

Slogan

Afghanistan	Afg. 150
Australia	A\$ 6
Bangladesh	Taka 100
Bhutan	NU 50
Brazil	BRL 20
Canada	CS 6
China	RMB 30
France	EUR 45
Hong Kong	HK\$ 30
India	Rs. 100
Japan	¥500
Korea	Won 3000
Malaysia	RM 6
Maldives	Rf 45
Myanmar	MMK10
Nepal	NcRs. 75
New Zealand	NZ\$ 7
Pakistan	Rs. 250
Philippines	P75
Saudi Arabia	SR 15
Singapore	S\$ 8
Sri Lanka	Rs. 100
Thailand	B. 100
Türkiye	Lira. 2
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20-C, Lane 12, off Khayaban-e-Ittehad,
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President & Editor-In-Chief

Syed Jawaid Iqbal

Editorial Coordinator

Syed Zain Akhter

Layout & Graphics

Haroon Rasheed
Riaz Masih

PRODUCTION & COORDINATION

Aqam-ud-Din Khan

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION

Shehryar Zulfiqar

Editorial

& Business Address

20-C, Lane 12 off Khayaban-e-Ittehad,
Phase II Extension, DHA,
Karachi - 75500, Pakistan
Tel: +9221 35313821-23
Email: info@slogan.com.pk

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A Divided Ummah in a Time of War

The intensity of the ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel continues to rise, threatening to engulf the wider Middle East in a dangerous cycle of retaliation and instability. What began as a series of strategic strikes has rapidly escalated into a broader confrontation involving missiles, drones, and regional alliances. As the conflict expands, the humanitarian, political, and economic consequences are becoming increasingly severe. For the Muslim world, this moment represents not only a geopolitical crisis but also a profound test of unity, wisdom, and collective responsibility.

Recent developments indicate that the conflict has entered a new and volatile phase. Israeli strikes have targeted military and security facilities across Iran, while Iran has responded with waves of missiles and drones aimed at Israel and other strategic locations in the region. The war has already claimed hundreds of lives and damaged critical infrastructure, raising fears of a prolonged regional conflict. The crisis deepened further after coordinated attacks by the United States and Israel on Iranian targets in late February 2026, an operation that reportedly eliminated senior Iranian leadership and intensified hostilities across the region. In response, Iran expanded its retaliation, launching missile and drone attacks not only toward Israel but also toward strategic sites in the Gulf.

The widening scope of the conflict illustrates how fragile the region's security architecture has become. When missiles cross borders and proxy groups join the battlefield, the risk of miscalculation increases dramatically. Even vital global trade routes have been threatened, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy corridors. A disruption there could send shockwaves through global energy markets and further destabilize already strained economies in Muslim-majority countries.

Yet beyond the military dimension lies a deeper and more troubling reality: the Muslim world remains divided at a time when unity is most needed. Political rivalries, sectarian differences, and competing alliances have long fractured the collective voice of Muslim nations. Instead of presenting a united diplomatic front capable of pushing for peace, many states remain preoccupied with regional rivalries or strategic alignments with global powers.

History offers numerous lessons about the consequences of disunity. When Muslim countries fail to coordinate their political and diplomatic efforts, external actors inevitably shape the direction of regional conflicts. The absence of a unified stance weakens the ability of Muslim nations to advocate effectively for peace, humanitarian relief, and stability.

The need of the hour is not military escalation but diplomatic leadership. Organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) must play a far more proactive role in mediating tensions and promoting dialogue. The Muslim world possesses considerable political influence, economic resources, and moral authority. When used collectively, these tools can help reduce tensions and encourage peaceful solutions.

Unity does not necessarily mean uniformity. Differences of ideology, political systems, and national interests will always exist. However, unity in purpose—particularly in matters of regional peace and humanitarian protection—is essential. A coordinated diplomatic initiative led by Muslim countries could help de-escalate the crisis, facilitate ceasefire negotiations, and ensure that the voices of affected populations are heard.

Equally important is the humanitarian dimension. Wars do not only destroy infrastructure; they shatter societies. Families are displaced, children lose access to education, and economic hardship spreads across borders. Muslim countries, working together, must prioritize humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts while advocating for the protection of civilians.



