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JULY-SEPTEMBER 2024

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The Star's Journey

FAYSAL QURAISHI
ON FAME AND FULFILMENT



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Editor's note

Al Hamdulillah, as millions of Muslims performed Hajj this year—an annual journey that fills our hearts with gratitude and deep reflection—I found myself pondering this blessed experience. I am struck by how far we've strayed from the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his Sunnah. If we could weave the essential lessons from Hadith into the fabric of our daily lives, it would pave the way for a more harmonious and tolerant society—and a better Pakistan.

With the advent of the new Islamic year, I urge everyone to take accountability for the challenges we face as a society. Pakistan continues to regress, with issues like domestic violence, torture, and discrimination against women worsening at an alarming rate. Women themselves must be resolute in fighting back and playing their part. We must recognize our inherent power to drive meaningful change, as every individual's foundation is laid in a mother's nurturing embrace. Instilling respect and honor for women in our sons and brothers from a young age is crucial.

Recent cases, such as those of **Syeda Sania Zehra** and **Ayesha Jehanzeb**, highlight the urgent need for change. We must focus on respecting everyone and work to end these injustices. Let this year be a call for all of us to unite, support each other, and make a real difference.

Sending love and light to all our readers! 🌟



MISBAH MOMIN
Editor-in-Chief



MINDFUL

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14th August 1947



“PAKISTAN IS PROUD OF HER YOUTH, PARTICULARLY THE STUDENTS, WHO ARE NATION BUILDERS OF TOMORROW. THEY MUST FULLY EQUIP THEMSELVES BY DISCIPLINE, EDUCATION, AND TRAINING FOR THE ARDUOUS TASK LYING AHEAD OF THEM.”

— MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH



Muniba, Honey & Talat



Chanda Wasim



Naila, Afshan & Naila Tariq



Jaria, Ela & Lilly



Chanda & Muniba



Chanda with friends



Rubia, Rafiq & Amina



Tehmina



Amina, Ghania, Zoobia, Chanda & Humazil



Farida, Muniba, Chanda & Humaira

— LAHORE — GOLDEN CELEBRATION

Chanda Wasim celebrated her 50th birthday with a fabulous party surrounded by her closest friends. The evening was filled with laughter, joy, and heartfelt moments as friends shared stories and memories from their long friendship. 🎂



Muniba & Bushra



Fauzia

Rubab



Seema & Nuzhat



Beena, Chanda, Rukhsana, Ayesha & Sara



Sadia, Fauzia, Lubna, Maisoon & Zooni



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Ruby, Faryal & Nina



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The Star's Journey

FAYSAL QURAISHI
ON FAME AND FULFILMENT

In the glitzy realm of Pakistani entertainment, where fleeting fame is common and lasting success is rare, Faysal Quraishi shines as a beacon of enduring talent and versatility. Debuting with "Dour-e-Junoon," Faysal's career spans decades, marked by roles ranging from heartthrob to hard-hitting. He has not only solidified his place in the industry but has also continuously evolved, embracing new challenges and setting new standards of excellence.

Born in Lahore, Faysal Quraishi entered the acting world at a young age. He began with child roles in various television dramas, where his innate talent and captivating presence quickly set him apart. His performance in the 2000s propelled him into the spotlight, making him a household name across Pakistan.

Faysal's defining trait is his versatility. From the intense Bashar Momin to the complex Haider in "Meri Zaat Zarra-e-Benishan," and the witty Sheeda in "Kis Din Mera Vyah Howay Ga," he infuses each role with rare authenticity. His seamless transitions between diverse characters highlight his range and commitment to his craft. His recent performances in "Fitoor" and "Muqadar" have captivated audiences, while his nuanced portrayal of Chanar Khan in "Khaie" serves as a reminder of why he is one of Pakistan's foremost actors.

*Photographer: 3H (Hassan Habib Hashmi) | Wardrobe: FQ COLLECTIONS by NARKINS
Coordination: MISBAH MOMIN | Text: DURRAH AMAN*

BEFORE WE EXPLORE YOUR IMPRESSIVE CAREER, COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY BACKGROUND?

My family is originally from Karachi, but they moved to Lahore before I was born. I grew up in Lahore, received my education there, and spent a significant part of my life in the city. In fact, I began my career in Lahore.

WHAT WAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR PARENTS LIKE

WHILE YOU WERE GROWING UP?

I had a very close relationship with my parents as I was their only child. My *Amma* was a bit strict, but I shared a friendly bond with my father. The only sorrow I'll carry throughout my life is that my *Abba* couldn't witness the success he wished for me.

WITH NEARLY THREE DECADES IN THE INDUSTRY, HOW HAVE YOU SEEN IT EVOLVE?

I've been working as a hero for about 30

years, beginning even earlier in my childhood. The television industry has evolved significantly, but our film industry still has a long way to go. In the early '90s, there were 40-45 films released annually, and cinemas were plentiful. At that time, only PTV aired dramas. Privatization and the rise of new channels began 8-9 years into my career. I moved to Karachi in 2002 because all the TV channels were based there, which shifted the focus more towards TV and less on film.



“THE ONLY SORROW I’LL CARRY THROUGHOUT MY LIFE IS THAT MY ABBA COULDN’T WITNESS THE SUCCESS HE WISHED FOR ME.”

Today, the world is at our fingertips. Social media allows us to connect with anyone, anytime, and master classes are available for almost every field. In contrast, we relied on watching films to develop our characters.

AMONG ALL THE CHARACTERS YOU’VE PLAYED, WHICH ONES HAVE BEEN THE MOST MEMORABLE OR CHALLENGING, AND WHY?

When I first began acting in TV serials, my breakthrough role was ‘*Boota from Toba Tek Singh*’. After that, I received numerous offers for similar characters, but I declined them, as I strive to play diverse roles with each project. *Alhamdulillah*, this approach has been successful, leading to consistently challenging roles. To this day, I seek roles that stand out, which aligns with the preferences of producers, directors, and especially writers who consider me for such roles.

The most challenging role for me was in ‘*Sabz Pari Laal Kabootar*,’ as it was the complete opposite of my personality. Another difficult role was in ‘*Haiwan*,’ which was also vastly different from who I am. Similarly, I have portrayed several other characters that were challenging due to their divergence from my personal traits.

HAVING WORKED IN BOTH TELEVISION AND FILM, HOW DO THESE MEDIUMS DIFFER FOR YOU, AND DO YOU PREFER ONE OVER THE OTHER?

Recently in Pakistan, cinema attendance has declined primarily due to rising ticket prices, creating a gap between cinemas and viewers. Meanwhile, with widespread access to



Khaife



Aashiq Hussain



Bashar Momin



Laloolal.com



Shikaar



Game show “Khush Raho”



Roag



Fitoor



Tum Meri Ho



Muqadar

SOCIAL ISSUES. HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR YOU TO CHOOSE ROLES THAT HIGHLIGHT THESE ISSUES, AND HOW DO YOU BELIEVE ENTERTAINMENT CAN DRIVE SOCIAL CHANGE?

Whether it’s a film or a play, every production carries a message that resonates with the audience. It might be a

television and the availability of content on YouTube for free, many people prefer these more accessible mediums and watch dramas rather than films. However, in my honest opinion, films remain the superior medium.

DESPITE WINNING NUMEROUS AWARDS FOR YOUR PERFORMANCES, HOW DO YOU STAY GROUNDED AMIDST ALL THE ACCOLADES AND RECOGNITION?

During your journey, before reaching your destination, things often seem easier and your vision feels broader. However, once you achieve success and start receiving praise and awards, the challenges become greater. With

everyone watching, the pressure mounts. While a struggling actor has more freedom to make mistakes and take their time, being in the limelight brings higher expectations and demands even more hard work.

Praise and awards come from your work, so staying grounded is vital. Despite the diverse characters you portray, they all reflect some aspect of reality. Humility remains key throughout the journey.

MANY OF YOUR PROJECTS ADDRESS



Faysal with Governor of Sindh, Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori



Best TV Actor, LSA 2016



Faysal with Former President Dr. Arif Alvi



Faysal with his father Abid



Childhood



Faysal with Aayat & Sana



Faysal with his mother Afshan



Faysal with family



Faysal & Sana with Aayat & Farmaan



“BEING IN THE LIMELIGHT BRINGS HIGHER EXPECTATIONS AND DEMANDS EVEN MORE HARD WORK.”



RAPID REVELATIONS

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE CUISINE OR DISH?

I’m a foodie at heart, with a particular love for dishes like *kari chawal*, *biryani*, and a good steak. I’m mindful of my fitness, but allow myself to indulge once a month

THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONALITY?

- 1- Passionate
- 2- Loyal
- 3- A bit crazy

WHAT’S YOUR ALL-TIME FAVORITE MOVIE?

I have many favorites, so it’s hard to choose just one.

ARE YOU A MORNING PERSON OR A NIGHT OWL?

I’m a morning person due to my busy schedule with kids, the gym, and shoots.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE TRAVEL DESTINATION?

I enjoy Turkey for its food and interesting places.

WHAT WAS YOUR VERY FIRST JOB?

