

# Slogan

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*Erica Robin*

**first Pakistani contestant  
at Miss Universe**



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## Entertainment Amidst Pandemic

One of the biggest industries to be hit by the coronavirus pandemic has been the entertainment industry. Last spring, when COVID-19 caused widespread shutdowns of businesses, arts and entertainment were hit hard. And unlike other industries, such as retail and food service, for the most part, the fine and performing arts have not been able to reopen or bounce back. Optimistically, with vaccines being administered at a successful rate, it may not be too far off for when museums, venues, and other performing centres can reopen. In the meantime, the entertainment industry needs to assess its path to recovery, as well as advocate for its importance both economically and culturally. Here are three insights about the current state of the entertainment industry and its economic importance. The COVID-19 pandemic created a major upheaval in the entertainment industry. Most theatres, concert halls and cinemas were shuttered for at least a year and television and film production halted for months, leading to hundreds of thousands of layoffs and large sums of money lost. Not only were those directly working in production affected but so were people that support the industry, such as caterers, florists and trucking companies.

But while the film industry has seen a number of negative effects due to the pandemic, it hasn't been all bad. Stuck-at-home consumers fuelled a tremendous increase in streaming, as noted by the staggering gains made by Netflix and Disney+, in particular, as well as a general increase in video gaming. With many movie theatres either in the process of reopening or still uncertain about the future, production companies have turned to these streaming services to debut their movie slates. One major film studio, Warner Bros. Pictures, decided to release all of its 2021 films on HBO Max. This allows for more people to stream new movies from the comfort and safety of their own homes while also prompting the question: What does the future hold for movie theatres, streaming services and film studios when the pandemic ends? Essentially cinemas will become reserved for more dedicated, niche audiences that will continue to support the theatres for years to come. As for television, the lowering of production standards via remote production practices has taken away one of television's core advantages in both domestic and transnational markets: high production values. This situation suggests we will see greater foreign competition for eyeballs as long as the international content fits within popular genres. People have become more comfortable streaming non-English language content, for example, the French mystery thriller series Lupin. The trend is likely to continue as international companies continue to produce content at a similar quality or even higher quality than the content entertainment companies are creating. Regardless of what the future holds for the entertainment industry, USC experts believe these shifts will have a long-lasting effect on culture and media.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented health crisis. It has had a drastic impact on every facet of the worldwide economy, including the media and entertainment industry. Lockdowns in countries with high caseloads have seen cinemas and movie theatres close. Those that remain open are operating at partial capacity due to social distancing measures. This has all led to the entertainment taking extraordinary measures such as major films like Trolls: World Tour and Mulan being released via streaming platforms while others such as the James Bond film No Time to Die's release has been postponed until April 2021. Meanwhile, other films have seen their production and release dates postponed indefinitely. Even major industry events have either been delayed, cancelled, or had their format changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



### State of Overseas Pakistanis

Some measures need to be taken for the welfare of overseas Pakistanis. If implemented, these measures will be helpful for Pakistan as well. Overseas Pakistanis can be made more active and motivated to strive for the country's prosperity through responsibility and honor. They can contribute better to trade, export expansion, employment opportunities, and foreign affairs as they are the real ambassadors and representatives whose actions and behavior directly affect others. There are ten seats in the Overseas Parliament, which represent all the regions. Special courts or a bench should be formed to end the illegal occupation of their properties. They should be represented in organizations working overseas. One window operation should be faster to improve investment, and various dispute resolution centers should be established.

*Rabia Butt,  
Toronto, Canada.*



### Need for Policy Changes

Some decades before, Pakistan exported wheat, sugar, and textile products. In marked contrast today, Pakistan is forced to import even essential food items and staples. The international trade deficit has grown unsustainably. In



such a situation, it has become necessary to revise the economic policies. By adopting this policy, India advanced industrially while we lagged behind. In this regard, this proposal of former Prime

Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif requires serious consideration that money invested in industries should not be asked where it came from. The same policy was followed during his rule, due to which inflation was under control, employment opportunities were available, and the country was in a better position industrially.