A Journey to Nowhere

The 78-year history of Pakistan can be divided into two types of leadership: Those who built Pakistan vs. those who looted the land. In the first period, the rulers of Pakistan were those who fought day and night and made all kinds of sacrifices to build Pakistan. The second period was that of those princely rulers who got a ready-made country. They freely used the national treasury, set new records of luxury, and the annual expenditure of the Prime Minister's House reached billions. There is no need to go into detail because, firstly, you are aware of the lavish spending of these rulers. Secondly, the purpose is to give you a glimpse of history so you can understand how our rulers established traditions of simplicity and thrift immediately after Pakistan's establishment, and then, God knows, where this train went off the rails.

*Dr. Asad Ali Riaz,
Sargodha, Pakistan.*

Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations

Tarique Rahman, the leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, has been sworn in as the new Prime Minister of Bangladesh, marking the beginning of a new era for the country. Relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan are also likely to improve after the new government takes office. The resumption of flights and the business partnership between Pakistan and Bangladesh are manifestations of a renewed relationship that may expand to defense, textiles, agriculture, and medical sectors. Pakistan has invited the newly elected Prime Minister of Bangladesh to visit Pakistan to lay the foundation for a new era of strong Pakistan-Bangladesh relations that can promote defense, education, tourism, culture, and the textile sector.

*Shagufta Jabeen,
Chattogram, Bangladesh.*



Remnants of British Colonialism

The outdated Central Superior Services (CSS) system is nothing more than a legacy of the British colonial era, producing "masters" like the British. Better to say, the CSS system is ripping off the national exchequer, and no reform is possible without eliminating it. Corruption is rooted in the institutions and has become a weapon of bureaucracy. The deficit in government institutions is not an accidental event but the result of systematic corruption, a product of a bureaucracy nurtured under CSS. These officers are ordinary graduates who have no technical skills. A simple graduate is appointed to science institutions, while there should be PhD scientists there. The result of this deliberate incompetence is a consummate failure. They govern, not serve. Their job is to terrorize the public, not to serve them. As long as such British-like masters continue to be produced, the failure will continue. The real solution is to recruit to institutions based on expertise and higher qualifications.

*Farah Junaid,
Karachi, Pakistan.*



Who Created Pakistan?

An impression has been created that Pakistan was created by the Muslim minority provinces of the Indian subcontinent, as there was neither much enthusiasm in the majority provinces nor did the Muslim League have much support for the creation of Pakistan. There is no doubt that the minority provinces made unprecedented and historic sacrifices for the creation of Pakistan. However, to assume that the Muslim majority provinces were not active and their role in the creation of Pakistan was very small is not correct. Just study history with a cool head and look at the facts with a neutral eye. One may easily find that indeed the minority Muslim provinces made a lot of sacrifices, but the role of the people of the majority Muslim provinces of India in the Pakistan Movement was more prominent. Otherwise, Pakistan would not have come into existence.

*Ehtesham Ahmed,
Badin, Pakistan.*



Who Said That!

Tax on Salaried Class

The salaried class in Pakistan is bearing the brunt of taxation more than the business sector. In the first seven months of the current fiscal year, for instance, salaried individuals paid Rs 315 billion in income tax, 10 percent more than in the previous fiscal year. Apparently, this could be good news for the government, but for the common man, it is otherwise. Salaried people are already grappling with hyperinflation, electricity and gas charges, and other unavoidable expenses, and a large part of their salary is spent on taxes. Currently, a salaried person pays about 38 percent of his income to the government, while real estate, shopkeepers, and many other sectors pay much less tax. Instead of expanding the tax net and bringing influential people into the system, the government is repeatedly burdening the same people who are already paying taxes. That is why educated and skilled people are leaving the country in droves. Last year, for example, about 762,000 Pakistanis left the country, of which more than 250,000 were skilled and highly educated.

Ain-ul-Haque,
Karachi, Pakistan

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Farah Junaid,
Karachi, Pakistan.



“Our neighbour threatened to weaponize the waters of the Indus River system that sustains the lives and livelihoods of Pakistan’s 240 million people.”

Shehbaz Sharif,
Prime Minister of Pakistan



“India has entered recent trade agreements from a position of strength.”

Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister of India



“Not party or political influence or force, but the rule of law will be the final word in governing the state.”

Tarique Rahman,
Bangladesh’s Prime Minister



“We appreciate Pakistan’s support to Sri Lanka during difficult times.”

Anura Kumara Dissanayake,
Sri Lankan President



“This election is being conducted in a special condition to give the country a way out.”

