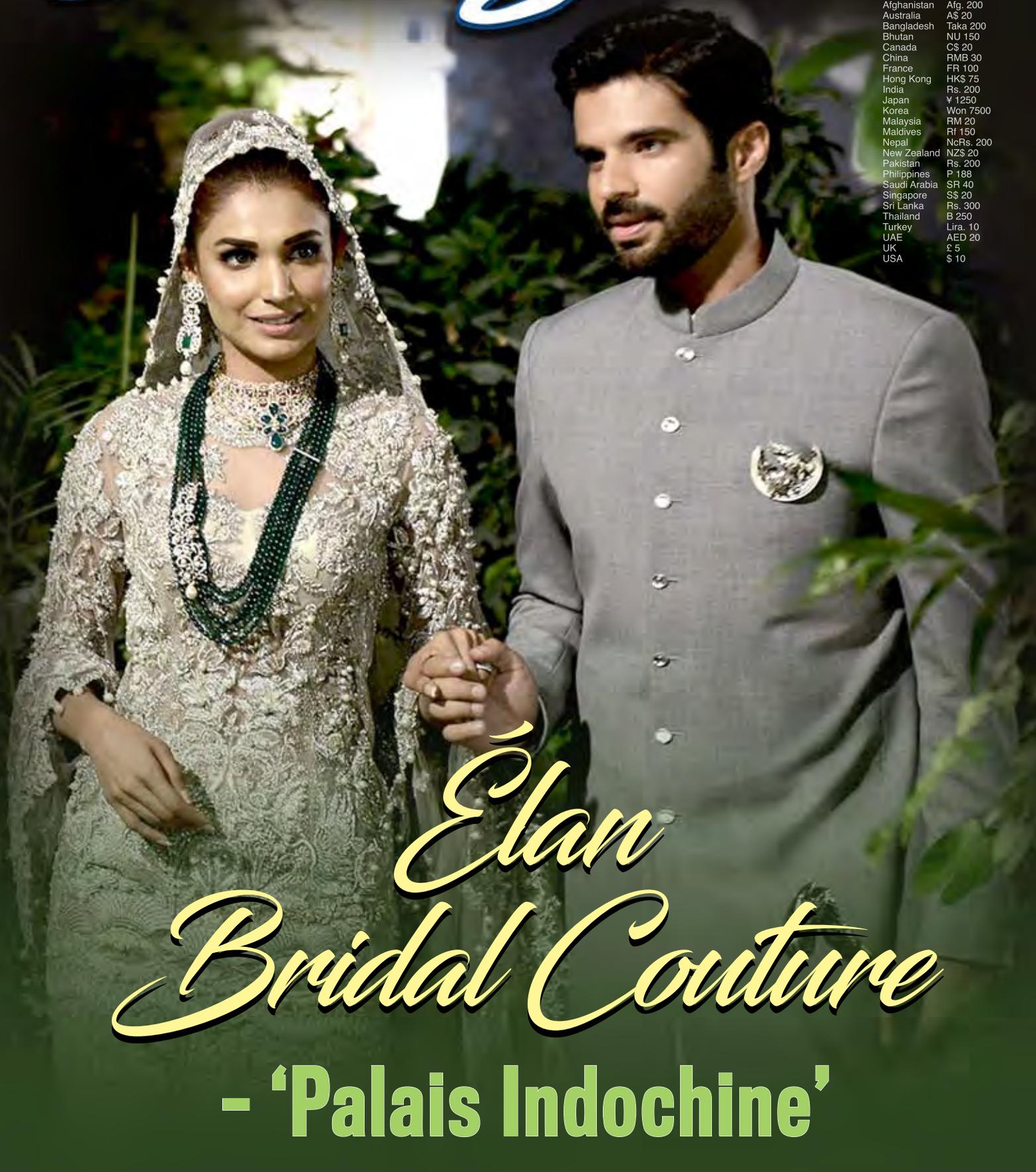


Slogan

Afghanistan	Afg. 200
Australia	A\$ 20
Bangladesh	Taka 200
Bhutan	NU 150
Canada	C\$ 20
China	RMB 30
France	FR 100
Hong Kong	HK\$ 75
India	Rs. 200
Japan	¥ 1250
Korea	Won 7500
Malaysia	RM 20
Maldives	Rf 150
Nepal	NrRs. 200
New Zealand	NZ\$ 20
Pakistan	Rs. 200
Philippines	P 188
Saudi Arabia	SR 40
Singapore	S\$ 20
Sri Lanka	Rs. 300
Thailand	B 250
Turkey	Lira. 10
UAE	AED 20
UK	£ 5
USA	\$ 10



Élan
Bridal Couture
 - 'Palais Indochine'



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*The views expressed by the contributors are
not necessarily shared by the editor.*

Available on
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India's darker side

Communal tensions in the BJP- ruled Indian state of Haryana remain high as the death toll rose to six on the third day of the clashes between Hindus and Muslims.

The first-ever phygital edition of Lotus Make-up India Fashion Week took place from the 14th until the 18th of October 2020. The pandemic hasn't dampened the spirits of the fashion fraternity. The industry has reinvented itself and supports the new phygital customer experience, the combination of physical and digital.

FDCI Chairman Sunil Sethi on the industries' reinvention: "As the world slowly understands how to live with the pandemic, fashion too is assuming a new avatar by spreading its wings to encourage a new kind of customer, who is tech-savvy and unafraid to make bold choices with the click of a button"

40 designers showcased their latest spring-summer collections for 2021 during the 5-day digital event, presenting both ready-to-wear frocks as well as couture pieces.

My personal highlights of this edition include: Samant Chauhan, Gauri & Nainika, Siddartha Tytler and Tarun Tahiliani.

Samant Chauhan is known for his colourful, intricate embroideries displayed on white and neutral fabrics. This time he went for bold coloured fabrics (silks) decorated with silver and metal work embroidery. The result is pure perfection! The contemporary silhouettes go extremely well with Chauhan's signature embroidery.

Long flowy dresses with bold prints are a trend next summer and Gauri & Nainika's collection stood out amongst this crowd. It sets the mood for a sunlit summer romance. The collection includes Victorian inspired floral prints and Dutch inspired Delft prints in leaf-green. The line includes a range of pencil dresses, wrap dresses and shirt dresses that have been made in a vintage colour palette of scarlet red, bottle green and classic black.

Siddartha Tytler is a welcome change on the digital runway scene. His creations are anything but the ordinary. Favouring interesting structures, bold colours and sharp cuts, Tytler's collections are an eclectic mix of several moods, all strung together by a penchant for bling and high-octane glamour. The label's expertise ranges from sensual, draped western wear to traditional wear with a contemporary spin. The backdrop for this seasons collection was dark, gritty and mysterious. I love it!

Tarun Tahiliani leaves me speechless every time he releases something new. One of India's finest designers if you ask me. This season Tahiliani's studio took a moment to think about the bride of today and what her heart would want. Freedom, happiness, hope...a new sense of luxury.

