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Editorial

Dr. Busharat Elahi Jamil
Assistant Editor



A typical feudal class along with their progeny has been ruling since 1947, adding up to their financial worth and leaving the country to sink. In fact, serving the Nation has never been their priority as they are nothing more than power seekers keeping up with politics as their occupation. Their social, political and economic ideologies never synced with the ideology of Pakistan and by chance they never happened to serve the purpose of its existence. Unfortunately wealth is gathering in the hands of a few. Elite is failing to pretend their affiliations and apprehensions with the problems of common Pakistanis being the key reason to dragging more than fifty percent population below the poverty line. Influenced economic policies and planning are driving the country towards hell of external debts and the slavery of international monetary organizations.

Political elites, with assets and investments of billions of dollars in foreign countries, are not willing to invest or shift their alleged looted money to Pakistan but begging all around depicting their actual intentions and associations with Pakistan and its people. They are using power, religion, media, and mafias to continue their rule and to take over the Country persistently.

Since April 2022, during the PDM regime, the economic crisis have gone all time worst in Pakistan. PDM is a coalition of around one dozen opportunistic political clutches, somehow ruling over Pakistan for more than four decades. By the way, the overall economic situation of the Pakistan in the last seventy five years remained unfruitful or unfortunate for the people of Pakistan due to the opportunistic political clutches and absurd policies by the establishment. Consequently, Pakistan could not prove itself a welfare state yet. Opportunistic and corrupt political clutches ever seemed eradicating the social norms and administrative institutes of the County for their own objectives.

PDM regime have hijacked the government institutes, law enforcement agencies and judicial system to strengthen their rule and to overwhelm the political opponents leaving their countrymen to suffer. Inflation rate now is around 30%, which was also around 47% during PDM regime in March 2023. In both urban and rural areas food inflation is around 50%. Basic needs like sugar, vegetables, rice, wheat, oil, electricity and petrol prices have almost doubled after April 2022. Moreover, US dollar value is around 300 rupees in open market. The purchase power of the people has gone extremely low and now poverty is all time high in the history of Pakistan. All economic indicators are showing worst condition of the contemporary economy of Pakistan.

Furthermore, closed factories, heavy taxes, fewer exports, unemployment, less foreign reserves, weak tax collection and network, huge brain drainage are serious problems to handle. PDM regime have failed to provide facilities and relief to the people, and are busy only to solve their own problems by following their objectives, particularly the anti-Imran politics.

President Biden, Come to East Palestine and Bring FEMA With You | Opinion

By: JESSICA CONARD

The Ohio train derailment is not a comeback story, it's a grim warning. It's about an industry that values profit over people and the environment, and about a regulatory system that has failed to keep these industries in check. There is an undeniable connection between this disaster and the plastics industry. The production of PVC plastic depends on transporting harmful chemicals like vinyl chloride. The insatiable demand for plastics has driven the need for increased transport of these hazardous



substances, placing communities near rail tracks under constant threat. As company profits soar, our communities are left to grapple with the aftermath of their negligence. My community learned the hard way when a train derailed with devastating consequences. We witnessed the callousness that the rail industry is capable of when they laid tracks over our poisoned soil only a day after conducting what is likely an illegal open burn of the vinyl chloride voluntarily spilled from five railcars—a decision we are only now learning may not have been necessary. President Biden, it's time to declare an emergency in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia for those who have felt the impact of this train derailment. My home is just outside the shockingly small evacuation zone. I watched from home as an ominous mushroom cloud expanded and crept over the place where I grew up. The sweet, thick chemical and chlorine smells left an unwanted film in my mouth as it intruded into my home and sent warning signals to my brain. We were advised to shelter in place, and that the smell didn't mean we would be harmed. The Unified Command reported on March 31 that residents were having acute health issues. Many residents still beg for improved indoor air testing, as the horrid odors linger inside and out for many, even five months later. My town's freedoms have been hijacked and with it, the narrative. It's astonishing how good Norfolk Southern is at running a public relations campaign aimed at distracting from the core issues at hand such as efficient indoor air testing and early cancer screening opportunities. Declaring an emergency now, not only for Ohio, but for Pennsylvania and West Virginia residents in the tri-state area will set a precedent to ensure the freedoms of my fellow Americans won't be held hostage at the next derailment. My young children who just experienced a pandemic are now asking again if their school is safe or if they will die if we continue to live in East Palestine—and yet, this could have been prevented. We have been left to beg for reimbursement for relocation, loss of income, related medical expenses, and clean air and water filtration systems from the company that caused this mess. The offender's financial assistance has come without clear criteria, length of time, or guidelines. We need to know our lifelong investments in our home and community will be protected. I am grateful for the recent National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigative hearing. But the people of East Palestine have more urgent needs. You started the crime investigation before treating the victims that are still bleeding. And we are LITERALLY still bleeding. Our bodies have suffered

from nosebleeds, headaches, respiratory illness, intestinal irritability, and eye irritation. Community members are now experiencing neurological symptoms and rectal bleeding—enough for blood transfusions. If you take action now, you can save lives. If you delay, then people will die. We know the cancer clusters are coming. We deserve the same protections as the people of Libby, Montana, who are now all eligible for Medicare following one of the worst asbestos exposure incidents in history. We also need environmental testing and indoor home monitoring, and we need it all to be conducted by independent third-party groups rather than by the company that poisoned us. We cannot continue relying on Norfolk Southern to be honest about how bad the situation is and how much this disaster might cost my community. After significant pressure, Gov. Mike DeWine (R-OH) has asked you, President Biden, to issue a major disaster declaration. Now is your opportunity to prioritize community needs over the malefactor's reports. There is time to hit reset. In the meantime, my family will watch the trains roll through our town, many carrying potential hazards on behalf of the plastics industry. We can't help but hope that the same urgency applied to restoring their operations will be directed toward addressing our community's health and wellbeing. President Biden, I implore you to prioritize human lives over corporate profits and take decisive action to prevent another East Palestine.

