

POSITIVE



Greenwich University

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

Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

Overview

Pakistan observed a slight improvement in the overall international rankings in 2021 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 was placed at the 104th spot among 167 states on the global Democracy Index 2021, compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

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 161 out of 192 countries in the Human Development Index scoring 2022 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's press freedom rank dropped to 145 out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index, An annual ranking of countries published by Reporters Without Borders (RWB), an international non-governmental organization dedicated to safeguard the right to freedom of information.

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

TERRORISM INDEX

Terrorism Index in Pakistan decreased to 7.83 in 2021 from 7.92 in 2020.

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

In 2021, index of economic freedom for Pakistan was 51.7 score. Though Pakistan index of economic freedom fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to decrease through 2002 - 2021 period ending at 51.7 score in 2021.

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 & Political outcomes

Historic November

24 December, 1951: UN Security Council adopts the Anglo-American Resolution on Kashmir urging immediate demilitarization talks between India, Pakistan.

16 December, 1957: Malik Feroz Khan Noon is sworn in as seventh Prime Minister of Pakistan.

December 8, 1958: Gawadar, formerly a feif of the Sultan of Oman, is handed over to Pakistan after its purchase.

7 December, 1970: 1970 Pakistani general election were held on 7 December 1970, although the polls in East Pakistan, originally scheduled for October, were delayed by disastrous floods and rescheduled for later in December and January 1971.

20 December, 1971: Yahya Khan resigns.

31 December, 1985: Martial Law is lifted, amended 1973 Constitution revived.

December, 2000: Nawaz Sharif goes into exile to Saudi Arabia

12 December, 2009: Operation Rah-e-Nijat ends in a Pakistani victory.

December, 2014: National Action Plan (Pakistan) is formulated.

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Pakistan to enter 2026 as fifth-most populous country

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) says that as Pakistan enters 2026 as the world's fifth most populous country, with a population exceeding 225 million, high population growth and fertility rates, persistent gender inequality, and rising climate vulnerability, the urgency of addressing population dynamics has intensified.

These realities underscore the need to view population not as a burden but as a strategic driver of sustainable and inclusive development, UNFPA Pakistan said in a statement.

Looking ahead to 2026, UNFPA called for a shift in how population is reflected in national planning and financing, particularly in the NFC formula.



Moving beyond population size as the primary determinant, a forward-looking approach should reward provinces for measurable progress in gender equality, climate resilience, balanced population outcomes, and improvements in the quality of health and education services.

Such reform would align fiscal incentives with human development results, encourage innovation and accountability, and help translate population policy into tangible gains for people and communities, the statement said.

UNFPA also urged the imple-

mentation of the recommendations of the Council of Common Interests with clear accountability mechanisms, defined timelines, and sustained domestic financing, supported by strong population data and evidence-based planning.

Despite gains, challenges remain, the agency said. High maternal mortality, unmet need for family planning, early marriages, gender-based violence, and unequal access to quality reproductive health services, particularly in remote communities, continue to demand attention. These challenges are also closely linked to stalled fertility decline and uneven development outcomes, UNFPA said.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan Playing Proactive Role in Global Diplomacy: Dar

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday outlined what he called one of the "most vigorous phases" of Pakistan's recent diplomatic history, citing a string of high-level visits, policy dialogues, and multilateral engagements in July and August.

Speaking at the Foreign Office, Dar set out Pakistan's foreign policy direction, centered on regional peace, trade revival, connectivity, and principled positions on global issues.

He highlighted Pakistan's presidency of the UN Security Council in July, during which it chaired several sessions, including one on Palestine. "Under Pakistan's leadership, a unanimous resolution calling for peaceful conflict resolution was adopted, a diplomatic milestone," he said.

During a July 28 visit to Washington, Dar met US Secretary of State Marco Rubio for what he described as a "frank and constructive" exchange. He also addressed think tanks, including the Atlantic Council, where his remarks on judicial independence drew controversy at home. "The judiciary operates independent-



ly in Pakistan," he said, rejecting what he called "political misinterpretations" of his comments.