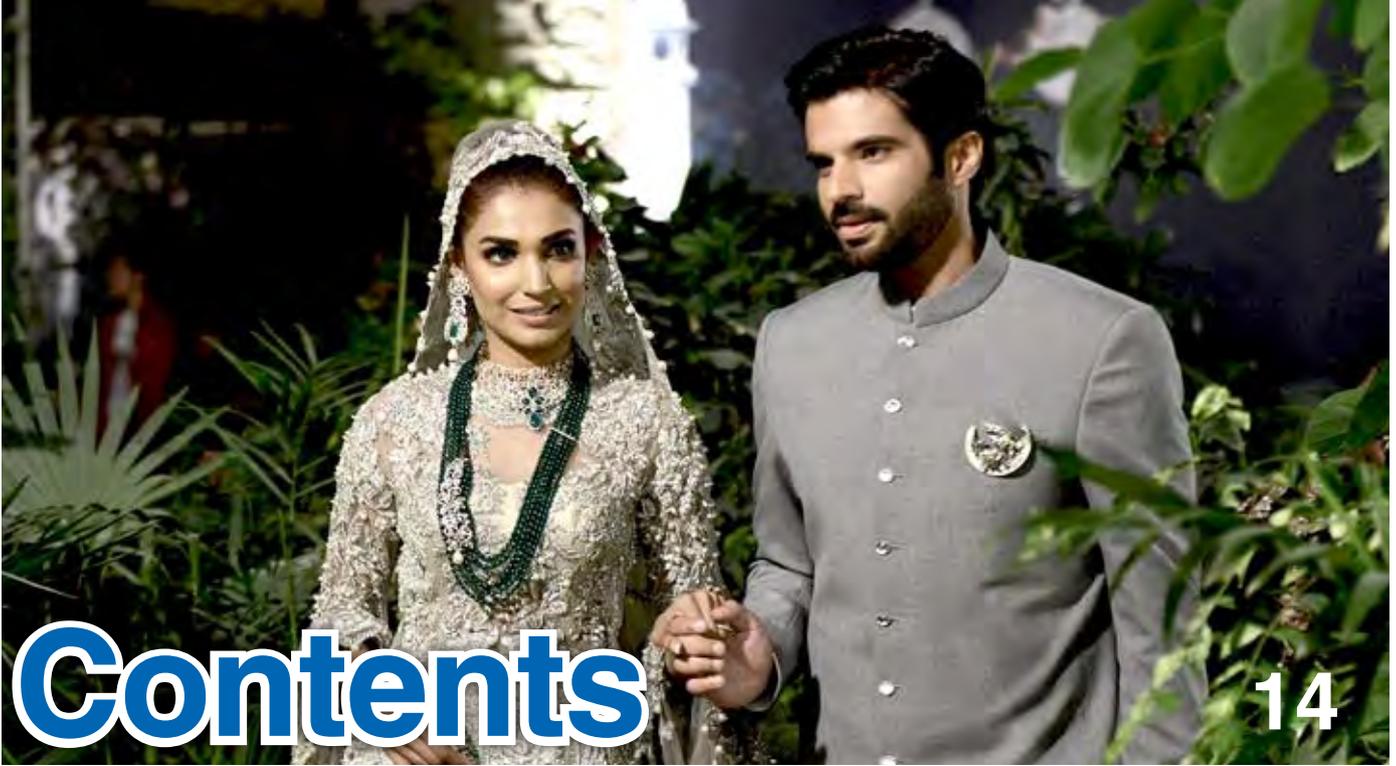
Check out the gallery for my favourite pieces from this edition of Lotus Make-up India Fashion Week.

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Climate Casualty?

This is with reference to the article titled 'Climate Casualty' by Muhammad Arslan Qadeer. The write-up was published in the July 2023 issue of SouthAsia.

Contrary to what 'climate experts' believe, the Maldives is one of the safest places on the surface of the Earth. Located on the equator, sea-level fluctuations here in the Maldives vary less than a meter compared to the west coast of Australia and the east coast of Africa - the two ends of the Indian Ocean, where sea-level fluctuations are 2 - 3 meters. Thus, even if the sea level rises by 1.5 - 2 cm, the rise will be felt more on these extreme ends of the ocean than in the



Maldives. By the time the level reaches a threatening point, most lowlands - the river estuaries across the globe will be inundated, resulting in the loss of fertile lands. In terms of structural damage and lives lost, the 2004 tsunami in Asia did more to Thailand, India, Sri

Lanka, and coastal cities of Africa, Somalia, for instance, which lost more lives than we lost—just a thought.

*Farooq Mohamed Hassan
Maldives*

Bilawal as Foreign Minister

In the Bhutto family, from Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the person who takes the leadership of PPP is always blessed with countless qualities. In the given scenario, it will not be wrong to say



that the PPP is a party of martyrs and genuine political leaders. In a similar vein, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has also been blessed with a charismatic personality. He entered politics in 2008, and from that day till today, he has been a victim of propaganda and false narrative. However, for the past year, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has been serving Pakistan as Foreign Minister, and his opponents are also praising him for his stellar record in the foreign ministry.

Interestingly, the young foreign minister's visit to Japan occurred during rapid geographical and political changes in our region, and Japan is an important part of the American camp against China. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's visit to Japan was criticized because he was accompanied by his sister Asifa Bhutto Zardari. But we should never forget the fact that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was also a political figure. He accompanied his sister Fatima Jinnah in meetings with local and foreign leaders. Even if Asifa Bhutto had not visited Japan with Bilawal Bhutto, PPP opponents would not have stopped criticizing him.

*Asim Ali,
Bahawalpur, Pakistan.*

Children and Cartoon Programmes

Cartoon films have become a part of children's entertainment, always enthralling them with imaginative characters and interesting stories.

Cartoon programmes stimulate children's imagination, creativity and critical thinking skills. They often present complex concepts in simple and engaging ways in the form of characters, scenes, and thereby promote cognitive development and problem-solving skills. As a result of watching various cartoon programmes, the intellectual development of children is enhanced. New ideas develop in the mind, following which they strive to do something. Although they offer valuable educational and recreational opportunities, it is important to keep in mind their potential negative effects. Parents and teachers can use cartoons to promote learning and foster positive values by encouraging communication in an open environment and guiding them.



*Bilqees Sultana,
Chittagong, Bangladesh.*

Road to IMF

Recently, the Pakistan government shared good news with the nation that a 3 billion dollar loan agreement was signed with the IMF. On this occasion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif himself has said that the loan acquisition from the international money lender is not a positive thing per se, and he will try to get rid of it. The Pakistan PM also prayed that Pakistan might not go to the IMF in the future. As things happen, the IMF loan increases the burden on the country's economy instead of reducing it. Although the burden is temporarily reduced now, and the economy appears stronger, the reality is quite the opposite. The IMF lends on interest, and the biggest disadvantage of usurious loans is that the borrower cannot get out of it easily, and he gets ensnared in the trap of interest on interest. Pakistan needs to work for economic strength to get rid of the IMF. An unconditional abolition of the usury system is also very important for prosperity. People think there will be prosperity if there is an agreement with the IMF, but the point to ponder is that the loan from the IMF is based on interest. How can prosperity come to it by resorting to loan acquisition, that too again and again?