*Chowdhury Mushtaq Zafar,  
Gujranwala, Pakistan.*

### End of Economic Crisis

Pakistan continues to suffer from a large fiscal deficit where government expenditure is higher than revenue, imports and exports are more elevated, and new investment is stagnant. Due to these factors, the foreign exchange reserves are used to pay off previous loans and take new loans on heavy terms. The high rate of inflation has limited the purchasing power of the common man to barely enough to feed his stomach with only two daily breads, which has adversely affected other sectors and made it impossible to obtain the basic needs related to them. According to the federal minister, the government will get 35 billion rupees by taxing the windfall profits of the banks. The anti-corruption program of the IMF has become a ray of hope for which the framework from the Ministry of Law and NAB has come. Apart from all these, the problem that Pakistan has been facing for 76 years is the impact of the regime change on the ongoing development projects. In this respect, it is necessary to keep the planning department above all matters.

*Sikandar Ali,  
Karachi, Pakistan.*



### Road to Economic Recovery

In the 1960s, Pakistan's economy was so strong and stable that even some of today's most developed countries used to borrow from it. Unfortunately, today, Pakistan itself is in debt of thousands of billions of dollars. In this regard, apart from friendly countries, international financial institutions are also casting doubt on the country's economic prospects. Industrial and business establishments are closing due to difficulties. The value of the rupee against the dollar has become negligible. Inflation has made it impossible for the poor man to survive. The international trade deficit has increased to an unsustainable level. Skilled manpower of the country is moving to foreign countries for employment. The existence



of industrial and commercial institutions in the country is in danger. Still, if these institutions are stable and earn profits, the nation will be prosperous, and the

burden on the treasury will also be reduced. Incoming governments should take advantage of this policy and apply it to other sectors. However, this does not mean that accountability requirements should be ignored. There should be a uniform policy for all institutions so the country may come out of crisis.

*Sultana Ayub,  
Lahore, Pakistan.*

## Gaza is Burning

A turning point in the history of human civilizational evolution came when the establishment and sustainability of real peace became possible. It was the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which freed the enslaved states of Central Asia from the tyranny of Russian oppression and the entire Eastern Europe from



the oppressive grip of the anti-people Warsaw Pact. The fall of the Berlin Wall became a great instructive symbol of this. Gaza has become the 9/11 of the Muslim world and the Middle East. Once again, a paradigm shift is taking place in the land of Palestine.

*Murtaza Bilal,  
Islamabad, Pakistan.*

## 9/11 of the Muslim World

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*Murtaza Bilal,  
Islamabad, Pakistan.*

## Who Said That!



"More than 420 children are being killed or injured in Gaza each day — a number which should shake each of us to our core."

**-Catherine Russell,**  
*Executive Director, UNICEF*



"The Western media is defending the atrocities being committed by Israel in its brutal invasion of the besieged Palestinian enclave of Gaza."

**-Anwaarul Haq Kakar,**  
*Caretaker Prime Minister of Pakistan*



"I have 170 million people in a small land, so we need investment — from every country."

**- Sheikh Hasina Wajid,**  
*Prime Minister of Bangladesh*



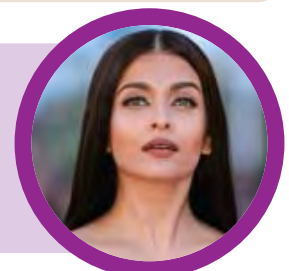
"2024 General Election results will be beyond barriers."

**- Narendra Modi,**  
*Prime Minister of India*



"If the playing field is level, only the PPP will win the election."

**- Bilawal Bhutto Zardari,**  
*Chairman, Pakistan People's Party*



"I don't believe in proving a point to anybody. Nobody is that important."

**Aishwarya Rai Bachchan,**  
*Indian Actress*



"But it is only a mature society which can possess intellectual and religious tolerance, and which can provide basic liberties to its citizens."