It was probably a play or film when I was very young.

WHO IS YOUR BIGGEST ROLE MODEL OR INSPIRATION?

In films, *Nadeem Baig Sahb*, and in dramas, *Talat Hussain Sahb*, *Qavi Khan Sahb*, *Firdous Jamal Sahb*, and *Abid Ali Sahb*.

WHO HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE CO-STAR TO WORK WITH?

Aijaz Aslam, because we’re close friends and understand each other well.

DO YOU HAVE ANY HIDDEN TALENT?

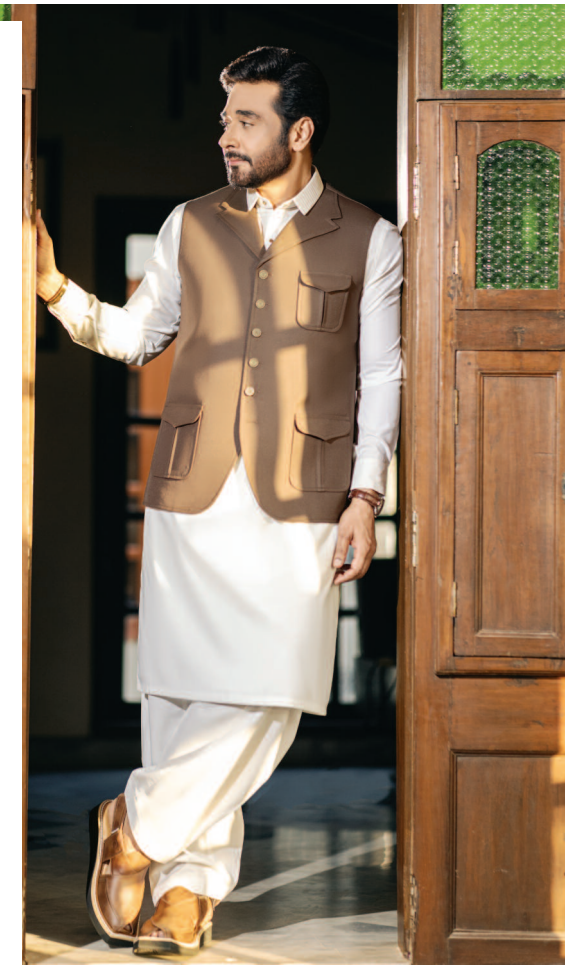
No hidden talents; what you see is what you get.

THREE THINGS YOU ALWAYS CARRY WITH YOURSELF?

- 1- Water
- 2- Peanuts
- 3- My phone

TELL US ABOUT YOUR HARLEY OWNERS GROUP? WHAT’S THE BEST PART ABOUT IT?

The group represents freedom and brotherhood. Riding together worldwide has been a valuable experience. 🏍️



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Fareshteh Aslam, Aisha Khan & Asma Chishty



Ayesha Jalil



Mr & Mrs Kamran Lashari with Ayesha Tammy Haq



Umar Sayeed



Frieha Altaf



Bunto Kazmi & Aamna Isani



Deepak Perwani, Asma Chishty, Mohsin Sayeed, Aliya Iqbal & Asad ul Haq



Rasikh Ismail



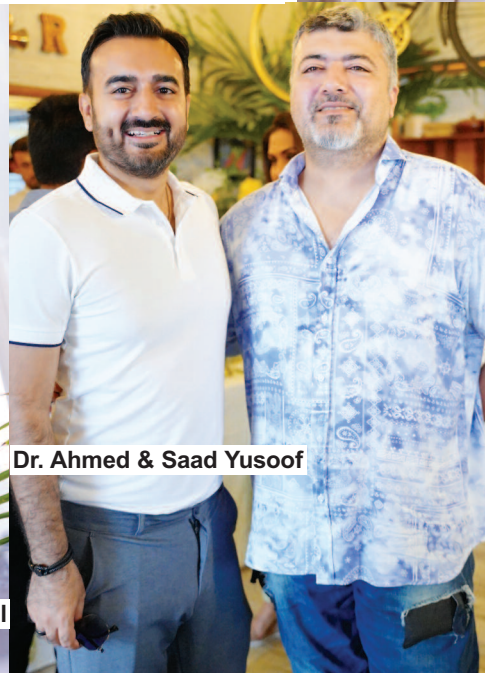
Salim & Shehla Chatoor



Sadaf Munir



Yawar Iqbal



Dr. Ahmed & Saad Yusooif



Seema Jaffer & Mohsin Sayeed



Asim & Ayla Raza with Asma Chishty

— KARACHI —

ART & CULTURE

Asma Chishty, CEO of Destinations Media, hosted an exquisite lunch for Mr. and Mrs. Kamran Lashari, featuring prominent figures from the entertainment and fashion worlds. Guests enjoyed **Mobeen Ansari's** captivating exhibit of Lahore's Walled City. The event promoted cultural and creative exchange, encouraging Karachi creatives to use Shalimar Gardens and Lahore Fort for their artistic projects. 📍



Riyadh



Boulevard City

BOULEVARD CITY: A MODERN MARVEL
 Our adventure began with a visit to Boulevard City, a spectacular site that replicates the energy and grandeur of New York's Times Square. This urban masterpiece is adorned with towering buildings, illuminated brilliantly by stunning light displays. Cafés and restaurants by the lake offer serene views of billboards showcasing extraordinary sceneries, creating an atmosphere both enchanting and bustling. Strolling through Boulevard City felt like stepping into a world where tradition meets innovation. The city's skyline, with its modern architectural designs, stood as a testament to Saudi Arabia's progressive vision. The blend of local and international culinary delights available in the restaurants added to the cosmopolitan feel of this vibrant locale.

Tower of Paris and the Pyramids of Egypt, were meticulously recreated, offering visitors a unique photo opportunity and a taste of global heritage. What truly captivated us were the live dance performances representing different regions. The vibrancy and diversity of these cultural displays highlighted the beauty of global unity and artistic expression. Boulevard World was not just a place of visual delight but also a celebration of cultural diversity, making it a must-visit for anyone in Riyadh.

SOUQ AL-AWALEEN: A JOURNEY BACK IN TIME
 Our exploration of Riyadh's cultural landscape led us to Souq Al-Awaleen, a traditional market offering a glimpse into old Saudi culture. The market was alive with the sounds of people playing traditional music and the rhythmic beats of the duff, a traditional drum. Stalls displayed beautifully crafted items, from jewelry to textiles, embodying the rich artisanal heritage of the region. The food stalls were a gastronomic

BOULEVARD WORLD: A GLOBAL TAPESTRY
 Our next stop was Boulevard World, a cultural mosaic where artisans from around the globe set up stalls to showcase their crafts. This immersive experience was like taking a mini world tour. Iconic monuments from various countries, such as the Eiffel



Pyramid, Boulevard World



Paris Enclosure, Boulevard World



American Enclosure, Boulevard World



Japan monument, Boulevard World

adventure in themselves. We indulged in local delicacies that tantalized our taste buds and provided a deeper connection to Saudi Arabia's culinary traditions. The market's ambiance, with its authentic representation of Saudi Arabia's past, offered a charming

contrast to the modernity of Boulevard City.

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM: A TREASURE TROVE OF HISTORY
 A visit to the National Museum was an enriching experience, showcasing Saudi Arabia's journey from ancient civilization to a modern state. The museum's beautifully preserved exhibits, ranging from archaeological finds to contemporary artifacts, narrated the story of a nation with a rich historical tapestry. Walking through the museum, we encountered fascinating displays that detailed the cultural and historical evolution of Saudi Arabia. The meticulous curation and preservation efforts highlighted the country's



Restaurant in Boulevard City



American dancing group, Boulevard City

DISCOVERING THE NEW AND PROGRESSIVE SAUDI ARABIA:

A JOURNEY THROUGH RIYADH

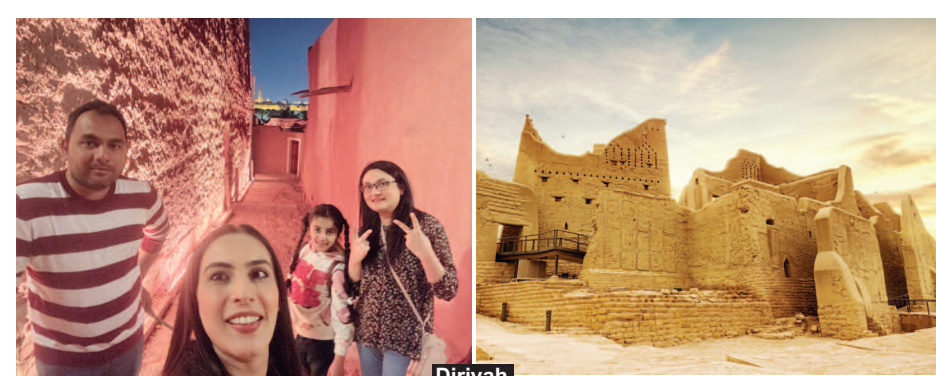
By Amber Qureshi, Journalist/TV host

My recent trip to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, was a delightful revelation of a nation rapidly evolving and embracing modernity while preserving its rich heritage. This visit fundamentally changed my perception of the country, and I believe it can change yours too. Accompanied by my two kids, we embarked on a visit to see my brother, and what we found was a vibrant city teeming with cultural richness, architectural marvels, and delectable cuisine. Here's a glimpse of our memorable journey through some of Riyadh's most remarkable destinations.