Reaffirming Pakistan's stance on Palestine, he pointed to his participation in the France-Saudi-hosted peace conference and the OIC emergency session in Jeddah on August 25. At the OIC, Pakistan dismissed the "Greater Israel" plan as "illegitimate and unacceptable."

The minister also disclosed Islamabad's behind-the-scenes role during the Iran-Israel flare-up. "Iran acknowledged Pakistan as a true friend, their parliamentarians even chanted 'Shukriya Pakistan,'" he noted.

On August 20, he joined his Chi-

nese and Afghan counterparts for trilateral talks in Kabul, covering refugees, border management, trade, and infrastructure. The three sides agreed on the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan railway project, with China signalling readiness to extend CPEC into Afghanistan.

Dar's August 23-24 visit to Bangladesh included rare outreach to all major political parties, including the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami. Six MoUs were signed in areas ranging from visa waivers to trade and cultural cooperation. He also advocated for reviving SAARC, noting Dhaka's support but acknowledging "resistance from one member state."

Earlier, in London (August 17-19), the foreign minister met senior British leaders, launched new digital services for Pakistanis abroad, and confirmed the lifting of the UK's flight ban on PIA. "Flights to Manchester will resume in September," he said, adding that a UK-Pakistan Business Advisory Council had been launched.

Looking ahead, Dar said Pakistan and China will mark 75 years of diplomatic relations in 2026 with cultural and economic initiatives. He underlined China's increasing interest in agriculture, mining, and industry, and announced that 1,000 Pakistani students will pursue advanced agricultural training in China. Pakistan's commitment to the "One China Policy" remains firm, he added, while acknowledging Beijing's consistent support on Kashmir.

"Pakistan is no longer confined to reacting. We are helping shape regional conversations and global dialogues," Dar declared. "Our foreign policy is rooted in principle, guided by experience, and aligned with the aspirations of the people."

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan, US to intensify cooperation on security, immigration

Pakistan and the United States agreed to intensify cooperation on immigration and security during a meeting here on Saturday between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and acting US Ambassador Natalie Baker.

The acting US ambassador, who called on the interior minister, offered her country's full technical assistance for counter-narcotics operations and efforts to curb illegal immigration.

The meeting also focused on strengthening collaboration in intelligence sharing.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Naqvi said that Pakistan had a clear and firm policy regarding illegal immigration.

He added said the identification of drug trafficking cases at airports remained a top priority.

"State-of-the-art scanning machines are being installed at all major airports across the country." The minister reaffirmed that the country was strictly implementing a zero-tolerance policy against narcotics.

"Even today, drugs originating from Afghanistan are reaching dozens of countries and destroying young generations," he noted, adding that US technical support to bolster Pakistan's counter-narcotics capabilities would be welcomed.

On the prime minister's directive, the National Narcotics Coordination Centre would be set up soon, the interior minister informed the envoy.

During the meeting, a detailed briefing was given on the Anti-Narcotics Force's (ANF) performance and ongoing operations across the country.



It was shared that under the annual counter-narcotics campaign, 134 tonnes of narcotics were seized, 2,001 suspects including 75 foreign nationals were arrested, and drugs worth \$12.797 billion were confiscated.

It was further informed that in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh, 110 Afghan nationals were arrested and 40,659 acres of land were cleared to maintain a "poppy-free status".

Ms Baker appreciated the performance of the ANF and said that the United States placed special

importance on its relations with Pakistan and would continue cooperation in all areas.

The interior minister said Pakistan-US relations were vital for promoting peace and stability in the region, and that Islamabad was committed to further strengthening their long-standing bilateral ties.

The meeting was attended by the interior secretary, the ANF director general, its director enforcement, representatives of the US embassy, and other officials.

