

Positive Post

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



Greenwich University
Pakistan-Mauritius

February in History

February 2, 1948: Urdu is declared the national language of Pakistan.

February 8, 1949: Azad Kashmir Government shifts its capital

February 21, 1956: Constituent Assembly decides the country shall be a Federal Republic known as Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

February 2, 1957: President Iskandar Mirza laid down the foundation-stone of Guddu Barrage.

February 24, 1960: Presidential Cabinet decides to name the new Capital as Islamabad.

February 3, 1962: Prominent poet and Pakistan's Guinness world record holder Dr. Muhammad Saeed Fazal Karim Beebani born in Rawalpindi. He wrote Ghair Munqoot Naatia poetry book 'Mumdooh-e-Kirdigar' and Ghair Munqoot Hamdia poetry book 'Al-humdulillah'.

February 13, 1973: Begum Rana Li-aquat Ali becomes first woman to assume office of Sindh Governor.

February 01, 1978: Allama Iqbal's Lahore house is declared national monument.

February 11, 1996: Cricket World Cup jointly hosted by Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.

February 03, 1997: Nation goes to the polls. PML secures 135 seats.

February 17, 1997: Nawaz Sharif sworn in as 19th Prime Minister.

February 23, 1997: Nawaz Sharif launches "Qarz utaro Mulk sanwaro" scheme. Declares Sunday, instead of Friday as weekly holiday.

February 04, 2016: First season Pakistan Super League.

Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

Overview

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

DEMOCRACY INDEX

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

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

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

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

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

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

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

PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

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

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

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

TERRORISM INDEX

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

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

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

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

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

Index from 0 (repressed) to 100 (free)

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

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



Japan is called an Island country, situated in East Asia. The country consist of 6,852 islands, largest ones are Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Shikoku which covers the 97% of Japan's land area which are often referred as home islands.

apan is the tenth largest populated country in world with 127 million population, 90.7% of people live in cities, while 9.3% live in the countryside. Tokyo is the capital city where over 13.8 million live. The Greater Tokyo Area is the most populated metropolitan area in the world with over 38 million people.

It is the third largest country in the world in economy and fourth largest exporter and importer. Japan is a greatly developed country which has high standard of living, highest life expectancy, and third lowest infant mortality rate in world.

Government

Japan is a constitutional monarchy where the Emperor's power is limited to mainly ceremonial duties. The government is comprises of three branches; the executive, legislative and judiciary. The Emperor is the Head

of State and the imperial family. His position does not affect the activities of the government in any way. The prime minister, therefore, is the head of the Government.

The executive branch of the Japanese Government entails of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Ministers. The Prime Minister is the head of both the executive branch and the Cabinet. The legislature nominates him to serve for a term of four years. The legislative branch has two organs; House of Representatives and House of Councilors. According to the Japanese constitution, this branch is the highest organ of the state power and the sole law-making organ of the country.

The judiciary of Japan consists of the Supreme Court, the high courts, district courts, family courts, and summary courts. It is independent of the legislature and the executive branches.

Culture

Japanese culture has an influence of Asia, Europe and North America. The interaction between Japanese and European art has been noteworthy, for example; ukiyo-e prints, which began to be exported in the 19th century



in the movement known as Japonism, had a significant influence on the development of modern art in the West, most notably on post-Impressionism. Famous ukiyo-e artists include Hokusai and Hiroshige. Traditional Japanese arts include crafts such as ceramics, textiles, lacquerware, swords and dolls; performances of bunraku, kabuki, noh, dance, and rakugo.

Japanese music is diverse and wide-ranging. Karaoke is the most extensively practiced cultural activity in Japan. Notable classical composers from Japan include Toru Takemitsu and Rentarō Taki. Popular music in post-war Japan has been heavily influenced by American and European trends, which has led to the evolution of J-pop, or Japanese popular music.

Religion

According to constitution, Japanese enjoys complete religious freedom. Shinto is the largest religion of Japan. It is the Japanese traditional religion that focuses on practices to be carried out in a way to establish a connection between ancient and modern Japan. However, 70-80% Japanese does not believe in any religion, but the participation in religious practices is high.



80-90% foreign born immigrants from Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Iran are belonged to Islam. Pew Research center estimated that there were 185,000 Muslims in Japan. Other minority religions are Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism.

