

Positive Post

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



Greenwich University
Pakistan - May 2019

May in History

May 18, 1950:

The Peshawar University comes into being.

May 11, 1951:

University of Karachi is established.

May 1, 1972:

Labour Day is celebrated for the first time in Pakistan.

May 26, 1980:

Establishment of Federal Shariat Court is announced.

May 16, 1991:

National Assembly adopts Shariat Bill.

May 21, 1997:

Saeed Anwar slams world record score of 194 runs against India.

May 12, 2000:

Supreme Court validated the October 1999 coup and granted General Pervez Musharraf executive and legislative authority for three years.

May 22, 2004:

Pakistan readmitted to Commonwealth.

May 14, 2006:

Charter of democracy (CoD) is signed by two former prime ministers of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto in London.

23 May-15 July 2009:

Pakistan Army launched Operation Rah-e-Rast and cleared Swat Valley of all Taliban elements. It is regarded as one of the most successful counter-insurgency operation in modern age.

May 19, 2015:

Zimbabwe cricket team toured Pakistan to play International Cricket Series for the first time since 2009 attack on the Sri Lanka national cricket team.

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.

AUSTRIA



Republic of Austria is a landlocked country located in East Central Europe which surrounded by Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Switzerland. The capital is Vienna, major language is German, and the population is about 8.7 million. Its currency is Euro.

Type of Government

The democratic Austria has a bicameral parliamentary system which means that legislative is divided in to the National Council and the Federal Assembly. It is composed of chancellor, vice-chancellor, and the senior ministers that exercise the executive

power in the country. According to Austrian constitution, the government has 3 branches; executive, legislative and judicial.

The President is elected by the general public to serve for 6-year tenure. He or she is in the position to have several powers according to the Constitution, including the power to appoint the Chancellor, Supreme Court judges, Cabinet of Ministers, and military officers. In practice, however, the President acts as a figure-head for the nation and a symbol of national identity.

Culture

Austria's past as a European power and its cultural environment



generated a wide-ranging contribution to numerous forms of art, most particularly among them music. Austria was the birthplace of many famous composers such as Joseph Haydn and Michael Haydn. Vienna was for a long time a significant center of musical innovation. 18th and 19th century composers were drawn to the city due to the patronage of the Habsburgs, and made Vienna the European capital of classical music.

Food

Austria's cuisine is derived from that of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is well-known for its balanced variations of beef and pork and numerous variations of vegetables. The popular meat of Aus-



trian cuisine is beef, pork, chicken, turkey and goose. Pork in particular is used widely, with many dishes using offal and parts such as the snout and trotters.

Religion

The major religion of the country is Christianity but majority of the population does not believe in any religion. There are about 700,000 Muslims and 8100 Jewish in Austria



Sports

Due to the mountainous land, alpine skiing is a popular sport in Austria and is tremendously valued in the promotion and economic growth of the country. A popular team sport in Austria is football, which is governed by the Austrian Football Association. Austria was among the most successful football playing nations



on the European continent placing 4th at the FIFA World Cup 1934, 3rd at the FIFA World Cup 1954 and 7th at the FIFA World Cup 1978. However, lately Austrian football has not been internationally successful. Other popular sports are snowboarding, ski-jumping, hockey, basketball and tennis.

Pakistan- Austria Relations

Pakistan and Austria enjoys bi-lateral relations. Pakistan has maintained a permanent embassy in Vienna and the current ambassador is Mansoor Ahmed Khan whereas Austrian embassy is in Islamabad and the current ambassador is Brigitta Blaha.

Austrian companies have invested in Pakistan which includes hydro power and several energy developmental projects. Pakistan's major exports to Austria are cotton, leather products, carpets, clothing and sporting equipment. As per 2016, Austrian imports were 150.9 million Euro, mostly all were textile products.



However, Austrian exports were 113.94 million Euros which included garments, machinery and electronic devices. Moreover, under the Memorandum of Understanding, Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has sent many scholars for the doctorate or post-doctorate studies to Austria.

Austria and Pakistan are mountainous countries and house some of the most impressive landscapes in the world. Numerous noteworthy Austrian hikers have explored the mountain ranges of Pakistan. Hermann Buhl was the first to reach the summit of

Nanga Parbat, the second highest mountain in Pakistan. Austrian hikers come to the Northern areas of Pakistan to experience the beauty of this country.

