

A New Year's Compass: Insights from Surah Al-Asr



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The wheel of life turns ceaselessly, carrying us forward with every passing moment. This unending cycle, unchanging since the dawn of time, will persist until the Day of Judgment. Years slip by as markers of our journey, some laden with joy, others with sorrow. As one year departs into history and another unfolds before us, we find ourselves at a crossroads of reflection and hope. The past year, like those before it, has been a mosaic of gains and losses. Loved ones left this world, leaving behind cherished memories, while others arrived, bringing with them the promise of new beginnings. As some look forward with optimism, others may reminisce about the comforts of the past, thinking perhaps it held more blessings than they realized at the time.



Surah Al-Asr provides a profound Quranic perspective on the nature and significance of time, emphasizing its value and urging humanity to use it wisely. Allah begins the Surah by swearing by time, highlighting its critical importance. "Asr," symbolizing the declining day, serves as a poignant reminder of life's fleeting nature and the urgency to make the most of our limited existence. The second verse, "Indeed, man is in loss," captures the universal human condition, warning that without purpose, direction,

and meaningful action, humanity is destined for failure—not only materially but also spiritually and existentially. This prompts reflection on whether our time is being squandered on trivial pursuits or invested in actions that bring lasting benefit. However, Surah Al-Asr offers hope, presenting a roadmap for salvation through four essential qualities: faith, righteous deeds, upholding truth, and patience. Together, these principles provide a comprehensive guide to living a purposeful and fulfilling life, ensuring protection from the despair of loss.

Faith is the cornerstone of a meaningful life. Belief in Allah provides clarity, direction, and a sense of accountability that shapes our actions and decisions. It is through faith that life gains meaning beyond the material, anchoring us in spiritual principles that transcend the temporary nature of this world. Faith inspires us to act with sincerity and intention, ensuring that our deeds are aligned with divine guidance.

Good deeds are a natural

Islam, guiding interpersonal relationships, governance, and societal structures. Promoting truth requires courage and integrity, especially in the face of opposition or adversity. It is through truth that trust is built, justice is upheld, and harmony is achieved.

As we stand at the threshold of a new year, Surah Al-Asr invites us to reflect deeply on our lives. The passing of time is a stark reminder of life's brevity and the urgency to make every moment count. Each new year is a gift, a fresh opportunity to realign our priorities, mend our shortcomings, and recommit to the principles that lead to true success.

The past year, like every year, has been a teacher. Its lessons, whether learned through joy or trial, offer valuable insights into our strengths and weaknesses. It is a time to ask ourselves whether our actions have reflected our faith, whether our deeds have brought benefit to others, and whether we have upheld truth and exercised guidance. If there are areas where we have faltered, the new year is a chance to seek forgiveness, make amends, and strive for improvement.

The theme of time, so central to Surah Al-Asr, resonates powerfully as we move from one year to the next. Time is a witness to our journey, recording our successes and failures, our efforts and neglect. It challenges us to act with urgency and purpose, knowing that each moment is an irreplaceable gift. The fleeting nature of time should inspire gratitude for the opportunities we have and a commitment to use them wisely.

For individuals, families, and communities, the new year is an opportunity to embrace the teachings of Surah Al-Asr collectively. By fostering faith, encouraging good deeds, promoting truth, and cultivating patience, we can create a society that thrives both spiritually and materially. This holistic approach ensures that time is not wasted but invested in building a legacy that benefits this world and the hereafter.

PTM introduces tech hall to create seamless consumer experiences

BT NEWS

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan Travel Mart (PTM), in a first, introduces a dedicated tech hall, bridging technology and travel to create seamless consumer experiences with the support of industry partners such as the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) and Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA).

A special networking session was organized at the



Marriott Hotel, Karachi, on December 26, 2024, bringing together key stakeholders from the travel and tourism sector,

this event also served as a prelude to PTM 2025, fostering dialogue and strengthening partnerships among national

and international participants, said a press release issued on Friday. This initiative not only highlights groundbreaking

solutions but also fosters visibility and collaboration for future growth of the industry.

Pakistan Travel Mart (PTM) 2025 is the premier and only platform connecting regional and global stakeholders with a focus on inbound, outbound, and domestic tourism with the support of national organizations of tourism like Pakistan Tourism Development Corp PTDC and provincial tourism authorities of Pakistan.