Sports

The national sport of Japan is Sumo, a form of wrestling. Japanese martial arts such as judo, karate and kendo are extensively practiced in entire country.

Japan hosted the Summer Olympics in Tokyo in 1964 and the Winter Olympics in Sapporo in 1972 and Nagano in 1998. Also, the country hosted the official 2006 Basketball World Championship. Tokyo will host the 2020 Summer Olympics, making Tokyo the first Asian city to host the Olympics twice. Japan is the most successful Asian Rugby Union country, won the Asian Five Nations six times and won the newly formed IRB Pacific Nations Cup in 2011. Japan will host the 2019 IRB Rugby World Cup. Japan has



one of the most successful football teams in Asia, won the Asian Cup four times. Also, it won the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2011.

Pakistan-Japan relations

Pakistan and Japan established their diplomatic relations in 1952. Pakistan appointed Mian Ziauddin as its first Ambassador to Japan and Japan Ambassador Kiyoshi Yamagata arrived in Karachi in 1952. After that, both countries exchanged high level of visits. Pakistan's Prime Minister Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy was the first Asian leader to visit Japan in April 1957, which opened up the door for Japan to come back to Asia after World War II. Within a month in May 1957, Japanese Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi commenced a visit to Pakistan, which was also the first ever visit by a Japanese Prime Minister to Asia after the end of World War II.



There are convergences of the bilateral and multilateral relations between Japan and Pakistan. Security cooperation including maritime security, terrorism, cultural cooperation, people to people contact, a solution of Afghanistan and peace in the regions of South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia is convergence. Japan and Pakistan are working together on numerous projects. Both have the identical opinion and stand on different issues. Pakistan and Japan have signed numerous mutual agreements in different sectors. These contain Trade Agreement 1953, Cultural Agreement 1957, Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income on 17th February, 1959, Agreement for Establishment of Agricultural Training Center 1960, Treaty of Friendship and Commerce 1950, Agreement Relating to Air Services 1960, Agreement regarding Establishment of Telecommunication Research Center 1963, Bilateral Investment Treaty 1998 and Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation, the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income 2008 and many others.

Ambassador Profile

Takashi Kurai is the present Japanese ambassador to Pakistan, born in 1955. He is fluent in English and Russian. In 1981, he entered in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has been an ambassador in Russia and Korea.



Consulate-General of Japan in Karachi organized an event on "Japan – it's people and traditional culture" at Greenwich University

Consulate-General of Japan in Karachi organized an event on "Japan – it's people and traditional culture" at Greenwich University on January 26, 2019. The acting Ambassador of Japan H.E. Yusuke

Shindo gave a brief presentation encapsulating Japan's history and culture, traditional values, and scientific achievements and contributions. He also showcased how Japan has emerged as one of

the most outstanding countries in scientific and technological advancement in the world. The Ambassador interacted with students addressing their questions concerning Japanese traditional culture, its economy and society.

Vice Chancellor Greenwich University, Ms. Seema Mughal, appreciated Japan's bilateral relations with Pakistan and shared that there is a lot of potential for both the countries to strengthen ties advancing cultural exchange



and economic growth and such avenues need to be unlocked through mutual cooperation.

Vice-Consul Ms. Mai Amano also graced the occasion alongside other officials from the Consulate.



Saudi crown prince arrives in Pakistan amid fanfare, received by PM Khan on red carpet

Amid heightened security and arrangements in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman arrived at Nur Khan Air Base in Rawalpindi on Sunday.

As he stepped down from the aircraft, the 33-year-old crown prince was warmly welcomed by Prime Minister Imran Khan. The premier's cabinet members and Army Chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa were also present at the air base to receive the Saudi guest.

A formation of JF-17 thunder jets and F-16 fighter jets had escorted the plane of the Saudi royal after its entry into the Pakistani airspace. Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman known as MBS for short was given a 21-gun salute upon arrival.

Read: Everything you need to know about the Saudi crown prince's visit In a break from protocol, Prime Minister Khan personally drove the Saudi crown prince to PM House, where a welcome ceremony was held in his honour.

The crown prince, who is visiting Pakistan on the invitation of Prime Minister Khan, was accorded a red carpet welcome and presented a guard of honour at the PM House.