<https://www.newsweek.com/president-biden-come-east-palestine-bring-fema-you-opinion-1813540>

South Korea tunnel tragedy: Officials ignored multiple warnings

A total of 36 local officials in South Korea are under investigation for the tunnel flooding earlier this month that killed 14 people, authorities said. An inquiry launched two days after the tragedy found that officials had ignored multiple warnings of a flood ahead of the incident. Severe rains on the weekend of 15 July had caused widespread flooding and landslides in multiple places. At least 40 people died in the disaster across the country. The tunnel, located in city of Cheongju south of Seoul, was flooded with water from a nearby riverbank that had burst from the weekend of torrential rain. Fifteen vehicles, including a bus, were trapped in the underpass submerged under water - only nine people survived. Authorities had to work for several days to free the vehicles. Following the incident, police launched an investigation to determine the cause and found that it could have been prevented. "[The flood] was the result of numerous agencies failing to recognise the seriousness of the situation and respond actively, despite receiving several warnings," said Bang Moon-kyu, South Korea's minister of government policy coordination. Three calls warning of a possible tunnel flooding were made to the emergency hotlines on the day of the incident, he added. A construction supervisor had similarly warned authorities seven times about the possibility that the tunnel would flood. The public officials have been accused of failing to promptly assess and manage the situation. Two of them were found to have replaced the river embankment - walls meant to prevent flooding - with a weaker version. "The government plans to seek the removal of positions for those responsible for the accident, even including elected positions," said minister Bang. Extreme rain and flooding have pummelled several other countries in Asia this month, including India, China, and Japan. Scientists have long warned that climate change would make extreme weather events like heavy rainfall and heatwaves stronger and more likely. Last year, South Korea saw record-breaking rains, causing floods that killed at least 11 people, including two women and a teenager trapped in a semi-basement flat in Seoul.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-66333778>

World hunger

and the war in Ukraine

By: VIJAY PRASHAD



On Monday, June 17, Dmitry Peskov, the spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin, announced, “The Black Sea agreements are no longer in effect.” This was a blunt statement to suspend the Black Sea grain initiative that emerged out of intense negotiations in the hours after Russian forces entered Ukraine in February 2022. The initiative went into effect on July 22, 2022, after Russian and Ukrainian officials signed it in Istanbul in the presence of United Nations Secretary General António Guterres and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Guterres called the initiative a “beacon of hope,” for two reasons. First, it is remarkable to have an agreement of this kind between belligerents in an ongoing war. Second, Russia and Ukraine are major producers of wheat, barley, corn (maize), rapeseed and rapeseed oil, sunflower seeds and sunflower oil, as well as nitrogen, potassic, and phosphorus fertilizer, accounting for 12% of calories traded. Disruption of supply from Russia and Ukraine, it was felt by a range of international organizations, would have a catastrophic impact on world food markets and on hunger. As Western – largely US, UK and European – sanctions increased against Russia, the feasibility of the deal began to diminish. It was suspended several times during the past year. In March, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, responding to the sanctions against Russian agriculture, said the main parameters provided for in the grain deal “do not work.”

Financialization leads to hunger

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said his country regrets Russia’s “continued weaponization of food,” since this “harms millions of vulnerable people around the world.” Indeed, the timing of the suspension could not be worse. A United Nations report, “The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023” (July 12, 2023), shows that one in 10 people in the world struggles with hunger and that 3.1 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet. But the report itself makes an interesting point: that the war in Ukraine has driven 23 million people into hunger, a number that pales in comparison to the other drivers of hunger – such as the impact of commercialized food markets and the Covid-19 pandemic. A 2011 report from World Development Movement called “Broken Markets: How Financial Market Regulation Can Help Prevent Another Global Food Crisis” showed that “financial speculators now dominate the [food] market, holding over 60% of some markets, compared [with] 12% 15 years ago.” The situation has since worsened. Dr Sophie van Huellen, who studies financial speculation in food markets, pointed out in late 2022 that while there are indeed food short-

ages, “the current food crisis is a price crisis, rather than a supply crisis.” The end of the Black Sea grain initiative is indeed regrettable, but it is not the leading cause of hunger in the world. The leading cause – as even the European Economic and Social Committee agrees – is financial speculation in food markets.

Why did Russia suspend the initiative?

To monitor the Black Sea grain initiative, the United Nations set up a Joint Coordination Center (JCC) in Istanbul. It is staffed by representatives of Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Nations. On several occasions, the JCC had to deal with tensions between Russia and Ukraine over the shipments, such as when Ukraine attacked Russia’s Black Sea Fleet – some of whose vessels carried the grain – in Sevastopol, Crimea, in October 2022. Tensions remained over the initiative as Western sanctions tightened, making it difficult for Russia to export its own agricultural products into the world market. Russia put three requirements on the table to the United Nations regarding its own agricultural system. First, Moscow asked that the Russian Agricultural Bank – the premier credit and trade bank for Russian agriculture – be reconnected to the SWIFT system, from which it had been cut off by the European Union’s sixth package of sanctions in June 2022.

