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MERC TIMES



**MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE
UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR**

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What's Wrong With PUBG Mobile Game?



Abdul Mukeet

In 2018, a widely popular mobile game, PUBG or PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds came into the scene. Since then, it had changed the whole mobile gaming platform. Not because there was a shortage of multiplayer games but, PUBG Mobile brought a genre which it had already excelled massively in PC- 'battle royale'.

According to 2019 report by The Esports Observer, PUBG Mobile had garnered around 400 million players in its database with 50 million daily active players. And according to statistics and ranking website of PUBG 'DAK.GG', the PC version currently has around 8 lakh daily active players.

The game had huge popularity right off the bat. Initially, with a size of around 1 GB, it provided the user a decent and good graphics depending on the type of device one possessed. The best thing was that it worked on most of the devices, even on the basic settings with a device comprising of 2 GiB RAM.

Two years later, as the game is about to end its 14th Royal Pass season in the first week of September, it has not lived up to its promises. A game which ran well on old-fashioned devices, now barely supports the mobile with 6GB RAM. Also, the game size has jumped to a staggering 5GB onwards (depending on the resource packs you have downloaded).

However, performance isn't the only problem but a little deeper than that. The snag is hackers and cheaters and the market is flooded with cheap and sometimes even free ESP hacks, wall hacks, aim hacks and a lot more. The hackers run rampant and there doesn't seem to be a proper system in place for the developers to put some leash around it.

Hackers drove biggest streamers and the gamers who used play PUBG on PC migrated away when the cybercriminals plagued the game to such an extent that it made the game unplayable. The intention of any game is to entertain but, the presence of hackers just defeats that purpose.

Further, with the games like 'COD Mobile' and 'Fortnite Mobile' emerging as the biggest competitors, the PUBG mobile game may start losing its charm. Both the games have relatively lower hacker presence, and Activision has a very strong anti-cheat mechanism in place for COD Mobile.

The only saviour for PUBG Mobile is its polished battle royale version and it is this feature where other games like COD lack. While they have strong multiplayer game modes, they still haven't been able to make the battle royale to work as the players want. Certainly, there is 'something' missing and once that missing piece would be filled, PUBG Mobile game would be staring at the end of the barrel if it doesn't fix its problems at the earliest.

Non-COVID-19 Patients Paying Price for Efforts against the Coronavirus

Humaira Nabi

As the attenuated healthcare system attempts to break the wave of the novel coronavirus pandemic, perhaps the highest cost of this fight is acquitted by the non-COVID-19 patients.

In March 2020, when Kashmir reported its first coronavirus case, district hospital Ganderbal, like many others in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir closed its OPD and abandoned all Non-COVID services. Since then, the residents of district Ganderbal have been suffering to have their basic health needs met.

"I'm in my third trimester. My gynecologist advised me to take routine checkups at least once in a week. As our district hospital has stopped all non-COVID services, I have to travel 15 kms to a private clinic for the checkup amidst the lockdown", said Mir Shahnaz, a 28-years-old pregnant woman.

"The pneumonic pandemic has brought a tormenting time on non-COVID patients. Though the government's decision of closing down all non-essential services might help in flattening the curve for COVID-19 but the real fall out of this has been that patients suffering from other ailments have been left in a lurch", said Dr. Ali Mohammad, General Physician, district hospital Ganderbal.

"I was suffering from acute tooth ache for a week. There were no dentists at district hospital Ganderbal, so I had to travel to Dental College, Srinagar where I was advised to go for root canal

treatment by the dentist", said Maria Shafi, a 19-years-old-girl.

To make things worse private clinics and diagnostic centers have put down their shutters as the district witnessed a surge in the COVID-19 cases since past month, "We were asked to close the clinic by the authorities after few of the technicians tested positive for the virus. We had number of appointments booked prior shutting down, some of which included patients suffering from serious ailments", said Nasir Ahmad, a Technician at a private clinic.

"We are trying our best to meet people's needs. We have appointed one medical officer at every Public Health Center in the district. Though, we know it's not enough but people need to understand it's for their own safety that we have closed all non-COVID services in district hospital Ganderbal as we have converted it into COVID specialty hospital", said Mehraj-din Sofi, CMO, Ganderbal.

"The district administration is surely doing all it can to fight the pandemic but at the same time it must not overlook other life threatening diseases. The virus is not going away anytime soon so the authorities must come up with a plan of opening all the OPDs where all precautionary measures are followed religiously so that other patients don't suffer", said Farooq Ahmad Bhat, a local resident.