Riyadh museum





Diriyah



dedication to honoring its past while forging a path toward the future.

DIRIYAH: THE CRADLE OF SAUDI HERITAGE

Diriyah, the old city of Saudi Arabia, was another highlight of our trip. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site, Diriyah offers a well-preserved glimpse into the nation's historical roots. The city's architecture, narrow alleyways, and traditional buildings transported us back in time, providing a deeper understanding of Saudi Arabia's cultural heritage. Diriyah's restoration as a tourist site stands as a symbol of the country's commitment to preserving its historical landmarks while making them accessible to the world. The blend of ancient charm and modern preservation efforts made our visit to Diriyah a truly remarkable experience.

A PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY EMBRACING MODERNITY

One of the most striking aspects of our visit was witnessing the progressive nature of Saudi society. People were welcoming and open-

minded, and no one batted an eye at our attire or behavior. It was refreshing to see such a relaxed and accepting attitude toward different styles and ways of dressing. The empowerment of women in Saudi Arabia is particularly noteworthy. It was inspiring to see Saudi women driving alone, enjoying meals by themselves in restaurants, and working in various fields. This shift towards gender equality and women's empowerment reflects a broader societal change and a move toward a more inclusive future.

A SHOPPER'S PARADISE AND CULINARY DELIGHT

Riyadh's infrastructure is a testament to its rapid development, boasting impressive highways, stunning skyscrapers, and expansive green spaces. The city is also home to numerous malls offering the best shopping experiences. From high-end fashion boutiques to local crafts, Riyadh's malls cater to every shopper's desire.

Our culinary journey in Riyadh was equally impressive. Local food delights such as shawarma, mutton, and chicken mandi tantalized our taste buds with their rich flavors and aromatic spices. The city's dining scene also features a wide array of international food chains, providing a diverse culinary landscape that reflects Riyadh's cosmopolitan nature.

REFLECTIONS ON PAKISTAN

As I experienced the progressive and open-minded atmosphere in Riyadh, I couldn't help but reflect on my home country of Pakistan. I fervently wish that Pakistan and its people would embrace the same mindset of evolving and accepting change. Particularly, the acceptance of different cultures and the empowerment of women are areas where progress can lead to a more inclusive and dynamic society. Seeing Saudi women driving, working, and enjoying their independence was inspiring, and I hope for a similar shift in societal attitudes in



Souq Al-Awaleen



Pakistan.

My trip to Riyadh was an eye-opening experience that showcased the dynamic fusion of tradition and modernity in Saudi Arabia. From the vibrant Boulevard City and the cultural tapestry of Boulevard World to the historical charm of Souq Al-Awaleen and Diriyah, every destination offered a unique perspective on the nation's evolution. Riyadh's remarkable infrastructure, shopping experiences, and culinary delights further underscored the city's progressive spirit and commitment to excellence.

The welcoming and progressive nature of its people, coupled with the strides in women's empowerment, painted a picture of a nation on the move. As I journeyed through this captivating city with my kids, I couldn't help but feel a deep appreciation for the new and progressive Saudi Arabia, a nation that honors its past while embracing the future with open arms. 🇸🇦



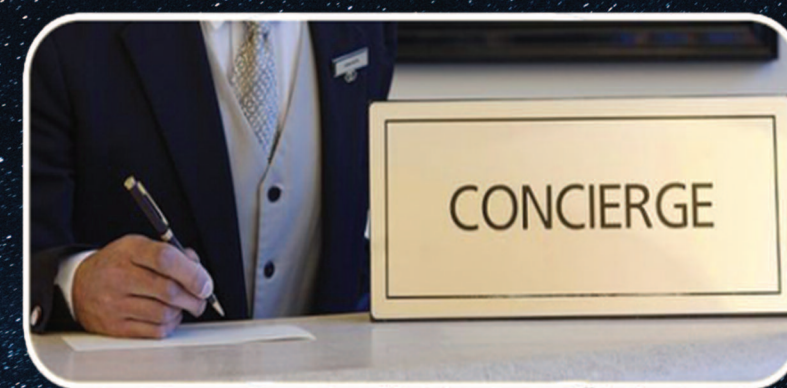
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Panelists

— LAHORE —
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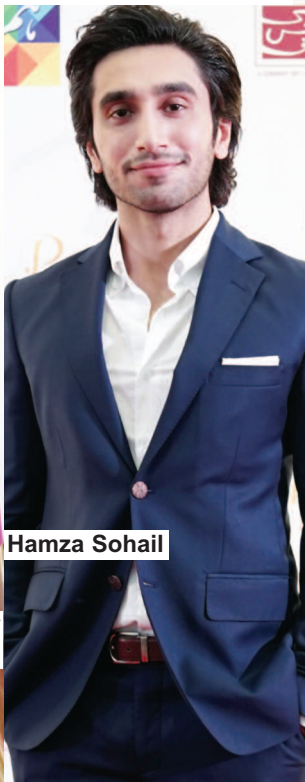
The Kashf Foundation hosted the launch of "Zard Patton Ka Bunn," featuring a panel on "A Fine Balance: Entertainment for Social Change." The event was attended by the drama's cast, crew, media, and dignitaries like Luke Myers and Alicia Sosa from Global Affairs Canada. Notable attendees included Moneeza Hashmi, Adeel Hashmi, and Seemi Raheel. Roshaneh Zafar, Managing Director of Kashf Foundation, co-hosted the event with Moneeza Hashmi. 



Roshaneh Zafar & Saifee Hasan



Roshaneh Zafar & Sajal Aly



Hamza Sohail



Alicia Sosa,
 First Secretary
 (Development)



Luke Myers,
 Counsellor and Head
 of Cooperation at
 Global Affairs Canada



Adeel Hashmi

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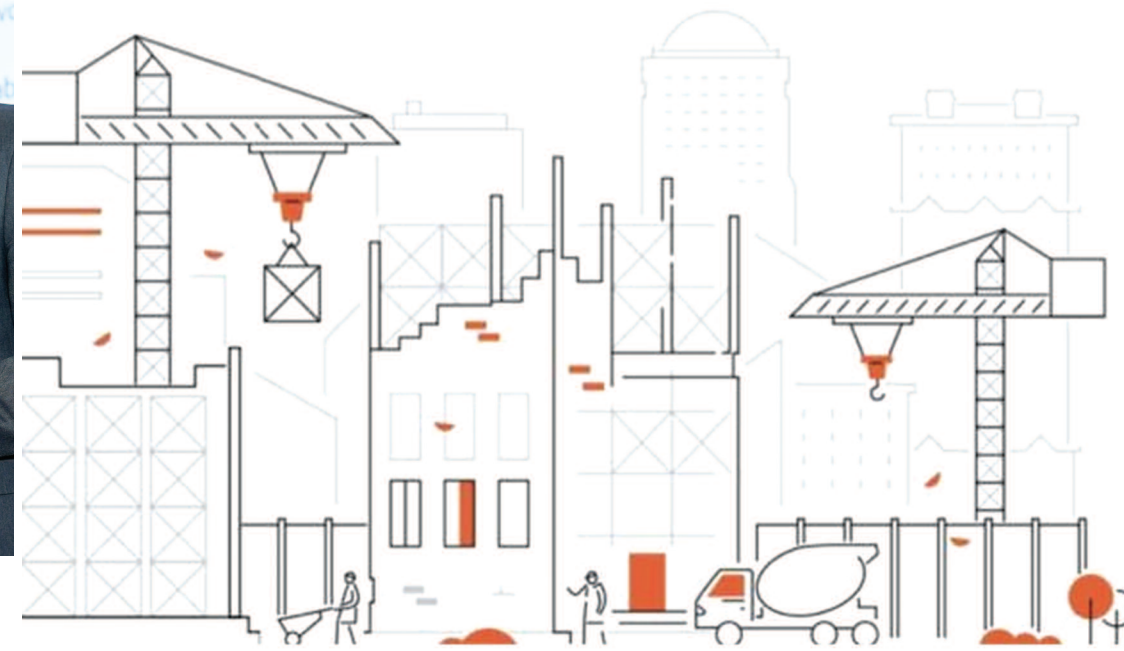
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RANI RHAPSODY: *Every Stitch Regal*

By Sania Hasan Couture

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*Designer: Sania Hasan
Model: Mahnoor Cheema
Makeup & Styling: Ayan Amir
Photographer: Talha Bhatti*









**A
TIMELESS
BLEND:**

SHAAM KI CHAI AND THE HEART OF PAKISTAN

Nitasha Syed, a Senior Product Manager with a background in software engineering, has always maintained a strong connection to her Pakistani roots. Growing up in Canada, she took pride in her heritage but was frustrated by the constant negative portrayal of Pakistanis in the media. Determined to make a difference, Nitasha sought to showcase the true essence of Pakistan, highlighting its beauty, vibrancy, and resilience. This passion led to the creation of "Shaam ki Chai," a podcast dedicated to celebrating Pakistan's untold stories, challenging biases, and fostering a narrative of hope and understanding.

