

SPECTRUM

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A Look Into The Life Of Daniyal Mueenuddin

Daniyal Mueenuddin, born in 1963, is a Pakistani-American author renowned for his compelling storytelling and exploration of the complex dynamics within Pakistani society. His notable works include the critically acclaimed collection of short stories, "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders," published in 2009. Mueenuddin's writing skillfully captures the intricacies of class, power, and human relationships in the backdrop of rural Pakistan.

"In Other Rooms, Other Wonders" is a mosaic of interconnected stories that delve into the lives of various characters, predominantly set on a feudal estate in the Punjab region of Pakistan. Mueenuddin masterfully weaves together narratives that provide a nuanced portrayal of the social fabric and economic disparities in Pakistan. One of the striking quotes from the book is, "In our country, our lives are like the trains, he thought. And we are the trains, too, but with unpredictable destinations."

Mueenuddin's writing style is marked by a keen observation of human nature and a deep understanding of the cultural milieu he portrays. His stories often illuminate the struggles and desires of individuals caught in the complex web of tradition and modernity. Another poignant quote from his work reflects this complexity: "In Pakistan, the rich are never entirely in control, and the poor are never entirely powerless."

Beyond his literary contributions, Daniyal Mueenuddin has a background that adds depth to his storytelling. Born to a Pakistani father and an American mother, Mueenuddin spent parts of his childhood in both countries, providing him with a unique perspective on the cultural nuances he later explores in his writing. This multicultural upbringing is evident in the richness and authenticity of his narratives.

Mueenuddin's formative years were also influenced by his family's history of landownership in Pakistan, an aspect that becomes a central theme in "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders." The stories within the collection offer a glimpse into the lives of landlords, peasants, and servants, illustrating the stark disparities and complex relationships that define the feudal system.

Aside from his literary pursuits, Mueenuddin has been involved in various ventures, including practicing law in New York and managing his family farm in Pakistan. This multifaceted engagement with different aspects of life adds layers to his understanding of the human experience, which is reflected in the depth of his storytelling.

In conclusion, Daniyal Mueenuddin stands as a distinctive voice in contemporary literature, blending his multicultural background and personal experiences to craft narratives that resonate with readers worldwide. "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders" is not merely a collection of stories but a profound exploration of the human condition, showcasing Mueenuddin's ability to capture the essence of Pakistani society with eloquence and insight. His unique perspective, rooted in a childhood straddling two worlds, adds a layer of authenticity to his work, making him a celebrated figure in the realm of international literature.



Coming Up

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Interview With Sir Sajid Hasnain

Head Of Archive Department

Interviewer: Assalam Alaikum, Sir. Thank you for joining us. Would you mind introducing yourself to our readers?

Sir: Wa Alaikum Assalam. Of course, I'd be happy to. I was born in Quetta and completed my education there until class 8. Later, I moved to Lahore for higher education, specializing in Economics and English Literature. Subsequently, I wrote and set papers for Masters at Punjab University. My career took me to the Air Force, where I served as the principal at Cadet College, Sargodha. Eventually, in 1992, I became part of Aitchison College, initially as an O and A level English teacher, rising to the position of the housemaster of Godley House. Since then, I've dedicated myself to Aitchison College, thoroughly enjoying my work and becoming accustomed to life here. I've been a part of Aitchison College up to the present day.

Interviewer: Amidst these experiences, could you tell us about your fondest memory at Aitchison College?

Sir: Without a doubt, my fondest memories revolve around the boys. As a housemaster and teacher, the boys I taught and supervised provided the best moments. It's something I've always cherished, particularly the bond with the boys in the boarding house. I treated them like my own children, and even now, when we meet after they've married, raised families, and pursued careers, we reminisce about our shared experiences. These memories are the most meaningful to me.

Interviewer: You've played a role in managing plays at Aitchison. Can you share your experiences in that domain?