Ambassador Brigitta Blaha

Dr. Blaha had served her country in Washington, Bangkok, Rome, Tokyo, Hong Kong and New York. As smart diplomat, she speaks German, English, French, Italian and Spanish and has extensive experience in dealing with integration and foreign affairs, Austrians abroad, citizenship matters, elections, social and health and Labor issues.



Transgender community members get health cards in KP



The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Friday gave Sehat Insaf Cards to members of the transgender community to address health problems being faced by the marginalised section of society.

The health cards were given during a function held at the Peshawar Press Club. On the occasion, Sehat Sahulat Programme project director Dr Mohammad Riaz Tanoli said that the provincial government was committed to improving the status of the transgender community.

He said that transgender individuals were reportedly experiencing healthcare disparities and the health department's step to provide them with Sehat Insaf Cards would end any such discrimination. On the occasion, the representatives of TransAction Alliance and Blue Veins also shared their views. The organisers said that under the new plan the Sehat Insaf Card would give free-of-cost coverage for HIV/AIDS and cancer tests and treatment.

The programme will offer medical coverage of Rs400,000 per family

for tertiary care diseases such as treatment of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, emergency and trauma, fractures and head and spinal injuries as well as joint replacement surgeries.

Farzana Jan, president of Trans-Action Alliance, said on the occasion that under the Transgender Person's Protection of Rights Act, 2018, it was illegal to deny healthcare services to the transgender community.

Qamar Naseem, programme coordinator of Blue Veins, appreciated the initiative taken by the government to support the transgender community and said that the transgender population continued to face major challenges in getting appropriate healthcare facilities.

Taimur Kamal, coordinator of Pakhtunkhwa Civil Society Network, said the health cards would help alleviate poverty and safeguard poor segments of society by improving their access to healthcare services.

Courtesy: Dawn

British Airways to resume operations with three weekly flights from June 2



British Airways (BA) will resume flights between London and Islamabad on June 2 after a break of around 11 years, with a three flights per week service on the Boeing 787 Dreamline aircraft.

According to a press release issued by BA on Thursday, the airline is starting a three flights per week service to London Heathrow. The final touches are coming together for the airline's return, ahead of its first flight on June 2, the statement said.

The service will be operated on a three-class Boeing 787 Dreamliner with World Traveller (long-haul economy), World Traveller Plus (long-haul premium economy) and Club World (long-haul business class) available.

The 787 is BA's newest long-haul aircraft. It is 20pc more fuel efficient than other aircraft and features larger windows, mood lighting and the latest in in-flight entertainment. Lower cabin pressure means that customers step off the flight feeling fresh.

The press release said customers can expect bespoke services to enhance the onboard experience, including a halal meal option in every cabin. The airline will also ensure that sauces in every meal do not contain alcohol or pork. As with any BA flight, customers will also be able to pre-order a range of special meal options, including veg-

etarian and vegan options.

The airline has a number of Pakistan and British-Pakistani colleagues who speak Urdu, and there has already been considerable interest from them to work on flights.

The hand baggage allowance on BA's long-haul flights is one large cabin bag with a small laptop or hand bag, and there will be complimentary food and drinks and online check-in and free seat selection 24 hours before departure.

Return fares between London and Islamabad start from £448 in World Traveller, £709 in World Traveller Plus and £1,499 in Club World. These can be reduced to £248 in World Traveller, £459 in World Traveller Plus and £499 in Club World by using Avios part payment.

Aviation Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan also said on Twitter that BA has decided to resume flight operations from Pakistan this year after almost 11 years, with three weekly flights to and from the capital.

A police team led by a deputy superintendent of police Rawalpindi visited the airport's outer areas in the limits of the Rawalpindi police and reviewed the deployment of police outside the airport to ensure security for passengers and others visiting the airport.

Courtesy: Dawn

Women-only buses launched in Abbottabad

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Speaker Mushtaq Ahmad Ghani on Tuesday inaugurated the women-only bus service here.

Earlier in the month, the Pink Bus Service was launched in Mardan.

Funded by the Japanese government, the initiative was undertaken by the United Nations Office for Project Services in partnership with the UN Women, a United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and empowerment of women.

PA speaker says initiative part of efforts to empower women

Addressing the bus service inauguration ceremony at the Jalal Baba Auditorium, the assembly speaker said the provincial government had fulfilled its commitment to providing safe, reliable and hassle-free transport facility to women in Abbottabad, the major city of Hazara division.

He said the initiative was part of the



government's efforts for the women's empowerment and facilitation.

