

An Islamic Country's Christmas Miracle Offers Hope to Persecuted Christians

Christmas arrived this year in Pakistan with something few expected and many welcomed: open doors, public celebration, and state-backed affirmation. In a nation long scarred by religious extremism, the government's decision to sponsor Christmas celebrations nationwide felt less like pageantry and more like a providential pause, a Christmas miracle wrapped in policy.

For the first time since independence, Christmas moved beyond church walls and into public squares, government halls and official statements.

According to reporting by Christian Daily International, celebrations stretched from Islamabad to Lahore, carrying the unmistakable stamp of state support. What once required quiet vigilance unfolded in the open, under lights and banners, with choirs singing and communities gathering.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif framed the moment not as a concession but as a shared national celebration. "Christmas is a message for humanity that connects us with feelings of love and goodwill," Sharif wrote, praising Jesus Christ's message of peace and brotherhood and describing Christians as an "active, positive and peaceful segment of society." He credited the Christian community for its contributions to education, health care, social welfare and the fight against terrorism, words rarely spoken so plainly and so publicly.

President Asif Ali Zardari anchored the celebrations in Pakistan's founding vision. "Christmas brings hope, peace and compassion, reminding us of the bonds that unite all human beings," he said, reaffirming constitutional guarantees of

equal rights and freedom of worship. The message echoed Muhammad Ali Jinnah's insistence that faith should never determine citizenship.



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Then came the moment that stopped even seasoned observers. Pakistan's army chief, Syed Asim Munir, attended Christmas services at Christ Church in Rawalpindi. In a country where the military's presence carries enormous weight, the symbolism landed with clarity.

According to the military's media wing, Munir called Christmas a reflection of shared values and reiterated the armed forces' commitment to protecting the dignity and equal rights of all citizens. Christian leaders called the visit unprecedented. They were right.

Punjab carried the celebration with particular confidence. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz attended a government-sponsored Christmas ceremony in Lahore and pledged to stand "like a wall" against injustice faced by minorities. "We are not Muslims, Sikhs, Christians or Hindus first. We are Pakistanis," she declared.

Minority welfare funding increased. Churches were cleaned by government workers ahead of Christmas. Minority cards and grants were distributed in public view. Diplomats watched as the Bible was read aloud.

Progressive Muslim commentators applauded the shift. One noted the installation of a towering Christmas tree in the heart of Lahore as a symbol of plurality and inclusion. Minority advocates welcomed the moment while pressing for deeper reforms.

Still, Christmas is built on unlikely hope. It begins with the light of Jesus breaking into darkness and ends with joy shared

aloud. For Pakistan's Christians, this year's Christmas was precisely that: loud, visible and officially endorsed. In a country where minorities have often been told to keep their faith quiet, the state spoke clearly.

Sometimes miracles do not arrive with thunder. Sometimes they come with choirs, Christmas lights, and a government willing, at last, to say, you belong.

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