Sir: Certainly. Over the years, I had the privilege of managing three plays: "Arsenic and Old Lace," "Psycho," and "Oscar." While "Arsenic" served its purpose of entertainment, "Psycho" and "Oscar" were better received. The principal himself commended them, and I consider these productions to be my greatest achievements. It's important to note that credit goes to the boys; they were the ones who did the actual work. In summary, "Oscar" and "Psycho" stand out as significant accomplishments.

Interviewer: You've mentioned many boys who left a lasting impression. Is there one student whose memory stands out prominently for you?

Sir: While it's challenging to pick one student, I fondly remember Asad Ahmed, a debater who excelled at the World Debating Championship and brought home the trophy under my guidance. Each boy leaves an indelible mark, and when old boys visit, their faces trigger memories of shared experiences.

Interviewer: As a literature teacher, literature must hold a special place for you. Could you share which literary work has been the most significant in your journey?

Sir: I believe every type of literature, whether drama or novel, leaves a mark on your psyche. Literature grooms you—it changes your personality and outlook. In my early years, studying "Great Expectations" and "The Merchant of Venice" in unabridged versions left a lasting impact. Later, in A levels, studying "King Lear" stands out, enhanced by the principal's engaging performance of parts from the play to the class.

Interviewer: You've had a multifaceted journey, combining literature with experiences outside academia. What fascinates you the most in life?

Sir: Anything beautiful fascinates me—people, landscapes—anything that appears beautiful holds my attention.

Interviewer: Aitchison College has a rich history. How do you think its past continues to shape its present and future?

Sir: While faces and outward appearances have changed, Aitchison College remains fundamentally the same at its core. The students' behavior, demeanor, and culture have always stayed constant. Despite boys coming and going, the ethos of the college has endured. The history, the collective struggles, and the hard work of the principals have played a pivotal role in shaping the Aitchison we see today.

Interviewer: Finally, sir, do you have a message or advice for the current student body at Aitchison?

Sir: Reflecting on my years of experience, I would offer a simple piece of advice. Boys should strive to control their emotions as they navigate through the stressful challenges put up by their studies, sports and extra curricular because maintaining self-discipline during times of turbulence and stress can empower individuals to navigate future challenges in life more effectively.



Aitchison Business Concept

Aitchison College recently transformed its campus into a bustling hub of entrepreneurial energy with the much-anticipated Aitchison Business Concept (ABC) event. Drawing in a whopping 1000+ delegates from various schools, ABC was not merely a competition; it was a celebration of business acumen, creativity, and enterprise – as well as a whole lot of fun! A brainchild of Aitchison College's most innovative minds, ABC featured an eclectic mix of categories, each designed to test the participants' skills in unique and exciting ways.

The day kicked off with the unmistakable clack of chess pieces, setting the tone for a day of tactical brilliance. Chess enthusiasts battled it out on the boards, showcasing intellect and strategic prowess that would make even grandmasters nod in approval. But ABC was not all about traditional challenges - the surprise category injected an element of unpredictability that kept everyone on their toes. Indeed, it truly lived up to its name, delivering unexpected twists and turns that left participants both thrilled and delighted. For the legal eagles in the house, the law categories provided a platform to flex their argumentative muscles. Debates were fierce, legal jargon was tossed around with flair, and the courtroom drama unfolded, although all in good spirits. The investing categories added a touch of Wall Street to the event as participants navigated the highs and lows of the financial world. Virtual portfolios were scrutinized, strategic decisions were made, and stock market chaos was simulated, proving that these young minds had a keen eye for investment strategy.