"This project is the first of its kind not only in Pakistan but in the entire South Asian region as well. It will provide safe, economical, reliable and hassle-free transport facility to women in Abbottabad," he said.

Mr Ghani said the ruling PTI was committed to protecting the women's rights and providing them with employment opportunities.

He said a bill against domestic violence would be tabled in the provincial assembly soon.

UNOPS director Charles Chanan, who was also in attendance, said his organisation was committed to helping the government for the women's development.

Local MPA Maleeha Asghar said the number of Pink buses would be increased in light of the women's response to the service.

She said buses had been designed

for women and minor children accompanying them.

"Seven buses will cover 15 bus stops built by UNOPS on an 18-kilometer route from Mansehra Bus Stop to Frontier Medical College. Every bus stop is powered by solar panels ensuring uninterrupted lighting after sunset," she said.

The MPA said the government would develop women's hostels and babysitting facilities for working women besides ensuring provision of technical education to women.

A representative of the UN Women said along with the UNOPS, the organisation had been actively involved to make the bus project a landmark of women's empowerment by enhancing their mobility and access to education and employment.

He said the initiative was meant to provide women with safer public transport.

Courtesy: Dawn

Jimmy Engineer receives Habib Jalib Peace Award

Eminent painter Jimmy Engineer was given the 13th Habib Jalib Peace Award on Tuesday evening at the Arts Council.

Mr Engineer thanked the award committee for bestowing the honour on him. He said the late Jalib was the people's poet. All his life he struggled for the rights of the masses. People too loved him. This he saw firsthand when once Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan took him (Engineer) to meet Jalib where he saw how people wholeheartedly shower their love on the poet.

Mr Engineer said wherever in the world he goes, he introduces himself as a servant of Pakistan, adding that Pakistan is a tremendous country with great potential. All it needs is good leadership.

Justice Rashid A. Razvi was the chief guest on the occasion. He said the award committee had chosen a deserving candidate for the honour. About Jalib, he said that his struggle was not just for a single segment of society, but it was for all the oppressed classes. His poetry delineated a particular time

period in the history of Pakistan. And he wanted every institution to work within its limits.

Poet and journalist Mahmood Shaam presided over the event. He congratulated Saeed Pervaiz (younger brother of Jalib, who also conducted the programme) for consistently organising the award function. He then reminisced about the time when Ayub Khan ruled over Pakistan and the 1962 Constitution was put in place. He (Shaam) and his friends used to sit in one corner of Lahore and listen to Jalib recite his famous poem 'Dastoor'. He counted himself lucky to have heard the nazm from the poet himself.

Artist Sheema Kermani began her stint on stage by singing one of Jalib's poems which she introduced as the tarana for women. It was 'Ay aurat ay dard ki moorat/Ay aadhi aabaadi jaag'. She then told the audience it was in June 1972 that she participated for the first time in a workers' rally in Banaras Colony. There the authorities opened fire on the rally's participants. In such a situation, one man got up and began reading poetry. It was Habib Jalib.



Ms Kermani said Jalib was not familiar with the word 'compromise'. She said in the early 1990s she prepared a ballet based on his poem, but did not have a recording of it, so couldn't do it again. She read out one more piece by the poet, and rounded off her speech by dancing a bit to the famous Jalib poem, which is used in a film, 'Raqs zanjeer pahan kar bhi kiya jata hai'.

Aqeel Abbas Jafri introduced Jimmy Engineer to the audience. He started off by talking about the artist's father and how he kept his profession (engineering) as part of his name. Jimmy Engineer, he said, was born in 1954. At an early age he suffered from a disease affecting his kidneys but thankfully recuperated.

The painter went to St Anthony High School in Lahore, and then to FC College followed by admission to the National College of Arts (NCA) where he was influenced by some big names in art. It was from his school days that his inclination towards art was noticed as one of his paintings titled 'Peacock', when he was six years old, impressed many art lovers. He, however, couldn't continue his stay at the NCA and pursued his love for painting, ending up making his famous 'Partition' series. Engineer is also the recipient of the Sitara-i-Imtiaz.

Tauqeer Chughtai and Jawaid Saba paid tribute to Jalib in verse. Sheikh Majeed, Nasir Mansoor and Habib Junaidi also spoke.

Courtesy: Dawn

Oil, gas reserves found in Sindh

Oil and Gas Development Company Ltd (OGDCL) told the stock exchange on Monday that gas and condensate was discovered from its exploratory cum appraisal Mangrio Well 1, which is located in district Tando Muhammad Khan, Sindh.