Sushila Karki,
Interim Prime Minister of Nepal



“A warship is certainly a dangerous weapon, but even more dangerous is the weapon capable of sinking it.”

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei,
Iran’s Supreme Leader



“I’ve stopped calling myself a celebrity.”

Sarwat Gilani,
Pakistani Actress

National Government Around the Corner?

The word is getting around the corridors of power about the possibility of a 3-year national government, in which all the major parties of the country, including the PTI, will be stakeholders. As rumours are circulating, the national government will be an alternative to the caretaker government. However, it will not be an interim one but rather a long-term set-up that will last for three years at least and will implement far-reaching reforms aimed at putting the country on the path of rapid development and progress. The idea of a national government is not new, as such out-of-the-box ideas have surfaced many times before. However, on this occasion, based on credible information, one thing is set in stone: a national government will be formed before the next general elections. We will just have to wait and see! ❏



'Force' for a Political Cause

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Sohail Afridi, while addressing a press conference outside the Supreme Court, announced the launch of 'Imran Khan Rihai Force.' According to CM KPK, the continued disregard for court orders has made an organised and peaceful public movement inevitable. Running parallel to the PTI Youth Wing, the 'Rihai Force' will register youth across the country as its active members. Though the CM has not spelled out the political means of getting the incarcerated PTI chairman out of prison, such non-political, military terms as 'Force' spell a disaster. These words are not foreign to our political history, but can only be assimilated by a jingoistic mind that believes in violence in making things happen in one way or the other. Other than the misplaced timing of such Rihai Force initiatives, the term better describes the inherent fault that fails the encumbered party time and again. ❏



Air Punjab vs. PIA

In a country like Pakistan, where ordinary citizens struggle to afford basic necessities, the Punjab government's purchase of a luxury jet worth Rs 11 billion is not only shocking but also appears to be a blatant misuse of public funds. The 2019 model Gulfstream GVII-G500 jet, estimated to cost between \$38 and \$42 million, has reportedly been acquired as the first aircraft for the proposed provincial airline, "Air Punjab." Many economists have described the move as commercially unsound. With a seating capacity of only 19 passengers, the aircraft is designed for luxury travel rather than regular commercial operations. Given that the federal government has recently privatized the national carrier, PIA, it is worth asking whether establishing a luxury airline at the provincial level truly serves the public interest. ❏



Nestlé Pakistan wins OICCI Climate Champion Award

Nestlé Pakistan's efforts towards creating shared value for people, planet, and business were recognized due to its initiatives on Climate & Net Zero, regenerative agriculture, and circularity at the 4th Pakistan Climate Conference, as it won the top Climate Champion Award for the second time in a row.

The 2nd Climate Excellence Awards by Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce & Industry, a representative body of over 200 multinational companies from 30 countries and 14 sectors, hosted the 4th Pakistan Climate Conference and the second edition of Climate Excellence Awards that saw over 80 entries this year.

Addressing the conference, Federal Minister for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Dr. Musadik Masood Malik stressed the need to mobilize investment and implement innovative solutions being driven by the upcoming generation to accelerate the country's transition towards climate-resilient development.

Earlier, Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, in his address, said,

"OICCI's 4th Pakistan Climate Conference has underscored the urgency of climate action and the pivotal role the private sector plays in driving sustainable solutions."
Jason Avanceña, Chief Executive

and digitalization. This builds on USD 40 million invested between 2023 and 2025, bringing total planned investment to USD 100 million over six years, and is a testament to Nestlé's commitment to Pakistan," he said.



Officer, Nestlé Pakistan, said, "Through the Pakistan Climate Conference, OICCI has pushed for actionable recommendations that support Pakistan's shift towards a more climate-resilient economy. Earlier at Davos, Nestlé also announced an additional USD 60 million investment in Pakistan to support sustainability and green projects, agricultural services transformation, automation,

Speaking on the occasion, Sheikh Waqar Ahmad, Head of Corporate Affairs & Sustainability, Nestlé Pakistan, said, "We are committed to being a force for good, with sustainability at the heart of our business. Our efforts underscore our commitment to creating shared value, as we take significant strides towards a cleaner environment and a more sustainable future." ❏

Ustad Salamat Ali captivates NAPA audience

Ustad Salamat Ali captivates NAPA audience. The National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) held an evening of classical and ghazal singing with Ustad Salamat Ali at NAPA's Zia Mohyeddin Theatre in the second week of February.