However, the heart of ABC clearly lay in the case study-solving competition, where teams tackled real-world business challenges in concert. The intensity was palpable as students brainstormed and strategized, presenting solutions that were as innovative as they were practical. The product-making category brought out the entrepreneurial spirit in full force as participants unleashed their creativity, proving that innovation knows no bounds. Throughout the day, the campus echoed with laughter, cheers, and the sound of intellectual gears grinding. Delegates not only showcased their business prowess but also forged connections, shared laughs, and created memories that shall last a lifetime. As the sun set on Aitchison College's ABC event, winners were crowned, laurels were distributed, and an undeniable sense of accomplishment was palpable. A day that began with anticipation ended with a vibrant celebration of talent, teamwork, and the undeniable joy of business in action. Aitchison Business Concept has truly created an environment where business met fun, leaving everyone eagerly awaiting the next edition of this dynamic extravaganza.

Aitchison's Sporting Heroes Shine Bright

In the hallowed halls of Aitchison College, where academic excellence meets the thrill of sportsmanship, a cohort of young boys has emerged as the pride of the institution, showcasing their mettle on national and international platforms. These budding athletes have not only excelled in their chosen sports but have seamlessly balanced the rigors of elite training schedules with their academic commitments.

One such standout is Sakhi Ullah Tareen, a force to be reckoned with in the world of squash. At just U17, Sakhi proudly carries the title of Scottish Squash Champion and reached the finals of the Pakistan U17 Squash Championship. His dedication and skill have not only brought personal success but have also added a touch of glory to the school's sporting legacy.

Amir Mazari, another rising star, has claimed the title of U14 National Junior Hardcourt Champion, showcasing his prowess on the tennis court. The school resonates with pride as Amir's achievements reflect not just his individual talent but also the nurturing environment that encourages young athletes to reach for the stars.

The 2023 College Ist XI Cricket Team, led by Captain Ammar Qaiyum, stands as a testament to collective excellence. Venerated as the Best Sports Team, their achievements on the cricket field echos the camaraderie and sportsmanship fostered within the school.

Ahmed Hussain, donning the colors of the U19 Pakistan Cricket Team, exemplifies the school's commitment to producing not just scholars but well-rounded individuals. His journey from the Aitchison cricket fields to the national team exemplifies the school's dedication to nurturing sporting prowess alongside academic endeavors.



Aitchison College, with its rich legacy and commitment to holistic development, takes pride in providing a conducive environment for young talents to flourish. The seamless integration of academics and sports at Aitchison not only produces champions in various fields but also instills values of discipline, teamwork, and perseverance.

As these sporting heroes continue to make strides on broader stages, Aitchison College stands as a beacon of inspiration, showcasing that success is not just measured in classrooms but also on fields, courts, and arenas. The school's commitment to fostering a culture where young minds can soar to new heights, both academically and athletically, cements its reputation as a nurturing ground for future leaders and sporting icons.

poem of the
month

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

The Road Not Taken
By Robert Frost

The Legacy Of Excellence Aitchison College's Triumph At LUMUN

The Aitchison College Model United Nations Society has made a remarkable impact at the 20th edition of LUMUN, held at LUMS University. With a five-team delegation, they not only secured the prestigious Best Delegation award but also retained the Best Junior Delegation award from the year before. This triumph was particularly historic as it marked the first time in 19 years that Aitchison College achieved such a double victory, solidifying its reputation as the premier MUN Society in Pakistan. Among the highlights was Haider Ali's exceptional performance, with him earning the title of MUN Champion of Pakistan after emerging victorious in LUMUN UNSC, a feat achieved by only two Aitchisonians prior to him. This victory marked a significant milestone for Aitchison College, affirming its position as a powerhouse in Model United Nations competitions.

Inter-House Football - Juniors

In a remarkable feat, Aitchison College has once again proven its academic prowess with a slew of Outstanding Cambridge Learner Awards in the June 2023 series. The achievements, spanning both Punjab and Pakistan, underscore the school's commitment to nurturing excellence in its students.