However with all this being said it would surely be a challenge for the authorities to come up with a strategy for non-covid patients.





Vidya Bhawan School: A Symbol of Communal Peace and Brotherhood



Asif Khan

At a time when communalism is on rise Showkat Baba, a Kashmiri Muslim, is setting up an example of universal brotherhood by taking care of an age old school of Kashmiri Pandits.

While Kashmiri Pandits were migrating from Kashmir, Vidya Bhawan School was left alone on the bank of the river Jhelum to shed tears. Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims studied collectively under its umbrella as it stood as motif of brotherhood in the Nawakadal area of downtown Srinagar. They were taught to accept the beauty of pluralism and diversity. People of both the communities would often celebrate each other's festivals with zeal and enthusiasm. But things took an ugly turn and the Pandits had to migrate leaving the institution to fend on its own. Soon the play ground of the institution turned into a littering point and its premises into a hub of evil doings. It waited for a rescuer who could save it from drowning. Showkat Baba proved to be that messiah for this institution.

Showkat and his wife overtook the institution with only 12 students on roll. The renovation of the school was under taken alongside the temple of Maata Roopa Bhawani in it.

"I always believed that downtown has been wrongly portrayed by the media. I felt that I need to play my role in getting rid of the bad tag given to downtown".

Showkat says.

As per the locals not many Pandits visited the temple before but once it got renovated and showed its presence on social media then Kashmiri Pandits began enquiring about it. Showkat has thus become a sort of bridge between the Pandits and their homeland. Some people from local community have also been very actively supporting and appreciating the rise of Vidya Bhawan which once used to be one of the finest knowledge hubs.

"We are very happy with its re-opening as it refreshes our memory when we studied there under Pandit teachers," Abdul Razzak, a local shopkeeper outside Vidya Bhawan says.

"It has been a welcome step that someone has finally taken up this initiative of restoring people's faith in this heritage institution," Says Hilal Ahmad, a local resident.

"I believe showing through character rather than defaming any religion. If your character and actions are good people will automatically get attracted towards what you follow as our Prophet (saw) has shown us," Showkat says.

Vidya Bhawan School organised the first ever heritage art competition in 2017 at Eidgah park Srinagar, where more than 50 schools of the valley participated and the then education secretary Mr Farooq Shah, famous Kashmiri poet and satirist Zareef Ahmad, President of J&K Private School Association G.N Var and Professor Gulshan Majeed were among

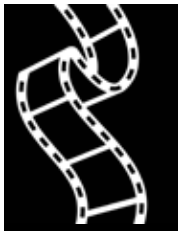
the guests.

Vidya Bhawan School was built in 1934 and comes under Shri Alakh Sahib Baba Trust and is currently running on rent with Showkat Baba. It has also been declared a heritage site and INTACH has issued a certificate to it.



I always believed that downtown has been wrongly portrayed by the media. I felt that I need to play my role in getting rid of the bad tag given to it





Movie Review: Pareeksha

A highly tragic story accentuating the wretched truth of education system

Arbeena

Known for socio-political films such as Rajneeti, Aarakshan, Saand ki Aankh; Prakash Jha, the National Award winning Indian director and producer, recently came up with the gut-wrenching and veracious movie 'Pareeksha' (The Final Test).

Released on August 6, 2020, Pareeksha is a 102-minutes long Hindi drama film starring Adil Hussain, Priyanka Bose and Shubham Jha in the lead roles. Initially intended for theatrical release,

The camera then introduces us to the protagonist Bucchi with his rickshaw as he picks up a school-going boy near a house. Later, we come to see Bulbul in the shabby government school, self-studying in the classroom.

Pareeksha remarkably portrays the hardships of the people belonging to the lower income group when it comes to providing education to their children in a reputed private institution. It brings the bitter to truth to light by showing how education has been turned into a business by

Adil Hussain's (Bucchi) acting of a poor father looks absolutely realistic since he has merged himself fully into the character. Hence, he fills the eyes with tears through his remarkable performance. While as Shubham Jha (Bulbul) as a 14-year-old teen wins the heart through sober, honest, and dedicated role of a son. His candid and true-to-life talk in front of the school committee as he is denied the admit card for his final exam, towards the conclusion of the film, makes the viewer proud as well as breaks the heart at the same time. The acting done by the entire lead cast, undoubtedly, rides the viewer on the roller coaster of emotions.

