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SPARK

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PUNCHING THROUGH
STEREOTYPES:

**BANO
BUTT**

AND THE RISE OF MMA
IN PAKISTAN

PRIME MINISTER'S YOUTH PROGRAMME

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Cover photo:

Bano Butt celebrating her stunning victory in the 47 kg atomweight final at the IMMAF Asian Championship, Lahore, August 2024.

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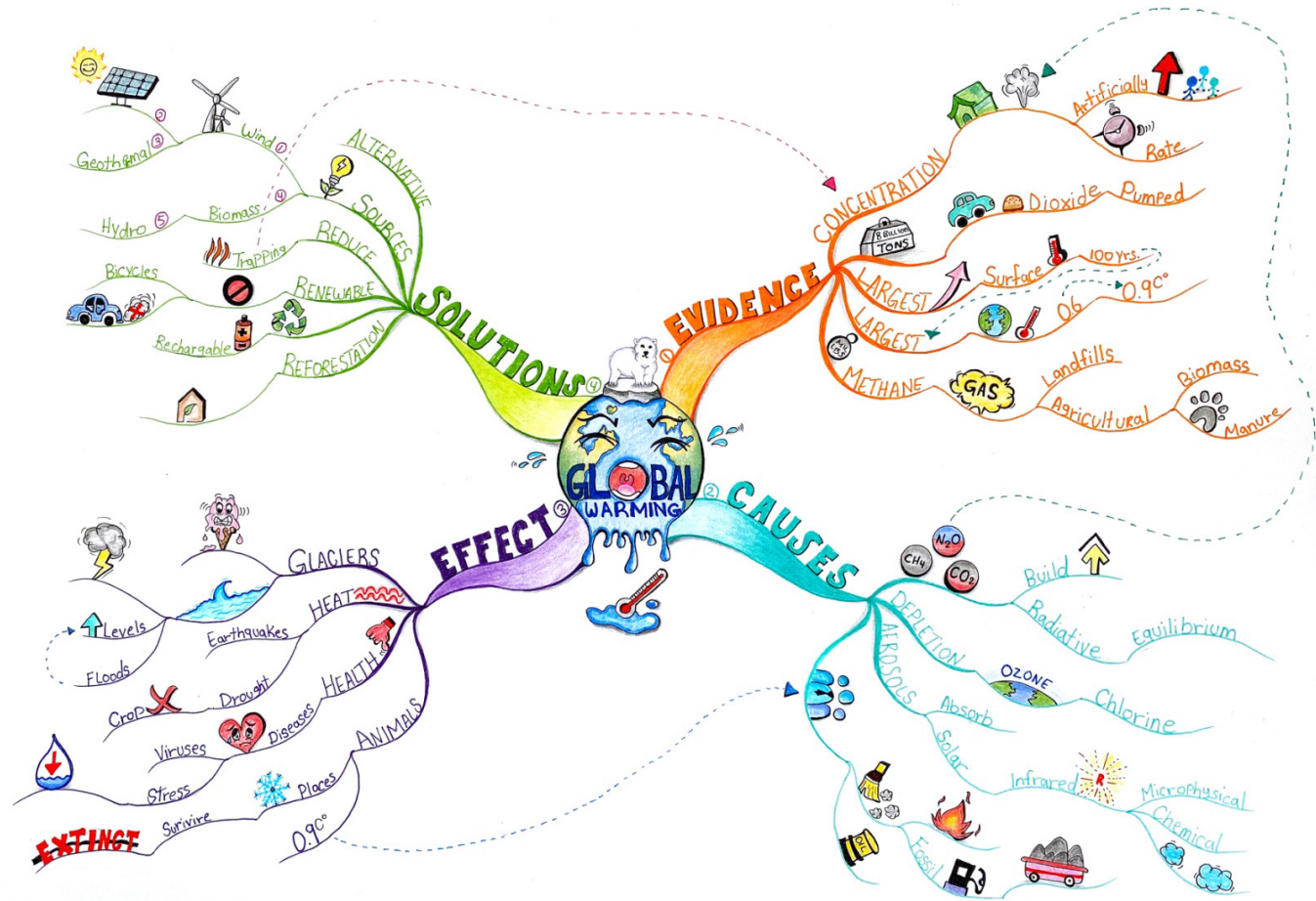
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**THE YEAR PAKISTAN'S YOUTH
TOOK THE DRIVER'S SEAT**

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EMMA ALAM

BUILDING A BRILLIANT BRAIN



<http://www.futuristiclearning.com/>



Emma Alam is a mind sports athlete. She has earned international acclaim as the World Memory Champion, World Speed Reading Champion, and World Mind Mapping Champion (Junior), setting two Guinness World Records in Memory and securing 21 medals and eight trophies in national and international championships.

Recognized for her extraordinary achievements, Emma was titled Pride of Pakistan by Inter-Service Public Relations. She received the Youth Excellence Award 2025 from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. She is also a member of the Prime Minister's National Youth Council.

She recently sat down with the SPARK team for an exclusive interview, sharing insights from her remarkable journey.

SPARK: Emma, most people know you as a World Memory Champion and Guinness World Record holder. But where did your journey really begin?

EMMA ALAM: I never had a good memory growing up. People assume I was born with a sharp mind, but that's far from the truth. I struggled like most students do. I would forget what I studied, lose focus quickly, and get overwhelmed by books piling up.



Everything changed when I got trained by my coach, Sania Alam, CEO of Futuristic Learning. She brought super-learning techniques to Pakistan, which are already being used in schools and companies across developed countries. With her guidance, I discovered that memory isn't a gift; it's a skill you can build.

I started applying techniques like mind mapping and memory systems, and within months, I saw a complete transformation. I completed four years of O and A Level studies in just a few months. Not only did I score top grades, but I did it without late nights, without cramming, and without stress.

SPARK: That's incredible. What exactly do you mean by "training the brain"?

EMMA: Just like athletes train their bodies, we can train our minds. Our brain is designed to learn fast; it just needs the right approach. Through techniques like memory palaces, visualization, and especially mind mapping, we can structure information in a way the brain actually wants to remember it. Mind mapping is one of the

most powerful tools I use. It helps me organize my thoughts visually, improves creativity, and speeds up learning. It helps me focus and retain information more efficiently.

SPARK: Do you believe these skills are



important for Pakistan's youth?

EMMA: Absolutely. Because the world is moving fast, and knowledge is power only if you can learn it fast, apply it, and keep growing. Youth in Pakistan are smart, passionate, and full of potential. But many don't realize that the way we've been taught to study is outdated. It focuses on rote learning rather than understanding.

Super learning tools like speed reading, mind mapping, and memory techniques give you a real edge. Not just in school or university, but in every area of life, including career, communication, and even confidence.

SPARK: What's one simple tip you can share to help the youth of Pakistan build their brainpower?

EMMA: Use mind maps whenever you're trying to understand or remember something complex.

Here's how you can apply it right away: draw a simple mind map starting with your main idea in the centre, then branch out into key points, images, and visual cues.

Why does this work? Because your brain thrives on visual structure and colourful cues. It quickly identifies patterns, groups related ideas, and retains information better. With mind maps, you can summarize 10–15 pages of material onto a single visual map that's far easier for your brain to absorb and recall.

Start small and try it with one chapter or topic. You will immediately feel the difference in how clearly you understand and remember the material.



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www.pmyp.gov.pk