Top in Punjab boasts an impressive lineup of talented individuals. Syed Danyal Hussain Rizvi shines in Accounting, while Aayan Faraz Shaikh displays exceptional skills in Additional Mathematics, Biology, and Chemistry. Mian Muhammad Khalid Rehman joins the ranks with excellence in Additional Mathematics, alongside Mujtaba Hamid and Rayaana Wasay Iftikhar, both excelling in Chemistry. Rafay Azeem stands out in Economics, and Muhammad Jinnah Mahmood Rashid shines in English Literature. Amr Nazir Ahmad and Syed Mohammad Ayaan Ali Zaidi showcase their brilliance in Pakistan Studies, while Ibrahim Khalid Latif emerges as a Physics standout.

The accolades extend to the national level, with Aitchison students securing Top in Pakistan in various subjects. Muhammad Shaban Anwar claims the honor in Urdu, Muhammad Abdullah excels in English Language, Amaan Yasser Effendi showcases prowess in History, Muhammad Umar Sajid stands out in Islamiyat, and Ibrahim Khursheed Malik excels in Urdu Language.

These outstanding achievements highlight not only the academic excellence within Aitchison College but also the diverse talents of its students. The school's commitment to providing a conducive learning environment is evident in the multifaceted successes of its learners.

The students' accomplishments are a testament to the dedicated faculty and the holistic approach to education at Aitchison College. The institution not only focuses on traditional subjects but also fosters a love for learning and mastery in various disciplines.

As Aitchison College continues to produce outstanding learners, it reinforces its position as a beacon of academic excellence in Pakistan. The recognition garnered by these students not only brings pride to the school but also inspires future generations to strive for excellence in their academic pursuits. Aitchison's commitment to shaping well-rounded individuals is evident in the diverse array of subjects in which its students have excelled, setting a standard for educational achievement in the region.



Did You Know?

- 1: Cats use their sensitive whiskers to navigate tight spaces, and too much whisker stimulation can lead to stress.
- 2: Cats purr not only when content but also in stressful situations; the healing properties of the purring frequency remain a scientific puzzle.
- 3: Cats boast 32 muscles in each ear, allowing them to rotate them independently for precise sound localization.
- 4: Similar to human fingerprints, each cat has a unique nose print, offering a potential method for identification.
- 5: Cats have a natural affinity for heights, driven by their instinct to find vantage points for hunting and a sense of security.
- 6: Cats typically have five toes on their front paws and four on their back paws, though polydactyl cats may sport extra toes.
- 7: The act of kneading, where cats push their paws against a soft surface, is a comforting behavior that harks back to kittenhood nursing.
- 8: About 50-75% of cats are affected by catnip, a plant that induces temporary euphoria, playfulness, or relaxation.

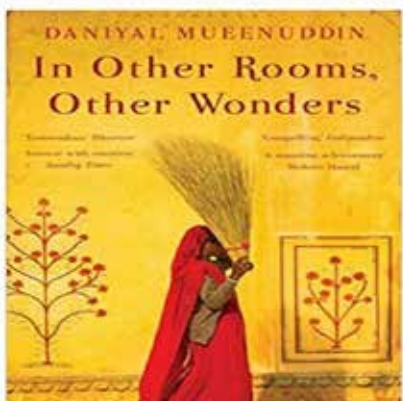
In Other Rooms Other Wonders

Book Of The Month

"In Other Rooms, Other Wonders" by Daniyal Mueenuddin is a literary tapestry that weaves a vivid picture of life in Pakistan. Mueenuddin's collection of short stories delves into the intricacies of human relationships, tying together tales that resonate with universal themes.

The stories span across rural and urban landscapes, exploring the complexities of love, power, and societal expectations. Mueenuddin's keen observations breathe life into his characters, making them relatable and engaging. Thanks to this, Mueenuddin masterfully captures the essence of Pakistan, depicting both its diversity and shared human experiences. Indeed, in spite of being deeply grounded in the soil of this land, each story is a doorway into different lives, offering insights into the universal aspects of the human condition.