TO START OFF, COULD YOU SHARE WITH OUR READERS A BIT ABOUT YOUR OWN PERSONAL JOURNEY?

My parents migrated to Canada from Pakistan in the '90s, where I grew up like most third culture kids, trying to balance my identity between where I was born and where my roots were from. Travelling to Pakistan for about a quarter every year, helped me understand and immerse in my culture, which gave me a certain sense of what my life as an adult would look like; get a degree, be introduced to someone, get married, have children, and focus on raising them with the same values I was raised with. But you know how they say, if you want to make God laugh, you should tell him the plans you have for your future!

While at college, I decided to follow in my father's footsteps by enrolling in a computer science degree. During my last semester though, he was diagnosed with a fatal form of brain cancer and most of my time was spent at the hospital. After graduating, I decided to live on my own - something I could have never imagined doing- and focus on building my career in startups. I learnt about what it would mean to work at a company that gets acquired, moved to Silicon Valley and became a Product Manager at startups in verticals like healthcare, financial services, and now Cybersecurity. As a 15-year-old Pakistani immigrant girl, I couldn't have fathomed that one day I would work on building a product line used by millions of people.

Alhamdulillah, for all the ups and downs that life brought. *Alhamdulillah*, for the loss that strengthened me to become who I am, the education that gave me the confidence to walk into rooms I didn't even know existed, and for always having the *duas* of my

mother and family members alongside me every step of the way.

HOW HAS YOUR UPBRINGING OUTSIDE OF PAKISTAN INFLUENCED YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON YOUR HERITAGE AND CULTURE?

I think it definitely made me question certain aspects of my heritage and culture. I didn't realize the opinions that I had formed as a young adult, but now that I look back at my life, I understand being exposed to different cultures can broaden the perspective you might be raised with. When you're outside of Pakistan, it doesn't matter whether you're Urdu speaking, Punjabi, Sindhi - you're just Pakistani. You grow up around nuclear family units and joint family units, realizing there is good and



Engaged in conversation with a partition survivor

bad to both structures. You go to school with kids who are being raised by single parents; in some family units, the husbands stay home, and the women go to work, and you realize there is more than one way to live a good life. When

you go onto live your own life, cultural norms and responsibilities start creeping up, and that's when you start to question why certain things are necessary.

CAN YOU SHARE ANY FOND MEMORIES OR EXPERIENCES FROM YOUR CHILDHOOD THAT STRENGTHENED YOUR CONNECTION TO PAKISTAN?

Driving down the road next to Clifton beach with my cousins, the original "aada" had just hit the radio, and it was blasting in the car, windows down, *Pakola* in hand (with no care about where those calories would go) - life was good.



Engaged in conversation with partition survivors near Wagha Border



WHAT'S THE CONCEPT BEHIND 'SHAAM KI CHAI' AND HOW DID YOU START THE PROJECT?

The media can really dictate how a society functions. There's a reason why governments, brands, and companies have large media budgets. They understand that if they control the narrative, they can control the way the world sees a specific topic. This means they have power over the way people behave and the way certain skin colors or religions are judged (and how religion is interpreted). For many years, the media has looked up to the western world and its culture - which has been built off the backs of people that look like me.

Media (national and international) has not been kind in its portrayal of Pakistani people. The 'Pakistani terrorist' is a common stereotype in western movies and TV shows. If you look at the plots in most popular Pakistani TV shows, they're centred around the 'toxic husband,' or the 'martyr *bechari* woman' who kills herself for her family or abusive husband.

No society is perfect and our media has done a good job in highlighting pertinent issues, but it seems like there's little or no other content being created. There's a lot of wholesome goodness in Pakistan that needs to be shared with the world as well. I refuse to let myself or the men/women of my family, community, and culture be defined by negative anecdotes on a national or international platform. I also look back to the early days of Pakistan and its media industry where we were able to have nuanced conversations, women were empowered /educated, and men showed affection.

HOW DOES 'SHAAM KI CHAI' AIM TO CHALLENGE PAKISTAN'S NEGATIVE PORTRAYAL IN THE MEDIA?

The media's portrayal of our people isn't reflective of their willingness to do better and that's what inspired me to create '*Shaam ki Chai*.' Pakistanis are often unfairly typecast and I hope my brand and business can change that. I hope it can hold enough value to create change, and not be beholden to a value

system that dehumanizes the narrative of Pakistanis (especially the minorities) for impressions, views, and political gain.

WHAT THEMES DO YOU EXPLORE AT 'SHAAM KI CHAI'?

We're not limited to any particular themes. We've explored the 1947 partition, the birth of Pakistan (how its food, architecture and media evolved), we've explored startups, the venture space, art, science - you name it!

WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST REWARDING ASPECT OF THE SHOW?

Seeing people's reaction to the show. The feeling I get when I see comments about how someone learned a new thing about Pakistan, or didn't realize a Pakistani was behind a certain innovation makes my heart warm! **IS THERE A PARTICULARLY MEMORABLE MOMENT OR STORY SHARED ON 'SHAAM KI CHAI' THAT YOU HOLD CLOSE TO YOUR HEART?**

Meeting **Moneeza Hashmi** for sure. The first female GM for PTV and one of the first women on camera in Pakistan -

yes, please! I was in the presence of a legend who was so humble. She was actually so worried for me behind the scenes, because I was filming in the cold without a jacket. I will forever hold that interview close to my heart.

WHAT MESSAGE OR FEELING DO YOU HOPE VIEWERS TAKE AWAY AFTER WATCHING AN EPISODE OF 'SHAAM KI CHAI'?

My hope is that someone who watches an episode of '*Shaam Ki Chai*' learns something they can use in their everyday life. I want people to walk away from the show, not just getting a different understanding of Pakistan but also thinking of *Shaam Ki Chai* whenever they talk about what they learned.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHERS WHO, LIKE YOU, ARE NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITIES OF MAINTAINING A STRONG CULTURAL IDENTITY WHILE LIVING IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY?

Be proud of your identity! Most young kids that grow up in a different country from their heritage want to hide their culture to assimilate to the culture around them. Do not hide who you are. When you grow up you will have a deep sense of loss for not understanding your language, food, music, clothing. It's your internal home. You're eventually going to come back to it, so always keep it close!

CAN YOU SHARE ANY UPCOMING PROJECTS OR EPISODES OF 'SHAAM KI CHAI' THAT YOU'RE EXCITED ABOUT, AND WHAT VIEWERS CAN LOOK FORWARD TO IN THE FUTURE?

Yes! We have a small segment coming soon called '*chai chats*', where we have short 10-minute interviews with Pakistanis about a specific topic. Stay tuned to dive deep and learn some interesting things! 🇵🇰

Nitasha & Yousaf Salahuddin



With Hashim Ali



With Hamza Ghaznavi



With Moneeza Hashmi

FASHION'S FINEST

Trendsetters of the Moment

Our style radar has identified the top IT style influencers making waves with their unique and captivating looks. Here's a round-up of some of the best, curated by Durrah Aman.

Sadaf Kanwal showcases a creation from her own label, Sadaf Kanwal Fashion. As a pioneer of the *khulapaincha shalwar* trend, her innovative designs and impeccable style continue to lead the fashion scene.



Bushra Mehr Khan styles a beautiful outfit by Purple Haze Pret Studio flawlessly. The color play and styling make it a standout choice for any occasion.



Amna Babar catches all eyes in a stunning hot pink outfit by Pehrwaas. The chic glam and accessories highlight the vibrant hue and stylish design.



Rija Mujahid is a sight to behold in a vibrant **Fahad Hussayn** saree. The minimal styling elevates the ensemble, making it a true statement piece.



Mehk Saeed defines luxury fashion in a gorgeous **Kamiar Rokni** creation. The silhouette, detailed work, color palette, and styling are all impeccable.



Shanzaay Sheikh steps out in a breezy summer Agraani outfit. The embroidered ensemble, paired with minimal accessories, exudes sophistication and captures the essence of summer grace.



Alishay Adnan turns heads in an all-white Ansab Jahangir ensemble, styled to perfection with minimal jewelry and white heels.



Sona Rafiq is a vision in a trendy blue outfit by Waniya by Mehr Azam. She keeps her look chic and minimal, letting the outfit's elegance speak for itself and solidifying her status as a trendsetter.



Zainab Reza maintains grace in a powder blue Farah Talib Aziz ensemble. Paired with high heels and flowy hair, she creates a look that's both graceful and stylish.



Abeer Asad Khan makes a statement in a butter yellow outfit by Ayesha Shoaib Malik—the color of the season.