Ustad Salamat Ali presented some of his famous renderings, such as Dr Tariq Mirza's ghazal Zamana chahiye thaa, Hasrat Mohani's Dekhna bhi to unhe door se dekha karna, Amjad Islam Amjad's Kahan aa ke rukne the raste kahan mor tha use bhul ja, and Faiz Ahmed Faiz's Tum aae ho na shab-e intizār guzrī hai. He also presented a couple of bandishes that he had composed when he was a faculty member at NAPA.

The evening culminated with Chairman NAPA Syed Jawaid Iqbal presenting Ustad Salamat Ali with the NAPA memento to honour his services to the Academy and the music industry at large.

A large number of music lovers enjoyed themselves with the melody-filled evening. ❏



Visa and HBL announce ‘She’s Next’ Winners G

Visa, a global leader in digital payments, together with HBL, Pakistan’s premier private sector bank, announced the five winners of the 2026 edition of the She’s Next program in Pakistan, including an award for most sustainable business. These winners included Aiman Shafique - EV Square, Anusha Fatima – Trashit (Sustainability award winner), Fizza Hussain - Khaas Foodz Kitchen, Maira Siddiqui - Chiragh Education Technologies, and Meesha Baig - Goud.

Handpicked from a pool of almost 3,500 applicants in Pakistan, the five winning woman-owned enterprises received a USD10,000 grant each, tailored guidance, and expert mentorship to take flight with their entrepreneurial ambitions. Winners will also receive access to resources, including a workshop library and a community of entrepreneurs to help turn their business dreams into thriving realities, and will join the She’s Next Club.

Aamir Kureshi, Head Products

& Payments, HBL, said: “HBL congratulates the winners of this year’s She’s Next program for the clarity, ambition, and resilience reflected in their entrepreneurial journeys. In collaboration with Visa, the Bank

the robustness of their business metrics; their digital presence; and their demonstrated ability to problem-solve confidently. The members of the jury included: Maya Inayat Ismail, Chairperson, HBL Microfinance Bank,



continues to support initiatives that expand women’s participation in Pakistan’s economy and strengthen a vital driver of sustainable growth.”

A jury evaluated entries based on the following criteria: the progression of applicants’ entrepreneurial journeys;

HBL; Naz Khan, Principal Country Officer, IFC; Dan Baxter, Vice President, Corporate Communications & Events, CEMEA Visa; Mubariz Siddiqui, Founding Partner of Carbon Law; and Ali Ladhurhai, Co-Founder, Abhi Microfinance Bank. ✨

LBF Appoints Nav Haq as Curator for Lahore Biennale 04

The Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF) has announced the appointment of Nav Haq as Curator for the fourth edition of the Lahore Biennale (LB04), scheduled to open in Lahore in Spring 2027.

The announcement was made at a ceremony held in Lahore, attended by leading figures from the cultural, academic, and public sectors. The event was graced by Zafar Masud, President & CEO of the Bank of Punjab, who attended as Chief Guest, reflecting the Bank of Punjab’s continued support for arts, culture, and public cultural institutions.

LB04 will present newly commissioned artworks, large-scale installations, and public programmes across a range of historical, civic, and public spaces in Lahore, continuing

the Biennale’s tradition of engaging the city and its communities through contemporary art.

Nav Haq is a curator and writer based in Antwerp, Belgium. He currently serves as Associate Director at M HKA – Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp, where he leads the artistic programme, and is an editor at Afterall journal. He has previously held curatorial positions at Arnolfini, Bristol, and Gasworks, London, and has

organised numerous major exhibitions internationally. Most recently, he was part of the curatorial team for the



Kyiv Biennial 2025, presented at the Museum of Modern Art Warsaw and M HKA. ✨

Trade gap widens 42pc with nine countries to \$9bn

Pakistan's trade deficit with nine regional countries swelled by 41.37 per cent to \$9.001 billion in the first seven months (July-January) of FY26, up from \$6.367bn in the corresponding period last year.

The widening gap reflects a fall in Pakistan's exports to regional markets, driven largely by reduced shipments to China, followed by Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Trade with Afghanistan, including exports, has remained

Meanwhile, shipments to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka declined during the period under review, according to the latest figures released by the State Bank of Pakistan.