**Pervez Hoodbhoy,**  
*Pakistani Scholar*



"As an actor, the wonderful thing is that you can become something else for a time."

**Nicole Kidman, Actress**



## Better Late Than Never

The announcement of general elections on February 8, 2024, by the Election Commission of Pakistan is indeed good news. Other than bringing much-needed political stability to the country, holding general polls will also help in battling the country's formidable economic challenges. However, given the current pace of political antics and alleged manipulation, one might wonder about the transparency of the forthcoming elections, especially when the country's leading political party is openly complaining about the lack of a level playing field and pre-poll rigging much before the holding of the elections, which is not a favourable sign for a democratic country like ours. No doubt, it's better late than never. Still, nothing could be more important than free and fair elections, allowing the electorate to exercise its constitutional right to choose its future leadership. 🇵🇰



## Defeat, Demoralisation, and Whatnot!

As one might expect, Pakistan's rollercoaster campaign in the AICC Men's ODI Cricket World Cup 2023 ended on a highly disappointing note, almost a week before the competition was finally over with the rise of Australia as new one-day cricket champions, winning the title for the sixth time. Once again, the task of rebuilding Pakistan cricket has now been assigned to some new faces with no prima facie changes made in the governing body for cricket known as Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), which can frankly be referred to as the most politicised institution of the country.

Most interestingly, the current scenario almost remains the same when, after the shameful exit from the 2023 World Cup, even before the knockout stages, some new faces took on the mantle of revamping Pakistan's crumbling cricket structure. However, the euphoria was soon over when some unfamiliar names came to the fore purely on political grounds with the same task, which seemed to be an unfinished agenda. For Pakistan cricket, the vicious cycle of defeat and demoralisation will never end. 🇵🇰

## ANIMAL FARM

Actress Sania Saeed is a staunch human rights activist. She usually does acting projects that highlight the plight of underprivileged groups. In a recent interview, she has also come out in support of animals. She has said, "[Zoos] should be closed with immediate effect and we should send all the animals back from where they have been brought in Pakistan." Obviously, her assertion has a proper context, and should only be applied to animals. 🇵🇰



# US calls for safe resettlement of Afghan refugees

The US State Department has urged Pakistan to prioritise the safety and efficient resettlement of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers.

The call comes amid concerns that hasty or unscrupulous deportations could pose a significant risk to the lives of these vulnerable individuals.

“Our key concern is the safety of vulnerable and at-risk individuals,” State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said at a Tuesday afternoon news briefing.

Highlighting the shared responsibility in addressing the plight of refugees, he emphasised the need for collaborative

efforts to navigate the complexities of resettlement.


“We believe it is in both our countries’

Miller said, “We join all of our partners in urging all countries, including Pakistan, to uphold their

respective obligations in the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. We strongly encourage all of Afghanistan’s neighbours to allow entry for Afghans seeking international protection and coordinate with international humanitarian organisations to provide assistance.”

As the situation evolves, the diplomatic engagement between the US and

Pakistan takes centre stage

in addressing the challenges associated with the resettlement process. 



interest to ensure the safe and efficient resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers.”


## Collaboration between CxO Global Forum and Magnus Technologies

Pakistan-based CxO Global Forum has launched its UAE Chapter in partnership with Magnus Technologies, paving the way for a fruitful collaboration between the two organizations. The CxO delegation had a productive and positive meeting with Serene Shalan, Director of Investment Attraction, and Tarek Mahmoud of Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism, discussing business expansion, networking opportunities, ease of doing business, and exclusive introductions to government entities.

TECOM Group’s Dubai Internet City powered the launch of the

UAE Chapter. It reinforced the organization’s commitment to technology, media, and design, creating a platform for companies to expand their reach within the UAE.



The CxO Global Forum is a community of over 10,000 global CEOs and CxOs who come together to share ideas, discuss solutions, and unlock value for organizations. With a focus on technology, innovation, and transformation, the forum provides a platform for diverse perspectives, cross-cultural exchange, and global problem-solving. 