*Saima Abdul Aleem,
Lahore, Pakistan.*



Overland Trade with Russia

After the creation of Central Asian states, Pakistan's bilateral relations with them have progressed rapidly in other fields, including trade. Still, the trade partnership between Pakistan and Russia can add a new dimension to it. For a struggling country like Pakistan, its bilateral trade with Central Asian countries, including Russia, is a unique channel of its kind in terms of land that connects the region to eastern and western countries via Pakistan. Of late, two cargo containers, loaded with pulses and other goods from Russia, arrived at the Torkham border under the Transit International Route (TIR) Convention. This first-of-its-kind shipment is a part of the Pakistan-Russia agreement signed in March this year, after the arrival of which the two countries have officially become commercially integrated



with each other. TIR is an international agreement under the supervision of the World Trade Organization. Pakistan also signed it, and the agreement has been in force since 2017, under which road trade between different countries is allowed unconditionally under the supervision of the International Road Transport Union. It does not require customs documents, and trucks are issued a specific permit. According to this agreement, citrus food was sent from Pakistan to Russia for the first time in 2021.
*Asif Ahmed,
Karachi, Pakistan.*



"Today, the danger of Pakistan's default and former rulers' impure wishes have been buried."
**-Shehbaz Sharif,
Prime Minister of Pakistan**



"Some countries use cross-border terrorism as an instrument in sync with their policy."
**-Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister of India**



"We only believe in the power of the people."
**-Sheikh Hasina Wajid, Prime Minister of
Bangladesh**



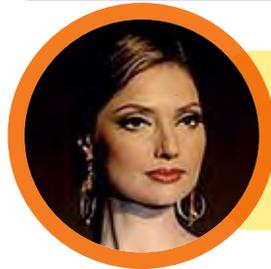
"We urge Pakistan to continue working with the IMF towards macroeconomic reforms and sustainable economic recovery."
**-Antony Blinken,
U.S. State Secretary**



"To be nasty to people, to be arrogant, to be violent, these are not Indian values."
**-Rahul Gandhi,
Indian Opposition Leader**



"You will never truly know yourself, or the strength of your relationships, until both have been tested by adversity."
**-J.K. Rowling,
British Author**



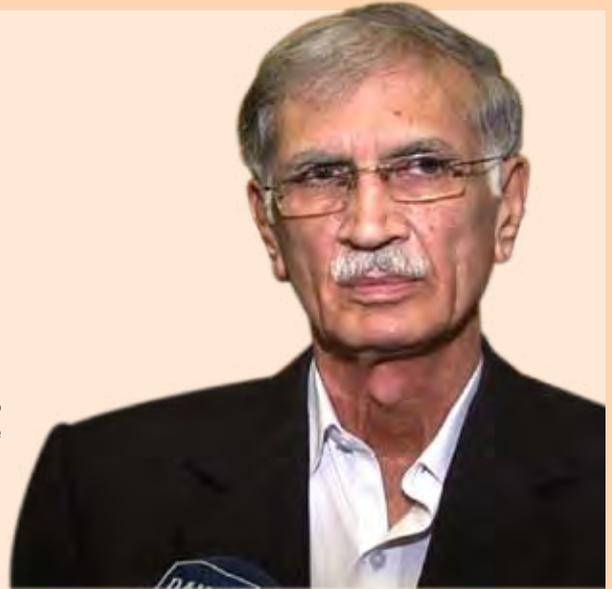
"We all work beyond our physical abilities to try to do justice to our job."
-Natasha Hussain, Pakistani Fashion Model



'Please take your dirty comments elsewhere.'
**Ayesha Omar,
TV and film actress**

Another 'P' Added to PTI

Pervez Khattak, former chief minister and PTI stalwart, has launched a new political party under the name of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians (PTIP). Adding another P to the PTI, Khattak seems to follow the examples led by the likes of Nawaz Sharif of PML-N, Faisal Saleh Hayat of PPP-P, Shujaat Hussain and Mian Muhammad Azhar of PML-Q, Maulana Fazlur Rahman of JUI-F, and the list goes on. Given that the general elections in Pakistan are, reportedly and hopefully, around the corner, one may expect more new political parties are being formed to join the political fray with more creative acronyms and interesting initialism, that too in the guise of bringing political stability and turning the fate of the nation, once again. ❏



A Hat Trick by Pakistani Passport

Pakistan has, of late, emerged as the most unfortunate part of the modern world, as the country has consistently been making headlines in international media for all the wrong reasons. For the third consecutive year, the Pakistani passport has been ranked the 'fourth worst' by the Henley Passport Index of 2023. The index is a yearly ranking of the world's 199 passports according to the number of destinations their owners can access without a prior visa. Pakistan's passport is only ranked higher than war-torn countries such as Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, as per the latest ranking. Making a hat trick this year, one hopes Pakistan's travel document will fare considerably well in the next year's rankings since hope is the only thing stronger than fear. ❏

Masterpiece or a Mockery?

One often wonders about the standards of success the TV drama industry sets today. This is because a low-grade drama serial, 'Tere Bin,' starring Wahaj Ali, Yumna Zaidi, and Murtasim, has been cited as a blockbuster masterpiece, but on what parameters? As per the self-praising comments posted online by Asad Qureshi and Abdullah Kadwani of 7th Sky Entertainment, "The exceptional performance of our lead Wahaj Ali and Yumna Zaidi and Murtasim-Meerub's magical on-screen chemistry has played a pivotal role in making Tere Bin a masterpiece, which has touched the hearts of billions of viewers and has been appreciated worldwide." Is it really the case? In marked contrast, the drama was more than a mockery to the standards earlier set by Pakistan Television of the 1980s and early 90s. If Tere Bin can be considered a huge success, then there must be something wrong with today's TV audience or those running the TV industry. ❏



Pakistan's Hamza Khan becomes World Junior Squash Champion



Pakistan's Hamza Khan won the World Junior Squash Championship 2023 after beating Egypt's Mohamed Zakaria, becoming the country's first champion since 1986.

Hamza beat Zakaria 3-1 during the tournament that was held in Melbourne, Australia. The last time a Pakistani made the finals was Amir Atlas in 2008, and the last winner from Pakistan was Jansher Khan in 1986.

Reacting to his win, Hamza — who had won the U-15 title at the British Junior Open Squash Championship in 2020 — thanked his coach, his managers and his parents for their



support.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked the squash player for bringing the title back to Pakistan after 37 years. He hoped that Hamza would make Pakistan "invincible" in the sport in the near future.

President Arif Alvi said that Pakistan had unprecedented and yet unmatched supremacy in squash in the past.