The prime minister and MBS introduced members of their respective delegations, following which the crown prince planted a sapling. At a ceremony in the PM House, Pakistan and Saudi officials signed MoUs for bilateral cooperation in a number



of areas a process overseen by Prime Minister Khan and MBS.

This is Prince Mohammad's first state visit to Pakistan since becoming the heir to the throne in 2017.

Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry welcomed Prince Mohammad on Twitter, saying the crown prince was coming to join his "family and [his] own country".

Preparations for a grand welcome Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir landed at Nur Khan Air Base ahead of the crown prince's arrival in a separate airplane. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood was present on the tarmac to welcome his Saudi counterpart.

The twin cities have been decked out in images of the Saudi royal family and banners welcoming the crown prince.

A high-powered delegation comprising key ministers and some prominent businessmen, besides members of the royal family, has also

arrived with the crown prince for his two-day visit.

The crown prince was due to reach Pakistan on February 16, but his arrival was delayed by a day for unknown reasons.

Islamabad has described the visit as a "historical one" which will help stabilise the crippling economy of the country as over \$21 billion Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) are likely to be inked between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia during the visit.

About an hour ahead of the crown prince's arrival, Finance Minister Asad Umar tweeted that he had held a meeting with Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih and his team.

During the meeting, a wide range of investment projects worth billions of dollars were discussed, the minister had revealed, adding that MoUs in this regard would be signed later in the day.

Two receptions will be held in the Presidency and Prime Minister

House in honour of the crown prince during which one-on-one meetings between him and President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Khan will take place. The crown prince will also meet Chief of the Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Not only the government but the opposition has also hailed the visit of the crown prince as PML-N president Shahbaz Sharif and PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari have welcomed the Saudi royal in their statements.

However, opposition parties have lashed out at the federal government for not inviting their leaders to the official reception to be hosted in honour of MBS and termed it an undemocratic and un-parliamentary step.

According to Foreign Office Spokesperson Dr Mohammad Faisal, Pakistan's highest civil award, the Nishan-e-Pakistan, will be conferred on the crown prince in an investiture ceremony at the presidency.

After Pakistan, MBS will travel to India, where he will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

MBS last visited Pakistan in 2016 when he was the country's defence minister. During a stopover in Islamabad on his way to China, Prince Mohammed had called on the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif at the PM House and pledged to strengthen bilateral cooperation in different fields.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistani educator wins Cambridge University award for 'World's Most Dedicated Teacher'

Pakistani educator Ahmed Saya has won the prestigious Cambridge University's Dedicated Teacher Award for 2019.

According to the Cambridge University Press website, he was among six teachers shortlisted for the award from across the globe by an esteemed panel of educationists. The other finalists belonged to India, Sri Lanka, Australia, Philippines, and Malaysia.

The winner was selected through an online poll conducted by Cambridge University where students were required to vote for the 'World's Most Dedicated Teacher'.

Saya teaches Accounting and Mathematics at the Cordoba School for A-Level in Karachi. His



students nominated him with the following entry submitted to Cambridge University:

"He'll always be ready to spare his weekends whenever a student needs his help, be it academically or anything personal. I have seen him when CAIEs approach, he spends sleepless nights, conducting

extra classes, catering each and every student's problem so that each one excels. I have never seen someone who checks your homework every day in a class of 100 students just to ensure that each and every one is on track. He actually deserves this for working so hard to ensure that his students are good humans."

Evaluation by the panellists was done based on the following factors:

- Going 'beyond the classroom' whether it's giving up spare time, own money or resources
- Fantastic pastoral care showing empathy, care, and personal support
- Making the ordinary, extraordinary innovative lesson ideas and practices
- Opening up the world preparing students for their futures beyond school

Saya has won, among other prizes, an all-expense paid trip to Cambridge and will be sharing his knowledge at Cambridge University's September 2020 sales conference.

Courtesy: Dawn

British tourists enjoy Moenjodaro expedition



A 22-member delegation of Britons headed by writer and journalist Peter Osborne arrived at Moenjodaro on Thursday. The delegation, other members of which appeared to be literati and tourists coming from different walks of life, visited ruins of the Indus Valley Civilisation and took keen interest in the ancient city of the dead. They were taken to the site's main gate in a convoy of traditional bullock cart, a ride they enjoyed a lot.