A Turkish banker told TASS that there was the possibility that the EU could “issue a general license to the Russian Agricultural Bank” and that the bank “has the opportunity to use JPMorgan to conduct transactions in US dollars” as long as the exporters being paid for were part of the Black Sea grain initiative. Second, from the first discussions about the grain initiative, Moscow put on the table its export of ammonia fertilizer from Russia both through the port of Odessa and of supplies held in Latvia and the Netherlands. A central part of the debate has been the reopening of the Togliatti-Odessa pipeline, the world’s longest ammonia pipeline. In July 2022, the UN and Russia signed an agreement that would facilitate the sale of Russian ammonia on the world market. Guterres went to the UN Security Council to announce, “We are doing everything possible to ... ease the serious fertilizer market crunch that is already affecting farming in West Africa and elsewhere. If the fertilizer market is not stabilized, next year could bring a food supply crisis. Simply put, the world may run out of food.” On June 8, 2023, Ukrainian forces blew up a section of the Togliatti-Odessa pipeline in Kharkiv, increasing the tension over this dispute. Other than the Black Sea ports, Russia has no other safe way to export its ammonia-based fertilizers. Third, Russia’s agricultural sector faces challenges from a lack of ability to import machinery and parts, and Russian ships are not able to buy insurance or enter many foreign ports. Despite the “carve-outs” in Western sanctions for agriculture, sanctions on firms and individuals have debilitated Russia’s agricultural sector. To counter Western sanctions, Russia placed restrictions on the export of fertilizer and agricultural products. These restrictions included the ban on the export of certain goods (such as temporary bans of wheat exports to the Eurasian Economic Union), the increase of licensing requirements (including for compound fertilizers, requirements set in place before the war), and the increase of export taxes. These Russian moves come alongside strategic direct sales to countries such as India that will re-export to other countries. In late July, St Petersburg will host the Second Russia-Africa Economic and Humanitarian Forum, where these topics will surely be front and center. Ahead of the summit, President Putin called South Africa’s Cyril Ramaphosa to inform him about the problems faced by Russia in exporting its food and fertilizers to the African continent. “The deal’s main goal,” he said of the Black Sea grain initiative, was “to supply grain to countries in need, including those on the African continent, has not been implemented.” It is likely that the Black Sea grain initiative will restart within the month. Earlier suspensions have not lasted longer than a few weeks. But this time, it is not clear if the West will give Russia any relief on its ability to export its own agricultural products. Certainly, the suspension will impact millions of people around the world who struggle with endemic hunger. Billions of others who are hungry because of financial speculation in food markets are not impacted directly by these developments.

<https://asiatimes.com/2023/07/world-hunger-and-the-war-in-ukraine/>

Dr. Abdus Salam

and Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program

By: Ata-ul-Haye Nasir

Of the eight nuclear powers of the world, Pakistan was the seventh to announce its nuclear capability on 28 May 1998. Nuclear tests were carried out at Ras Koh Hills in the Chaghi area of Balochistan and the day was labelled Yaum-e-Takbir (Day of Supremacy); the day is celebrated on the same date every year. Such milestones are not reached in days or months – experts toil for years to achieve such a feat. Dr Abdus Salam Sahib – a Pakistani theoretical physicist and Pakistan's first Nobel Prize laureate – also played a pivotal role in Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program. Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) was established in 1956. Talking about the program, Dr Abdus Salam Sahib said in an interview dated 15 December 1986: “It was quite clear to us that we had to think of power, nuclear power, right away. And, in the meanwhile, the important point was to get the commission, like all the commissions in the world, to train the manpower in Pakistan. There was no other body in Pakistan that was training people. “Pakistan had no training programs whatsoever in the basic sciences or in applied sciences. And that was the first



goal, that [Ishrat Hussain] Usmani and I together were busy with. We got about six hundred people trained under the umbrella of the Atomic Energy Commission.”

He further said:

“The second goal, which was quite clear to us, was to build up laboratories in various research disciplines, the PINSTECH laboratory is just one of them. [...] The second achievement was to get a nuclear reactor built in Pakistan, and show that nuclear reactors could be built and operated by Pakistanis safely.

“And so, a nuclear power reactor was built in Pakistan, by the Canadians, which is operated by the Pakistanis now [...] So, both these ideas were quite successful by the year 1972.” (War and Peace in the Nuclear Age; Carter's New World; Interview with Abdus Salam, 1986, December 15 1986, GBH Archives, accessed 13 October 2021, http://openvault.wgbh.org/catalog/V_5D66933CA5D94645BB064138A04D633B). Shortly after the fall of East Pakistan in 1971 and the preceding war with India, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto called top brass physicists and engineers, including Dr Abdus Salam Sahib, to a meeting held in Multan on 20 January 1972.

Regarding Dr Salam's crucial involvement, Norman Dombey said:

“When Salam was first appointed by Ayub Khan as Presidential Science Advisor, he and [Ishrat Hussain] Usmani had worked closely together to establish civil nuclear power in Pakistan and had set up the Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PINSTECH) at Nilore, near Islamabad, whose first reactor went critical in 1965. “As Presidential Science Advisor Salam naturally played a central role in Bhutto's principal scientific project after Janu-



ary 1972, namely the nuclear weapon programme. Furthermore, there is substantial evidence to back this up.” (Abdus Salam: A Reappraisal Part II – Salam’s Part in the Pakistani Nuclear Weapon Programme, Physics and Astronomy Department, University of Sussex, 10 December 2011) A well-known journalist, Shahid-ur-Rehman wrote a book *Long Road to Chagai* (1999) based on interviews of those who played a crucial role in Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons Program. He also interviewed Riazuddin (who served in the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission), in which he stated that

after the Multan meeting, Dr Abdus Salam Sahib visited Pakistan for a meeting with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the Chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Munir Ahmad Khan. In late September 1972, Dr Abdus Salam Sahib called Riazuddin and Masud Ahmad, to his office at the ICTP in Trieste, Italy. He informed them about the Pakistani government’s decision to start working for nuclear development. He also instructed Riazuddin to create a group of theoreticians for understanding the physics of nuclear implosions. Dr Abdus Salam Sahib instructed Masud Ahmad to return to Pakistan and join PAEC.