Courtesy: Dawn

PIA auction on Dec 23 to be broadcast live

After a detailed meeting with all corporate entities and company representatives participating in the privatisation process of Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Ltd (PIACL), Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced on Thursday that bidding for the national flag carrier will be held on December 23.

He said the entire bidding process, which will be broadcast live, would be transparent and merit-based, adding that these were the government's top priorities. A statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said the bidding process was progressing smoothly to restore the airline's "lost glory" and align it with modern requirements.

According to the statement, all bidders attending the meeting with the prime minister praised the government for adopting a professional and transparent procedure in the PIA privatisation.

The consortium comprising Lucky Cement Limited, Hub Power Holdings Limited, Kohat Cement Company Limited and Metro Ventures (Private) Limited;

the consortium comprising Arif Habib Corporation Limited, Fatima Fertiliser Company Limited, City Schools (Private) Limited and Lake City Holdings (Private) Limited; Fauji Fertiliser Company Limited; and Air Blue (Private) Limited have been pre-qualified for the privatisation of PIACL.

The pre-qualified bidders have now proceeded to the buy-side due diligence phase — a critical next step in the transparent and competitive privatisation process of PIACL.

The privatisation process, aimed at selling public sector entities in an open and transparent way to secure the best possible price, varies depending on the nature of the entity being privatised, the proportion of shares offered and whether a transfer of management is involved.

PM Shehbaz said restoration of PIA flights across the globe would bring great convenience to overseas Pakistanis, stressing that aligning the airline with modern-day requirements was "extremely essential" for developing the country's tourism sector.



He hoped that whichever bidder ultimately succeeds will devote its full energy to restoring the prestige of the national airline and expanding its operations after taking over PIA. He said PIA would soon once again live up to its traditional slogan of "Great People to Fly With".

The privatisation of PIA is at the top of the government's privatisation programme (2024-29), and the carrier is the only entity in the aviation sector placed in the first phase, which is to be completed within a year.

The national flag carrier mainly provides aviation services supported by its ancillary segments, making it a full-service airline. Its business segments include passenger services, ground handling, flight training, cargo, engineering and flight kitchens.

Out of a total of 20.5 million passengers who travelled during 2023, PIACL has maintained a prominent market share and has been a key player in the market since 1955.

The airline serves around five million passengers per year through access to 34 distinct destinations and operates 260 flights per week. PIACL has access to 97 international routes, with slots at some of the most attractive international destinations, providing direct flight access for passengers travelling between Pakistan and large diaspora markets.

Demand in the under-served Pakistani aviation market is expected to continue growing at a compound annual growth rate of around 5.5 per cent from fiscal year 2024 to fiscal year 2028.

Courtesy: Dawn

Slew of MoUs on the cards for Indonesian president's visit

As President Prabowo Subianto landed in the federal capital on a two-day visit, Pakistan and Indonesia are expected to sign several memorandums of understanding (MoUs) spanning several sectors, including climate, health, and defence.

The Indonesian president, on his maiden visit to Pakistan, was received by President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at Nur Khan Airbase. Upon his arrival, children dressed in traditional attire presented him with flowers. He was also given a 21-gun salute.

During the two days, the Indonesian president will hold delegation-level talks with PM Shehbaz and meet President Zardari.

PM Shehbaz tweeted that he was honoured to host President Sub-



ianto and looking forward to "our meaningful engagements tomorrow as we work to strengthen this enduring partnership".

Pakistan and Indonesia will also sign several memoranda of understanding during the visit. Talks are expected to cover advancing bilateral cooperation in "trade, investment, defence, health, IT, climate, education and culture, as

well as enhancing collaboration at regional and global levels".

Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir will also call on the visiting dignitary.

The visit coincided with the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Indonesia. The two countries maintain strong bilateral

relations rooted in shared religion and culture, with both countries cooperating in trade, education and health. A day earlier, the Foreign Office said the Indonesian leader would be in Pakistan on Dec 8-9 to discuss a "wide-ranging agenda" with Pakistani leaders aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and "exploring new avenues of cooperation". According to the FO, this is the president's first visit to Pakistan, as the last presidential visit was by ex-president Joko Widodo in 2018.