Pareeksha is a heart-wrenching and genuine movie predominantly. It moves with a good pace in the first half and grips the viewer. Howbeit, with the onset of the second interval the story moves fast and loses the charm it had created earlier. Also, it could have raised few more questions on the education system, but it ends abruptly. The

cinematography by Sachin Krishn is pleasant to the eyes. The background music, songs, location and costumes all look apt and matches the overall tone, theme and mood of the film.

Pareeksha is a family movie and must be watched by everyone in order to see how poor parents struggle to provide best education to their children, the sorry state of government schools, how private institutions grab the money in the name of 'good education' and the cold-hearted behaviour of the elites towards the impoverished section. I would rate it 3.5 out of 5.



Pareeksha was launched on the OTT platform ZEE5 amid the pandemic.

Shot in Ranchi, Jharkhand, the movie deals with the topic of Indian education system. It is based on a tragic story of a rickshaw puller named Bucchi (Adil Hussain) who strives hard to provide his son, Bulbul, with similar opportunities as those given to the children of the privileged families. The film opens with the sound of azaan (call for prayer) which later blends into temple bells.

the wealthy class and some greedy politicians which can only be afforded by rich and elites. Besides, the movie can also be discussed under the umbrella of a New Education Policy announced recently as it points out one of the important guidelines mentioned in it, that is, mother tongue or Hindi as the medium of language in the schools. Pareeksha shows how Bulbul is mocked by his fellows and an English teacher in a private school 'Sapphire' for not being able to properly speak in English language despite being a topper.



Kashmir's walnut industry takes a hit

Shaheen Malik

The foreign import of dry fruits had already posed a great challenge to Kashmir's walnut industry, now amid lockdown walnut growers are facing severe crisis in exporting their production at competitive rates.

Muzafar Ahmad, a businessman from Heerpora area of the district Shopian while talking to MERC Times said, "The cleaning and processing procedure is quite costly nowadays. Walnuts are also to be exported then, so the investment is quite heavy,"

"As per estimation, the value of 1000 walnuts will reach Rs 2,500 after processing and exporting. It's impossible that anyone will buy 1000 walnuts for Rs 2,600 in Jammu," Muzaffar added.

"The price hike in the rates of walnuts is more than double of the last year's price. So, we have decided to shut our walnut business for this year," Danish Ahmed, who is in dry fruit business from a decade said.

"I had gone to buy walnuts for my shop but returned empty-handed due to a massive spike in walnut prices," Danish added.

Popularly known as 'doon' in Kashmiri, the walnuts of Kashmir are famous for their

flavour and supreme quality. Every year, they are packed into cardboard boxes and bags and sent to different parts of India. However, walnut production is in itself a hectic procedure.

The farmers beat the walnuts in order to break open their green husks and reveal their fissured shells. After that, the nuts are carried in bamboo baskets and cleaned with water. Then workers stomp the walnuts to further clean the shells. Lastly, the clean walnuts are laid out in open for drying before being packed.

Kashmiri walnut and its kernels are bought by retailers and dealers located in the different cities of India. Besides, consumption in domestic markets, these walnuts are exported to UK, Egypt, Netherlands, Germany and United States which earn India more than Rs 800 crore foreign exchange. Stakeholders have been blaming Central Government for allowing "free flow" of import.

"Though there is no tax on walnut kernels in Jammu and Kashmir, once we supply them outside the state, they are charged at the rate of 12 per cent tax. We appeal Government of India that Kashmiri walnuts kernels be made tax free outside the valley as well," the growers in Kupwara said.

India's takes 90% of its walnut production from Kashmir. Its timber has a high demand in the valley's handicrafts industry, which is the second largest after fruits in the valley. Under the Jammu and Kashmir Preservation of Specified Trees Act, 1969, a walnut tree can neither be felled nor pruned, even if it stands on private land, without permission from the revenue department. It has got the special status mainly to protect the walnut economy.

According to traders, the average price of walnut kernel in the wholesale market of Jammu Mandi has increased by 35% in the last one month to Rs 900/kg due to the uncertainty over arrivals.

The official data reveals that around 2.66 lakh metric tonnes of walnuts are cultivated on 89 thousand hectares across the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. Walnuts constitute almost 98% of the dry fruit that Kashmir produces a year. Anantnag and Kupwara are at the top in walnut cultivation with 11,939 and 8,797 hectares under the fruit.