Dr Abdus Salam Sahib continuously supported Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons Program, as Norman Dombey stated: “He not only accepted its logic that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons were necessary given that India had overwhelming conventional capability but actively helped to achieve the programme’s goal.” (Abdus Salam: A Reappraisal Part II – Salam’s Part in the Pakistani Nuclear Weapon Programme, Physics and Astronomy Department, University of Sussex, 10 December 2011) A Pakistani Nuclear Physicist, Dr Pervez Hoodbhoy wrote an article *Abdus Salam in China*, about the contributions of Dr Abdus Salam Sahib with regard to the Nuclear Weapons Program of Pakistan, published in the daily *Dawn*, on 30 November 2019. His article also brings to life two Chinese physicists, Jinghan Sun and Xiaodong Yin, who gave details about the role of Dr Abdus Salam Sahib in Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons Program in their paper titled *Abdus Salam and China – A View on Salam’s Influence on China’s Science Development Based on His Six Visits to China*. This was published from Beijing in March 2019. These authors have drawn on transcripts of various meetings held at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and revealed Dr Abdus Salam Sahib’s efforts to seek China’s help for Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons Program. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto sent Dr Abdus Salam Sahib to China in 1972 to seek China’s help in regard to the nuclear weapons technology. The authors of the above mentioned paper state that during that visit Dr Abdus Salam Sahib met with the Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai on 5 September 1972, and discussed assistance from China for Pakistan with regard to becoming a nuclear power.

Dr Yangyang Cheng of Cornell University, said:

“Why did Salam help Pakistan acquire nuclear weapons? [...] Maybe Salam believed that nuclear weapons were a necessary evil to protect his country and its people. Maybe he saw the state’s interest in the Bomb as an opportunity to develop Pakistan’s scientific infrastructure. “Salam was not a dissident. His country had turned its back on him because of who he was and how he prayed. But whenever he could, Salam had worked with the Pakistani government to advance science and education in his country” (*The Holy and the Broken, Sup-China [now The China Project]*, 30 October 2019)

While describing Dr Abdus Salam Sahib’s services for Pakistan, Nayyar Afaq states:

“Some of his services, for instance, include working as the science advisor for President Ayub Khan to lay the infrastructure of science in Pakistan. He persuaded him to acquire Karachi Nuclear Power Plant (KANUPP) – the first commercial nuclear reactor of Pakistan.

He served as a founding director of Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), worked for the establishment of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and The Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PINSTECH). Not to mention that he mentored the scientist who designed the atomic bomb for Pakistan.” (Dr Abdus Salam and all the wrong choices Pakistan made, The Express Tribune, 29 January 2016) The opponents of Ahmadiyyat raise an allegation that Dr Abdus Salam Sahib sold Pakistan’s nuclear secrets to other countries, but they are unable to provide any proof to support this claim.

Dr Pervez Hoodbhoy said:

“That Salam palmed off Pakistan’s nuclear secrets to other countries is a flat lie created by those very persons who were actually into this business and were thereafter exposed.” (Abdus Salam in China, Dawn, 30 November 2019) The opponents also try to snatch the credit from Dr Abdus Salam Sahib, in regard to Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons Program. Although, many people have contributed to this project, but the role of Dr Abdus Salam Sahib can never be denied. He had played a great role in laying the foundations of Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons Program, and as stated by The Express Tribune, mentored the scientist who worked to design the atomic bomb. Unfortunately, Dr Abdus Salam Sahib never got the due appreciation he deserved from his country and is now among the unsung heroes of the nation. Why? Merely for being an Ahmadi Muslim.

<https://www.alhkam.org/dr-abdus-salam-and-pakistans-nuclear-weapons-program/>

Unveiling the Emotive Tapestry: An Analytical Review of Yasir Farooq’s Poetry

By Rehmat Aziz Khan Chitrali, world record holder

Yasir Farooq, an esteemed contemporary poet, possesses a distinctive style that captivates readers with its profound emotional depth and thought-provoking themes. In this article, we delve into the nuances of Yasir Farooq’s excellent poetry, specifically focusing on the evocative imagery and emotional resonance portrayed in his Urdu verses. His ability to capture the multifaceted nature of human emotions and articulate them through his beautiful words is a testament to his poetic prowess. Yasir Farooq’s poetry often delves into the realm of emotional turmoil, giving voice to the internal struggles faced by individuals in the society. In the lines, “Why are eyebrows crying here? We who are we cry innumerable,” the poet employs metaphorical language to depict the weight of emotional burdens in his poetry. This imagery evokes a sense of confusion and despair, where the act of crying becomes a powerful metaphor for the pain experienced by the self and others. A recurring theme in Farooq’s poetry is the paradoxical nature of loss and victory. He skillfully weaves together the contradictory emotions associated with success and failure. In the lines, “If you lose, cry for victory. If they win, they cry when they lose,” the poet challenges conventional notions of triumph and defeat. Here, the poet invites readers to question the significance of these societal constructs and reflect upon the emotional intricacies that underlie them. Farooq’s poetry often explores the fragility of human existence and the vulnerability inherent in our daily lives. In the lines, “Now even the eyes have become barren. Now Sakhan Maho-Yar cries,” the poet portrays a sense of desolation and emotional emptiness. By personifying the eyes and imbuing them with feelings, Farooq magnifies the impact of emotional suffering and the profound sadness that permeates human experiences. Yasir Farooq’s poetry not only captures the complexities of human emotions but also highlights the role of poetry itself as a medium for emotional release and catharsis. In the lines, “How simple it is that we. They cry with tears. Yasir Farooq, when the eyes are closed at night, so our poems cry,” the poet illustrates the intrinsic connection between personal emotions and poetic expression in his poems.