# NAPA holds an evening with Ustad Shafqat Salamat Ali Khan

The National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) and the city chapter of the All-Pakistan Music Conference organised an evening with Ustad Shafqat Salamat Ali Khan at Napa's Zia Mohyeddin Theater.

The event began with Nadir Ali Khan's and Faizan Ali Khan's solo performances. Then, the two were joined by their father,



Ustad Shafqat Salamat Ali, the son of the legendary maestro of Sham Chaurasi gharana, Ustad Salamat Ali Khan. Towards the end, the Ustad sang some thumris and even ghazals on request.



The audience enjoyed themselves with the performance as Ustad Shafqat Salamat Ali carries the formidable legacy of his Gharana, which successfully combines the angst of dhruwad, kaafi,



and khayal in its distinctive style. Ustad Shafqat Ali Khan was accompanied by Ishtiaq Hussain on harmonium, Kashif Ali Dhani on tabla, Gul Mohammad on sarangi, and Tariq Naseeb on tanpura. ❏

# Ali Zafar wins big at DIAFA

Ali Zafar has been honoured as the best Pakistani singer at DIAFA 2023. The Distinctive International Arab Festivals Awards (DIAFA), an international award being held in Dubai since 2017, confer awards to the best artistes from the Arab world as well as international celebrities for their

achievements every year.

This year, Ali Zafar is the Pakistani awarded at DIAFA, which he attended alongside his wife, Ayesha Fazli. Zafar added another feather to his cap by clinching the Pakistani Artiste of the Year title at the Distinctive International Arab Festivals Awards (DIAFA) held in Dubai. On the momentous occasion, Ali Zafar highlighted the ongoing atrocities in Gaza, commending the DIAFA management for shedding light on the plight of the Palestinians



during the ceremony.

Earlier, Pakistani celebrities, including Mahira Khan, Sajal Aly, and Maya Ali, are a few names that have been honoured with a DIAFA. ❏





## Pakistani teacher wins Global Teacher Prize 2023

**S**ister Zeph, a Pakistani teacher who established a school for underprivileged children at the age of 13, has won the Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize 2023. The \$1 million award, the largest of its kind, was presented to her in collaboration with UNESCO and Dubai Cares.

Sister Zeph, chosen from over 7,000 nominees worldwide, has dedicated 26 years to providing free education to more than 200 children.

The award ceremony, hosted by Stephen Fry, featured speakers like Nile

Rodgers and highlighted the UNESCO and Teacher Taskforce Global Report on Teachers, emphasizing the need for 44 million additional teachers globally by 2030. Sister Zeph plans to use the prize funds to build a school for underprivileged children and create a shelter for orphans.

The event also recognized the top 10 finalists for the Global Student Prize 2023. The Global Teacher Prize aims to celebrate exceptional teachers and acknowledge their critical role in society. 🇵🇰



## Court directs PIA, CAA to submit report

**T**he Gilgit-Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court (SAC) has directed the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) to submit a report on the operational life of ATR aircraft on the Gilgit-Islamabad route and the reasons behind technical faults in these flights.

The people of GB pleaded that the operational life of PIA's ATR planes had expired, posing an extreme risk.

PIA's chief technical officer told the court that ATR planes, purchased in 2006, are supposed to complete 70 thousand flight cycles, of which only half have been completed. 🇵🇰

## Hasina's daughter takes WHO top job, rejects criticism

**T**he World Health Organisation on Wednesday selected the daughter of Bangladesh's prime minister to be its South-East Asia director, a month after she rejected criticisms of nepotism over her application.

Saima Wazed, 49, daughter of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was accused of using her mother's clout to get nominated to the position, allegations she has denied.