In July, Indonesia's Defence Minister retired Lt-Gen Sjafrie Sjamsuoddin met Shehbaz in Islamabad, where he expressed his country's desire to boost defence ties with Pakistan and explore areas for possible collaboration, particularly in defence production.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan snaps up major arms deal with Libyan force

Pakistan has signed a multi-billion dollar deal to sell conventional military equipment to the Libyan army, entering a select club of countries that export conventional arms and equipment.

According to the Reuters news agency, the over \$4 billion deal, one of Pakistan's largest-ever weapons sales, will see arms sold to the Libyan National Army (LNA).

It was finalised after a meeting last week between Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir and Saddam Khalifa Haftar, deputy commander-in-chief of the LNA, in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi, officials said.

Although foreign ministry, defence ministry and military did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment, military officials called it "historic in terms of size and financial impact".

JF-17s, Super Mushak aircraft on LNA's 'shopping list', said to be valued over \$4bn

A copy of the deal before it was finalised that was seen by Reuters listed the purchase of several JF-17 fighter jets, jointly developed by

Pakistan and China, and a number of Super Mushak trainer aircraft, used for basic pilot training.

A Pakistani official told Reuters the deal included the sale of equipment for land, sea and air, spread over 2-1/2 years, adding it could also include the JF-17 fighter jets.

Since 2011, the United Nations has imposed an arms embargo on the fractured North African country, which means transfers of weapons and related material require UN approval.

However, senior Pakistani military officials justified the arms sale, saying that many major western and Middle Eastern states have been supplying weapons and equipment to Libya for many years despite the embargo.

Calling it a "paper embargo" which is virtually "non-existent due to multiple reasons", the sources said the move was in line with the prime minister and army chief's vision for "an export driven self sustained economy".

The internationally-recognised Government of National Unity,



led by Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah, controls much of western Libya, while Haftar's LNA controls the east and south, including major oilfields, and does not recognise the Unity government's authority.

According to Reuters, any arms agreement with the LNA is likely to face scrutiny given Libya's long-running instability following a 2011 Nato-backed uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi and split the country between rival authorities.

The LNA's official media channel reported on Sunday that the faction had entered a defence cooperation pact with Pakistan, which included weapons sales, joint training and military manufacturing, without providing details.

"We announce the launch of a new phase of strategic military cooperation with Pakistan," Haftar said in remarks broadcast on Sunday by Al-Hadath television.

Authorities in Benghazi also did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

Pakistan has been seeking to expand defence exports, drawing on decades of counterinsurgency experience and a domestic defence industry that spans aircraft production and overhaul, armoured vehicles, munitions and naval construction.

"Our recent war with India demonstrated our advanced capabilities to the world," CDF Munir was quoted as saying in remarks broadcast by Al-Hadath.

Courtesy: Dawn

Fauji Fertiliser Company joins winning consortium after PIA auction



Russia and Pakistan are in talks on a potential oil-sector agreement, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb told the Russian RIA news agency in remarks published.

“All of these areas are Russia’s strengths. And we would be very happy if Russia agreed on an agreement in this sector with Pakistan,” Mr Aurangzeb told RIA in an interview when asked about wider cooperation in exploration, production and refining between the two countries.

“At present, the issue is being discussed by the energy ministries of both sides.”

Russia also discussed upgrading a refinery in Pakistan with Russian companies involved, Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilev had said in November.

Pakistan has stepped up engagement with Russia in recent years as Moscow sought new energy markets after Western sanctions over Ukraine, and Islamabad looked to lower import costs. Pakistan began buying Russian crude in 2023.

Mr Aurangzeb also said Russia and Pakistan are looking into building another steel plant in Pakistan, RIA reported.