"I had personally watched many finals among our giants. After a long time, a resurgent ray of hope. Well done," he said.

Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab termed Hamza's win a "proud moment for all Pakistanis".

HBL contributes over Rs 4 bn. in Social Uplift

HBL has contributed over Rs 4 billion - spread over a decade - for the social uplift of Pakistan. In 2022 alone, the Bank contributed over Rs 580 million. This contribution is a testament to HBL's commitment to being "More Than Just a Bank" making a real difference in the communities it serves.

HBL shared this information at an event to mark the launch of its Impact & Sustainability Report - 2022 in Karachi.

In pursuance of HBL's commitment to inclusion, sustainability, and community development, the Bank is pledged to reducing its own emissions; expanding its Green Banking portfolio; expanding its customer base to over 34 million including 4 million women; and contributing to the communities in which it operates by supporting healthcare, education,

arts, and social development initiatives through the HBL Foundation. Upholding the ethos of the Aga Khan



Social Responsibility is not confined to charitable giving, but also directed at conducting our daily business and living our daily lives with constant care for our physical and social environments. The HBL Microfinance Bank has contributed tremendously to ensuring that we are the single largest provider of microfinance and SME services in Pakistan.

Sultan Ali Allana, Chairman – HBL, commenting on the report, said, "Last year in our review, we emphasized the urgent need to reflect on sustainability challenges in the future. This year, we

lived in that future as unprecedented flooding devastated the country. Our priority remains consistent: to innovate and provide solutions that support growth and improve quality of life for our employees,

those we serve, and the people of Pakistan."



Development Network (AKDN), HBL's good governance and Corporate

US Centcom chief meets COAS Gen. Asim Munir

US Central Command (Centcom) chief General Michael Erik Kurilla, in a meeting with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir on July 24, recognised Pakistan's "continued efforts" for bringing peace and stability to the region.

According to the Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR), Gen Kurilla called on Gen Munir in Rawalpindi today.

"The visiting dignitary acknowledged and appreciated Pakistan Army's successes in [the] fight against terrorism and Pakistan's continued efforts for bringing peace and stability in the region," the statement said.

"During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, [the] regional security situation, and defence cooperation were discussed," the ISPR added.

It stated that both sides reiterated the desire to enhance bilateral relations in all fields further.



The US Central Command Chief General Michael Erik Kurilla (L) with Pakistan Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir.

The meeting comes days after both countries called on the interim Afghan government to prevent their soil from being used as a safe haven for terrorist attacks. In a press briefing earlier in July week, US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller said the Afghan Taliban administration bore the

responsibility to control terror activities originating from their territory.

"I will say we have made very clear that we believe the Taliban has the responsibility to prevent Afghanistan from being used as a safe haven for launching terrorist attacks," he said in response to a question. ❏

NBP enters into an agreement with NRTC



NBP has recently signed an agreement with the National Radio Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC) for the procurement of Thin Client PCs for NBP branches and ATM Hotlines under the G2G arrangement. This is a hallmark initiative by NBP management towards the digitalization of branches for better and more efficient customer service.

ChatGPT dragged to US court

US comedian Sarah Silverman and two other authors have sued Open AI over copyright infringement in the latest pushback since the company's release of ChatGPT took the world by storm.

The plaintiffs accuse the San Francisco company of using their works to train their artificial intelligence models without permission, adding to a series of cases that could complicate the development of the tech world's biggest new trend.

The trio also filed a suit against Facebook parent company Meta, whose less known open source models also used pirated downloads of their books for training purposes, the suit alleged.

Much of the training material used by OpenAI and Meta "comes from copyrighted works—including books written by the plaintiffs—that were copied by OpenAI and Meta without consent, without credit, and compensation," the trio's lawyers said in a blog post. ❏



US diplomat briefed on Gandhara civilisation

US Consul General in Lahore William Makaneole visited the archaeological museum of Taxila and the ancient Buddhist site of Dharmarajika stupa in July.

The officials briefed the US diplomat about the history of Gandhara civilisation, various stupas, statues, and other artefacts. The diplomat and his team were taken around the main hall, which exhibits more than 70 stories of the life of Buddha from the time of his birth to death. They also visited the Bodhisattva and Buddha galleries.

The envoy was informed that hundreds of monasteries and stupas had been built together with Greek and Kushan towns, such as Sirkap and Sirsukh, both in Taxila. The diplomat also visited various Buddha images and Buddha life stories. Mainly the display consists of objects

from 600 BC to 500 AD. Gandhara is the second holy land of Buddhism, and it is the place where the religion flourished across the globe. Later, he also visited the Unesco Buddhist world heritage site



of Dharmarajika stupa and monastery which was founded in the 3rd century AD by King Asoka. The US diplomat was informed that this ancient site was accredited for being one of the earliest Buddhist monuments, one of South Asia's eighth largest Buddhist stupas. ❏

EFU Life appoints new MD and CEO

The Board of directors of EFU Life Assurance has appointed Mohammed Ali Ahmedas the new MD and CEO of EFU Life. Mohammed Ali Ahmedas has 29 years of professional experience in the life insurance industry and is an Actuary by qualification.

He started his career at a trainee position and over the last three decades has risen through the ranks to reach the leadership position. In his recent roles at EFU Life, Ahmedas served as the Chief Strategy Officer, before being elevated to Deputy MD position in 2021. Ali joined EFU Life in 2002 and prior to this worked in the public sector life insurance industry for 8 years.

With an impressive tenure of 21 years with the Company, Ali brings a wealth of experience, deep industry knowledge, and a steadfast commitment to values. ❏



Telenor Pakistan partners with Kistpay to scale smartphone financing

Telenor Pakistan has entered into a partnership with Kistpay to bring affordable smartphone financing solutions to customers at an unprecedented scale. A signing ceremony in this regard took place, which was attended by Irfan Wahab Khan, CEO of Telenor Pakistan, Asif Jafri, CEO of Kistpay, Julian Gorman, Head of APAC Region GSMA, Saira Faisal, Country Lead and Jeanette Whyte, Head of Public Policy APAC GSMA who participated virtually to emphasize the importance of this

partnership. The highlight of this partnership is the launch of Shariah-compliant smartphone



instalment plans, which are tailored specifically for Telenor's vast customer

base in Pakistan. The collaboration offers an inclusive solution for individuals hailing from middle and low-income segments of society, promoting smartphone ownership through user-friendly instalment-based financing options that align with Shariah principles. The partnership aims to further digitalization in the country and empower communities through this first-of-its-kind collaboration by making the purchase of smartphones convenient and affordable. ❏

Princess Diana's sweater to be



A jumper worn by Britain's late Princess Diana and depicting a black sheep is headed for auction this summer with a price estimate of up to \$80,000. Designed by knitwear label Warm & Wonderful, the sweater, which will headline Sotheby's Fashion Icons Aug. 31-Sept. 14 online sale, was rediscovered in an attic earlier this year by one of the brand's founders.

