bangladesh recently whitewashed it in a two-match Test series. While the current chief of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) plays on many fronts, nobody knows where Pakistan cricket is heading or when things will improve. England has now arrived in Pakistan to play a 3-match Test series, including three T20s. Does this suggest that what was left by Bangladesh will now be finished by the English cricket team, putting the last nail in the coffin? ❏

Quaid's death anniversary observed in Bangladesh

The 76th death anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was observed at the National Press Club in Dhaka with Urdu songs and poetry the other day.

Speakers on the occasion highlighted various aspects of Quaid's life, remarking that Pakistan would not have been created without him, and without Pakistan, "Bangladesh too would not exist."

These remarks came during a discussion session organised by the Nawab Salimullah Academy at the Tofazzal Hossain Manik Miah Hall of the National Press Club. Prof Dr Mostafizur Rahman presented the keynote paper. ❏



Ambassador Amna Baloch appointed as foreign secretary

Ambassador Amna Baloch officially took over as Pakistan's 33rd Foreign Secretary, succeeding Ambassador Syrus Sajjad Qazi, who retired after reaching superannuation.



A seasoned diplomat, Ambassador Baloch has held key positions both in Pakistan and abroad, including Consul General in Chengdu, China (2014-2017); High Commissioner to Malaysia (2019-2023); and Ambassador to the European Union, Belgium, and Luxembourg (2023-2024). With a Master's degree in History, she began her career in the Pakistani Foreign Service in 1991. ❏

Nestlé Pakistan conducts capacity-building training

Nestlé Pakistan carried out a two-day training on ecotourism and sustainable waste management in Naran under Travel Responsibly for Experiencing Ecotourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

government and civil society.

Talking about the initiative, Sheikh Waqar Ahmad, Head of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, Nestlé Pakistan, said, "Our partnership with the government and World Bank



(TREK), which embodies Nestlé's vision for a waste-free future.

Under the TREK initiative, over 450 public and private sector participants have been trained in Abbottabad, Swat, Galiyat, Chitral, Peshawar, Kumrat and Naran. The training comprised sessions on categorizing waste, the importance of recycling, learning to conduct waste audits, basic food safety, and WASH compliance, among others. Participants included representatives from the hospitality sector,

Group on TREK will help realize our vision for shaping a waste-free future by driving new behavior for a cleaner environment."

Nestlé Pakistan's commitment to TREK includes two pillars: a massive awareness campaign focusing on Reduce, Reuse and Recycle and a Stakeholder Engagement plan that includes activities that will help counter waste, pollution and wildlife destruction, in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 12, 13, 15 and 17. ❏

China to crush foreign encroachment in South China Sea

China will crush any foreign incursion into its sovereign territory, including in the South China Sea, a senior Beijing military official said on the sidelines of a defence forum.

Washington and Beijing have verbally sparred over China's increasingly assertive approach in disputed maritime regions, including the South China Sea.

In recent months, Chinese vessels have engaged in a series of high-profile confrontations with Philippine ships in the waters, which Beijing claims almost in their entirety despite an international court ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

Speaking to a small group of journalists at the Xiangshan Forum,

Chinese Army Lieutenant General He Lei said, "We hope that the South China Sea will remain a sea of peace."

But, he said, "If the United States moves its pawns behind the scenes if it pushes countries to the front line, or if the United States itself ends up on the front line, then we in the Chinese People's Liberation Army [...] will never have any patience".

"We in the Chinese People's Liberation Army will resolutely crush any

foreign hostile encroachment on China's territorial, sovereign and maritime rights



and interests with firm determination, staunch will, strong capability and effective means," he said. ❏

HBL awarded 'Best Board of the Year'

HBL has been honored with the 'Best Board of the Year' award by the Pakistan Institute of Corporate Governance (PICG), in recognition of its exemplary leadership, outstanding governance, and strategic oversight.



Aamir Irshad, Acting President & CEO - HBL, received the award on behalf of the Board of Directors of HBL at the PICG Awards ceremony held at the Movenpick Hotel in Karachi. Other Senior Officials of the Bank were also present on the occasion.