The growers demanded that the government must help and offer some relief to them and take concrete steps in order to bring back the lost charm of this significant industry.

The Song of Sparrows

Aasif Rashid

Released in October 2008, 'The Song of Sparrows' is an Iranian drama movie directed by Majid Majidi. The movie has won several awards- Best Foreign Language Film 2008, Best Director Award at Fajr International Film Festival 2008, Silver Bear for Best Actor: Berlin International Film Festival 2008.

Majid Majidi is an Iranian film director, producer and screen writer. He is known for the movies- Children of Heaven, The Color of Paradise and Mohammad: The Messenger of God. Children of Heaven nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film was the first Iranian movie to be selected for the nomination of this award.

The movie is about Karim (Reza Naji) who lives with his wife Narges (Maryam Akbari), two daughters and son in a small village west of Tehran. He works as a chief Ostrich wrangler at a ranch and has a deep love for them. However, Karim knows that things have taken a bad turn for him when one ostrich escapes

from its pen. Karim searches the countryside on his bike but all his effort is to no avail. Karim is fired As such, he begins to find his way into the city. The city lifestyle begins to change him. He becomes materialistic and greedy.

His young son Hussein (Hamed Aghazi) also seems to have developed an acquisitive nature. He and his buddies clean out the



sludge from a water tank with the idea of breeding goldfish there and then selling them. The boy is convinced that he can become a millionaire. While as, a twist in Karim's life opens the door for his spiritual renewal. While climbing around in his pile of things collected in the city, he falls and is badly injured. While bedridden, he realizes how much he depends on the kindness of his wife and neighbors. Karim gets back in touch with the beauty of

the natural world and identifies with a sparrow that is trapped in his house. When he sets it free, we know that he is really ready to change.

The acting has been done excellently by the entire cast as they have properly embodied themselves in the character. They have interacted with each other in a good and nice way. Karim disguising himself as the ostrich was really appealing and attracting.

There is not any jump cuts in the movie making the cinematography commendable. There is a good use of extreme close up shots, which were good to get the glimpse of the expressions of the characters.

I loved the bird eye shot on the mountain where Karim tries to find the lost ostrich. The diegetic sounds were maintained well with non-diegetic sounds. Music was soothing and matched the situation. However, there is less use of over-the-shoulder shots and high angle shots and haven't maintained the rule of thirds (visual grammar) in many shots.

On the whole, the movie is emotional, moralistic and a must watch for all. I will give it 3 stars out of 5.

A wonderful moralistic movie teaching the lesson about retribution of materialism

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SERIES

Review:

Dirilis: Ertugrul

A popular historical Turkish series based on the heroic story of Ertugrul Ghazi

Imran Malik

Ertugrul Ghazi is a great story from the thirteenth century history of Anatolia (Turkey). Originally 'Dirilis: Ertugrul' (Resurrection: Ertugrul) is a Turkish historical drama and adventure series. It has been created by Mehmet Bozdog, directed by Metin Gunay and starring Engin Altan Duzatan as a leading role of Ertugrul Ghazi. Shot in Riva village of Turkey and released on a state run television channel TRT 1 on December 10, 2014 to 29 May 2019. The series revolve around the life of Ertugrul, the father of Osman, who was the founder of the Ottoman Empire.

The series is originally divided into 5 seasons with 150 episodes and was later on released on Netflix cut into shorter episodes of 448 in total. The show caught eye of

people abroad after Pakistan government translated the series in Urdu and started its broadcast in Ramadhan 2020 on Pakistan Television (PTV). On YouTube, it broke all records of fetching the most number of subscribers within a month.

Ertugrul Ghazi is the story of a brave warrior written in the light of faith, justice and love who changed the destiny of not only his tribe but also the entire Islamic world with his steadfastness and courage. The Turkish show Ertugrul is based in 13th century Anatolia and tells the story prior to the establishment of the Ottoman Empire. It illustrates the struggle of Ertugrul Gazi, father of the empire's founder, Osman.

This drama series is based on fictional exploits of a historical characters and events. More importantly, the normalisation of such content will truly be ground-breaking when it comes to fighting Islamophobia,

as it gives a peek into the culture and lives of Muslims, allowing them to be regular human beings...something the world strips them off every day. However, the series shows violent killings and beheadings which may not be good for some people wishing to watch it but it is an awesome series even without that.