Pakistan, which imports 70pc of its crude oil consumption, is mainly dependent on Russian crude exports, according to an Anadolu Agency report. Despite this, Pakistan has enjoyed lower tariffs from Washington and close relations with its current administration, even as India recently saw a punitive 25pc tariff imposed on its goods.

Courtesy: Dawn

December 2025 among Pakistan’s hottest Decembers in 65 year

December 2025 has been declared one of Pakistan’s hottest Decembers in more than six decades, with unusually warm days and nights recorded across much of the country, according to the latest monthly climate report.

The Meteorological Department released its monthly meteorological report for December 2025.

The report ranked December 2025 as the seventh hottest December in the past 65 years, highlighting a continued warming trend during what is typically a colder winter month.

According to the report, both daytime and nighttime temperatures remained above normal across Pakistan throughout December.

The area-weighted minimum temperature for the month ranked as the eighth highest in 65 years, reflecting persistently warm nights across the country.

The Met Department noted that unusually hot weather prevailed in Sindh and Balochistan during December.

Residents in several districts experienced conditions more typical of early autumn than mid-winter,



raising concerns among farmers and urban dwellers alike.

The report also pointed to below-normal rainfall in many parts of the country during December.

Cities, including Karachi, received significantly less rain than average, contributing to dry conditions and compounding the effects of higher temperatures.

The Met Department attributed the rise in December temperatures to climate change, noting that warming trends are increasingly visible even during traditionally cooler months.

Experts warned that such shifts could have long-term implications for water availability, agriculture, and overall climate resilience in Pakistan.

Courtesy: Saama TV

Basant colours will return to Punjab skies this spring

The iconic festival of Basant, which heralded the coming of spring and saw the skies over Punjab’s cities spring to life with thousands of colourful kites, has been revived by the provincial government after an 18-year hiatus.

While a proposal to revive the festival had been on the table for some time, Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan promulgated the Punjab Regulation of Kite Flying Ordinance 2025 a day earlier, paving the way for the festival’s revival.

The Punjab Assembly was supposed to take up the ordinance on Wednesday, but the session was put off due to lack of quorum. Consequently, the ordinance will be laid before the provincial legislature today (Thursday) for

approval.

Under the new legislation, those under the age of 18 are prohibited from kite-flying, and a fine of Rs50,000 will be imposed for the first violation and Rs100,000 for subsequent violations. In case of non-payment of the fine, action will be taken against the relevant parent or guardian.

The law now requires kite-flying associations to be registered with the deputy commissioner of the relevant district, and shopkeepers will also be registered, who will be linked via a QR code.

To identify a seller or manufacturer, every kite shall have to carry a QR code.

The violators will be imprisoned for three to five years, and they



will pay a fine of up to Rs2m for violation of rules.

Importantly, only the manufacturing of thread-based kite strings will be allowed, while the use of metallic, chemical-coated, or sharp strings has been outlawed, and anyone found using them will face severe legal consequences.

Although Lahore was known around the world for the ubiquitous spring festival, the Punjab

government imposed a full ban on kite-flying in 2007, following several deaths especially of motorcyclists and children due to becoming entangled in sharp kite string.

Motorcyclists were especially vulnerable to the lethal strings, and many had taken to mounting special aerials on their bikes to deflect errant strings that may harm them.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan and Russia exploring oil deal, says Aurangzeb



Russia and Pakistan are in talks on a potential oil-sector agreement, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb told the Russian RIA news agency in remarks published on Tuesday.

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Courtesy:Dawn

Pakistan showcases cinema at 43rd Fajr Film Festival in Shiraz



Pakistan participated in the 43rd Fajr Film Festival held in the historic city of Shiraz, Iran, with Federal Culture Minister Aurangzeb Khan Khichi leading the national delegation. The minister was invited as a special guest and was accompanied by prominent Pakistani filmmakers. In his keynote address, Minister Khichi emphasised the importance of enhancing cultural cooperation between Pakistan and Iran, particularly through joint film productions. He noted that both countries share close social, cultural, religious, and brotherly ties, and stressed that cinema is a powerful medium for promoting cultural values. The minister added that the exchange of films between Pakistani and Iranian cinemas would help strengthen

people-to-people relations. For the first time, three Pakistani movies — Actor in Law, Umro Ayyar: A New Beginning, and Taxali Gate — were screened at the festival.