The tourists went around the remains of Moenjodaro and the museum standing on the site.

Speaking to local reporters, Mr Osborne and others said they were here to see and study archaeological sites. They said they had already vis-

ited Ranikot and some other sites in Sindh. They said Moenjodaro was one of the oldest civilisations of the world which depicted civilised living and a well-planned civic system.

They said the visit satisfied their urge of examining the ancient treasure as closely as possible. Archaeologists and other tourists have much to explore and gain knowledge of ancient sites here.

The delegation intends to also visit Karachi, Hyderabad, Jacobabad, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur, Multan, Sehwan, Islamabad and Lahore during their journey through Pakistan, sources in the culture and tourism department said.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistani artist Naiza Khan will showcase at the Venice Biennale



Her exhibition will explore contemporary life on Manora Island

Pakistan makes its way to the Venice Biennale for the second time as artist Naiza Khan gets ready to showcase her work.

The Art Newspaper reported, that the Karachi and London based artist will have a solo exhibition titled Manora Field Notes which will explore contemporary life on Manora Island.

Speaking about her artwork Naiza said that her exhibition is a result of years of exploration and research and the work can be situated "within a larger conversation that links Venice to the Persian-Indian-Arab peninsulas through histories

of empire and maritime trade."

The show's curator Zahra Khan feels Naiza's work will bring "to life the unique nautical, multicultural and multireligious history of Manora Island." She added that the artist is the perfect person to represent Pakistan on an international platform like this.

Pakistan's first ever National Pavilion at the Venice Biennale was by Coalesce Design Studio, a Karachi based multi disciplined/multi-faceted team, in 2018.

The 58th International Art Exhibition, titled May You Live In Interesting Times, will take place from 11 May to 24 November 2019.

Courtesy: Dawn

Adab Festival ends with tribute to culture, literature

The celebration of the rich and diverse Pakistani culture and literature at the three-day Adab Festival culminated with a closing ceremony against the beautiful backdrop of Governor House.

Peter Alan Osborne, British broadcaster and former chief political commentator of The Daily Telegraph who was the keynote speaker at the event, amped up the crowd by sharing his excitement at being back in Karachi and also taking part in the Adab Festival. He shared there were indeed many reasons to hope for Pakistan, and Pakistanis should be very proud of their journey.

Mr Osborne said that the city was virtually in a state of civil war. "Karachi used to be one of the most dangerous cities on the planet and the change is amazing," he said. Over time things have vastly improved and it has become easier for foreigners to visit and live here, according to him.

He said Pakistan didn't represent a narrow set of western values and that set it apart from the world. From public policy, to foreign relations, and a more politically engaged population, there were several positive changes in the country which would continue to make Pakistan greater, he added. "However, there are some matters of concern, especially those related to the freedom of press which is being threatened. A lot of damage will be done to the image of Pakistan abroad if this harassment of the press continues," he shared.



Co-founder of the festival, Ameena Saiyid spoke about the idea of the literature festival caught fire many years ago and still burns brightly, inspiring more such events to take place. "The Adab Festival is a mixture of the deeply intellectual, with the sensuous, light-hearted and cheerful, the modern and the traditional, that will appeal to people from all walks of life."

She even addressed the controversy regarding the name of the festival in which the co-founders were no longer using the name of 'Pakistan Literature Festival', according to organisers, because "Oxford University Press has filed legal proceedings against us temporarily restraining us from using this name for such a festival. We are rigorously contesting such legal proceedings but since there is no legal restraint against us holding literature festivals, we have decided to hold it in the name of the Adab Festival Pakistan."

Ms Saiyid said: "Literature festivals are open source and not a monopoly and we would like people to take it from here to all parts of the country."

Asif Farrukhi spoke about the moment of parting after three days of events including discussions, book launches, theatre, dramatic readings and music. "It took a lot of hard work to pull off the Adab Festival against all odds," he said.

He also shared a vision for the next Adab Festival, which was expected to be bigger and better and would iron out all the shortcomings of the first time.

Author Ahmed Rashid chartered the trajectory of the literature in English in Pakistan that he said took around 70 years to develop. Fiction writers such as Kamila Shamsie and Mohsin Hamid did a great service to Pakistan in the way they wrote about their home. He expressed delight at the increasing number of authors in Pakistan.