"I look forward to building a healthier South-East Asia," Wazed posted on X, formerly Twitter, after being selected for the post heading an 11-nation region home to a quarter of the world's population. 🇵🇰



## Pakistan applies for BRICS membership

**P**akistan has applied for BRICS membership, according to the Foreign Office (FO).

In her weekly presser, FO Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch confirmed Pakistan's decision, saying that the country hopes BRICS will move forward with its application.

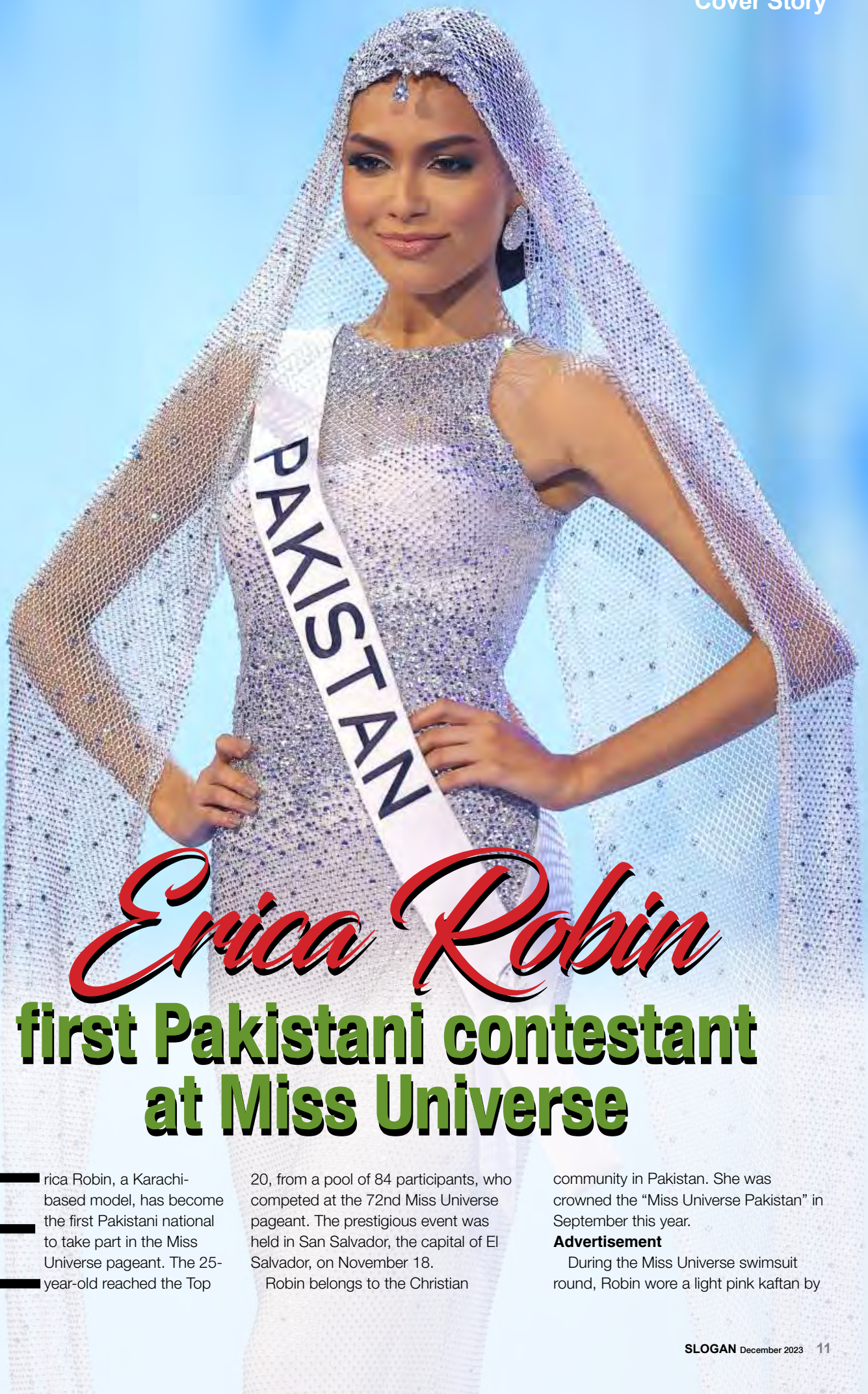


"We have decided after having noted the BRICS-related developments in Johannesburg," she said. Baloch added that Pakistan enjoys friendly ties with most members of the BRICS and the newly invited group of countries.