The well was drilled down to the depth of 2,676 metres. It has tested 10.44mmscf/d gas, 120 barrels per day condensate through choke size 32/64 inches at well-head flowing pressure of 2,085 Psi from lower Guru B-Sand.

PPL terminates contract with SPEC Energy

Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) terminated Engi-neering, Procurement, Construction and Commissioning Contract with SPEC Energy DMCC, for the construction of a Gas Processing Plant for processing 60 MMScf/d gas from the company's Shahdadpur field.

Courtesy: Dawn

198th urs celebrations of Sachal Sarmast get under way at Daraza Sharif

The three-day 198th urs celebrations of renowned Sufi saint and multilingual poet Sachal Sarmast began at his shrine in Daraza Sharif, 40 kilometres.

Sindh Minister for Auqaf Faraz Husain Dero inaugurated the urs by laying a wreath on the saint's grave in the presence of Mian Abdul Haq Farooqui, custodian of the shrine, and officials concerned of different departments.

The minister said later at Sachal Award distribution ceremony that the government had curbed terrorism to a great extent and now there was need to spread Sachal's message of peace, brotherhood and tolerance in order to eradicate the menace completely.

He said that despite the fact that Sindh was cash-strapped and it braced for a looming financial crisis because it did not receive its full share in National Finance Commission Award from the federal government, the provincial government had prepared security plan for all shrines after the unfortunate blast at Qalandar's shrine in Sehwan.

He said that under the plan, Sachal's shrine had been put in 'A' category which envisaged stricter security arrangements. No untoward incident had taken place at the shrine since the plan had been put into effect which showed its success, he said.

He announced that schemes worth Rs150 million had been included in the upcoming budget of 2019-20 for development work on Sachal's shrine which would be approved with the budget and the work would start from next financial year. Besides, other problems of the shrine would also be resolved, he said.

The minister later distributed Eid gifts among the poor and the needy in the front yard of the shrine.

Mian Abdul Haq Farooqui, the shrine's custodian, expressed concern over Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah's absence from the inauguration ceremony of the urs and said that the chief minister excused himself on the pretext of busy schedule but he failed to understand as to what kept him so busy that he could not spare even a single day for the saint.

He said that Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, Sachal Sarmast and other Sufi saints spread Islam in the region through their message of love, peace and social justice.

He said that some extremist elements carried out blasts at the Qalandar's shrine and tombs of other saints just to scare away devotees but they failed in their nefarious design. These elements were actually afraid of dhamal culture at the shrines, he said.

Pakistan celebrates as Sana Mir becomes world's most successful women's ODI spinner

Sana Mir took her 147th ODI wicket during yesterday's ICC Women's Championship match against South Africa

While yesterday's third ODI of the ICC Women's Cricket Championship wound up to a thrilling tie, there was something special that added to Pakistan's excitement.

Pakistan off-spinner Sana Mir took her 147th ODI wicket during the match, which made her the most successful women's ODI spinner in the world.

The achievement also puts Mir on #3 on the all-time list of most successful bowlers, behind fast



bowlers Jhulan Goswami of India (218) and Australia's Cathryn Fitzpatrick (180).

Congratulatory messages began pouring in as her achievement became public:

Sana Mir's really made Pakistan proud!

Courtesy: Dawn



He asked the minister to ensure development work was carried out at the shrine at the earliest as the structure had grown weak over the years and demanded that a Jamia Masjid with a capacity for 500 faithful be constructed at the shrine.

Earlier, chief administrator of Auqaf Munawwar Ali Mahesar said that Sufi shrines had remained the only sanctuary of peace which might help in curbing religious extremism. Sachal was a leader of mystic philosophy and "we can build peace not only in Sindh but also in the rest of the world by acting on his advice", he said.

Sukkur Commissioner Rafique Ahmed Buriro said that Sachal's message was part of the very existence of Sindh. Besides being a poet, Sachal was also a social activist and his message could be used to eliminate social evils, he said.

Khairpur Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Naeem Sindhu, who was also chairman of Sachal Yadgar Committee, said that the committee's topmost priority was to spread

the message of Sachal to eradicate hatred from society and spread love.

The minister on the occasion also inaugurated the committee's publications brought out by information department. The ceremony concluded with a Sufi musical concert in which Sufi singers Rajib and Salamat Sohrab Faqeer, Ranjhan Bhatti, Ayaz Khokhar, Bhooral Bhatti, Mehdi Shah, Mehboob Motan Shah and others presented famous kalam of Sachal Sain Ghund khol deedar vikhao which mesmerised the audience.