While announcing the award PICG explained that the 'Best Board of the Year' was awarded based on the criteria of not only achieving the highest Board Strategic Performance Index (BSPI) but also having ensured the most efficient

evaluation process in cohesion with the management team. The HBL Board also set a record of the most timely completion of the evaluation process after year-end, and held detailed discussions with PICG's management to discuss the way forward.

This achievement reflects HBL's unwavering commitment to excellence and responsible corporate practices. ❏

India to boost electric vehicle adoption

India's cabinet has approved a scheme to spend 109 billion rupees on incentives for adopting electric vehicles to curb pollution and move towards cleaner fuels. The PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement, or PM E-DRIVE, will provide subsidies worth 36.79 billion rupees on e-two-wheelers,



e-three-wheelers, e-ambulances and e-trucks. Although the adoption of EVs is still low in India, it is on the rise as the government promotes clean energy and offers companies incentives to build vehicles and parts in the country. Truck replacement will be incentivised, with an outlay of 5 billion rupees for e-trucks. The government also set aside 43.91 billion rupees for public transport agencies to buy 14,028 electric buses. ❏

Turkmenistan to access Gwadar Port

Turkmenistan is set to become the first Central Asian country to access the Gwadar Port under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as both countries are about to ink an agreement on this matter.

Pakistan and Turkmenistan are already pursuing various joint projects, including the TAPI pipeline, railway track and fibre connectivity to connect two regions: South and Central Asia.

The government has formed a committee to vet the draft of the agreement to be signed between the Port of Gwadar and the Port of Turkmenbashi under the CPEC.

In the recent cabinet meeting, the Planning, Development and Special Initiatives minister was assigned the task of overseeing the agreement with the support of the Ministry of

Commerce, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Maritime Affairs.

The agreement shall be placed before

Affairs, the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Interior have completed the due diligence process. Besides,



the cabinet after the committee, and the planning ministry vet it.

According to the Ministry of Maritime

the Ministry of Law & Justice has also vetted the draft MoU after making minor changes. ❏

Win Gold with NBP PayPak Debit Cards

National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) recently announced the launch of its latest "PayPak Cardholder Campaign," providing customers with an exciting opportunity to win gold. By using NBP



PayPak Debit Cards, customers can enter to win a 2.5g gold bar through various transactions, including ATM withdrawals of Rs. 500 or more, retail purchases of Rs. 5,000 or more, and online transactions of Rs. 5,000 or more. 75 gold bars will be awarded, with 25 winners in each transaction category. This exclusive campaign will run from September to December 2024, giving NBP PayPak cardholders the chance to benefit from their everyday spending. ❏

Hasina 'destroyed' Bangladesh's institutions: Yunus

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus took over as interim leader of Bangladesh in August after violent political unrest that led to an unceremonious end to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 15-year rule.

In an interview with DW, the Nobel Peace Prize winner addressed an array of issues, including the domestic political situation, Bangladesh's relations with India and the influx of the Rohingya into the country.

The 84-year-old leader, who holds the official position of chief adviser in the interim government, said former prime minister Hasina "destroyed almost all institutions" and "the economy was shattered."

"You do not know where to begin because everything has to be restarted in a different way," he said, adding that his interim administration wants to "establish citizens' rights, human rights,

democracy and everything that goes with a good governance."

He also hinted at amending the constitution. "We should be focusing on the major issues of the constitution and build a consensus. We cannot do anything without a consensus because our strength comes from the consensus. If we can establish the consensus, we go ahead and do that."

But Yunus refused to give an exact date for the

next election, saying it will be held "as soon as possible."

"That is our mandate. We want to come to the election and have a decent election, beautiful election, celebrate the victory of a particular party or whatever party comes in, and hand over the power to the newly elected government. So this should be as brief as possible. We cannot give you a date and time right now." ❏





HUM Awards 2024

A night of fashion faux pas

The 2024 HUM Awards were held on Sunday night in London, and looking at all the fashion we can tell that this clearly wasn't the HUM Style Awards. Style was noticeably lacking, to say the least.