It's full of emotions and not mechanical like Bollywood masala movies where a hero is shown fighting despite taking a number of bullets in his body. Here you would see the main protagonist falling and rising that makes it more realistic. As we see Ertugrul getting severely injured and almost close to death when he gets stabbed by his mate.

A motivational series that teaches us that one can achieve anything with his strong will and steadfastness. Ertugrul Ghazi in my opinion is a must watch series therefore; I give it 4 stars out of 5.

Book
Review

Lessons for the 21st Century

A rip-roaring voyage talking about the critical issues of contemporary era

Faisal Akhoun

Published in August 2018 by Spiegel & Grau, the book '21 Lessons for the 21st Century' written by Yuval Noah Harari swims through the murky waters of the online world and confronts the pressing questions of contemporary global agenda.

Yuval Noah Harari is an Israeli public intellectual, historian and professor in the Department of History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is known for his best-selling science books- Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind (2014) and Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow (2016).

Consisting of five chapters, the 400 pages book '21 Lessons for the 21st Century' is a collection of 21 essays based on various topics such as disillusionment, work, liberty, equality, technological challenge, artificial intelligence, civilization, nationalism, religion, immigration, terrorism, war, humility, happiness and education.

In the opening chapter of the book, he emphasizes the powerful impact of stories on humankind throughout the history. He states that humans are hardwired to think around stories rather than in facts

or numbers. Due to the same reason, communist, fascist and liberal stories of the twentieth century were so powerful.

Harari debates in detail the role that artificial intelligence and algorithms will have and how they will influence or control almost every aspect of our lives in future. The book provides sufficient details about how collection and analysis of huge amounts of data and sophistication in technology will allow us to even re-engineer our brains.

Harari has not taken the unanimous takeover by technology over human force seriously which might affect the briefing of information where a loan application will be processed by machines and banks will rely on "Algorithm said no", restraining the humans to know how much financial impetus they need to be eligible for the same. Digital data is spread all over the world and this data is always exposed to several risks. This book raises a key political question "how do we regulate the ownership of data?" It impresses on the fact that computers and machines are far ahead in creativity when compared with humans.

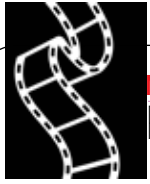
Speaking about human happiness, the book states that it all depends on human prospectus. Our prospectus increases

with improvement in things and may consequently result in our dissatisfaction. People not only need the basics, but they need to feel like they have enough, they are learning and growing and have access to a community.

Harari towards the end mentions that benefits of commercialized entertainment extend to the realm of warfare where Israelis are using the money raised by the entertainment platforms to monitor Palestinians who might be making a phone call or post something on Facebook or travelling from one place to another and this motorization comes through cameras, drones, and software's.

Terming patriotism as good, the author trusts that the hallucination of supremacy and uniqueness of one's nation is harmful. The issue of terrorism in the last chapter of the book ends with the sufferings the world has witnessed overtime and the resulted chaos in political spheres.

Besides being well-written, the book is thought-provoking, sweeping and an intellectual read. It a must read for those who want a glimpse into the possible future of the mankind. It gives insights into the crucial issues of modern times.



Movie
Review

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas

Heart-rending and adeptly crafted movie on The Holocaust

Taiba Hameed

Based on the novel written by John Boyne, 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' is a 2008 historical drama movie written and directed by Mark Herman. The movie is based on one of the greatest examples of the human atrocities - The Holocaust. It was honoured with British Independent Film Awards for Best Director and Best Actress in 2008 and Irish Film and Television Awards for Best International Film in 2009.

Mark Herman is an English filmmaker, producer and screenwriter. Some of his works include Little Voice (1998), Purely Belter (2000) and Hope Springs (2003).

The Holocaust is a theme on which a wide variety of films are made by the French and European cinema but Hollywood has some to its name as well, quite prominently the best of them being Steven Spielberg's 'Schindler's List' and Edward Zwick's 'Defiance'.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas takes a different approach and we experience The Holocaust as seen through the prism of an 8-year-old German boy named Bruno. His father

is a commander and in charge of a nearby concentration camp. This in itself is a novel approach and although we as viewers know what is happening at the nearby camp, at the beginning, but he doesn't. And every step he takes, he gets closer to discovering the truth, thereby, losing his childhood innocence in the process.

Following the relocation to a new place in a far and desolated place, Bruno quickly becomes subdued and bored with his new surroundings until he meets Shmuel. Both strike an innocent friendship and unbeknownst to him, Bruno's father is the commander of the very concentration camp and in charge of gassing the Jews where Shmuel is held captive.