THE POSTPARTUM EXPERIENCE

—A Woman’s Worst Kept Secret



SHIZA SHAHZAD

The postpartum experience of young mothers is a topic that resonates deeply with me and deserves to be at the forefront of our discussions. Having gone through it myself and interacted with numerous clients, friends, relatives, and acquaintances who are mothers, I’ve seen firsthand how often this experience is overlooked. This article aims to shed light on the realities faced by women as they embark on the journey of motherhood.

WHAT IS THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD?

The postpartum period begins after childbirth and brings a range of physical, mental, hormonal, and emotional changes. Every woman experiences postpartum differently, with some facing mild discomfort while others endure severe emotional and mental distress. First-time mothers often feel overwhelmed, experiencing crying spells, constant anxiety, frustration, or a sense of hopelessness and numbness. These intense emotions can impact their relationships, daily functionality, and ability to care for their child. Understanding the postpartum experience is crucial to addressing the underlying feelings of overwhelm and frustration.

This article will highlight the common emotional experiences of postpartum women, helping readers identify and acknowledge their own state of mind. **NAVIGATING MOTHERHOOD: A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY** One of the most profound transitions in a woman’s life occurs when she adopts the role of motherhood, bringing with it new demands, expectations, and responsibilities. This transition often leads to a sense of losing one’s identity beyond motherhood, prompting questions like, “*Who am I besides being a mother?*” Many women experience a crisis of identity as they integrate this new role into their lives, longing for aspects of their former selves.

Feelings of guilt and shame often accompany these thoughts. Internal dialogues like, “*I planned and wanted this child, so why do I feel sadness and miss my old life?*” are common. It’s crucial to recognize that these emotions are natural and valid. Missing aspects of one’s pre-pregnancy life does not diminish love for the child or make a mother ungrateful. It’s normal to experience conflicting feelings during this transformative time.

As a therapist, I want to affirm that it’s okay to miss your pre-baby self and still embrace motherhood. You can crave alone time and cherish moments with your child simultaneously. We must normalize and humanize these complex emotions without imposing guilt or judgment on mothers.

THE CHALLENGE OF LOST INDEPENDENCE IN POSTPARTUM

A significant challenge for women in the postpartum period is the loss of independence, freedom, and spontaneity. Infants require constant care—feeding, sleeping, diaper changes—making their needs the priority. Mothers find

themselves immersed in repetitive tasks day and night, struggling to find time for even basic self-care activities like showering or enjoying a quiet moment. This newfound routine can lead to feelings of being stuck and isolated, exacerbated by seeing others around them continue with normal life.

This loss of independence can strain relationships, especially with partners, leading to a phase often referred to as the “roommate” stage where emotional and physical intimacy diminishes. It’s crucial for mothers to recognize and manage these feelings in a healthy manner. Seeking support, carving out personal time, and communicating openly with partners and loved ones are essential steps. Remember, it takes a community to raise a child, and seeking help is not a sign of weakness but a necessity for well-being. Support from those around young mothers should be offered with compassion and understanding, fostering an environment where they feel supported and valued.

THE PRESSURE TO BE PERFECT

Many women derive their self-worth from various roles—daughter, wife, professional—which intensifies with the addition of motherhood. The pressure to excel in all these roles exacts a heavy emotional and mental toll, often leaving women feeling drained and exhausted. Motherhood itself involves significant physical and emotional labor, compounded by sleep deprivation, leading to burnout and heightened sensitivity.

Amid fulfilling multiple roles and societal expectations, women often internalize pressure to appear strong and in control, despite feeling overwhelmed internally. This struggle can manifest as anger or rage in relationships, exacerbated by unsupportive



environments. It’s vital for women to recognize these pressures and seek support to maintain their well-being during this challenging phase.

BODY IMAGE CHALLENGES IN YOUNG MOTHERS

Many young mothers struggle emotionally with their changed bodies after childbirth. They often feel disgusted, disappointed, and sad, longing for their pre-pregnancy appearance. This dissatisfaction can lead to demotivation and low self-esteem, worsened by comparisons on social media. There’s often a lack of self-compassion and acceptance, which may also be lacking in immediate surroundings.

CONSTANT COMPARISONS, UNSOLICITED ADVICE, AND INTERFERENCE

Young mothers often face distress from constant comparisons and unsolicited advice, especially from older women and family members. This stress can lead to resentment, anger, or feelings of

inadequacy. The barrage of criticism and comparisons—statements like “*I gave birth without an epidural,*” “*I breastfed for two years,*” or “*I potty trained my child early*”—further fuels self-doubt. It’s important to recognize that these remarks often stem from the speaker’s own experiences and upbringing, perpetuating a cycle.

Unfortunately, young mothers often lack validation, empathy, or encouragement from their peers. Understanding and support from others can help alleviate these pressures and boost confidence during this challenging time.

THE DILEMMA OF THE MODERN WORKING MOTHER

Reflecting on the postpartum experience, I’ve realized how undervalued motherhood and caregiving are in our society. As a working mother, a stay-at-home mother, or balancing both, many women of our generation grapple with feelings of worthlessness in non-career

pursuits or guilt when prioritizing their careers. Society often diminishes the importance of caregiving tasks, labeling them as mundane despite their demands for time, energy, and organizational skills.

Unlike professional roles that offer financial compensation, recognition, and promotion, motherhood lacks visible rewards, leading to a sense of invisible labor. Shifting my perspective on these tasks helped me make better choices for my family and embrace motherhood as a source of personal growth rather than a burden. Feeling valued and appreciated in this role boosted my self-confidence as a mother.

It’s crucial to reassess how we perceive and value caregiving tasks, recognizing their empowering potential rather than dismissing them. By reevaluating our relationship with motherhood, we can enrich our life experiences and foster a healthier self-image as mothers.

CONCLUSION

The postpartum experience is a profound journey marked by complex emotions and challenges often overlooked by society. It’s essential to acknowledge the physical, emotional, and psychological changes women undergo during this transformative period. From adjusting to a new maternal identity to coping with the loss of independence and societal expectations, each aspect contributes to a unique and sometimes overwhelming experience.

Creating a compassionate environment involves fostering open dialogue, offering empathetic support, and validating these emotions without judgment. Through self-awareness, acceptance, and seeking help when needed, women can navigate this journey with resilience and reclaim empowerment in their roles as mothers. It’s crucial to prioritize discussions around postpartum experiences to ensure every woman feels supported and understood during this significant chapter of her life. 📖

Note: *Persistent feelings of hopelessness, sadness, or suicidal thoughts lasting more than two weeks require immediate professional support.*

The writer is a mental health professional. She can be reached at shiza.shahzad173@gmail.com

GROWING UP ONLINE: THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON TEEN DEVELOPMENT



DR. AMINA SAEED

Writer is a freelance journalist who works on issues related to mental health and well-being. She is a yoga expert and conducts meditation and breathing sessions



The term “*aaj kal ke bachay*” (kids these days) is loosely used by those from earlier generations, such as pre-millennials and pre-Gen Z individuals. Each era is distinct, and every generation has its own unique characteristics that may not always be relatable to others. Today’s era is particularly unique, with significant changes in schooling, entertainment, friendships, and communication. For much of this, we’re dependent on devices- sometimes to an unhealthy point of addiction.

Teenage years are a crucial and susceptible period in one’s life, as experiences during this time can significantly influence the trajectory of one’s future. This phase is marked by rapid physical and mental growth, with substantial brain development. The frontal cortex in the brain develops during these years and is responsible for behaviors, decision-making, risk management, self-control, and emotional regulation. Hormonal changes contribute to typical

adolescent behaviors, but various intrinsic and extrinsic factors also highlight teenage vulnerabilities. It is essential to focus on fostering healthy development to support the formation of a resilient adult brain.

Social media has become an integral and indispensable part of everyday life, especially for teenagers who spend several hours on platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, and others. While social media offers significant benefits such as connectivity, information access, and support, it also comes with a high cost, impacting mental health. The emotional input from these platforms

can significantly affect the development of young individuals.

I’m just scratching the surface here, but some of the effects are:

1. Users on social media often share only the highlights of their lives, which are carefully curated and sometimes far from reality. This creates pressure on impressionable minds to meet these unrealistic standards, leading to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem.
2. Social media allows users to hide behind a screen and say things they might not say in person. Words have power, and when used inappropriately, they can lead to

3. Excessive use of social media, particularly before bedtime, has been shown to cause insomnia and poor sleep due to the blue light emitted from screens. When the natural sleep cycle is disrupted, mood disorders can worsen, affecting cognitive function, and impairing academic performance and overall well-being.
4. Increased social media usage has been linked to rising levels of anxiety and depression.
5. Daily exposure to social media content heightens peer pressure, prompting the need to constantly update one’s life. This can lead to uneasiness, poor self-image, and feelings of isolation.
6. Social media platforms are designed to be addictive, which can lead to compulsive behavior patterns that interfere with daily life and interpersonal relationships. This creates a cycle of loneliness, making genuine friendships increasingly rare.
7. While social media provides a platform for self-expression, it also pressures teens to conform to popular trends rather than embracing and developing their unique identities.