Sifting through all the looks, it wasn't so much about who nailed it or who flopped — most attendees hovered somewhere between mediocre and outright misses. They may have given out awards, but fashion-wise there was no winning. And what a tragedy that is — one truly looks forward to the rare nights when Pakistani talent is celebrated, hoping for a dose of glitz and glam; alas, all we got was a parade of underwhelming outfits that barely scraped the bar.

Without further ado, let's get into it.

The good and the mid

Kubra Khan

Kubra Khan wore a sparkly pink gown from Esteles London and while she looked gorgeous and the dress itself was quite lovely, minor details

ruined the whole vibe. Case in point — the extra added fabric at the bottom of her outfit which transformed it from seamless to clunky and the panel on her chest which wasn't stitched very well. We think the panel was the worst part about her dress but it didn't have to be. If the stitching was straighter and the piece added better, the outfit would've been flawless. In its current state, it looked as if they ran out of time and did a quick fix in five minutes. All in all, a good effort and definitely one of the better looks of the night.

Hania Aamir

Hania Aamir kept it minimal and chic, and that worked out great for her! Her baby pink corset was paired with a silken skirt a shade darker than the top. Aamir's makeup was glowy, natural and pink, which went perfectly with the Barbie theme she appeared to have going on. Her jewellery was also subtle in the best way possible — a diamond necklace, small earrings and a couple of silver rings. We couldn't help but think of Margot Robbie during the Barbie premiere. Probably one of the

best looks from the night.

Ramsha Khan

Ramsha Khan's second look of the night was stunning — a mint embroidered saree, a glittery blouse and minimal jewellery which went perfectly with the kaam on her outfit. The curls in her hair sat perfect and the pinky-orange makeup looked great with the colour of her clothes. The first look, however? Don't even get us started. We're traumatised enough. Just FYI, celebrities need to stop it with the 3D floral embellishments. This is not the mid-2010s — you just look two thousand and late.

Azfar Rehman

Azfar Rehman kept it basic — very basic — but hey, he looked good! A well-tailored grey suit, with long pants and a black turtleneck. Effortlessly chic, though we hope we can expect a little more effort from our male celebrities in the future. We loved his chunky loafers and round sunglasses.

Hamza Sohail

Hamza Sohail looked good, but did he look great? No. It was another

basic moment — a black suit and a silky black shirt with the top couple of buttons open. Honestly, it was giving

But, we guess there are perks to being a handsome man in a well-made suit. Rehman and Sohail used that to their full advantage. Good for them!

The bad (AKA you should've stayed home)

Dananeer Mobeen was wearing a white, voluminous frock with gold embroidery on the bodice and her bell sleeves. The look was tied together with a high ponytail and natural makeup. While Mobeen did look beautiful, it felt as if she missed the memo that this was an award show



and not her Arab cousin's wedding. This did not pass the vibe check. At all.

Mahira Khan

The queen bee of Pakistani entertainment, Mahira Khan, wore a gorgeous rose gold number by none other than Faraz Manan. The gown had a beaded top and a plain, flowy, silken skirt, with a dupatta to match. However, one couldn't help but compare her look to Bollywood's Ananya Panday, who was also wearing Manan at the Indian Film Fare Awards. Panday's look simply looked more luxe, clean and designer, whereas Mahira's left us wanting more. The bodice felt like it was too short, and the stitching didn't look super neat. Regardless, we love Mahira and thought she looked beautiful especially because of her immaculate makeup and big, bouncy hair.

Yumna Zaidi

Yumna Zaidi is one of the best actors in the Pakistani entertainment industry, but her outfit was not it, to put it politely. She paired a bedazzled white shirt with a beaded black skirt and...

It was as if she wore a work shirt with a shaadi lehnga. The panel inside the front open shirt completely ruined the top half, and while we agree that modesty is important, maybe go with a different shirt?! The skirt did not go with the shirt AT ALL, it was east meets west in the worst way possible. The whole look was a massive fashion faux pas. We think perhaps Zaidi's next move should be to hire a new stylist or revisit her partnership with stylist Hafsah Farooq who dressed her beautifully.