The trade deficit with the nine countries widened by 29.42pc to \$12.297bn in FY25 compared to \$9.502bn in the preceding year.

The value of Pakistan's exports to the nine countries — Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Iran,

Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives — declined by 16.86pc to \$2.307bn in 7MFY26 compared to \$2.775bn a year ago.

In FY25, exports to these

nine countries recorded a modest increase of 1.49 per cent, rising to \$4.401 billion in July to June, up from \$4.336 billion in the corresponding

period a year earlier.

Contrary to this, imports surged 23.69pc to \$11.31bn in 7MFY26 from \$9.14bn. Imports surged 20.66pc to \$16.698bn in FY25 from \$13.838bn over the same period of the previous fiscal year.

Further analysis showed that imports from China grew by 24.58pc to \$11.097bn in 7MFY26 from \$8.907bn over the same period last year. In FY25, imports from China stood at \$16.312bn, up by 20.79pc from \$13.504bn a year ago. The bulk of imports in the region is sourced from China, followed partially by India and Bangladesh.

Pakistan's exports to China fell by 1.02pc to \$1.467bn in 7MFY26 from \$1.482bn in the preceding year.

Imports from India dipped by 9.44pc to \$122.56m in 7MFY26 from \$135.35m. In FY25, imports from New Delhi increased to \$220.58m from \$206.89m in the preceding year. Meanwhile, exports remained at \$2.926m, slightly increased from \$0.404m. ❏



suspended since October 10, 2025.

Exports to India posted a slight increase in percentage terms, though the rise was minimal in dollar value.

NADRA highlights the future of digital identity services

Officials of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) highlighted the growing role of digital identity services in modern governance during a seminar at the Riphah Institute of Media Sciences (RIMS), emphasising the authority's flagship Pak-ID Mobile App as a key tool in transforming citizen services.

The seminar, held at Room C-105, brought together students and faculty to discuss the modernisation of civil registration systems in Pakistan and the transition from conventional paperwork to digital platforms under the broader "Digital Pakistan" initiative. The session was hosted by Esha Rehman and featured a keynote address by Ali Butt,

Deputy Director, NADRA.

In his address, Mr Butt traced NADRA's evolution since its establishment in 2000, noting that the authority was mandated to



create a secure, centralised identity management system to prevent document fraud and ensure reliable citizen data. Focusing on the Pak-ID Mobile App, he reiterated the

organisation's slogan: "Na Qataar, Na Intezaar — Tamam Sahuliyat Aap Ke Phone Par" (No queues, no waiting — all facilities on your phone).

The seminar provided a walkthrough of the app's interface and functionality, outlining how users can apply for the renewal, modification, or reprint of Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) and Smart Cards. The NADRA platform also facilitates the issuance of Child Registration Certificates (CRC) and Family Registration Certificates (FRC), in addition to offering biometric attestation services for legal inheritance matters and proof-of-life verification. Other features include access to digital arms licences and vaccination certificates, including those related to polio and Covid-19. ❏



AAG LAGAY BASTI MEIN

Aag Lagay Basti Mein is an age-old tale of good versus evil, and how far one can go in compromising their ethics before stepping into the world of crime. At its core is a struggling couple, one honest, the other street smart. Yet, what truly sets the film apart is that you find yourself rooting for the greedy wife (Almas), played by Mahira Khan, whose only dream is to make it to Dubai. Tired of a modest life and daily frustrations, she devises a masterplan to fast track her way to money.

The film carefully builds their struggles and savings, only to strip it all away with one wrong move, pushing them back to square one. What follows is a spiral of loot, kidnapping and ransom. Small, calculated risks soon snowball into something far bigger, dragging the couple into the messy world of seasoned criminals.

Mahira Khan is a revelation. She owns the film. What once felt like an underwhelming outing for her in Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad alongside Fahad Mustafa is completely overturned here. This time, she is not matching him, she is leading him. She drives the chaos, commands the comic timing, and runs the show with surprising ease. Who knew she had this flair for comedy.

There is something almost symbolic in her performance, like a final push before breaking out of a shell. It has taken time, but Mahira finally sheds the image of being too polished and steps convincingly into a raw, unfiltered space. I was sceptical about her as a gritty house help, but she delivers. Unlike *Raees*, where her Gujarati accent slipped early on, here she holds on firmly to the street lingo. The rawness, the unhinged tone, even the way she repeats “plan” as “peelan” at different points, all land with consistency and intent.