Are we heading towards a far-right **European Union**?



By: Lorenzo Marsili & Fabrizio Tassinari

We always assumed European unity would imply greater cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. With the recent rise of the far-right, that may not be the case.

In Germany, support for the hard-right AfD is surging. In Spain, the far-right Vox party is expected to be the kingmaker in the upcoming snap election. Far-right parties are also either in government or supporting the government from within parliament in Italy, Poland, Finland and Sweden. Undoubtedly, there is some truth to the analyses pointing to a backlash against multiculturalism, “woke” culture wars, or the ever-deepening cost of living crisis as the reasons behind the far right’s entry into mainstream politics across the continent.

But ultimately, what we are witnessing today is the result of European leaders’ insistent failure to meet the people’s collective demand for protection and control in the face of many – real and perceived – threats pushing them into precarity. Amid a climate emergency and a new era of global conflict, the need for Europe to politically unite is self-evident. Small and relatively powerless European nation-states are uniquely misplaced to steer an independent course and give their citizens a sense of security and stability in this age of planetary challenges and emergent superpowers. And yet, European elites appear reluctant to take the necessary steps towards political union. As a result, Europeans are now discovering what it means to be the objects and not the subjects of history. A green transition is desperately needed, but for the least well-off not to be left behind, there is also a need for massive investments. As the climate crisis and conflicts continue to push people towards Europe, the need for effective and humane migration management is also urgent. Meanwhile, war has returned to the continent, so people are demanding a new security paradigm. Unfortunately, there is no single actor in Europe that can steer these issues and not be steered by them.

Some have tried to make Europe into a united force that can once again decide its own course. At the beginning of his tenure, French President Emmanuel Macron often spoke of the need of building a “Europe that protects” – in his landmark 2017 Sorbonne speech he called for “a sovereign, united and democratic Europe” – but the German government and his peers elsewhere in Europe responded to his federalist overtures with indifference, if not contempt. More recently, the European Commission has tried to lay down ambitious plans for joint climate financing, responding to Joe Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act. That effort has

been torpedoed by the supposed “national interest” of the most fiscally liquid member states. As the soft-spoken nationalism of mainstream European parties made it impossible to integrate the continent and erect a continental public power that would respond to the many worries of Europeans, the far right has stepped in with its overt, aggressive ethnic nationalism, offering the masses intimidated and confused by the problems of the modern era a familiar place of shelter: the ethnic nation. The question today is not whether the far right can achieve political power in Europe, but what it will do with it once it does. In the recent past, during their stints in relative power, many of Europe’s far-right politicians proved to be more interested in securing populist points than implementing policies that deliver results and help keep their movements in power. For example, Italy’s Matteo Salvini ordered Italian ports to block a rescue ship carrying a few dozen migrants, attracting international criticism and even condemnation in exchange for nothing but a round of applause from his devoted supporters. So, one may be excused for expecting the far right to take power, divide an already divided continent further, fail to inflict any change, and retreat back into the political fringes in a relatively short time period. However, the European far right has evolved significantly since Salvini’s migrant rescue boat bravado in 2019. And now, its leaders appear to have much more potential to do what is necessary to implement policies that could keep them in power, as well as reshape their countries and the European Union according to their own agenda. Italy’s far-right Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, for example, has demands that are not that different from those of Salvini, who is a deputy prime minister in her government: curtailing migration, achieving economic sovereignty, protecting and promoting traditional Christian values and “Western civilisation”. And yet, Salvini’s loud but ineffective showmanship and populist aggression are nowhere to be found in her administration, replaced with a desire for pragmatic coalition building and intergovernmental bargaining. Consider Meloni’s recent high-profile visits to Tunisia, accompanied by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Dutch Prime Minister Marc Rutte, which led to the signing of a migration deal that is in many respects comparable to the controversial “cash for migrants” agreement the EU made with Turkey in 2016 under the leadership of then German Chancellor Angela Merkel. However morally dubious it may be, this deal reinforces a common European border policy and even aims to lay the ground for a European policy towards North Africa.

Meloni’s eagerness to collaborate with her European peers to secure an EU-level deal that is beneficial to her national agenda perfectly encapsulates the recent metamorphosis of the far right in Europe. As opposed to the superficial Euroscepticism of its previous incarnations, the new European far right increasingly uses Europe, its institutions and its superior negotiating power to its own advantage. There is, of course, every reason to expect any cooperation between far-right governments like Meloni’s and European institutions – as well as their alliances with fellow far-right governments – to eventually collapse, as they all prioritise the national interests of their respective countries over the continental good. We have recently witnessed the limitations of such alliances when Meloni’s attempt to reform European asylum policy failed due to a veto from her far-right colleague, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. But could this new brand of pragmatic far-right actors manage to act collaboratively long enough for them to become a genuine force towards a more united Europe? Could they pave the way for more integration, especially in areas like defence, external borders and economic policy, which would help them deliver on their promises to their constituents? And, if so, could they – perhaps unintentionally – help strengthen the European Union and its place in the multipolar world? Take the issue of Ukraine and Western Balkan countries’ accession to the EU. The far-right governments in both Poland and Italy want the union to expand to include these countries. Of course, the expansion of the EU from 27 to 35 or more members will require the European institutions to go through a significant transformation, including a move from unanimous to majority voting as a large and diverse Union cannot function if every country has the right to veto collective decisions. If Europe’s far right takes the lead in this transformation, it would become instrumental to

what is possibly the most consequential advance in European unity in recent decades and a momentous step towards building a continent-wide political power. Paradoxically, the far right is positioning itself as the champion of a strong European identity, albeit one premised on the ethno-nationalist idea of a white, Christian, and Western civilisation. We always assumed that European unity would imply greater cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. But what if a united Europe turns out to build what Hans Kundnani calls an “ethnoregionalism”, or the appeal to the defence of a European “civilisation”? Ultimately, the question is this: Could the far right leave behind its old-fashioned, petty nationalism and embrace new “European nationalism” that would further unite and strengthen the continent, even if at the cost of making it uglier? The way Meloni and her peers answer this question will determine whether the new episode of far-right rule in Europe will result in yet another show of impotent extremism, or pave the way for a new political hegemony on the European continent.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/7/19/are-we-heading-towards-a-far-right-european-union>