Mueenuddin's acute observations bring forth a rich portrayal of characters, each serving as a conduit to explore the varied facets of Pakistani life. As the stories unfold, they act as windows into different lives, revealing new dimensions and adding layers to the overarching exploration of the shared human condition. Grounded in the specificity of Pakistan yet reaching for the universal, Mueenuddin's literary endeavor transcends geographical boundaries, leaving an indelible mark on the broader canvas of human experiences.



A Raisin In The Sun

Play Of The Month

"A Raisin in the Sun," a play by Lorraine Hansberry, was initially published as a book in early 1959 before making its debut as a Broadway production. The play vividly portrayed the harsh realities of Black life in the U.S. during the 1950s, shedding light on various forms of discrimination and complex social and cultural conflicts faced by Black individuals. The plot revolves around a Black family comprising two siblings and their parents, grappling with financial instability following the recent death of their father. The acquisition of a substantial life insurance payout becomes their lifeline. The mother aims to invest in a new house in an affluent white neighborhood, while the son aspires to wealth through investment in a liquor company. This sets the stage for the central conflict, with each character embodying a distinct perspective on the future of Black America.

The daughter, meanwhile, interacts primarily with two men, George Murchison and Nigerian-born Joseph Asagai, symbolizing different facets of Black identity in American society. Murchison represents assimilation, seeking acceptance and success in white society, while Asagai advocates for maintaining one's identity and cultural loyalty, even proposing a move to Nigeria.



The play received acclaim for its honest portrayal of Black lives and struggles. Notably, it marked the first instance of a Black-oriented story being presented to a predominantly White Broadway audience and was the inaugural play by a Black woman to premiere there. Regarded as one of the best plays of the twentieth century, it continues to garner praise as a timeless masterpiece. Its enduring legacy is evident in numerous adaptations, including radio plays, TV broadcasts, films, and theatrical productions.

Trade resumes as Torkham crossing reopens

In a noteworthy development, the Torkham border crossing linking Pakistan and Afghanistan has reopened, signaling the revival of bilateral trade after a ten-day hiatus. This resumption, marked by heightened enthusiasm among transporters, follows Pakistan's decision to ease visa conditions for Afghan transporters, extending this arrangement until the end of March. Local agents responsible for customs clearance played a pivotal role in facilitating the smooth flow of trade. They indicated a preference for vehicles loaded with perishable items such as oranges and potatoes from Pakistan, as well as onions from Afghanistan. To mitigate potential congestion, a dedicated lane was allocated for these vehicles at the border crossing point.

Vehicles laden with various export and import goods were granted passage on both sides of the border. The brisk movement of trade activities was fueled by drivers and their assistants eager to proceed to Afghanistan after securing clearance from customs authorities. Preliminary estimates provided by local traders and transporters indicated that approximately 350 to 400 laden vehicles, carrying a diverse range of trade goods, successfully crossed the border from both sides by the end of Tuesday evening. In an effort to address the backlog of stranded vehicles, the border was anticipated to remain open late into the night. Customs officials at Torkham assured the provision of every possible facility to customs clearing agents and transporters, ensuring an expeditious and efficient clearance process.

The sudden suspension of bilateral trade on January 13 resulted from Pakistan's imposition of a ban on the entry of Afghan transporters lacking valid visas. A corresponding ban on Pakistani drivers by Afghan authorities exacerbated the situation, creating a challenging environment for both nations. Afghan transporters encountered difficulties in obtaining national passports promptly and faced obstacles in stamping visas for Pakistan in Kabul and Jalalabad. Their appeals for relaxed visa provisions and extended time for passport-related processes were acknowledged, prompting Pakistan to announce visa relaxation until March 31. Following this deadline, all Afghans will be obligated to enter Pakistan with proper travel documentation.



The resumption of trade activities holds promising implications for normalizing relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The prioritization of perishable items and the commitment to facilitating swift clearance underscore a shared dedication to fostering a favorable trading environment. With the border remaining open, both nations anticipate fortifying economic ties and surmounting the obstacles that prompted the recent closure.

