

HTML Newspaper Recreation — Al-Islah (1938)

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1. Code Structure

The HTML document follows the standard HTML5 structure, beginning with the `<!DOCTYPE html>` declaration to ensure proper rendering in modern browsers. The `<head>` section contains metadata such as character encoding and the page title, while the `<body>` contains the visible newspaper layout.

The layout is organized into logical sections that mimic a traditional printed newspaper. These include the masthead area, date bar, main headline section, and a multi-column content layout. HTML tables were used to recreate the rigid column structure of historical newspapers, while inline CSS was applied for formatting and alignment as external stylesheets were not allowed.

2. Key Sections

Masthead (Header Area)

The masthead contains the newspaper title **Al-Islah**, the publication date, and a logo positioned on the right. A table was used to align the title centrally while keeping the logo on the right side, matching the structure of historical newspapers.

Main Headline Section

The main headline and subheading are centered to reflect the visual hierarchy of traditional newspapers. A war emblem image is placed below the headline to enhance realism and resemble the original newspaper's visual elements.

Main Content Area

The body of the newspaper is divided into three parts:

- A vertical notice strip on the left using `writing-mode: vertical-rl` to simulate Urdu-style vertical text.
- Two main columns containing dense, justified news content.
- Table-based layout ensures consistent column widths and alignment.

Footer and Bottom Notice

A bottom notice strip and footer provide a closing message similar to printed newspapers. Borders were used to separate sections visually and maintain the structured appearance of the original layout.

3. Design Decisions

Tables were used instead of `<div>` layouts because newspapers rely on rigid column alignment, which tables replicate effectively. Semantic structuring was maintained using logical grouping of sections such as header areas, content sections, and footer.

Inline CSS was used for styling because the assignment prohibited external CSS files. Properties such as `text-align`, `border`, `font-size`, and `writing-mode` were applied to achieve layout accuracy and replicate historical newspaper formatting.

The vertical text strip was implemented using the CSS property `writing-mode: vertical-rl`, which allowed the text to flow from top to bottom, resembling Urdu newspaper side columns.

4. Challenges Faced

One major challenge was recreating a historical newspaper layout using only HTML without external CSS. Achieving dense column formatting and accurate spacing required careful adjustment of font sizes, line heights, and borders.

Another difficulty was simulating the vertical Urdu-style text strip. This was solved by using the `writing-mode` CSS property, which allowed the text to be displayed vertically while maintaining readability.

Balancing realism with assignment constraints was also challenging. The layout was refined through incremental adjustments to ensure visual similarity while adhering strictly to HTML-only requirements.