Fahad Mustafa acts as the film’s anchor. He brings sincerity to a man constantly weighed down by expectations to man up. In moments as simple as struggling to start his bike, not for a second does it cross your mind that this man has distributed wheels and bikes to half of Pakistan and is a national superstar and a style icon. You see a man burdened with life and never-ending struggles. His live persona is so big that you often forget this finesse and ease come from more than two decades of acting on television and over a decade in films, hence his deep understanding of the pulse of the crowd.

Having said that, Fahad now needs to change his avatar, as his character and tone feel very much in line with what we have already seen in *Load Wedding*, *Na Maloom Afraad*, and to an extent *Actor in Law*.

Tabish Hashmi’s entry is a reminder of what good casting can do and his

Cover Story



even when it occasionally borders on inappropriate. At times, it does feel uneven, almost like a first draft brought to life, where structure takes a backseat to gags and momentum. Yet there is clear intent in that madness.

That said, the film also highlights a recurring pattern in Pakistani comedy films. From betelnut spitting to city specific street lingo, the genre often



character's entry is what cinema is made of. His signature punchlines lift the scenes, and instead of a traditional gangster, his metrosexual, designer clad criminal persona works well. The well-moisturised hands and bathtub aesthetic, paired with his capacity for action, add a fun contrast. Even if the father son dynamic echoes *Animal*, it does not weigh the film down.

Beneath the humour, the film also touches upon the divide between the haves and have nots. It shows how deprivation forces children to grow up too soon, pushing them into roles that can turn dangerous. The presence of street performers like Goldie becomes more than comic relief, it turns into quiet commentary on the city's inequalities. The satire lands because it reflects a truth we often overlook.

The film also benefits from characters that remain true to themselves. Almas stays corrupt till the end. Barkat, despite being born into a gangster




family, remains kind hearted, guided by his conscience. *Chota Marble* does not suddenly transform either, unless the narrative device demands it. This consistency keeps the chaos grounded.

Director Bilal Atif Khan makes a confident debut. At times, the work feels like Nabeel Qureshi meets Priyadarshan, yet the applause and whistles in the cinema are well earned. His use of Karachi street humour and boyish banter feels authentic,

clings to familiar templates. New directors who have talented artists at their disposal must dare to take risks, deviating from clichés and exploring fresh settings or perspectives, be it a rom com in a college backdrop or situational comedy beyond the streets or perhaps in a corporate setting. While this film will surely be loved by many, Gen Z, the future of cinema going audiences, may find it harder to fully connect and own it unless such risks are taken.

One cannot help but wish the journey ended with the characters finally making it to Dubai, perhaps posing in front of the Burj Khalifa. After everything, they earned that moment. Maybe that is a story for another day.

There are few experiences better than a theatre full of people erupting in collective laughter. Because in this day and age, we could all use a good laugh. *Aag Lagay Basti Mein* gives ample such moments. Go watch it. 

KAFEEL

Naseeb Ka Khel

By Amna Ilyas

Pakistan's entertainment industry, especially TV plays, is evolving positively. Recently, it has produced serials that are not only revolutionary and garner millions of views but also reveal the bitter truth of our society. The latest example is the ongoing TV serial 'Kafeel,' an eye-catching play that has won the hearts of millions of viewers.

The serial revolves around Zeba,

It is a wonderful memory for Zeba, but a nightmare for her mother; in her eyes, a girl in love is a serious scandal that must be hidden immediately; in order to "protect" her family's honor, Zeba's mother advises her to get married.

Ironically, the groom's name is also Jami (Jamshed). Zeba believes she marries the man she falls in love with because of a "Backward culture" in which girls are not allowed to meet or talk to their future husbands before

good person, but behind closed doors, he is an emotional predator.

Looking at Zeba's siblings reveals Kafeel's sadness even more. Her sister is married to a wealthy man, and her brother has a successful career.

They all live happy lives, but Zeba is suffering. Even after giving birth to four children, Jami hasn't changed. He cheats with other women and treats his family like a bank.

He even steals money from his own daughter, and the real victims here were not just Zeba but also her children, who grew up watching their father's controlling and abusive behavior, while their mother works as a teacher so she can provide food to her children.

When her friend asks her for a divorce, Zeba finds herself in a cage with invisible walls. In her society, divorce is seen as a "stain" that ruins her daughters' chances of marriage. She stays not out of love, but out of fear.