Diana first wore the red jumper, which depicts a lone black sheep among rows of white sheep, to watch then

Prince Charles play in a polo game in June 1981, a month before they were married, sparking speculation over its potential significance. "If you're Princess Diana, certainly you have access to lots of pieces of apparel you could choose to wear," Cynthia Houlton, global head of fashion at Sotheby's, said at a press preview in London.

"And the fact that she wanted a replacement and then again two years later wore the replacement sweater, I think speaks really volumes from her how

much this sweater meant to her."

The jumper, which is being sold with Everett's two letters to Osborne, has a price estimate of \$50,000-\$80,000. ❏

Top BBC Presenter Off the Air



A BBC presenter Rylan Clark has been accused of paying a minor for explicitly sexual photographs.

The alleged victim's mother told The Sun that the money, amounting to over £35,000, was used to fund drug addiction, destroying her child's life.

In response, broadcaster Rylan Clark tweeted to clarify that he was not the presenter in question. Neither the individual nor the teenager has been identified.

BBC said it takes allegations 'very seriously' and has processes to investigate such cases, considering the severity of the matter. ❏

Yamuna laps Taj Mahal walls

A river that runs through the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh has risen to lap the compound walls of the iconic Taj Mahal in Agra city, causing concern about damage to the 17th-century white marble monument.

The water level of the Yamuna River has increased over the last few days after unusually heavy rain in northern India, including Uttar Pradesh, which has received 108 per cent of its normal rainfall since the four-month monsoon season began on June 1.

According to India's Central Water Commission (CWC), the portion of the river flowing alongside the Taj Mahal rose to 152m on July 18, well above the warning level for potential danger of 151.4m. The level considered dangerous is 152.4 metres.

Local media outlets reported the last time the river reached the walls of the monument was 45 years ago, in 1978.

Visuals from the area showed the red sandstone boundary wall of the Taj Mahal surrounded by muddy water, with the mausoleum itself looming over the

scene, untouched by the river.

Officials from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), which oversees the Taj Mahal along with several other monuments in the country, said there is "no serious concern" about the monument at present.



"If it rains more, or the water stays this high for some days, we will need to assess the situation again," said Raj Kumar Patel, superintendent archaeologist with ASI.

Several other monuments and gardens located in the vicinity of the Taj Mahal, closer to the banks of the Yamuna, however, "have been submerged" and damaged, he said. ❏

Sirajuddin Aziz appointed as Banking Ombudsman

Sadiq Sanjrani, the then Acting President, has signed the summary of appointing Sirajuddin Aziz as Banking Pakistan Ombudsman.

Sirajuddin Aziz, veteran banker with decades of experience, has worked for different organisations in Pakistan, China, Hong Kong, UK, Nigeria, and the UAE. Until recently he was the Chief Executive Officer-Financial

Institutions at Habib Bank AG Zurich. Prior to this, he has served as the president and Chief Executive Officer of other leading commercial banks in Pakistan. Aziz is a Fellow of Institute of Bankers Pakistan (IBP). He was the Editor of the Journal of IBP and is also a Member of Pakistan Institute of International Affairs and of the English Speaking Union of Pakistan. He served

on the Board of Governors of various educational institutions and social



organisations.

Sirajuddin Aziz is a regular contributor to national and international publications, including Monthly SouthAsia (<http://www.southasia.com.pk/>). He is a published author, with works comprising "In Quest of Mirage," "Bitter & Sweet – Life & Times of Dad," "The Essence of Islam," and "Emerging Dynamics of Management." ❏

Jashn-e-Urdu Held in Chicago

The Urdu institute USA recently held "Jashn-e-Urdu," an emblematic event, which was organized on 3rd of July in Chicago, United States, in collaboration with the Pakistan Arts Council Karachi.

Speaking on the occasion, the convener Amin Hyder, along with the president of the Pakistan Art Council Ahmad Shah, highlighted the future programmes for the promotion of Urdu literature and hoped that this collaboration will usher many more episodes of this kind to the people living abroad Pakistan



who want to see their literature to its par excellence.

A large number of Urdu literature fans turned up on the occasion to enjoy and witness the exemplary presentations. The sessions depicted the excellence of participants in their mastery and expertise in various forms of literature and performing arts. A grand mushaira added the spectacular ambiance at the end of the grand ceremony. ❏

Afghan women protest against beauty parlour ban

Security officials shot into the air and used fire hoses to disperse dozens of Afghan women protesting in Kabul against an order by Taliban authorities to shut down beauty parlours, the latest curb to squeeze them out of public life.

Since seizing power in August 2021, the Taliban government has barred girls and women from high schools and universities, banned them from parks, funfairs and gyms, and ordered them to cover up in public.

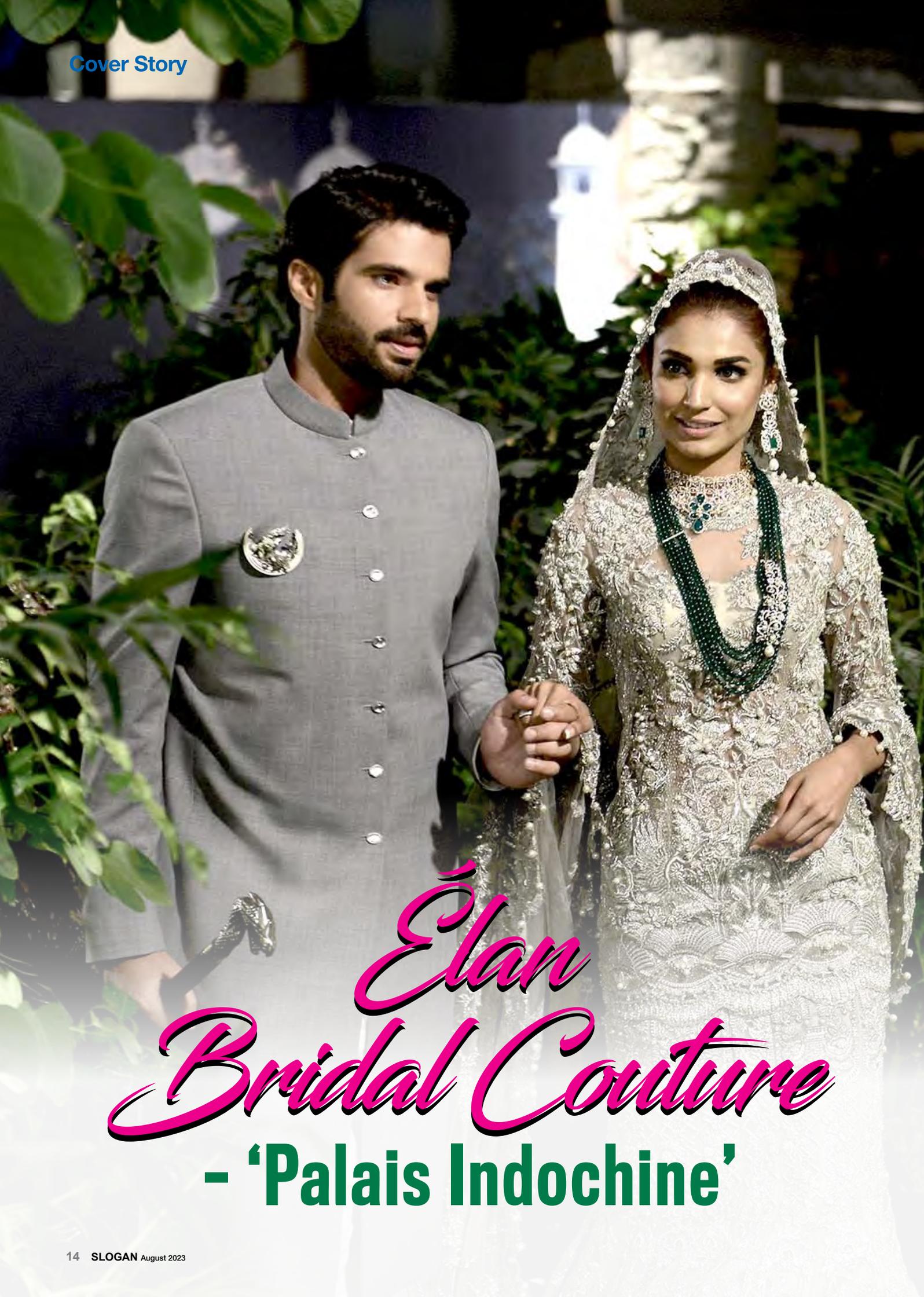
The order issued last month forces the closure of thousands of beauty parlours nationwide run by women — often the only source of income for households — and outlaws one of the few remaining opportunities for them to socialise away from home.