In conclusion, as the teenage brain undergoes intense development, shaping unique cognitive and behavioral traits, it is crucial to support their growth and prevent them from falling into cycles of comparison and despair. 📱

LAHORE'S FORGOTTEN MASTERPIECE:

THE TOMB OF KHAN-E-JAHAN ZAFAR JANG KOKALTASH



YEMEEN ZAHRA

A Glimpse into the Past

Nestled in the bustling environment of Lahore’s Larechs Colony lies a monument steeped in history, yet often overlooked: the ancient tomb of Khan-e-Jahan Zafar Jang Kokaltash. Once a figure of great significance in the royal court of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir, Khan-e-Jahan’s resting place stands as a symbol of Lahore’s rich but often neglected heritage. Constructed in 1697, this historical site reflects the grandeur of an era when Kokaltash was a prominent figure, revered for his administrative acumen and close relations with the reigning *Maharaja*.

The Unseen Decay

Despite its grand past, the tomb now presents a scene of neglect, with its once-majestic structure succumbing to the ravages of time. Visible from the city’s

Canal Road, the monument whispers stories of its former glory amidst modern chaos. However, not all hope is lost. In 2018, the Punjab Archaeological Department initiated restoration efforts to revive this forgotten treasure, though the site remains partially obscured by ongoing construction work.

A Dance Hall and a Railway Colony: Layers of History

The tomb’s journey through time is marked by various transformations—from a symbol of power to a dance hall during British rule, and eventually to its current dilapidated state. Yet, amidst these transitions, restoration efforts have kindled hope for its revival. The structure’s original marble and intricate designs, once captivating, have largely vanished, but their legacy lingers, urging for preservation.

Restoration and Controversy: The Battle for Authenticity

The ongoing restoration efforts highlight the complex challenges of historical preservation. The use of modern materials, such as cement instead of traditional *kankar* lime plaster, has sparked debates among conservationists. This clash between old and new encapsulates the broader

struggle to maintain the integrity of our cultural landmarks.

Architectural Splendor Unveiled

Despite the absence of its original marble facade, the tomb’s architectural brilliance remains undeniable. With its distinctive octagonal design, towering arches, and the once-majestic dome, the mausoleum continues to hold secrets of the past, waiting to be rediscovered. The presence of geometrically laid bricks and remnants of a bygone era on its podium invite visitors to pause and reflect on the fleeting nature of time and the enduring beauty of art.

A Call to Action: Preserving Lahore’s Heritage

The tomb of Khan-e-Jahan Zafar Jang Kokaltash stands as a powerful symbol of Lahore’s cultural heritage and underscores the pressing need to preserve such historical landmarks. It challenges us to recognize the value of our historical sites and to take active steps in safeguarding them for future generations. Let us not wait until the echoes of the past fade into silence but work together to keep these stories alive, ensuring that Lahore’s hidden gems are cherished and celebrated for years to come. 🏛️





JUICING FOR HEALTH: BENEFITS, TIPS, AND HOW TO GET STARTED



SARAH KAMAL MUGGO
Lifestyle Author and Strategist
on Health

WHAT IS JUICING?

Juicing is a great way to improve your health, especially if you're not a big fan of fruits and vegetables. Juices help keep your skin hydrated and are excellent natural anti-aging remedies.

Fresh juices provide hydration and act as anti-aging, natural syrups.

All you need is a cold press slow juicer, a blender, and a citrus press. With these, you can enjoy a variety of nutrient-dense juices. Fresh fruits and vegetables help prevent disease, slow premature aging, and promote overall health.

Doctors agree that diets rich in fresh fruits and vegetables are not only preventative but also improve the management of diseases like cancer, heart disease, and obesity. Fruits and vegetables are high in fiber, low in fat, and packed with essential vitamins, minerals, and water.

DON'T WAIT FOR HEALTH ISSUES TO STRIKE

Human nature often neglects health until problems arise. Even a simple headache can disrupt our day. More serious health conditions can have far greater impacts.

It's important to take responsibility for our health. Staying active and maintaining a positive lifestyle benefits both ourselves and those around us. Teaching children these habits is equally important.

BENEFITS OF JUICING

Juices are quickly absorbed, providing immediate nutrition and hydration. Experimenting with different combinations can lead to discovering new favorite mixtures. Juice bars like "Boost" and "Joe & The Juice" offer organic and delicious options, including smoothies and wheatgrass shots. Traditional drinks like *shikanjbin*, made with lemon and sugar (or honey), are excellent antioxidants rich in vitamin C.

Making your own juice (MYOJ) at home ensures you know exactly what's in it and allows for portion control and hygiene. Smoothies, such as those made with bananas, pineapple, and berries, are also quick and nutritious.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A HEALTHY DIET

Good food is essential for happiness. What you eat and drink affects your body and overall health. Juiced fruits and vegetables provide concentrated nutrition, aiding in disease prevention, boosting the immune system, and promoting vitality and a glowing complexion.

Different fruits and vegetables offer unique nutrients and health benefits. Fresh juice retains its nutritional value best when consumed immediately. If storing, use an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a week.

WEIGHT LOSS AND NUTRITION

For weight loss, opt for low-calorie, high-fiber fruits and vegetables. Whole fruits should be your first choice over juicing. The following list ranks fruits and vegetables by nutrient density:

1. Bell peppers
2. Parsley
3. Kale
4. Broccoli
5. Spinach
6. Celery
7. Brussels sprouts
8. Cauliflower
9. Carrots
10. Cabbage
11. Beetroots
12. Pineapple
13. Cantaloupes
14. Watermelon
15. Tomatoes
16. Apples
17. Strawberries
18. Pears
19. Oranges
20. Grapes
21. Mint leaves
22. Blueberries
23. Coconut water
24. Grapefruit
25. Guava juice

TIPS FOR JUICING

- Spinach has a rich green color.
- Celery has a strong flavor.
- Fruits add sweetness.
- Vegetables can be bitter.
- Water or coconut water can be used as diluters.

Mix strong-flavored vegetables with

sweet fruits like apples or carrots to make them more palatable. Fruits are higher in natural sugars and calories compared to vegetables.

The antioxidants in juices help combat oxidative damage, which contributes to aging and illness. Maintaining your body's health is like preventing rust.

THE ROLE OF WATER

Water makes up about 70% of our body weight and is essential for all cell functions and temperature regulation. Staying hydrated supports digestion, excretion, and weight management. Aim to drink 1.5-2 liters of water daily.

Plain water is best, but flavored water with lemon, mint, or cucumber can add variety. Drinking water before meals can help reduce appetite.

Indicators of low water levels include a dry tongue, constipation, chapped lips, and feeling overheated. During hot weather and exercise, replenish your body with water to prevent dehydration.

Water balance is crucial for survival, with an intake of fluids, water from food, and metabolic water totaling around 2000ml. This balance is maintained through output via urine, stool, lungs, and skin.

Water is the purest and best drink for maintaining health. **W**

From pg. 134, Fitness, Nutrition and Lifestyle in Pakistan by Sarah Kamal Muggo. Published in Pakistan, 2019.

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CLASSIC RUSSIAN SALAD

A Medley of Fresh & Creamy Vegetables



GOCHI MAHMUD

INGREDIENTS:

- Beetroot: 2
- Carrots: 2
- Potato: 1
- Salad Leaves: Handful
- Cucumber: 1
- Eggs: 2
- Vinegar: 1 tsp
- Sugar: 1 tsp
- Mayonnaise: 1 tbsp
- Cream: 1 tbsp
- Salt and Black Pepper: To taste

METHOD:

1. Boil the vegetables separately. Once cooked, cut them into bite-sized pieces and set aside.
2. Mash the yolks of the boiled eggs. Add vinegar, sugar, salt, and black pepper, and mix well until smooth.
3. Stir in the mayonnaise and cream into the egg yolk mixture.
4. Gently fold in the salad leaves and all the vegetables with the dressing.
5. Serve chilled. 📖



Photograph: Moiz Saleem Ahmad



DESSERT DELIGHT

Classic Shahi Tukra

Ingredients (Serves 4-5):

For the base:

- Whole milk: 1½ cups
- Sugar: 1½ cups

For the bread:

- Bran or white bread: 5-6 slices
- Oil for shallow frying

For the sheera:

- Water: 1 jug
- Sugar: 1½ cups
- Green cardamom pods: 6-7, crushed

For garnish:

- Pistachios: slivers
- Almonds: roughly chopped
- Barfi: 3-4 pieces
- Edible silver varq: 2 small sheets
- Kewra essence: 1½ teaspoons



2. Prepare the sheera:

- Combine the sugar, water, and crushed cardamom pods in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 7-10 minutes until the syrup is sticky and syrupy.

3. Prepare the bread:

- Heat oil in a frying pan. Fry the bread slices until light brown, working in batches. Drain on kitchen paper.

4. Assemble and bake:

- Dip each fried bread slice in the sheera and lay them in the prepared baking dish.
- Pour the cardamom-flavored milk over the bread slices. Sprinkle with half of the almonds and pistachios, and add the kewra essence.
- Bake in the preheated oven for 15 minutes, until the bread absorbs the milk and forms a crust.