"We have learnt painfully that literature is not influenced by government policies but development in civil societies, how ordinary people change the social landscape around them. However, we are witnessing a failure of civil society as the state institutions attempt to force feed us into a single narrative. No country can survive without the flourishing of civil society, such as through NGOs, fair and equitable education system, respect for human rights and especially for women and children, and a flourishing media."

Courtesy: Dawn

Saudi crown prince orders release of over 2,000 Pakistani prisoners

The morning after Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman promised to deliver "whatever we can do" for Pakistanis living in the kingdom, Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry announced that MBS had ordered the immediate release of over 2,000 Pakistani prisoners in Saudi jails.

Prime Minister Imran Khan at a ceremony held to welcome the crown prince at PM House on Sunday night had made a "special request" to MBS to look into the hardships of Pakistani labourers working in the kingdom, and to "look upon them as your own people".

"There are some 3,000 [Pakistani] prisoners there and we just would like you to bear in mind that they are poor people who have left their families behind," Khan had said.

Explore: Saudi crown prince arrives in Pakistan amid fanfare, received by PM Khan on red carpet

MBS had responded by assuring the premier to consider him Pakistan's ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Prince Mohammad had continued: "We cannot say no to Pakistan ... whatever we can



do, we will deliver that."

Prime Minister Khan in a tweet today said that the crown prince had "won the hearts of the people of Pakistan when he said, 'Consider me Pakistan's ambassador to Saudi Arabia' in response to my asking him to treat the 2.5 million Pakistanis working in KSA as his own."

Read more: 'Pakistan will be a very important country in coming future,' says Saudi crown prince

Fawad Chaudhry in a tweet today said: "As a sequel to Prime Minister of Pakistan's request, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of KSA Mohammad Bin Salman has ordered the immediate release of 2,107 Pakistani prisoners from Saudi Jails."

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi also noted that the crown prince had "graciously agreed" to free the Pakistani prisoners "with immediate effect".

"Cases of the remaining will be reviewed," he announced.

The foreign minister said the people of Pakistan thanked the crown prince for "responding immediately" to the premier's request.

This was Prince Mohammad's first state visit since becoming crown prince. Saudi Arabia has signed agreements worth \$21 billion with Pakistan in various fields, including cooperation in power production, establishment of an oil refinery and petrochemical plant, promotion of sports and technical assistance in the standardisation sector

Courtesy: Dawn

30 participate in Malam Jabba skiing competition

Tourists from across the country flocked to Malam Jabba on Friday to witness a skiing gala at the 9,000-foot-high ski slope, which saw participation from over 30 national and international players.

The three-day skiing gala was jointly organised by the Pakistan Army, district administration and Samson group. The competition included slalom, giant slalom and free downhill races.

Amjad Ali, a ski player who is participating in the competition, told Dawn that he started skiing with wooden ski gears which he made himself but later on he was selected in the KP team and received proper professional gear.

“Presently, I am a professional ski player and participating in various professional level championships. Here, I will try my best to win the competition as being a resident of Malam Jabba, I am confident I will play a good game,” he said. The players said that skiing was limited to the winter season and they



waited for snowfall to play the game. They said that if the local ski players were facilitated they had the talent to play internationally.

Hundreds of tourists have also reached Malam Jabba to enjoy the skiing gala as well as snow in the picturesque valley.

“I did not expect to find such a beautiful place in Pakistan where everything is white with snow. The ski resort and the facilities available here are of international standards.

I am surprised to see such skiing here because I always thought skiing was a European sport and is played in Europe and other western countries,” said Abdul Wahab Khan, a tourist from Islamabad.

The tourists said that Malam Jabba was worth a visit, and the government must open the valley for tourism by advertising about it on an international level.

Samar Sabeen, a tourist from Lahore, said that she visited Malam Jabba during the summer season

and was excited to see the amazing valley covered in snow.

“I am also happy to know that the organisers of the event have organised a month-long ski training course for locals which is a very positive step for promoting winter sports and tourism in the country,” she told Dawn.

Pir Waris Shah, one of the organisers, said that the skiing event was polishing and promoting the ski talent of the country.