Dozens arrested at Sweden riots sparked by planned Quran burnings

More than 40 people have been arrested after violent clashes in Sweden between police and people angry at plans by a far-right group to burn copies of the Quran.

Three people were injured in Norrköping on Sunday when officers fired warning shots at rioters, police said. The violence was sparked by a series of rallies organised by the Danish-Swedish politician Rasmus Paludan. He says he has burned a copy of Islam's holy book and wants to do so again. Muslims consider the Quran the sacred word of God and view any intentional damage or show of disrespect towards it as deeply offensive. Saudi Arabia has condemned what it called the “deliberate abuse of the holy Quran by some extremists in Sweden, and provocation and incitement against Muslims”. Iran and Iraq earlier summoned the Swedish ambassadors to lodge protests. Sweden's national police chief, Anders Thornberg, said he had never seen such violent riots following Sunday's clashes in Norrköping, which is about 160km (99 miles) south-west of Stockholm, and nearby Linköping. The two cities also witnessed riots on Friday, along with the Stockholm suburb of Rinkeby and the western city of Örebro. On Saturday, there was a riot in the southern city of Malmö. On Monday, police said 26 police officers and 14 members of the public had been injured in the violence and that more than 20 vehicles had been damaged or destroyed. They said that around 200 people had been involved in the violence, adding they believed it was organised by networks of criminal gangs. Some of the individuals are already known to police and Sweden's security service, Säpo. Sunday's violence in Norrköping came after Rasmus Paludan said he planned to hold a rally there. However, he never showed up in the city. In a statement posted by his far-right, anti-immigrant Stram Kurs (Hard Line) party, Paludan said he cancelled the rally because Swedish authorities had “shown that they are completely incapable of protecting themselves and me”. He had earlier appeared on Thursday in the central city of Jönköping, but as he talked into a megaphone while holding a Quran, his words were drowned out by a priest ringing the bells of a local church in protest. Protests against plans by Stram Kurs to burn the Quran have turned violent in Sweden before. In 2020, protesters set cars on fire and shop fronts were damaged in clashes in Malmö. Paludan represented Stram Kurs party in the last Danish elections in 2019, where it received 1.8 % of the vote, failing to win a seat. In 2020, he was jailed in Denmark for a month for a string of offences including racism. He plans to stand in Swedish elections in September, but he reportedly does not yet have the necessary number of signatures to secure his candidature.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61134734>

World's Most Powerful Passports,

Japan Loses Top Spot In Henley Ranking

By: Duncan Madden

The newly updated 2023 Henley Passport Index, based on official and exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), has revealed a newly crowned winner of the world's most powerful passport. For the first time in five years, Japan has lost its number one ranking, dropping to third place on the list. Singapore can now call itself the country with the most powerful passport in the world, according to the latest ranking. Its citizens can now enjoy visa-free visits to 192 of the 227 destinations Henley surveys. Singapore isn't the only country on the list to third, it falls behind three European countries in second place: Germany, Italy and Spain, who all have visa-free access to 190 destinations. Japan joins six other nations in third place with 189 destinations listed as visa-free: Austria, Finland, France, South Korea, Luxembourg, Sweden and South Korea. Somewhat surprisingly, the U.K. appears to have turned a corner and is climbing its way back up the Henley ranking after six years of decline. Finding itself in fourth place with 188 visa-free countries accessible, this result is the highest it's been since 2017. The U.S. however has seen no such turnaround and continues its slide down the index, this year ranking eighth with 184 destinations listed as visa free, the same as Lithuania. Bear in mind that a decade ago, the U.S. and U.K. were sitting pretty at the top of the Henley Index. The downturn only goes to show the impact that geopolitical changes are having around the world. Still entrenched at the bottom of the ranking is Afghanistan, whose passport holders can visit just 27 destinations without a visa. Just above sit Iraq with a score of 29 and Syria with 30, rounding out the three weakest passports in the world. Looking at the general trend over the Henley Index's 18 year history, the average number of destinations open to visa-free access has nearly doubled from 58 in 2006 to 109 in 2023. Despite this, the global mobility gap between top and bottom ranked countries is bigger than it's ever been – Singapore passport holders can visit 166 more destinations without a visa than those with an Afghanistan passport.