Chairman CDA reviews progress on Serena Chowk Interchange Project



BT NEWS

ISLAMABAD—A roundtable discussion on the "Business Case for Decarbonization in Pakistan" hosted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) emphasized the critical need for industrial decarbonization to address the nation's economic, energy, and environmental crises that was possible through ensuring emerging technologies and financial instruments accessible to developing nations like Pakistan.

The event, moderated by Saleha Qureshi, Lead of the Pakistan Industrial Decarbonization Initiative at SDPI, brought together experts from various sectors to explore viable solutions to mitigate Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change while boosting its economic resilience, said a press release.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Khalid Waleed, Energy Expert at SDPI, pointed out that Pakistan's economy is trapped in a cycle of low productivity, trade deficits, and unsustainable energy costs.

AJK's youth urged to raise voices for IIOJK's people right to self-determination

BT NEWS

ISLAMABAD—Former President of AJK Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Sardar Masood Khan, called upon the AJK's youth, who have access to all opportunities and enjoy all fundamental freedoms, to raise their voices on behalf of those who reside in India's Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

He said this while speaking at a workshop organized by the Institute of Regional Studies in collaboration with the Youth Forum for Kashmir, where deliberations were held on the root causes of the Kashmir dispute, the challenges faced by AJK residents, and the negative campaign waged by India against Pakistan.

Mishal Hussein Malik, former Special Advisor to Prime Minister of Pakistan for Human Rights and spouse of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front



(JKLF) leader Yasin Malik, also urged the youth of AAZ Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to take the lead in advocating for the right of self-determination of the people in IIOJK.

Earlier, at the workshop's opening session, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of the Institute of Regional Studies, emphasized the impact of India's disinformation campaign on IIOJK's ongoing struggle for freedom. He reaffirmed Pakistan's solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their pursuit of attaining the right of self-determination, in line with the United Nations resolutions.

Honoring the legacy of Pakistan's great leader Quaid-e-Azam

DR. MUHAMMAD SHAHZAD ASHFAQ

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan, left behind a remarkable legacy that continues to shape the nation to this day. As a visionary leader, he played a pivotal role in the creation of Pakistan, securing a separate homeland for Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. His unwavering dedication to the cause of independence and his steadfast leadership inspired millions to strive for a better future.

Quaid-e-Azam, also known as Muhammad Ali Jinnah, is hailed as the founding father of Pakistan. Quaid-e-Azam's vision for Pakistan was rooted in the idea of a homeland where Muslims could practice their faith freely and live in harmony. His leadership during the unrestrained period leading up to the partition of India in 1947 was characterized by his steadfast resolve and diplomatic insight. Through negotiations with the British colonial rulers and the Indian National Congress, Quaid-e-Azam navigated complex political waters to secure a separate nation for the Muslims of the region.

Jinnah's vision for Pakistan was not limited to mere independence; he envisioned a state that would be a beacon of hope for the oppressed and marginalized communities around the world. He believed in the principles of democracy, secularism, and social justice, which he saw as essential for the progress and prosperity of the nation. His famous 11th August speech, in which he emphasized the importance of religious freedom, equality, and tolerance, continues to be cited as a guiding principle for the nation. The Quaid's vision has inspired generations of Pakistanis to strive for a more just and equitable society, where every citizen has equal opportunities to succeed and contribute to the nation's progress.

The values that Jinnah embodied, such as honesty, integrity, and simplicity, continue to be celebrated and emulated by the Pakistani people. His simplicity and humility, despite his immense power and influence, are a testament to his strong moral character and his commitment to serving the people. The Quaid's emphasis on education, hard work, and self-reliance has instilled a strong work ethic in the Pakistani people, driving them to strive for excellence and innovation in various fields. His commitment to the welfare of the common man, particularly the poor and the marginalized, has inspired a culture of social responsibility and philanthropy in Pakistan.

Jinnah's legacy has played a significant role in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy and international relations. His commitment to non-alignment and neutrality during the Cold War era earned Pakistan a reputation as a champion of independence and sovereignty. The Quaid's vision of a united and strong Muslim world, which he articulated through his leadership of the Muslim League, continues to inspire Pakistan's engagement with the global Muslim community. His emphasis on regional cooperation and diplomacy has facilitated Pakistan's participation in regional organizations, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and has helped to promote peace and stability in the region.