Minister Khichi actively participated in various festival events, visited the Pakistan Pavilion, and met with the chairman of the Cinematic Foundation of Iran. He invited the chairman to visit Pakistan and engage with key stakeholders in the country’s film industry. The minister reaffirmed the government’s commitment to uplifting Pakistan’s cinema sector and expressed optimism about deeper collaboration with Iran in film making.

Courtesy:Dawn

Pakistan’s ‘space journey reaches new heights’ in 2025, ‘Moon Mission’ planned for 2026: SUPARCO

SUPARCO Director Shafaat Ali Friday proudly announced that 2025 will be remembered as a breakthrough year for Pakistan in space projects, with the nation’s sights already set on the Moon in 2026, backed by the collaborative support of both Pakistani and Chinese governments. While speaking with a local media channel, Director called 2025 a turning point for Pakistan, marking significant progress in space technology and exploration. He further emphasized that with continued collaboration between the Pakistani and Chinese governments, 2026 will see Pakistan make its mark on the Moon. He emphasized that the partnership between Pakistan and China in space exploration highlights the growing collaboration in science and technology.

PPRA to launch new e-Procurement



system in June

He added that 2025 will mark a historic milestone for Pakistan, as the country will launch three satellites for the first time in its history. Responding to a query, Director stated that next

year, Pakistan will continue its momentum with multiple satellite launches, further solidifying its presence in space exploration. Looking ahead, he confirmed that Pakistan’s ambitions will expand, with plans to reach both the Moon and Mars. Responding to

another query, he revealed that by the end of 2026, Pakistan will send its first astronaut to China’s space station, setting a new benchmark in international space collaboration. He emphasized that this historic achievement will not only demonstrate Pakistan’s growing capabilities in space but also strengthen its partnership with China in groundbreaking scientific exploration.

Talking about space education in the curriculum, he reaffirmed his commitment to advancing space-related knowledge in Pakistan. He emphasized that, with the full support of the government, various space education programs are being launched for students, aiming to inspire and equip the next generation with the skills needed for the future of space exploration.

Courtesy:Dawn

Tribute paid to Qawal Aziz Mian 25th death anniversary



Aziz Mian's 25th death anniversary was marked by tributes that highlighted his lasting impact on Qawwali, with his soulful voice and unique style remaining a source of inspiration for fans around the world and ensuring that the legend's music continues to echo through generations. Aziz Mian did not merely view Qawwali as a style of singing; he transformed it into a profound spiritual message. Widely celebrated as the "emperor" of this musical tradition, he gained fame not just in Pakistan but across the globe, local media channel reported. His verses were a blend of philosophy, emotion and thought, connecting deeply with the hearts of ordinary people. Aziz Mian's powerful, commanding voice and distinctive style made his performances unforgettable, earning him a place as one of the most unique figures in Qawwali history. Born on April 17, 1942, Aziz Mian began his musical journey under the tutelage of Ustad Abdul Waheed.

He also pursued higher education, earning master's degrees in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu literature from the University of the Punjab. Born Abdul Aziz, he was affectionately known as "Mian," a title he often used and which eventually became a central part of his stage persona. Aziz Mian's qawwalis were renowned for their lyrical intensity, emotional depth, and raw, unfiltered reflection of life's realities. His performances were iconic, celebrated not only for their spiritual warmth but also for the devotion they conveyed, making them a cherished part of Qawwali's rich tradition. In recognition of his immense contributions to music, the Government of Pakistan honored him with the Pride of Performance award in 1989. Aziz Mian passed away in Tehran on December 6, 2000, after a prolonged illness. Following his wishes, he was laid to rest in Multan, at the shrine of Sain Naazir Hussain, his spiritual guide.