American passport continues to lose international power

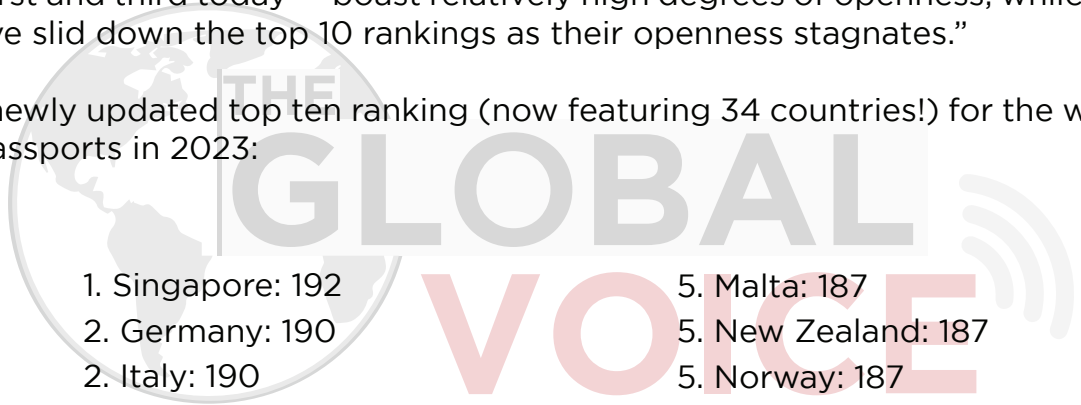
Only eight countries have less visa-free access to destinations than they did a decade ago, demonstrating how countries are opening up more and more to give their citizens more freedom to travel. The UAE has added 107 visa-free destinations, climbing 44 places up the ranking. Singapore has added 25, which has pushed it up to the top spot. The U.S. however has added just 12 new destinations, the lowest increase in the top ten. Looking at the ranking, Greg Lindsay from Cornell Tech's Jacobs Institute, says that from a purely mechanical perspective, "the story is a simple one — by more or less standing still, the U.S. has fallen behind. While its absolute score has in fact risen over the last decade, the U.S. has been steadily overtaken by rivals such as South Korea, Japan and Singapore. America's relentless slide down the rankings is a warning to its neighbor Canada and the rest of the Anglosphere as well."

Openness Index shows huge disparity between richer and poorer nations

Alongside the passport index, the Henley Openness Index paints a damning picture of America's approach to welcoming in citizens from developing nations. While U.S. passport holders can visit 184 countries without a visa, the U.S. itself allows only 44 other countries to visit visa free, placing it 78th on the Henley Openness Index. Only Australia has a greater disparity although Canada isn't far behind, alongside New Zealand and Japan. Interestingly, all five of these countries have remained static or dropped down the passport power ranking over the last decade.

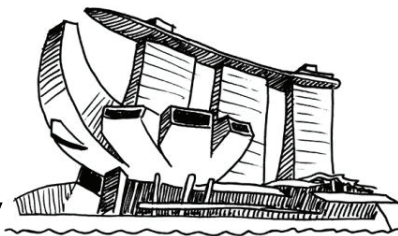
The top 20 most open countries on the index are all African states or small island nations (with the exception of Cambodia) including tourist hotspots the Seychelles and Maldives. Twelve of these countries are open to all passports, asking none for a visa, or allowing visitors to collect one on arrival. Conversely, just four countries have a zero openness rating and don't let anyone visit without a visa – Afghanistan, North Korea, Papua New Guinea and Turkmenistan. Leading sociologist at Tel Aviv University, Prof. Dr. Yossi Harpaz, says the data clearly shows that the relationship between travel freedom (the passport ranking) and openness is complex and non-linear. "Nations' diplomatic and socio-economic realities and strategic goals significantly impact these factors, resulting in a complex web of interrelations. As the global landscape continues to change, so will these patterns, reflecting the dynamic nature of global mobility." Greg Lindsay from Cornell Tech goes on to explain that while the correlation between a high openness score and high visa-free access score isn't very obvious in the data, "It is notable that Singapore and South Korea – high climbers on the Henley Passport Index over last decade, moving up from sixth and seventh respectively in 2013 to first and third today – boast relatively high degrees of openness, while the US and Canada have slid down the top 10 rankings as their openness stagnates."

Here's the newly updated top ten ranking (now featuring 34 countries!) for the world's most powerful passports in 2023:

- 
- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Singapore: 192 | 5. Malta: 187 |
| 2. Germany: 190 | 5. New Zealand: 187 |
| 2. Italy: 190 | 5. Norway: 187 |
| 2. Spain: 190 | 5. Portugal: 187 |
| 3. Austria: 189 | 5. Switzerland: 187 |
| 3. Finland: 189 | 6. Australia: 186 |
| 3. France: 189 | 6. Hungary: 186 |
| 3. Japan: 189 | 6. Poland: 186 |
| 3. Luxembourg: 189 | 7. Canada: 185 |
| 3. South Korea: 189 | 7. Greece: 185 |
| 3. Sweden: 189 | 8. Lithuania: 184 |
| 4. Denmark: 188 | 8. United States: 184 |
| 4. Ireland: 188 | 9. Latvia: 183 |
| 4. Netherlands: 188 | 9. Slovakia: 183 |
| 4. United Kingdom: 188 | 9. Slovenia: 183 |
| 5. Belgium: 187 | 10. Estonia: 182 |
| 5. Czech Republic: 187 | 10. Iceland: 182 |

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/duncanmadden/2023/07/18/worlds-most-powerful-passports-japan-loses-top-spot-in-henley-ranking/?sh=674747d9409e>

Financial infiltration of international organizations poses threats to global security



By: By Shen Yi

Former Singapore diplomat Kishore Mahbubani once suggested that multilateral organizations, which enjoy significant authority in their respective fields, face threats and challenges from developed countries' systematic use of money for infiltration and control. Take the World Health Organization as an example, Mahbubani laid out three approaches. First, the West starved the WHO of reliable long-term mandatory funding. The second was to



focus on biomedicine, with its focus on individual behavior, instead of social medicine. The third was to dilute the role of the WHO and favor institutions like the World Bank, which is controlled by the West. In other words, the approach was to deliberately reduce mandatory funding methods such as membership fees, thereby putting international organizations in the embarrassing situation of lacking the necessary disposable funds to take independent actions. Then, various stakeholders, especially those from developed countries, are allowed to provide funds through "voluntary donations" with explicit or implicit conditions, effectively creating a reality of "purchasing services" and ensuring that the relevant international organizations become "puppets" controlled by specific funding sources.