Later, the minister conferred Sachal Award on Ghous Bux Abbasi (best paper), Hidayat Baloch (best poet), Mumtaz Kanwal (best singer), Rajib and Salamat Sohrab Faqeer, Bhooral Bhatti (best Sufi singers), Abdul Qadir Maitlo and Mohammad Siddique Bhatti (best malh pehalwan), Khalil Mahesar (best Sughar), Syed Sajid Husain Shah (best activist) and Dur Mohammad Sahito (lifetime achievement award).

Courtesy: Dawn

'The real message of Ramazan': Roadside iftar feeds thousands in Karachi

As the sun begins to fade in the Muslim holy month of Ramazan, volunteers start fixing traditional delicacies and drinks on scores of tables at different points of Karachi's main University Road. Others roll large plastic mats on the stony footpaths and fill them with food.

Motorists pull over hurriedly and join small crowds of people of all ages already gathered around the tables or occupying the plastic mats. As the call for maghrib (sunset) prayer resounds from a nearby mosque, they break their fast.

Another group of volunteers hand packets of food and bottles of water and juice to the fasting people sitting in their vehicles and public transport, who do not opt to stop.

Some 50 metres away, a different group of volunteers makes preparations for dinner to be served soon after iftar (fast-breaking). This all creates a brief traffic jam at this portion of the road.

Every Ramazan, hundreds of stalls are set up at the corners of city roads by relief organisations and local residents where homeless people, vendors, rickshaw and taxi drivers, labourers, beggars and even those who do not fast are served free food and drinks for the whole month.

A few individuals had started to arrange roadside iftar during Ramazan for needy people in Karachi two decades ago, which now has become a tradition.

In no time, this tradition was adopted by scores of other cities including the capital Islamabad, where roadside iftar stalls feed tens of thousands of people during Ramazan.

So much so, the country's tiny Sikh community has been hosting iftar for Muslims in the historic Qissa Khawani Bazaar and at several other points in Peshawar for the last several years.

"This is my sixth year to break the fast here," Abdul Hameed, an Afghan refugee, told Anadolu Agency at a roadside stall on the University Road in Karachi.



Hameed together with his other colleagues works as a scavenger in the city's eastern district far from his residence, and cannot afford to buy iftar.

"Mostly, we cannot reach home on time due to traffic jams and scanty transport. This (roadside stall) has resolved the iftar issue," he added. The fasting people are served traditional delicacies — including samosa, pakora, fruit chaat, dates, and juices.

For dinner, biryani (a spicy mixture of rice and meat) is the favourite dish of the people of Karachi.

"At least in Ramazan, we fully fill our stomach," Hameed said in a lighter vein.

Abdullah, a rickshaw driver is another regular visitor of this site during the holy month.

"It's hard for me to go home [for iftar] and come back to work. Here, I get good and enough food, and save money that I spend on my family," he told Anadolu Agency.

Act of kindness: Zar Mohammad, one of the organisers, said he together with his friends and philanthropists has been arranging free iftar meals for the last 20 years in a row.

"From first to last (evening) of Ramazan, we break our fast with these people here. sometimes our families also join us," Mohammad, who is also a prayer leader at a mosque, told Anadolu Agency.

About finances, Mohammad said the friends and families themselves, area shopkeepers, philanthropists and even common citizens, all chip in to arrange the event throughout the month.

"We do not have to run here and there for finances. A month before (Ramazan), we simply start to chip in and by the end of the month, we have plenty of funds to manage this all," he said. "It has become a set tradition now. People trust us, and hand over huge amounts even without disclosing their names."

Around 1,000 people, including travellers, are served the meal every day during Ramazan, according to Mohammad.

Bhopal Singh, who arranges iftar in Qissa Khawani Bazaar in Peshawar, said he was pursuing the mission of his late father who worked for inter-faith harmony in the country.

"For the last four years, I had been arranging iftar for my Muslim brothers here. But this year, we have changed the strategy due to security threats," Singh told Anadolu Agency, referring to threats received by the organisers last year from some militant groups that objected to their gesture.

Monis Shaikh, a student of commerce at the Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology in Karachi, was excited as it was his first day as a volunteer. "This is our first day to serve here," Shaikh said with a nervous smile on his face, pointing at a group of 8-10 students who were given instructions by an organiser.

The group plans to volunteer throughout the remaining days of Ramazan.