5. Garnish and serve:

- Allow to cool slightly, then top with pieces of barfi, remaining nuts, and edible silver varq. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Enjoy this rich and aromatic Pakistani bread pudding! 📖

MINDFUL Reads

A TRIBUTE

By AZ, a reader/teacher



(Late) Mrs. Rahila Masood

There's usually one person for everyone who acts as an agent of change, setting the trajectory of their life on an enlightened path.

For me, that person was my English teacher, **Mrs. Rahila Masood**, during my senior school years. It was our good fortune that Cambridge offered a choice of "Classics in Translation," alongside Literature and Language, in Karachi schools. Even more fortunate was having Mrs. Masood (Mrs. M) as our teacher for all three subjects.

Having heard rumours of Mrs. M's candid, satirical remarks and humor, we entered her class with trepidation. As a group of 14 to 15-year-olds with little finesse and a rudimentary knowledge of

Greek and Roman myths, our apprehensions were high. However, ten minutes later, we were immersed in the world of Homer, the blind bard who crafted *The Odyssey*. Entranced by the tale of Odysseus' journey, the tribulations faced by his wife Penelope, and the struggles of his son Telemachus, we were startled when the bell signaling the end of our double period rang. We left the world of mythology reluctantly.

My journey into classics, mythology, folklore, and literature had begun. I had always loved reading, but under Mrs. M's tutelage, it became a passion. With her, we explored Greek and Roman writers like Ovid and Euripides, and discovered Aristotle, Sophocles, and many others. It became a contest to see

who would find a book first and bring it to class. We learned to give references from other writers in our answers to make them more interesting. The highlight of our class was the discussion of our scripts and Mrs. M's sometimes scathing, yet constructive, criticism, laced with wit. This made us determined to do better and achieve the nearly impossible and coveted 6 out of 10.

In our A-levels, it was the same with literature. Shakespeare had never been so interesting or so easy. We slurped up the difficult language like a sugary drink. Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* was a revelation—a writer from his time portraying a woman who had no qualms about choosing a sixth husband:

*Yblessed be God that
I have wedded fyve!
Welcome the sixte,
whan that evere he shall.*

*For sothe I wol nat kepe
me chaast in al.*

*Whan myn housbonde
is fro the world ygon,*

*Som cristen man shal
wedde me anon.*

In this part of her Prologue, she gleefully thanks God that she has had five husbands and declares that she will happily marry the sixth after the fifth dies. In these lines, as in others, she praises marriage for its physical pleasure, barely mentioning the medieval value of chivalrous love. We spent many hours chortling over Chaucer and Shakespeare's bawdiness and lamenting the insipid portrayal of women in their works. Mrs. M gave us the power of inference, deduction, and analysis, for which I will always remain grateful.

She dedicated her life to teaching, lived on her own terms, and founded what was probably Pakistan's first academy for students who couldn't get the desired quality of education in regular schools. She was an unforgettable personality and, for many like myself, a beacon of hope for those dedicated to imparting a love for literature. RIP! 📖



THE BANNER OF CHANGE: WOMEN IN POLITICS



IQRA PARVEEN AWAN
Founder of PCOS HELPS, PCOS CLINIC
& Awaaz Pakistan

Back in the day, when medicine was the most esteemed field due to its recent advancements, it was considered the only truly respectable career option for girls. Somehow, we remained stuck in that mindset and never progressed. Do you remember when we were choosing subjects during our academic years? All girls were directed towards medicine and discouraged from pursuing fields like law, engineering, or media—areas that might make them more vocal or aware of their rights.

As a law student who initially aspired to join medicine (for obvious reasons), I've faced many questions about my choice. I recall a time when I was on public transport in Lahore, and an auntie asked about my studies. When I mentioned my field, her disappointment was so palpable that she turned away and said nothing more. This was only

one of many such encounters.

I've often pondered how women manage to thrive in the predominantly male-dominated sphere of politics. It's a field where traditional barriers and entrenched biases can pose significant challenges, yet many women have successfully navigated these obstacles and made impactful contributions.

Reflecting on this, I decided to acknowledge the efforts of such trailblazers; those who not only broke barriers but also paved the way for building a Pakistan where no profession is gender-specific.

SEEDS

As the seeds of Pakistan were sown by the Pakistan movement, so too were the seeds for women's participation in politics, long before Pakistan existed as a separate entity. Figures like **Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz**, **Fatima Jinnah**, **Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan**, and **Begum Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah** not only helped in the creation of Pakistan but also created spaces for women in the most male-dominated arenas.

THE FIRSTS

Breaking glass ceilings is not for the faint-hearted. I always celebrate the "firsts," especially for women, because it takes immense courage and relentless commitment to carve out your path. These pioneers guide future generations. Let's recognize the firsts in Pakistani politics, the ones who have made us visible today:

- **Begum Mahmooda Salim Khan**, the first woman to be appointed as a Minister in Pakistan.

- **Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan**, sworn in as the Governor of Sindh in 1973, making her the first female governor of Pakistan.
- **Fatima Jinnah**, the first woman to run for the presidency of Pakistan in 1965, challenging the then-dictator **Ayub Khan**.
- **Benazir Bhutto**, the first woman to head the government of a Muslim-majority country when she was elected Prime Minister of Pakistan in 1988.
- **Dr. Noor Jehan Panezai**, the first woman to hold the position of Deputy Chairperson of the Senate of Pakistan in the early 2000s.
- **Hina Rabbani Khar**, appointed Pakistan's first female Foreign Minister in 2011.
- **Fehmida Mirza**, the first woman to be elected as the Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan in 2008.
- Recently, **Maryam Nawaz Sharif** made history as the first female Chief Minister of Punjab.

WOMEN IN POLITICS: A SOLUTION

Research by the Inter-Parliamentary Union suggests that legislatures with more women tend to prioritize issues like education, healthcare, and social welfare – areas that disproportionately affect women and families. Given Pakistan's ongoing struggles in these areas, increasing the number of women legislators would be a sustainable solution.

Furthermore, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), women's political empowerment is crucial for economic growth. Countries with higher female political participation tend to have better economic policies and more robust economic growth.

Considering the current economic, social, and administrative crises in Pakistan, we need more women in leadership to chart a way out. This will not only help bridge the gender disparity gap but also address issues affecting women, who are often the most impacted. Who better to lead the way than those who live through the suffering firsthand? 📖



Begum Naeema Raja



THE TASBEEH PLANT:

A SYMBOL OF DEVOTION AND GENEROSITY

BY MOMINA RAJA

My recent pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah and the surrounding sacred sites remains etched in my memory as a transformative experience—a journey that deepened my faith and left an indelible mark on my soul. Months before embarking on my journey, anticipation and excitement began to build. Preparation for Hajj is not just logistical; it is spiritual and mental as well. I immersed myself in studying the rites and rituals of Hajj, seeking to understand their significance and spiritual dimensions. There was a profound sense of awe and reverence knowing that I was about to undertake a journey followed by millions throughout history, walking in the footsteps of prophets and generations of believers.

As my departure day arrived, I vividly

recall the sight of my mother carefully placing bundles of *Tasbeeh* beads into small pouches. Her intention was clear: to offer pilgrims a token of spiritual aid and encouragement during their journey to the holy sites. The *Tasbeeh* beads, crafted by her own hands and nurtured from her garden, carry not only the physical beauty of the plant but also the love and prayers of a devoted mother.

The *Tasbeeh* plant, named after the prayer beads (*Tasbeeh*) it resembles, features small, round seeds with vibrant red and black hues. These seeds are meticulously crafted into prayer beads used by Muslims worldwide during their devotional practices. Native to tropical and subtropical regions, the plant grows as a slender vine and is cherished not only for its religious symbolism but also for its medicinal properties in traditional medicine systems.

My mother, a devout woman whose devotion to Islam permeates every aspect of her life, tends to the *Tasbeeh* plant with meticulous care. Each year, as the plant matures and produces its distinctive seeds, she lovingly collects them, dries them, and then strings them together to create prayer beads. The *Tasbeeh* plant is more than just a botanical curiosity; it is a testament to the intertwining of nature, spirituality, and human compassion. Through the loving hands of my mother, this plant becomes a conduit for spiritual reflection and charitable giving, embodying the essence of *Sadqa e Jariya*.

In a world often fraught with division, the *Tasbeeh* plant and the beads derived from it serve as a powerful symbol of unity among believers. Through the simple act of distributing these prayer beads, my mother exemplifies the timeless Islamic values of generosity, compassion, and communal solidarity. Each bead represents a prayer whispered, a blessing shared, and a moment of connection with the divine.

May Allah grant us all the compassion to perform such small acts of kindness that leave an everlasting impression. 🕌

LUSH HYDRANGEAS IN GALLIAT

THE ULTIMATE GARDENING GUIDE



NOSHIN SARFRAZ

President of Amateur Gardening Club.
Coordinator, Lahore Gymkhana Gardening Club.

Hydrangeas come in various types. The Mophead hydrangea for example, has a round, ball-like shape. Then there are the Lacecap hydrangeas, while the new cone-shaped variety is called Paniculata hydrangeas.