Courtesy: The Nation

Tribute paid to Junaid Jamshed 9th death anniversary

Thousands of fans across the country remembered Junaid Jamshed together, the iconic singer-turned-religious figure, on the ninth anniversary of his passing, honouring both his unforgettable contributions to music and his profound spiritual influence. Junaid Jamshed, renowned for hits like "Aitebar," "Naraz Ho," "Tera Karam Maula," and "Na Tu Aye Gi," rose to fame as one of Pakistan's most iconic voices before dedicating his later years to faith, media channels reported. Born in Karachi on September 3, 1964, he discovered his passion for mu-

sic early and gained nationwide recognition in 1987 with the pop band Vital Signs, whose anthem "Dil Dil Pakistan" became legendary. In the early 2000s, Jamshed underwent a profound spiritual transformation, leaving mainstream music to focus on Islamic learning, preaching, and public outreach, inspiring countless followers with his remarkable journey from pop star to religious figure. In 2002, he launched the popular clothing brand J., which later expanded into women's fashion and personal care. By 2004, he had fully stepped away

Sharmeen and Patakha Pictures celebrate women filmmakers from across Pakistan



Two-time Academy Award winner Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy marked the conclusion of the seventh edition of Stories She Tells, Pakistan's largest filmmaking grant and mentorship programme by Patakha Pictures. The initiative showcased work by eight emerging women filmmakers from Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Chitral, and Quetta. A special showcase held in Karachi, organised in collaboration with the British Council and the Scottish Documentary Institute, premiered film trailers developed during the programme's six-month mentorship led by internationally acclaimed filmmaker and educator Noe Mendelle.

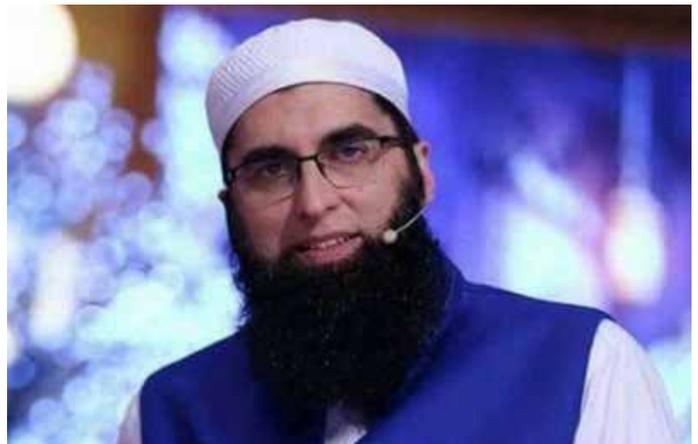
The films explore powerful themes of women's resilience, cultural heritage, music, performance, spirituality, and identity. Working in creative pairs, the fellows participated in intensive online mentoring before concluding the programme with an in-person editing and closing session in Karachi. The showcase offered an early look at four intimate,

human-centered stories shaped through collaboration, guidance, and sustained creative support.

Speaking at the event, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy emphasized the importance of trust and mentorship in empowering women to tell bold, deeply personal stories. She highlighted the role of such initiatives in strengthening women's voices within Pakistan's cultural and cinematic landscape. The British Council reaffirmed its commitment to nurturing emerging storytellers, with Country Director James Hampson praising the programme for building creative confidence and professional skills among young filmmakers.

Since its launch in 2022, Patakha Pictures' mentorship programmes have supported 69 filmmakers, whose work has earned over 25 awards and screened at more than 70 international festivals worldwide, continuing to expand women-led storytelling in Pakistan.

Courtesy: Express Tribune.



from music, earning acclaim for naats and sermons such as "Dil Badal De." Tragically, his life ended in a plane crash near Havelian on December 7, 2016.