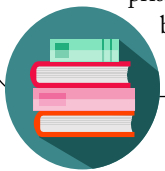
This 94-minutes long keeps the viewer hooked till the end, even though it starts off slow; one gets wrapped up in the story soon. The incredible acting by the child actors makes one glued to the movie. Asa Butterfield who portrays Bruno and Jack Scanlon, a Jew prisoner, act in an exceptional and yet heart-wrenching manner. The connection between the two boys is a poignant contrast from what is taking place all around them, but the

friendship becomes dangerous for the two youngsters with inevitable tragic consequences.

The movie not only does justice to the novel on which it is based but also provides depth and dimensions to the characters of the book. It is an honest and truthful adaptation of the novel.

The cinematography of the movie is great and the colour of the movie is aesthetically complimentary to the overall mood of the movie. It is pleasant at the start and then a grim reality blankets towards the end. The script is well written and amazingly executed. With restrained direction by Mark Herman, the music score from James Horner is similarly reserved. Undoubtedly, the movie is shocking, appalling and harrowing.

A timeless movie in itself, it is a must watch for history enthusiasts as well as people who appreciate good cinema and storytelling. The only admonition though, if any, is that since the movie is emotionally charged, it should not be shown to the children below 12 years of age as it has been rated PG-13 for its mature and distressing content.



Book
Review

Persuasion

A classic and stirring novel about the second chance at love

Nauman Malik

According to great Italian writer, Italo Calvino, the classics are timeless and no matter the era, they always had something to teach us. Originally published in 1818, 'Persuasion' is a classic romantic novel written by Jane Austen. It has been described as a 'perfect novel', a mature and nuanced work, and also placed on the BBC's Top 100 Reads.

Born in 1775, Jane Austen was an English novelist primarily known for her six major novels which includes Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, Emma. She is on the £10 note which was introduced in 2017, replacing Charles Darwin. Persuasion is the last complete novel by Jane Austen.

The protagonist of the story is Anne Elliot, a strong but subdued woman, who Jane Austen describes as having "an elegance of

mind and sweetness of character" but despite her uprightness, she is largely neglected by her family. She is the middle daughter of Sir Walter Elliot, a vain baronet who takes more than a little pride in his good looks. Her elder sister, Elizabeth Elliot, takes after their father in both temperament and looks, thereby making her father's favourite. Anne and her younger sister, Mary, a nervous, clinging woman married to the heir of the Musgroves of Uppercross Hall are both treated by the father-daughter duo as if they were of very inferior value.

In the opening chapter, we learn that Anne's mother is long dead. Before passing away, she had handed the charge of her daughters to Lady Russell, her close friend and confidante. The title's primary reference is to the persuasion of Anne (19) by Lady Russell, her godmother, not to marry Frederick Wentworth, a young naval officer. However, in the end, Anne marries Wentworth, a man she was initially forced to refuse due to his

poor connections.

Without ever having read any of her books before, I definitely enjoyed reading Jane's Persuasion. It is a moving story about second chance at love. It was written at a time when the social boundaries in British society were undergoing a challenge and the book wonderfully reflects it. Although, the pacing of the plot is slow in the beginning but later it hooks up the reader. This isn't a high adrenaline book, though there is a plenty of tension in it. It's more subtle, reflective and a slow-paced tale. The reader is not compelled to go back to the page, rather brought back to it by an appetite for the rich prose and characterization. The scenes and the characters are crafted beautifully and creatively.

If you are in the mood for some beautiful reflective prose and enjoy good character interactions, then this is the book for you. The book is surely a marvelous piece of literature and a must read for lovers of classic literature.



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The Martian

A phenomenal sci-fi thriller revolving around a stranded astronaut

Mysara Hassan

Based on a novel by Andy Weir, 'The Martian' is a 2015 adventurous science fiction movie. It has been directed by an English filmmaker, Ridley Scott, with an award-winning American actor Matt Damon in a lead role. The movie became the 10th highest-grossing film of 2015 and also won the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture.

Ridley Scott is best known for the sci-fi horror film 'Alien' (1979), the road adventure film 'Thelma & Louise' (1991), 'Gladiator' (2000) and the war film 'Black Hawk Down' (2001).