To plant hydrangeas in Galliat, they must be placed in partial shade to full sun, receiving morning sunlight and afternoon shade. They do very well in large pots, such as 18-20 inch terracotta pots, that can be easily moved. Other points to keep in mind are:

- The soil mix should consist of six parts leaf mold or acidic pine needle compost from under trees, very well-decomposed old termite-treated manure, and one part sand.
- When planting in the ground, create a hole measuring two feet deep and two feet wide. Incorporate the aforementioned soil ingredients and water thoroughly. Wait a day or two before transplanting the rooted hydrangea, and then water it generously.
- Hydrangea plants are heavy drinkers but try not to wet their foliage; only water at the base. This reduces the chance of fungal infestation and powdery mildew. Water the plants only early in the morning.

- Hydrangeas prefer moist and loamy soil.
- The colors of hydrangea flowers reflect the soil's chemistry. Blue flowers indicate acidic soil with a pH of 5 to 5.5. Pink flowers indicate alkaline soil with a pH of 6 to 6.5. White varieties, like the Annabelle hydrangea, remain the same regardless of soil pH.
- Once small buds form, feed with a water-soluble potash-based fertilizer every week. Use a tablespoon of fertilizer in a liter of water.
- Using a teaspoon of baking soda dissolved in a liter of water and applied to the soil base enhances flower quality and prevents fungal infestations.
- Adding crushed

eggshells provides calcium to the soil and improves blooms.

- Monthly application of a tablespoon of Epsom salt (magnesium sulfate) dissolved in 2 liters of water during the active growing period helps fortify stems and foliage.
- If the soil is alkaline, applying a mixture of a cup of white vinegar in 4 liters of water around the plant every 2 months during the active growing season of a mature plant can be beneficial.
- Adding alum to the soil once buds form, helps acidify the soil and improves flowering.
- Pruning should be done according to the area's climate. In cooler and more snow-affected areas like Nathiagalli, Khairagali, and Changlagalli, do not prune plants, letting them be as they are during high winter and snow. Only add mulch, such as decomposed pine needles, to cover the root zone in snow. Once the snow starts melting in early spring, lightly prune and shape the plants, feed the base with good compost, and apply a slow-release NPK fertilizer in the soil, and water well. This will jumpstart the plant in spring. Once active growth is established, start a 10-day routine of feeding with 50% water-soluble potash dissolved in water. Once buds form, add alum to the soil base.
- When pruning, remove all damaged and dead stems to activate fresh growth.

Hydrangeas are excellent as cut flowers despite their smaller stems. Their large blooms provide a striking focal point in any arrangement. They dry beautifully and can last up to two years when preserved in a water and glycerine solution, which maintains their suppleness and color. 📧

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A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO KITCHEN GARDENING



IMTESAL AHMAD
Freelance Writer

Adding years to your life and life to your years, kitchen gardening is the practice of growing your own fruits and vegetables at home. It offers numerous benefits, including nutritious produce, reduced dietary expenses, and a sustainable way to minimize food waste. While gardening can be physically demanding, it also serves as a calming and rewarding activity that enhances your connection with nature. The love for gardening is a seed once sown that never dies.

BENEFITS OF KITCHEN GARDENING:

Healthier Produce: Growing your

own fruits and vegetables ensures they are free from harmful chemicals.

Physical Activity: Gardening keeps you active, serving as a form of exercise.

Stress Relief: The act of gardening can be meditative and reduce stress levels.

Fresh Air and Sunlight: Working outdoors helps you soak up vitamin D and breathe cleaner air.

Cost Saving: Reducing the need to buy produce can lower your grocery bills.

Environmental Impact: A small garden contributes to environmental sustainability.

Key Elements of a Kitchen Garden:
Size: Determine the scale of your garden based on available space, from a single pot to a full yard.

Location: Choose a spot that receives at least 6-8 hours of daily sunlight with easy access to water. Ensure the area has good drainage to prevent waterlogging. A location near your home makes it easier to maintain the garden and access fresh produce quickly.

Soil Preparation: Good soil is essential for healthy plants. Test the soil to determine its pH and nutrient levels. Add compost or organic matter to

improve soil structure and fertility. Well-prepared soil supports robust plant growth and higher yields.

Select Your Plants: Choose plants that are suitable for your climate and soil conditions. Beginners can start with easy-to-grow vegetables like tomatoes, lettuce, radishes, and herbs.

Garden Layout: Organize your garden to make the best use of space. Raised beds, containers, and vertical gardening techniques can maximize small areas. Group plants with similar water and sunlight needs together.

Maintenance: Regular care, including proper watering, weeding, and pest control, is essential. Water your plants consistently, especially during dry periods. Mulch around plants to retain moisture and suppress weeds. Use natural remedies for pests and diseases when possible.

Crop Rotation: Practice crop rotation to prevent soil depletion and reduce the risk of pests and disease. Rotate plant families each season to maintain soil health and fertility.

By following these guidelines, you can create a beautiful and productive kitchen garden. Kitchen gardening is more than just a way to grow food; it is a journey towards a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle. The process of nurturing plants and watching them grow provides a sense of accomplishment. Whether you have a spacious backyard or a small balcony, kitchen gardening is adaptable to any living situation. Start small, learn as you go, and gradually expand your garden as you gain confidence and experience. In doing so, you'll enjoy the many benefits of fresh, home-grown produce while contributing to a greener planet. 🌱



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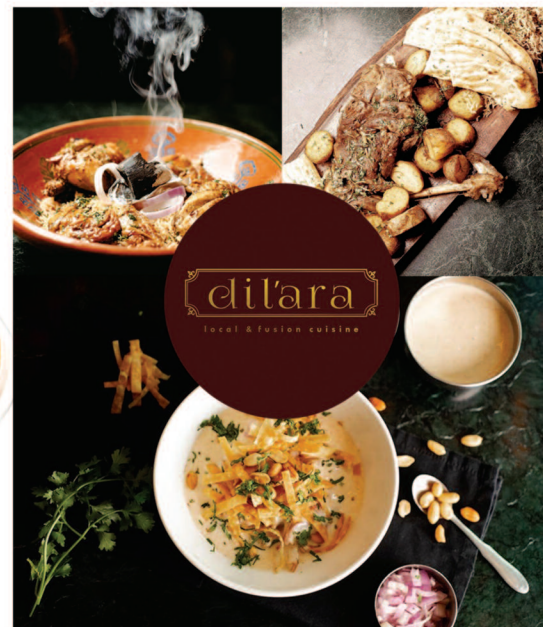
FALL INTO FASHION

If you're looking to elevate your fall wardrobe, be sure to explore Camisa by Mashal Aasim for chic options. Ladies in Dubai can view these beautiful designs on September 21, 2024, at the Ritz Carlton DIFC, Ensemble Festive Souk. For more details, contact them on Instagram (@camisaoninsta) or at 03077875557. 


MINDFUL EDITORS' pick

DESI DELIGHT

Dil'ara, a local and fusion restaurant in the heart of Phase 3, DHA Lahore, offers a delectable *desi* feast. With rich, aromatic curries and unique fusion dishes, the diverse menu will have you coming back for more.
 Instagram: dilara_resturant_
 Contact: 0323 1884994 

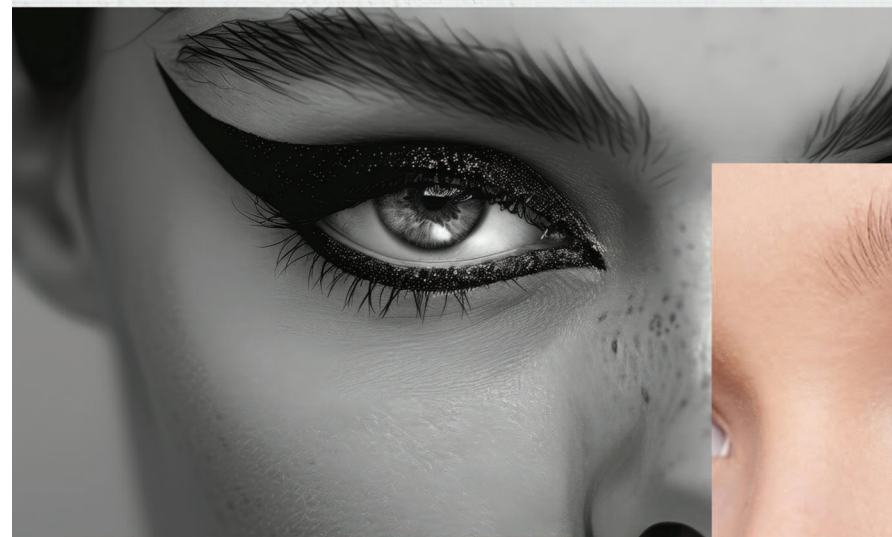


CHEESE THE DAY

Zeboo Classic Food, a pizza service in Dharampura, Lahore, is renowned for its delicious flavors that cater to a variety of taste preferences. With its reasonable prices, the business successfully combines quality and affordability, making it a popular spot among pizza enthusiasts in the area.
 Contact: 0307 4777499-77 



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for whom He wills.”

—(Al-Qur’an 2:261)



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