"Pakistan is an ardent supporter of multilateralism and a member of several multilateral organizations. The country has played an important role in global peace and development," she added.

In August, BRICS - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa - invited six countries - Argentina, Egypt, Iran, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates - to become new bloc members. At the time, Baloch had said that Pakistan did not make any formal request to join the group. 🇵🇰





# *Erica Robin* first Pakistani contestant at Miss Universe

**E**rica Robin, a Karachi-based model, has become the first Pakistani national to take part in the Miss Universe pageant. The 25-year-old reached the Top

20, from a pool of 84 participants, who competed at the 72nd Miss Universe pageant. The prestigious event was held in San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, on November 18.

Robin belongs to the Christian

community in Pakistan. She was crowned the “Miss Universe Pakistan” in September this year.

#### **Advertisement**

During the Miss Universe swimsuit round, Robin wore a light pink kaftan by





Robin Singer, while other contestants wore metallic swimsuits by the same designer.

For the national costume segment, Robin walked the stage in a richly embroidered black and magenta traditional ensemble. This outfit was named 'Pehchaan', meaning 'Identity' in English. As per Robin's Instagram post, the outfit aimed to represent "the rich and diverse culture, history, and lifestyle of Pakistan".

For the evening gown segment, Robin wore a bejewelled white gown by Amato Couture. She paired the form-fitting gown with a floor-length head veil.

In 2020, Erica started her career in modelling. She appeared in Diva Magazine Pakistan the same year.

A day after the pageant concluded, Robin shared a video from her Miss Universe journey and thanked her team for training her. In a gratitude-filled post, she also paid homage to her country and wrote, "To Pakistan - it's an honour to represent you with modesty, respect and pride. I love you all!"

Robin was not the only unique participant in this year's Miss Universe pageant. Jane Dipika Garrett, who represented Nepal, became the first plus-size contestant to take part in the event.

Additionally, Camila Avella of Colombia became the first married woman and mother to participate in the pageant since Miss Universe changed its rules in August 2022.

Sheynnis Palacios of Nicaragua was crowned as Miss Universe 2023. She is the first Nicaraguan to win this title. 🇳🇮





## ZULM

# Haves and Have-Nots

By Beenish Mahmood

**Z**ulm is a new TV serial being aired on Hum TV every Monday. Written by Rehana Aftab and directed by Ilyass Kashmiri, the plot of the TV serial is simple yet layered with depth and profundity, while the storyline touches the viewers' hearts.

first wife. Ijlaal treats his wife like a slave. He is married a second time to Hani Taha, and the relationship between the two is toxic. As Hani presents the request for a baby to Ijlaal, the latter insults her, saying he has an aversion to pregnant women because they look fat and ugly. The incident points to the shallow outlook of society, particularly of men. Raheed

Her demands are getting out of control, and she starts dreaming the impossible, i.e., to become a part of the elite society. Little does she know what the peril that she is putting herself into. Detached from reality, she lives in a fairytale world and believes herself as Cinderella whose prince charming will come and take her away from the poverty trap.



Faisal Qureshi as Ijlaal and Sahar Hashmi as Eesha play the lead roles. Ijlaal and his sister Minaal are the offspring of an affluent family. Both are arrogant and unkind and exercise their influence on the economically disadvantaged people of society. They treat their domestic help worse than the treatment meted out to animals.

The serial takes an interesting twist when, on Minaal's (Aamra Kazi) birthday, Usher (Ahmad Rafique) and Ijlaal brothers fall for Eesha.