"Don't take my bread and water," read a sign carried by one of the protesters on Butcher Street, which boasts a concentration of the capital's salons.

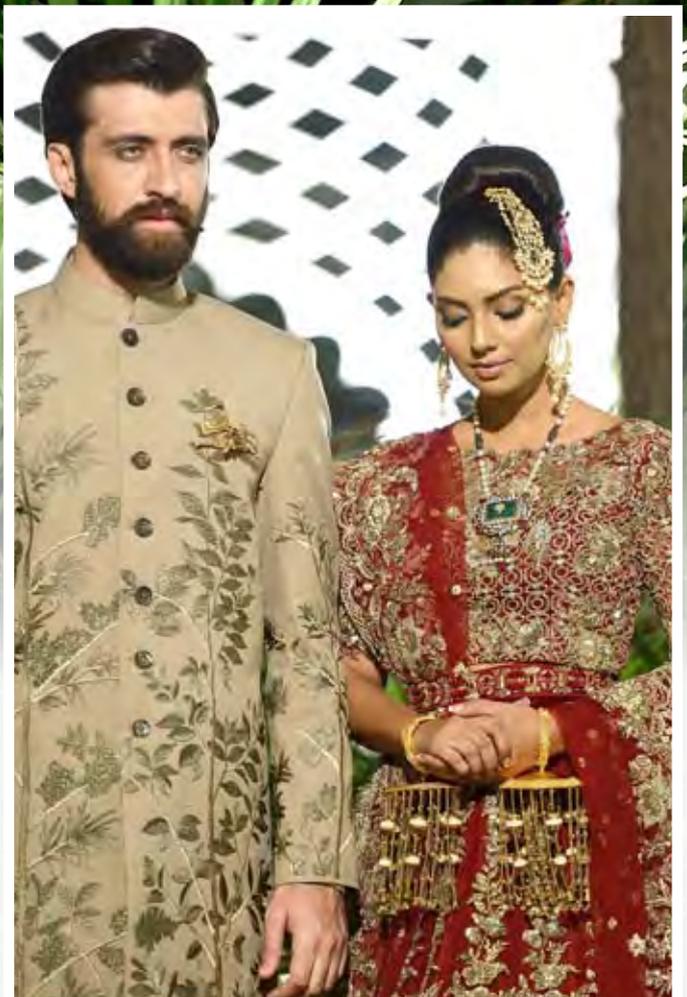
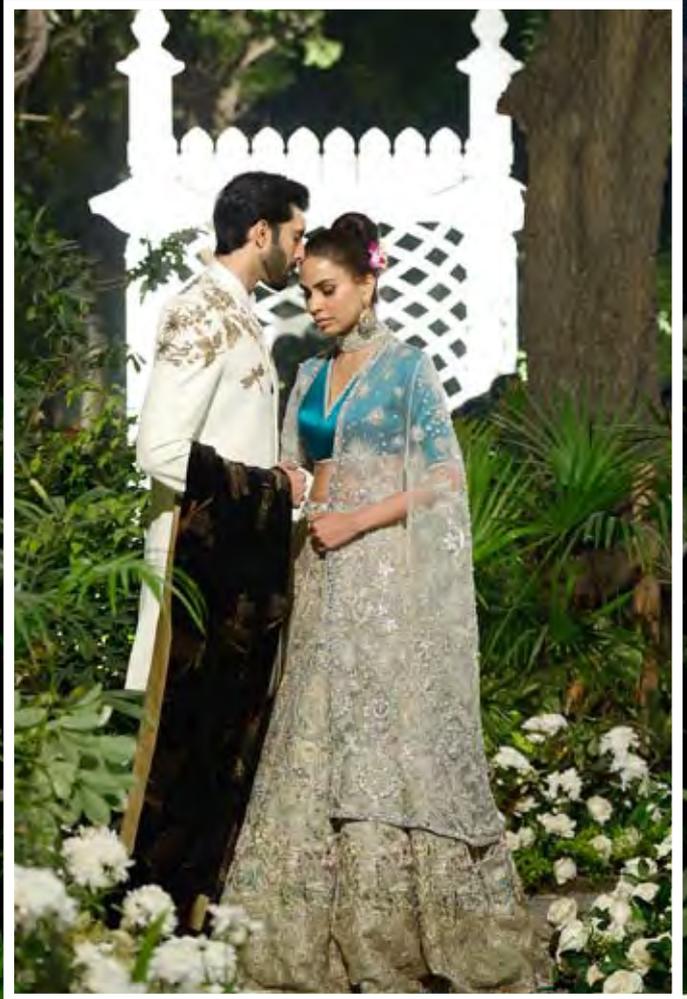


The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) condemned the protest breakup. "Reports of the forceful suppression of a peaceful protest by

women against the ban on beauty salons — the latest denial of women's rights in #Afghanistan — are deeply concerning," it said in a tweet. ❏



Élan
Bridal Couture
- 'Palais Indochine'



Luxury designer Khadijah Shah organised an extravagant bridal show to celebrate the 10th anniversary of her brand Élan, during which she unveiled her Bridal Couture Collection 2016 'Palais Indochine'. The show took place in Lahore, Pakistan and was live streamed on Élan's official website. Khadijah collaborated with jewellery designer Sherezad Rahimtoola, who created bespoke pieces for the bridal showcase.