The Martian is a story about an astronaut named Mark Watney left behind on the planet Mars during a space mission. The movie commences when the crew of the Ares III mission to Mars is exploring Acidalia Planitia (plain on Mars) on Martian Solar day 18. The crew gets a warning message

from earth regarding a huge and expeditious approaching dust storm. The team quickly assembles, however, the astronaut Mark is struck in debris and lost in the storm. He loses his communication device, causing his crew members to forsake him on a foreign planet, postulating that he has been killed.

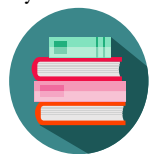
This movie gives a graphic description of being stuck at an alien planet where survival skills are the only hope for a human being. The protagonist, Mark, endeavors every move to survive marginally longer till help reaches out to him. However the hope of evading the planet soon becomes a reality when satellite planner notices unusual movement citing that Watney may still be alive.

This 141-minutes long movie has been beautifully made with pacing been shrewdly done. The realization of the Mars's surface is genuinely brilliant. The effort that the makers of this film have put in to making it scientifically precise is praiseworthy and

that is what makes it more interesting, exhilarating and pleasurable to watch. It is not too far-fetched as is usually the case with the science fiction films

It was good to see some female actresses in the lead which is mostly rare in the sci-fi films. Matt Damon has given a brilliant performance and artistically carried the film on his shoulders. His character is comically hysterical but there are moments when his character reveals that his resistance is withering away but his optimistic attitude keeps him going. Everything that goes wrong he finds the good in it and that is what keeps him wanting to survive, which is the most stunning feature about this movie. It is a well-written story with a great soundtrack and laudable screenplay.

The Martian is a complete package of drama, adventure, humor, and heartwarming moments which makes it a must watch for all the science fiction lovers.



Book Review

Constantinople in the Quran

An insightful book answering all the thought-provoking questions on Constantinople

Owais Mansoor

Published in January 2020 by Iron Heart Publishing, the book 'Constantinople in the Quran' has been written by Imran Nazar Hosein. He is the foremost Muslim scholar who passionately writes on and teaches Islamic eschatology.

Apart from being an Islamic scholar, Shaykh Imran Nazar Hosein is an author as well as philosopher specialized in world politics, economics, and contemporary socio-economic and political issues. He is known for his book 'Jerusalem in the Quran'.

Constantinople in the Quran has been devoted to Hagia Sophia (formally a Christian cathedral, now re-opened as a mosque). Hosein's goal with this book is to educate people about the status and role of Constantinople in both Islamic and Christian eschatology and why he is sure the disappearance of the name Constantinople from modern-day vocabulary and discourse is linked to its status and role in said doctrines. He tells us that the erasure of the name Constantinople is a conspiracy to make Muslims mistakenly believe

that they have already conquered the city, as was prophesied by the blessed Prophet (PBUH). But Hosein argues that the prophecy hasn't come to pass yet, instead it shall come true in the future and that the sacking of the city in 1453 by Sultan Mehmed II contravened the principles of Islamic morality.

The author devotes a decent chunk of space to discussing why the Christian cathedral Hagia Sophia's conversion to a mosque at the time by the Ottomans was wrong. In this regard, he even makes the following prayer: "May that day soon come when a Muslim army will conquer Constantinople, after which you will be returned to the Christian people to whom you rightfully belong. They are the people who accepted Jesus (AS) as a true Messiah, and who strive to faithfully follow him, while their enemies on the other hand, both those who rejected Jesus(AS), as well as their allies(i.e the Judeo-Christian Zionist alliance), follow the Dajjal(anti-christ)".

The rationale of this book is to educate and aware the people regarding upcoming events and highlight the importance of the city in

Muslim and Christian alliance against Judeo-Christian allies. The book has marked the footprints by covering upcoming geo-political allies, economic allies, international relations in the light of Quran and Hadith.

It has been divided beautifully into nine chapters consisting of 108 pages which discusses the importance and conquest of Constantinople, Jerusalem, the mention of Constantinople in the light of Quran, and also talks about the Ottoman Empire. It also comprises of foreword, preface and the glossary of Arabic terms in the beginning and has an index at the end.

The in-depth research and analysis by the author is astonishing and took me by surprise while reading. The clear interpretation of the Quranic verses and Hadith mentioned in many chapters is again commendable.

I would recommend this book to everyone particularly to those who want to seek the answers of thought-provoking questions like 'Why Constantinople had been renamed as Turkey? Why did this name suffer a mysterious fate?'

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