Sehar Khan

Sehar Khan's green Saniya Maskatiya gown was beautiful but could've been tailored better. Not terrible but not the best. It was quite bland and though she paired it with statement jewellery, it didn't make much of a statement. Had the material been different or more embellished, it could have worked better.

Mawra Hocane

Horrific. We have no words to describe this, except hodge-podge mess. It looks like something your British-Pakistani cousin in her 40s would wear — and we all know how we

feel about British-Pakistani fashion. It was arguably one of the worst looks of the night. If she wanted a more modest look, there were so many other options that would have looked better than this.

Ahad Raza Mir

The red velvet? The beading? This look was a BIG no from us. Once again, get a new stylist.

On the other hand, his father, Asif Raza Mir looked very dapper and classy. He wore a grey suit with a white button-down and a light grey scarf that added the perfect pop of colour with yellow dots. Ahad — please take style suggestions from your dad.

Sahir Ali Bagga

Was Saher Ali Bagga told that these aren't country music awards?! His black suit jacket was adorned — nay, bedazzled — with silver tassels and his lapel was covered in silver sparkle. This just hurts our eyes. It is painful to look at, good God. Sometimes, less is more Mr Bagga.

Atif Aslam

Yes, he's one of Pakistan's best singers. Yes, we love him. But this outfit is HORRENDOUS, and that's the kindest we can be. We think him and Bagga shopped at the same (terrible) store.

The 'Aadaat' singer's black jacket was covered in silver studs, in what appears to be a very poor attempt at making it seem as though he was dripping in silver. He wore a silken black shirt with a crooked bow, that his stylist failed to fix for him even though he was on the literal red carpet, and the shirt had weird V-shaped silver buttons which matched the embellishments on his pants.

Nope. Just nope.

Mamya Shah Jaffar

Mamya Shah Jaffar's outfit looked like she got a replica of Blake Lively's iconic 2023 Met Gala dress from Shein. Except the Shein designer got tired and gave up halfway. The top half was okay but the bottom looked flimsy, ill-fitting and cheap. Get. A. New. Stylist. AND better jewellery.

What were your favourite — or well, least favourite — looks from the HUM Awards? Tell us in the comments below! Meanwhile, excuse us, we're going to go rinse our eyes. ❌

NOOR JAHAN

MORE THAN SAAS-BAHU SAGA

By Maleeha Faisal Siddiqui

ARY Digital's TV serial Noor Jahan initially seems like a run-of-the-mill domestic play, but it transforms into a gripping revenge tale filled with layered characters and intense moral conflicts.

At its heart is Noor Jahan, played by Saba Hamid, who brings unparalleled grace and poise to a character whose ideals are deeply misguided yet oddly compelling. She imbues the character with such nuance that viewers find themselves torn between disapproving of Noor Jahan's actions and rooting for her on some level.

Noor Jahan is not your typical villain, nor is she a straightforward protagonist. She operates in a gray area, where her sense of justice and personal retribution often clouds her better judgment. As a mother and a wife, she commands respect, but her actions in pursuing her goals often push her into morally questionable territory.

Despite her evident flaws, Hamid's portrayal is so masterfully executed that it becomes difficult not to empathize with Noor Jahan, even as she engages in actions that traditionally mark her as an antagonist. This complexity forms the crux of her appeal, as Hamid humanizes her character with subtlety and depth.

One of Noor Jahan's greatest strengths is its handling of its female characters. In a television landscape often filled with one-dimensional female roles, Noor Jahan offers something different. Every female character is thoughtfully developed, replete with complexity and flaws that make them more human and

relatable.

These women are not caricatures of virtue or villainy. Instead, they exist in the messy, contradictory space between, making choices that are not always admirable but always understandable. Each woman in the series has her agenda, strengths and weaknesses, and none are relegated to plot devices. While Saba Hamid's



Noor Jahan commands the spotlight, Kubra Khan's portrayal of Noor Bano equally deserves mention.