One of the key aspects of Quaid-e-Azam's legacy is his unwavering commitment to upholding democratic values and principles. He believed in a Pakistan where every citizen, regardless of their background, would have equal rights and opportunities. Quaid-e-Azam's dedication to inclusivity and tolerance serves as a guiding light for modern-day Pakistan, reminding its people of the importance of respecting diversity and fostering a culture of acceptance.

Quaid-e-Azam was a staunch advocate for social justice and economic empowerment. He envisioned a Pakistan where every citizen would have access to basic necessities,

freedom of speech and employment opportunities. His emphasis on social welfare programs and initiatives aimed at uplifting the marginalized segments of society. Muhammad Ali Jinnah highlights his commitments to creating a more equitable and prosperous nation.

Quaid-e-Azam's legacy is characterized by his unwavering commitment to the principles of democracy, equality, and justice. He believed in the power of unity and diversity, advocating for the rights of all citizens regardless of their religion, caste, or creed. His vision for Pakistan was one of a modern, progressive nation, where all individuals could live in peace and harmony.

In today's fast-paced world, where the challenges facing Pakistan are multifaceted and complex, honoring the legacy of Quaid-e-Azam becomes even more crucial. Reflecting on his teachings and principles, Pakistanis can draw inspiration and guidance on how to address contemporary issues such as poverty, corruption, and political instability. Quaid-e-Azam's legacy is a reminder of the importance of integrity, leadership, and nation-building, values that are essential for the progress and development of Pakistan.

His commitment to education led to the establishment of numerous educational institutions across the country, providing opportunities for young Pakistanis to excel and contribute to the nation's development. The legacy of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah is one of courage, integrity, and vision. His leadership continues to inspire generations of Pakistanis to work towards a brighter future for their country. As we reflect on his remarkable achievements, we are reminded of the importance of upholding the values of democracy, equality, and education that he held. Quaid-e-Azam's legacy will forever be cherished and honored as a beacon of hope for the nation.

Capital to offer bus service for tourists

BT NEWS

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) has unveiled a plan to launch a Sightseeing Double-Decker Bus Service in Islamabad.

PTDC Managing Director Aftabur Rehman Rana briefed stakeholders here on Wednesday.

The briefing revealed that the Islamabad Sightseeing Double Decker bus service will be launched in January 2025 under the joint venture of Pakistan

Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) and Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP) to promote tourism in the capital city of Islamabad.

Rana, while giving a power point presentation, informed that the government is committed to using all its energies to promote tourism in Pakistan to make it a major sector of economic growth.

He said this new initiative will provide the visitors of Islamabad a unique

experience to explore the key monuments and tourist sites of capital city through a guided tour twice a day on daily basis with pick and drop facility from all major hotels in Islamabad.

In the second phase of this programme, PTDC in collaboration with the private sector will also launch weekend sightseeing tours of tourist sites around Islamabad including Taxila, Rohta Fort, Ketas Raj, Kallar Kahnar, Khewra, Takht-e-Bahi, Murree, Patriata and Peshawar.



BT NEWS

ISLAMABAD—Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) took action against over 800,000 vehicles and motorcycles for traffic violations during the year of 2024, an ITP spokesperson said on Friday.

He told APP that legal actions were initiated against 1,019 individuals for severe violations of traffic laws.

He added that 300



individuals were issued legal notices after the suspension of driving licenses and route permits for transport vehicles.

The spokesperson

mentioned that over 10,000 vehicles and more than 40,000 motorcycles were impounded for serious violations at various police stations.

Additionally, fines were imposed on 100,000 vehicles for illegal parking, 64,000 for using fancy number plates, and over 17,000 for having tinted windows.

ITP penalties 800,000, issues 64,395 new driving licenses in 2024

The ITP also issued tickets for traffic violations, including 56,000 for motorcyclists without helmets, 16,000 for overloading, and over

25,000 for lane violations.

In 2024, the ITP issued 64,395 internationally recognized driving licenses, renewed 62,876 licenses, and provided over 112,000 learner permits to citizens seeking driving licenses.

The spokesperson further shared that during the year, the ITP managed over 2,000 events, including the SCO Summit and the arrival of national and international delegations.