Enter Raheed Alam as Eesha's brother and Adeela Salim as Ijlaal's

Alam spoils his sister. As his mother, Saba Faisal tries to control Eesha and her burgeoning desires, but Raheed plays the loving brother and fulfills all her wishes with the swish of the magic wand. The TV serial is set in Karachi, which is a cosmopolitan city, and its society is highly competitive. There is a tussle going on between the haves and have-nots. Everyone is involved in a rat race.

Eesha becomes a victim of peer pressure. As she moves into high society, she forgets her morals and values and takes on the persona of a spoiled, unsaturated human being.

Meanwhile, the scene shifts to Ijlaal and Hani. Both are unfaithful to each other. As Ijlaal spots Hani with another man, his possessive side as a husband comes to the forefront. He yanks Hani by her hair, asking her for the truth. Hani justifies her sinful act by saying the man was her client. Here, the writer unfolds the story between Hani and Ijlaal. As Usher goes to drop Eesha off, he expresses his love for Eesha. He slips a ring onto her finger, saying it is a token of his love for her. In a word, Zulm is a promising TV serial highlighting society's ills. ❏

## THE DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES

## WAR BEGETS WAR

By Zubeir Faisal Siddiqui

In 1968, a science-fiction film 'The Planet of the Apes' was released. Based on the book written by Pierre Boulle (1912-1994), this film was about an astronaut who landed on a foreign planet where apes enslaved humans. Following a big plot twist, four more sequels of the film were made, each with a rather lacklustre storyline and were more plot-driven than by the protagonist's internal conflicts.

The film 'The Dawn of the Planet of the Apes' commences in a dystopian, post-apocalyptic world, with human civilization on the precipice of extinction as the ALZ-113 pandemic forces the planet Earth into a strict lockdown. Ten years have passed since the beginning of the lockdown, and humans have now been immunized against the virus. The cold colour palette of the film perfectly reflects its dark, gloomy atmosphere. The film is significantly relatable to audiences who have suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdown. Only a handful of human-populated pockets have survived on Earth. Near the woods where the apes have taken refuge is a village utterly devoid of electricity.

The apes, meanwhile, have formed a sort of tribal system, with Caesar as the head. Two of Caesar's closest companions are an orangutan called Maurice and a bonobo called Koba. Koba and Caesar possess very different personalities. While Caesar

is more calm and collected, Koba lets his emotions take the wheel. Caesar is a chimpanzee, and Koba is a bonobo. Bonobos are docile and harmless, and chimpanzees are known to be aggressive and violent. This, however, does not reflect off of these two characters. Caesar has a soft spot for humans, whereas Koba

Caesar discuss the issue of the dam. When push comes to shove, Caesar allows the humans to use the dam. Koba is enraged at this and argues vociferously with Caesar. Caesar, infuriated in turn, lunges at Koba and physically assaults him. Caesar regrets his decisions later on, but Koba's heart has now hardened, and



has only seen their mercilessness. Koba wishes to enact his vengeance upon the humans and for the apes to declare war on them. Caesar, nonetheless, is aware of the horrors of war and knows that war begets war and mutual destruction. Despite their differences, Caesar and Koba get along like a house on fire.

Dreyfus, played by Gary Oldman, and a warm-hearted man called Malcolm, played by Jason Clarke, essentially rule the village. Dreyfus sends Malcolm and a few others to go and take an overview of the situation in the tribe of the apes and perhaps convince them to let both civilizations gain access to the dam. In the woods, Malcolm and

he begins to expose his true colours.

Filled with a burgeoning hatred towards humans and sympathetic apes, Koba indulges in ruthless murder, sparing apes due to the "Ape does not kill ape" law. His sole mission is to obliterate the human race. Despite an intriguing turn of events, Koba meets his demise, revealing the hypocrisy embedded in his personality. The film intricately weaves themes of friendship, betrayal, revenge, and forgiveness, portraying a cinematic end. With outstanding performances, particularly from Andy Serkis, the film communicates its message effectively through minimal dialogue. ❏





# Rush



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