Extreme Cold Strikes Lahore

Throughout the last and first few weeks of 2023-24, respectively, an unprecedented but not entirely unforeseen cold wave swept Pakistan, with one of the hard-hit major cities being Lahore. The drop in temperatures caused the city to be coated in mist by night, gathering and greatly reducing visibility heavily by morning, resulting in dangerously low visibility and a hazardous traffic situation.

However, the cold brought some good news as well. Lahore's infamous smog is decreasing in severity due to the heavier fog serving as a thicker air medium, trapping more pollutant particles. This has brought the Air Quality Index (AQI) in the city down from the 500-600 range to the 100-200 range in a matter of weeks, in line with the usual yearly cycle of smog severity. Furthermore, forecasters predict light rains at the end of January, which shall further combat the smog.

Civilians have been advised to dress warmly and to don extra layers while traveling at night or commuting in the morning. Many schools have given leeway to students, allowing them to wear all manner of warm clothing for the month of January. Additionally, some schools are closing entirely or shifting their timings a few hours later as long as the extreme cold persists. The chilly weather has also had health consequences, with cases of pneumonia, common cold infections, and other cold-related illnesses skyrocketing in major cities.



Lahore is known for its characteristically fluctuating climate. The rainy season is highly irregular year after year, both in intensity and duration, with seasonal extremes going both ways. Summers reach sweltering hot temperatures, and winters are packed with freezing nights. In recent years, however, this phenomenon has been accelerated dramatically by climate change, with a record-shattering summer heatwave and winter "cold wave" occurring in the span of one year. The severe 2022 flooding also serves as a reminder of this fact. These drastic effects of climate change piling up are making it ever more apparent that the impacts of climate change are hitting hard and are here to stay.

A Glimpse into the 2024 Noto Earthquake

On January 1, 2024, the idyllic serenity of Japan's Noto Peninsula was shattered by a ferocious earthquake, ripping through the land with a 7.6-magnitude fury. The shallow tremor, fueled by the tectonic clash of the Okhotsk and Amurian plates, left a trail of devastation in its wake. Quaint fishing villages crumbled under sheer force, their wooden skeletons groaning in protest as they succumbed to the earth's violent dance.

Widespread infrastructure lay in tatters, roads becoming twisted ribbons of asphalt, and bridges reduced to skeletal remnants. Power lines drooped like mournful willows, plunging entire towns into an unsettling darkness. Fires, ignited by the quake's fury, danced across the wreckage, adding an orange glow to the apocalyptic scene.

But the most tragic consequence wasn't cracked concrete or mangled steel. It was the loss of life. At least 238 souls perished in Ishikawa Prefecture alone, swallowed by the earth or crushed by collapsing structures. Countless others were left injured, physically and emotionally scarred by the experience. Yet, amidst the ruins, shone the indomitable spirit of the Japanese people. Rescue teams, clad in fluorescent orange, tirelessly combed through the debris, their determination fueled by the faintest cry for help.



About Spectrum

Spectrum is a monthly literary newspaper that was started by the Literary Society of Aitchison College and was introduced to give an outlet to all the writers and creative souls at Aitchison. Spectrum aims to spread knowledge and awareness and help the students develop opinions on different subjects.