“We are not only facilitating professional players to go skiing here but also providing professional training to children and youth,” he said, adding that by organising the event they wanted to send a message of peace and harmony to the world and invite them to come and see the natural beauty and hospitality of the people. He also invited national tourists to visit Malam Jabba and learn skiing as professional coaches were providing services free of cost.

Courtesy: Dawn

22nd International Puppet Festival will see performances from Germany, Turkey

The three-day festival in Lahore focuses on international and local puppet productions and activities for children

The 22nd International Puppet Festival by Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop will start today (Friday) at Rafi Peer Cultural Complex, Gaddafi Stadium.

The three-day festival focuses on the international and local puppet productions and activities for children and the families in a community at the Rafi Peer Cultural Centre and the puppetry museum that can be a special experience for them.

The festival is a celebration of puppetry, local arts and crafts and culture from around the country and it is held annually in spring in Lahore. This year, it welcomes spring with a colourful line-up which includes all the familiar favourite activities such as puppet performances and workshops for children, storytelling, puppet parade and puppet exhibits at the museum.

The puppet performances include those by the artists from Pakistan, Indonesia, Germany and Turkey.

The Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop has been ac-



tively involved with puppetry since 1978 and it has hosted internationally renowned puppet festivals along with puppet workshops for children and young adults in schools and festivals across Pakistan. It has been promoting joyful learning by using puppetry as a tool for education and social awareness.

The puppetry groups from Lahore Arts Council,

Pakistan National Council of Arts, Rawalpindi, and from other places are participating in the festival. There would also be a performance by the Papermoon Puppet Theatre Indonesia, one from Germany and one from Turkey. A puppet-making workshop, storytelling and a folk music night are also part of the festival.

Courtesy: Dawn

In pictures: The unmatched pristine beauty of snowbound Kalam valley



"Some scenes are so beautiful and artistic that people mistake them for enchanting paintings," says one tourist.

The gorgeous landscape of Swat's Kalam valley with its gushing streams and rivers, thick alpine forests, lush green meadows, enchanting glacial lakes, magical peaks, and roaring waterfalls, is heaven for tourists in summer.

However, the mesmerising valley offers a completely different look in the winter when it is bathed in white and becomes a snowy paradise for tourists.



Surrounded by verdant forests and tall mountains, Kalam valley then becomes home to snow-laden landscapes, huge glaciers, thick forests with frozen lakes, and is known for its panoramic views.

This year, the valley received heavy snowfall, at-

tracting tourists from across the country to visit and enjoy the unmatched, pristine beauty of the snowbound valley.

"At last my dream of witnessing snowfall and seeing the snow-covered landscape came true. Kalam is exceptionally beautiful in winter when the entire valley wears a sheet of white snow," said Tauseef Ahmad a tourist from Charsadda who was visiting the valley with friends.



The tourists said that every scene in the valley has an artistic attraction and once people entered it they found dazzling sights to behold wherever their eyes fell.

"I spent two days in Kalam and was completely in awe of the snow-clad valley. I visited different locations and simply did not wish to leave. The snow-covered mountains, forests and meadows are mesmerising," said Asim Khan another tourist.

Some tourists who visited the valley from Karachi said that they fell in love with Kalam valley because it was like a winter wonderland, calm and serene.

"The high snowclad mountains are magical and mysterious. Some scenes are so beautiful and artistic that people mistake them for enchanting paintings," said Bushra Ali a tourist from Karachi who visited Kalam with her family.

The tourists said that Kalam valley was different from other tourist spots in the country because it was a more spacious offering to the tourists.

"We walked in vast fields covered with heavy snow and played in them. We enjoyed a mysterious trip to a thick pine forest full of snow and took many photos. It is a fascinating place to visit and wonderful opportunity to capture on film some of the most beautiful moments one could have in their lives," said Azlan Khan, another tourist.



The tourists said that the people of Kalam were also cooperative and food items were cheaper than other tourist resorts of the country.

"It is good that several hotels are open in Kalam where they offer every facility. The best thing which I felt was different from other tourist spots in Pakistan was that everything here is available at reasonable prices," said Karim Dad, a tourist from Lahore.

The tourists, however, complained about the bad shape of the road from Bahrain to Kalam and demanded that the government expedite the road's construction so that more tourists could reach the valley without difficulties and enjoy its scenic beauty.

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