In recognition of his impact on music and society, he was awarded the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz in 2007.

Courtesy: The Nation

Karachi hosts the Lux Style Awards 2025

Pakistan's entertainment industry gathered in Karachi for a smaller, more intimate ceremony marking the 24th Lux Style Awards, as artists reflected on the importance of recognition, evolving formats and broader inclusion across creative fields.

The awards, considered Pakistan's longest running and most prestigious entertainment honors, were held at the Mohatta Palace, a departure from previous large-scale events at the Karachi Expo Center.

Actress Sanam Saeed, who co-hosted the evening, described the ceremony as "small and intimate," a tone echoed by several attendees.

The scaled-down format followed an unusual year for the awards. The 23rd Lux Style Awards, scheduled to take place in Lahore in May, were canceled amid the brief war between Pakistan and India, with winners announced digitally and trophies delivered to recipients' homes.

Among the prominent stars attending this year's ceremony were Fahad Mustafa, Hania Aamir, Mawra Hocane and Yumna Zaidi. Aamir, who won Actor of the Year – Female (Viewers' Choice), for the hit television drama *Kabhi Main Kabhi Tum*, said award platforms play a vital role in sustaining creative industries.

"It's extremely important to appreciate the art that comes out of your country," she told Arab News at the red carpet. The drama, she noted, resonated beyond Pakistan, trending in Bangladesh and India during its broadcast.

Addressing fans abroad, Aamir, arguably Pakistan's most popular celebrity internationally, said:

"Thank you so much for loving be-



yond borders. We love you as much even more. So thank you so much for appreciating all the hard work that we do."

"I'd like Lux [Style Awards] and every other award show to have a lot more diverse categories to appreciate every single person who is a part of the team. [And] who actually makes the project come to life."

The Lux Style Awards have long attracted debate over transparency and credibility, a recurring discussion whenever nominations and winners are announced.



Still, many artists said the platform remains essential for motivation and visibility.

"Whenever we discuss the awards, no award will be fair because some people will have certain reservations with it," producer Abdullah Seja of iDream Entertainment told Arab News. "These might be the most authentic awards in Paki-

stan [but] obviously there is room for improvement in everything."

Reflecting shifts in Pakistan's creative economy, the awards introduced a separate category this year for Digital Content Creators. The inaugural trophy went to real-life couple Rabya Kulsoom and Rehan Nazim, known online as 'Ron and Cocco'.

"The credit goes to Lux [Style Awards] for introducing the category because content creation is not easy," Nazim said. "Whoever is doing it, it's a difficult job. And

now it has become a full-time job. You can't take it lightly and do it on the side. So, we need to recognize the people who are doing it." Actress Yumna Zaidi, who won her first film award for *Nayab*, described the ceremony's return to Karachi as significant.

"I am so glad that it's happening in Karachi because it's been a while,"

she said, adding, "Lux [Style Awards] are the strongest because it includes nominations from all the channels and it's the strongest [competition]."

Mawra Hocane, whose drama *Jafaa* was nominated for TV Play of the Year (Critics' Choice), said meaningful storytelling mattered more than trophies.

"Platforms [like these] are very very important but more than that what's important is that a project strikes a chord with the audience," she said.

"I do my projects so that we can work on the position of women in society. [And] somehow elevate them, somehow create some space for them. And I think 'Jafaa' has done that."

Music remained a central draw of the evening.

Co-host Sanam Saeed said she was particularly looking forward to live performances.

"Music is the kind of genre that bonds people together and puts Pakistan on the map," she said.

"We become one when it comes to music, forgetting all the distance, limitations and borders. [And] Our music does that."

Singer and songwriter Hasan Raheem, popular among younger audiences, also performed during the ceremony and reflected on the value of such platforms.

"These [platforms] are important, honestly," he said. "I feel like things like these should happen because the real present and the gift that I personally get is the love from people that is the epitome of all the awards. I can never get a better award than that."

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