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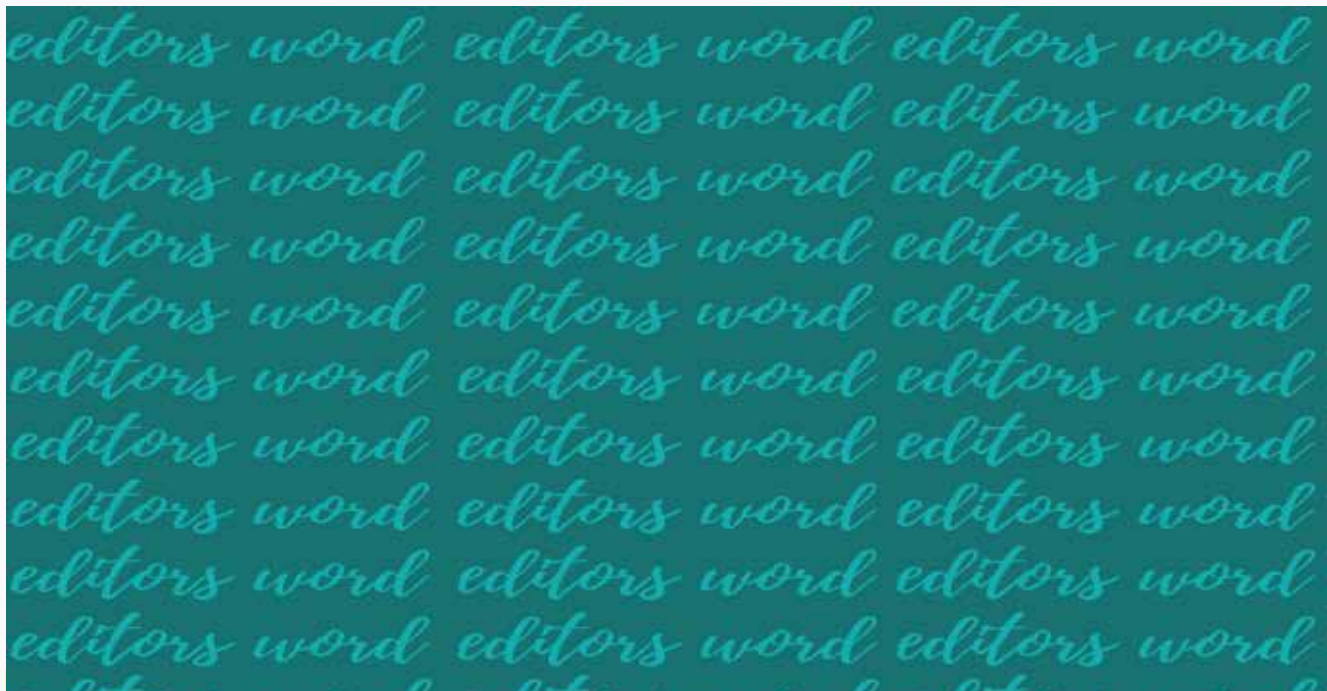
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Volunteers, their faces etched with concern, emerged from the woodwork, offering food, shelter, and a comforting hand to those who had lost everything.

Government agencies mobilized resources at a lightning pace, deploying medical personnel, setting up emergency shelters, and coordinating a massive relief effort. The international community, touched by the tragedy, extended a helping hand, sending search and rescue teams, medical supplies, and financial assistance. The road to recovery will be long and arduous. Debris removal, infrastructure reconstruction, and economic revival will require immense resources and unwavering dedication. But Japan, a nation forged in the fires of natural disasters, possesses inherent resilience. Like the cherry blossoms that rise each spring from the ashes of winter, the people of the Noto Peninsula will rebuild, stronger and more united than before.

In the face of the 2024 Noto Earthquake, Japan was tested. But through the tears, the dust, and the debris, emerged a testament to the human spirit's unwavering strength and boundless compassion. The scars of the earthquake may remain, etched onto the landscape and hearts alike, but they will also serve as a reminder of the indomitable spirit that binds a community together in the face of adversity.



Editor's Word

In the morning light, i hold the paper in a soft embrace
Slowly swiping through: my monthly quest
Headline after headline; a lot to digest
A beautiful symphony of words presented with such grace

Open enigmas and tales that intertwine
Digitally published whispers of the world's affairs
Many cherished memories the paper shares
Made of the echos of voice, both yours and mine.