"Allah has blessed us with everything. It's our duty to serve and help his creation. This is the real message of Ramazan," he said.

Courtesy: Dawn

Meet the Pakistani filmmaker who's made it to Cannes this year

Iram Parveen Bilal's film, *Wakhri* has made it to a fast track finance program at the prestigious film festival. If you think there were no Pakistanis representing our emerging cinema at Cannes, think again.



Iram Parveen Bilal, a Pakistani filmmaker is currently attending the prestigious film festival with her project, *Wakhri* in tow. The talented Iram has made it to Cinefondation's Atelier programme which features 15 directors from all over the world. Talking to Images, she shared: "Cinefondation Latelier is a curated official selection program of Cannes where 15 directors from the world are invited to a seven-day intensive fast track finance program. This program has a 93% financing and distribution success rate. The general manager of the program watched my work the Locarno film festival's film library and had been tracking me."

Wakhri is a film about an accidental social media star who learns the harsh cost of wearing masks in the real world that deals with themes like "hypocrisy, trolling and the ultimate empowerment of self".

"It has been an honour for Abid Merchant, the producer, and I to be in the company of our esteemed colleagues. We hope to gain a strong international framework of support so the project once made insha'Allah can have a wide and celebrated reach," she added.

Courtesy: Dawn

Sikhs arrange Iftar dinner to promote interfaith harmony

The Sikh community has restarted arranging Iftar dinner for Muslims to boost interfaith harmony in the city at places where there is concentration of poor daily wagers, homeless people and widows.

The organisers of the event told this scribe that members of Hindu and Christian communities also contributed to the cause of interfaith harmony while young Muslim volunteers were part of the Iftar arrangement.

In an effort to promote religious harmony and mutual respect, members of Sikh community motivated a group of young volunteers to host Iftar dinner at different places of the city for the Muslims and also make arrangements at orphanages and hospitals around the city for poor people and labourers.

Announce to launch Ramazan package for poor families

The Sikh community the other day in collaboration with local charity organisation arranged an Iftar dinner at Fawara Chowk, Peshawar Saddar in which rice, milk, fruits and cold drinks were offered to the fast keepers.

Jatinder Singh, a political and social activist, said that his community had been doing that noble job for the last many years to boost interfaith harmony as minorities had been living with Muslims for centuries and had been enjoying good relationship.



“This time around we have made a different arrangement and we are going to approach every deserving family with a Ramazan package and want to make it sure that the poor people receive our contribution at their doorsteps as most of them including widows could not walk up to our Iftar points.



Home delivery makes it easier for such families to enjoy Iftar with us,” said Mr Singh.

Balbeer Singh, a resident of Mohalla Jogan Shah Dabgari in Peshawar city, said that hosting Iftar dinner for Muslims had been a good spiritual experience as it helped to enhance the spirit of mutual respect among religious groups.

Riaz Khan, a resident of Charsadda, said that he drove a rickshaw and could not reach his hometown for Iftar. He said that he almost every second day stayed in Peshawar for enjoying free Iftar dinner with Sikh community. He said like him, many other daily wagers broke fast on the Dastarkhwan of Sikh brethren in Peshawar. Radaish Singh Tony, another member of Sikh community, said that holding such events not only promoted interfaith harmony but also gave a message to the world that Pakistanis stood united and that minorities enjoyed greater freedom there than in any other country.

He said it was not only the month of Ramazan but throughout the year minority groups had been participating in several festivals and religious celebrations.

Mr Radaish Singh said that beef and other edibles were being purchased and cooked by young Muslim volunteers for the Iftar dinner.

Balbeer Singh, also a religious scholar, said that for the rest of the Ramazan, Iftar dinner would be hosted in Saddar Bazaar opposite to Wadood sons while Ramazan packages would also

launched on Thursday (today) which would continue till end of the holy month.

Christians also host Iftar Dastarkhwan To promote interfaith harmony among various communities, the Christians in collaboration with district administration arranged an Iftar Dastarkhwan for Muslims in front of All Saints’ Church, Kohati Gate on Wednesday.



A statement issued here said that the volunteers of Christian Students Fellowship (CSF) and youth of different churches of Peshawar participated in serving Iftar to the poor and needy brethren. It said that the gesture would not only help in bridging the gap between the two communities and bringing harmony but would also promote tolerance.

The location of the Iftar dinner holds a sentimental value to the Christians of Peshawar as it is the same spot where twin blasts took place back in 2013, claiming the lives of scores of worshippers.

Courtesy: Dawn

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