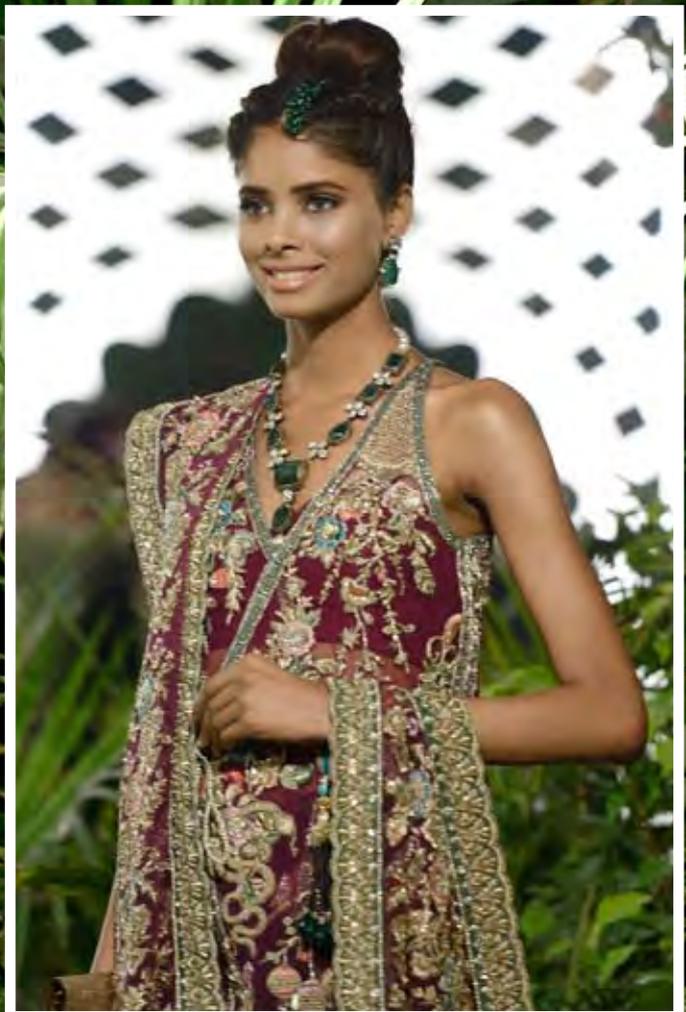
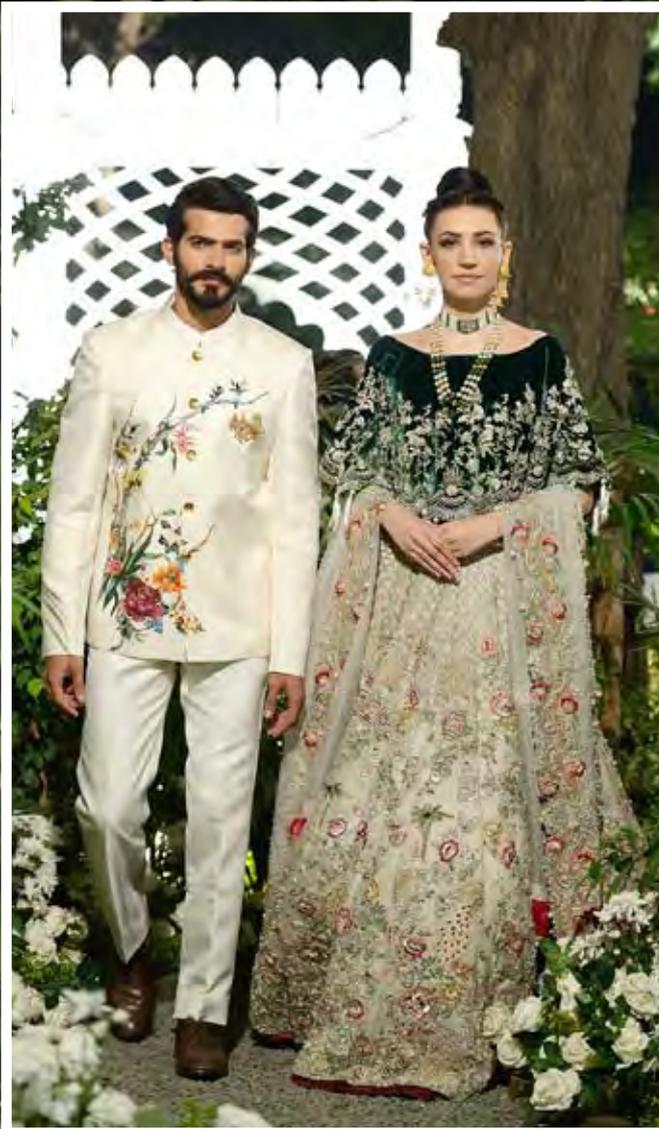
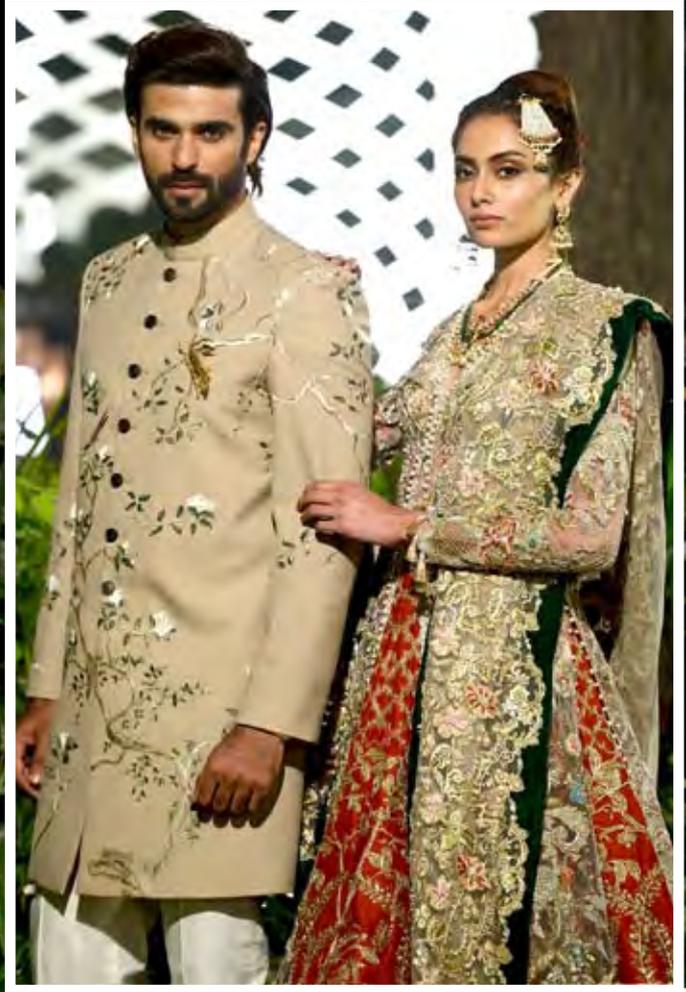
The collection 'Palais Indochine' is inspired by the French

Cover Story

Indochina colonies in South East Asia. Shah also drew inspiration from Chinoiserie; a style inspired by art and design from China, Japan and other Asian countries. The collection consists of breath-taking bridal gowns in luxurious colours decorated with intricate embroidery and embellishments including small pearls. The designer contemporized traditional motifs, which makes the designs look modern yet classic. The silhouettes are very feminine and chic!