As the character who ultimately becomes Noor Jahan's undoing, Noor Bano is integral to the story's development. Kubra Khan brings a quiet yet powerful intensity to the role, slowly building until Noor Bano becomes a pivotal force in the narrative.

In many ways, Noor Bano is Noor Jahan's foil. They are both strong women, driven by their principles, but with vastly different approaches to life and morality. Noor Jahan is headstrong and willing to bend the

rules to achieve her aims, but Noor Bano's strength lies in her resilience and moral fortitude. Kubra Khan captures this contrast beautifully, portraying Noor Bano not as a mere victim or a pawn in Noor Jahan's game but as a fully realized character with her emotional depth and motivations.

Noor Bano's steadfastness and quiet determination ultimately lead to Noor Jahan's downfall. Kubra Khan's performance is masterful in its subtlety, making Noor Bano a key player in the unfolding revenge saga.

The good thing is that the TV serial Noor Jahan is more than just another saas-bahu saga. The initial episodes introduce typical family dynamics, with tensions building between the traditional mother-in-law (saas) and daughter-in-law (bahu). However, it soon becomes evident that this TV serial is not merely another tale of domestic squabbles. As the plot unfolds, it takes a darker, more intense turn, evolving into a full-blown revenge saga that leaves

viewers on the edge of their seats. What makes Noor Jahan even more captivating is how it handles themes of justice and morality. The series presents these concepts not in black-and-white terms but as complex and multifaceted.

Noor Jahan's sense of justice is deeply personal and often clashes with the more conventional ideas of right and wrong. She sees herself as justified in her actions, even when those actions hurt the people closest to her. It's this moral ambiguity that keeps the audience questioning their own beliefs about justice and revenge. ❏

A FAMILY AFFAIR

FORGETTABLE FILM

By Syed Zain Akhter

Netflix's *A Family Affair* promises a heartwarming romantic comedy with an appealing cast but ultimately falls short. Directed by Richard LaGravenese and starring Nicole Kidman, Zac Efron and Joey King, the film sets up an ideal formula for success but delivers little beyond tired clichés and a predictable story. What starts as a fun premise—balancing family dynamics with romantic tension—quickly becomes a lackluster viewing experience.

The film's biggest flaw is its formulaic and unimaginative plot. We follow a young woman torn between career ambitions, romantic possibilities and complicated family ties—territory well-worn by countless other rom-coms. The plot feels like a collage of overused tropes, with no fresh twist to set it apart.

Predictability is a problem: every major plot point can be seen coming long before it happens, which strips the movie of any real emotional weight or surprise. This lack of originality turns what could have been a charming story into something that feels more like a chore to watch.

Adding to the frustration is the wasted potential of the talented cast. Nicole Kidman, Zac Efron,

and Joey King are capable actors, but here, they're trapped in shallow, one-dimensional roles. The characters lack depth, and their emotional struggles never



feel genuine.

The protagonist, in particular, comes off as indecisive and bland, making it hard to connect with her or care about her journey.

Meanwhile, the romantic lead lacks chemistry with her, leaving the love story feeling forced rather than swoon-worthy. Even the supporting family members are reduced to stereotypes, leaving the family dynamics flat and unconvincing.

The film's comedy, which should be its saving grace, also misses the mark. The humor feels forced and awkward, with outdated jokes that rarely land.

Instead of providing much-needed levity, the attempts at comedy drag the film down, making it harder to stay invested. It's frustrating because good humor could have salvaged some of the film's shortcomings, but here, it only highlights how out of touch the writing is.

Visually, *A Family Affair* doesn't offer much either. The cinematography is bland and forgettable, with no standout

moments or settings that could elevate the material. It's the kind of generic production that could belong to any number of Netflix's mid-tier offerings.

Ultimately, *A Family Affair* is a forgettable film that doesn't live up to its potential. It offers nothing new

and fails to engage emotionally or entertain. It might be worth a watch for fans of the actors, but for everyone else, there are far better options out there. ❌



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