The heartbreaking part is Zeba's mother, who blames everything on "faith" and calls it "Naseeb ka khel." This is a dangerous excuse to avoid the truth.

It is not her fate that ruins Zeba's life, but her mother's fear and lack of communication.

The story of Kafeel is something very inspiring and eye-opening, especially for the Pakistani audience. There are millions of Zebas roaming around who are trapped in a marriage and don't know what to do. ❏



played by Sanam Saeed, a perfect example of modesty and elegance. She is kind, beautiful, and intelligent. However, despite the fact that Zeba herself is amazing, her life is completely the opposite. Her story is a painful look at how a small misunderstanding and a backward society can turn a young girl's dreams into a life sentence.

While attending a wedding, she meets a man named Jami, and the two develop a bond, which leads Jami to give Zeba a handkerchief that serves as a secret love letter.

marriage. She attends a wedding full of hope, only to find that a stranger (played by Emad Irfani) is waiting for her on the wedding night.

Over the years, her husband, Jami, revealed himself to be a "social parasite," or a lazy person who refuses to work and prefers to live at others' expense. He is a master at gaslighting Zeba, begging Zeba's parents for money while acting like a "saint" in front of everyone.

In public, he appears to be a

THE WRONG PARIS

Between Ambition and Authenticity

By Syed Zain Akhter

The Wrong Paris is a feel-good romantic comedy starring Miranda Cosgrove and Pierson Fode that blends small-town warmth, reality TV chaos, and just the right amount of heart.

The story follows 25-year-old Dawn, an aspiring artist living in a quiet Texas town with her two sisters and their grandmother, Birdie, who raised them after they were orphaned. When Dawn gets accepted into art school in Paris, France, it feels like everything she's worked towards is finally coming together. But life has other plans. After using her savings to cover Birdie's medical bills, her dream suddenly feels out of reach.

That's where The HoneyPot comes in, Dawn's guilty pleasure dating show obsession. On a whim and with a little push from her sister, she auditions, hoping the appearance fee could help pay for school. To her surprise, she actually gets cast. The new season is set in Paris, or so she thinks. After a celebratory night out, Dawn has a chance encounter with a charming, sharply dressed cowboy. There's an undeniable spark, but she brushes it off as a random, fleeting moment. Then comes the twist.

Instead of landing in Paris, France, the contestants arrive at a ranch in Paris, Texas. Dawn's frustration is immediate and understandable. Determined to leave early but still collect her paycheck, she tries to tank her chances on purpose. But fate and the show's bachelor, Trey McAllen, have other ideas. In a deliciously rom-com turn of events, Trey turns out to be the very same cowboy she met before filming.

What follows is a sweet and sometimes chaotic tug-of-war

between ambition and authenticity. Dawn starts off treating the show like a financial transaction, but as the challenges unfold from axe-throwing

film quickly gained momentum and surged to become the No. 1 film on Netflix worldwide shortly after release. It was heavily watched across 84



competitions to obstacle courses and runaway horses, real feelings begin to surface. A quiet, stolen moment away from the cameras reveals there's more to their connection than just good TV.

Of course, it wouldn't be reality television without drama. Rivalries intensify, tensions rise, and when Trey discovers Dawn's original reason for joining the show, the fallout is heartbreaking. Eventually, Dawn makes it to Paris, France, finally pursuing the dream she sacrificed so much for, but somehow, the City of Light doesn't feel as bright as she imagined.

The film's emotional payoff resonated with audiences worldwide. The Wrong Paris debuted on Netflix on September 12, 2025, opening with 12.8 million views in its first few days and initially ranking among the weaker film debuts of the year. However, despite the slow start, the

regions and reached the top spot in 18 countries, including Brazil, South Africa, and Switzerland. According to Netflix's Top 10 reports, the film ultimately garnered 21.8 million views within its first two weeks, marking a strong rebound and solid global performance.

Without spoiling every twist, the final act delivers everything rom-com fans hope for: grand gestures, emotional confessions, and a bold decision involving the show's coveted \$250,000 "honeypot." The film keeps you wondering: Is Dawn chasing love, financial security, or something deeper?

At its heart, The Wrong Paris is about discovering that sometimes the "wrong" destination leads you exactly where you're meant to be. It's charming, lighthearted, and full of heart, a reminder that dreams aren't just about places, but about the people who make them meaningful. **S**



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