The runway was turned into a romantic forest with white flowers, oriental gates and a lighted gazebo. Photographer Faisal Farooqui and his team at DragonFly shot beautiful pictures from the show. As you can see in the gallery, the photographer captured moments that make it seem like the models are actually at their wedding and in love. It gives me warm and fuzzy feelings, instantly picturing myself walking down the aisle wearing Élan, gazing lovingly into my boyfriend's eyes...if there was an 'add to cart button' on my laptop screen right now I would've pushed it, I'm sold!

Which Élan bridal gown got you day dreaming about your special day? Let me know! [✉](#)



THE MARVELOUS MRS. MAISEL

Winning over the Audience

By Maleeha Faisal Siddiqui

“The *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*” is a television series created by Amy Sherman-Palladino, known for the popular show “*Gilmore Girls*.” Sherman-Palladino, globally known for crafting iconic female leads, serves as the show’s director and writer who knows how to write compelling women that live life on their own terms, whether it’s Phoebe Waller-Bridge ingeniously playing the foul-mouthed and liberated Fleabag or Lauren Graham shown as the quick-witted and charming Lorelei Gilmore.

Miriam “Midge” Maisel, played by Rachel Brosnahan, is a sharp-witted, devoted housewife living a seemingly perfect life on the Upper West Side of New York City in the 1960s. But her world soon falls apart when her husband confesses to his infidelity. Faced with uncertainty, Midge discovers her talent for stand-up comedy.

With a sharp tongue, a fearless demeanor, and a natural gift for observational humor, she is unafraid to speak her mind and challenge every conventionality. We follow her journey as she transforms from a housewife abiding by all rules of propriety to a daring stand-up comic who takes over the underground nightclub comedy scene in New York, eventually rising to global stardom.

It’s also a story about self-discovery, standing up for yourself, and shattering that glass ceiling in more ways than one. With stand-up comedy sets that are incredibly well-researched and relevant

to the sociopolitical dialogue of today, through Midge, Sherman-Palladino gives us some of the most profound and hard-hitting lines.

Whether it’s Midge taking over a female-driven protest and chanting, “If women don’t realize what’s going on in the world, they won’t step in and fix it. Because they will fix it and accessorize it!”



or calling out sleazy, sexist men and rightly asking “Am I supposed to find them intimidating?”

Luke Kirby impresses as the legendary Lenny Bruce, serving as Midge’s mentor and friend. At the same time, Tony Shalhoub, as Midge’s genius, socially awkward, and comically orthodox father, Abe Weissman, has masterful comic timing and becomes one of the show’s lovable characters.

Featuring captivating soundtracks and music from renowned artistes, such as Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, and Louis Armstrong, the music selection is carefully curated to transport one

to the vibrant atmosphere of the 1950s and 1960s. Music is integral to how this story unfolds, from lively jazz numbers during comedy club scenes to soulful ballads during poignant moments.

The costumes, designed by Donna Zakowska, do full justice to the high fashion of the mid-twentieth century. Tailored silhouettes, exquisite fabrics, eye-catching patterns, and intricate embellishments, including sequins, feathers, and beading, are all well-executed to match the promise of *Marvel*, as indicated by the show’s name. Where Midge is concerned, costumes play a crucial role. They are always perfectly balanced to befit her upper-class sensibility and her edginess as a bold and occasionally profane stand-up comic.

The show’s real star, however, is the on-screen sisterhood between Midge and her manager, Susie Meyerson, played by Alex Borstein. Borstein brings humor and depth to Susie, garnering recognition and praise. Together these two women are loud and opinionated. They make their way and leave their mark in the male-dominated, misogynistic world of stand-up comedy. The show’s appeal also lies in the whimsical and idiosyncratic supporting characters and comic situations brilliantly juxtaposed with Midge’s struggles. Whether or not you like dramedies, this show will leave you wanting more. Winning over the audience, it starts strong, never once faltering, and goes out on just as much of a high note with one final epic and hilarious monologue. [S](#)

THE OUT-LAWS

THUMBS DOWN

By Syed Zain Akhter

The Out-Laws is an American dramedy directed by Tyler Spindel, featuring a star-studded cast including Adam DeVine, Pierce Brosnan, Lil Rel Howery, and Beanie Feldstein. In the film, a diligent bank manager, Owen Browning, becomes convinced that his future in-laws, played by Brosnan and Feldstein, are the notorious Ghost Bandits responsible for robbing his bank during his wedding week.

One of the film's strengths lies in its stellar ensemble cast. Adam DeVine, known for his comedic prowess, delivers a solid performance as the straight-laced Owen Browning. Pierce Brosnan brings his charm and charisma to the role of the potential father-in-law, while Beanie Feldstein shines as the possibly criminal mother-in-law. Lil Rel Howery injects his trademark humor into the film, adding another layer of enjoyment for audiences.

The film also offers well-choreographed and exhilarating action sequences and keeps viewers on the edge of their seats as the characters navigate through thrilling heists and daring escapes. These sequences are undoubtedly one of the film's main highlights, showcasing the director's skills in crafting intense and visually

appealing moments.

The film also boasts a good sense of humor, sprinkling genuinely funny moments throughout the storyline. Adam DeVine's comedic timing shines through, and the interactions between the cast members generate laughs. The comedic elements provide some lightheartedness amidst the action-packed plot, offering the audience moments of levity.

However, the film falls short in certain areas. One of its primary

balance. This inconsistency may leave viewers unsure of what to expect, disrupting their immersion in the story. A more cohesive approach to blending the two genres could have greatly enhanced the film's overall impact.

The film's only saving grace is the cast. Adam DeVine and Pierce Brosnan give it their all but can't save this sinking ship. The supporting cast is also good, but they're given nothing to work with.

If you're a fan of Adam DeVine or



setbacks is its predictable and formulaic plot. The narrative unfolds in a way that leaves little room for surprises and unexpected turns. While the film aims to entertain, its lack of originality prevents it from standing out in the crowded genre of action comedies.

Moreover, The Out-Laws struggles to strike a consistent tone, often veering between comedy and action without finding a comfortable

Pierce Brosnan, you might be able to find some enjoyment in watching them sleepwalk through their roles. The film wastes the talents of its cast, and no wonder how they even agreed to do the film in the first place. The Out-Laws is a mess from start to finish, with a predictable plot, unfunny humor, and unlikable characters. I give it 2.5 out of 5 stars and the much-deserved thumbs down. ❌



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