Japan's practices in this regard are relatively systematic and prominent. On the one hand, Japan has long been focusing on delivering personnel to key positions in international organizations and controlling them through infiltration. On the other hand, Japan has a more mature and systematic way of providing funds. Recently, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) released a comprehensive assessment report on the dump plan for nuclear-contaminated wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan, stating that Japan's plan to dump the water into the ocean was "consistent with international safety standards." Nonetheless, two South Korean media outlets revealed that the Japanese side had influenced the report's writing by providing the IAEA with financial support. The revelation alleged that the Japanese government provided the IAEA with at least 1 million euros to earn a draft of the IAEA final report ahead of its official delivery and demanded sensitive parts be redacted. From a global perspective, the prevalence of such measures poses new challenges and threats to global security, stability and development. Since the end of the Cold War, global governance issues that have increasingly attracted attention from all parties require international organizations to engage in effective coordination and communication from a relatively objective and impartial standpoint. The credibility of international organizations in terms of fairness and procedural compliance is of vital significance in promoting the implementation of global governance solutions. It is evident that international organizations that fall victim to corruption will not only suffer a loss of their own reputation but also lose their important position in the global governance process.

Take this forced discharge of nuclear-contaminated wastewater as an example, the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) is unwilling to continue bearing the economic cost of storing nuclear-contaminated wastewater, and the Japanese government also wants to get rid of this politically unpredictable time bomb as soon as possible. Therefore, they have chosen the cheapest and most irresponsible approach. The IAEA is an international organization that is supposed to be working for the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology and contributing to international peace and security. Therefore, it should firmly stand its ground and provide responsible assessments and plans from the perspective of the community of a shared future for mankind, based on genuine science rather than pseudo-science influenced by various monetary factors. However, it is regrettable that the IAEA seems insufficient to meet the demands of humanity for a safe, stable and sustainable life. Faced with Japan's decision to dump nuclear-contaminated wastewater, it lacks responsibility and action, which is obviously disappointing. On the other hand, in order to truly move toward the goal of establishing and maintaining a community of a shared future for mankind, hopes should not be put solely in the contemporary self-centered Western developed countries. Emerging powers and countries that objectively face common risks and challenges should take more effective actions together. We should promote more effective reforms of these international organizations at the global level, bringing their operations back to the correct track of focusing on the interests, destiny and well-being of all mankind. Only then can more positive and constructive factors be injected into this world that is facing numerous uncertainties, risks and challenges.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202307/1294828.shtml>

She is a woman **without a Heart**

The woman in the picture with a smile is Salwa Hussein !! She is a woman without a heart in her body. She is a rare case in the world, as she carries her artificial heart in a bag.

The British newspaper "Daily Mail" reported that Salwa Hussein, aged 39, is the only one who lives like this way in Britain. She is married, is the mother of two children, and tries to live a normal life as much as she can, but with a twist!

Salwa's heart is placed in a bag which she always holds in her lap. The bag is always with her with a device with two batteries weighing 6.8 kg, which is an electric motor and a pump, The batteries push the air into a plastic bag in the patient's chest through attached tubes, for blood circulation in her body.

All our personal problems and worries are nothing in front of this woman. Yet she smiles. And we lose our peace of mind over rains, heat, birds chirping, birds not chirping, the tea having less sugar, the newspaper getting late.....

Let us thank God every moment that we are in



Are **China** and the **US** listening to each other?

By: Lorenzo Kamel

Recent high-level visits from the US to China show that the rival superpowers are talking again. But they must listen to each other too – for the sake of the world.

Imagine this scenario: China and Mexico establish a military alliance, training military personnel along the 3,145km (1,954-mile) border shared by the United States and Mexico. Such an eventuality is not so far-fetched. In recent years, both China and Russia have massively increased their investments in Mexico (particularly in minerals, energy and technology). China and Russia are major economic trade partners for Mexico. So, how would Washington react to that scenario? Perhaps the panicked headlines in the US over recent reports that China might set up a base in Cuba – a claim that Havana has denied – offer clues. For while the Soviet Union and, since 1991, Russia have invaded several countries – from Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) and Afghanistan (1979) to Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014 and 2022), while playing a nefarious role in others including Syria (2015) – the US has been involved in very similar and far more numerous invasions, regime changes and wars.

Often, these have focused on strengthening US-friendly regimes or toppling unfriendly ones in its hemisphere, both in Central and South America: from Argentina to Bolivia, passing through Chile, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Panama and many more. Cuba, which in 1950 had the fifth-highest per capita income in the Western hemisphere before a brutal US blockade contributed to its economic ruin, is an effective example of how the US conceptualised and imposed the notion of its “sphere of influence”.

At the other extreme is Hawaii, which represents a compelling example of how deindustrialisation and linguistic effacement worked. Indeed, what became America’s 50th state (August 21, 1959) experienced one of the most effective attempted identity erasures of a native population, and its organised de-development (Iolani palace had electric lights before the White House): before US colonisation, Hawaii had electricity, mass transit, railroads and one of the world’s highest literacy rates.

In a widely discussed open letter focused on the Russia-Ukraine war and published on the University of Berkeley’s Blog by Yuriy Gorodnichenko and other economists, the authors did not linger on any of these aspects, but were keen to stress that “spheres of influence” is a “notion that seems appropriate for the age of empires and not for the modern era”. Yet that claim, while fully agreeable in itself, loses much of its legitimacy when applied to Russia and China selectively. Thanks also to over 750 mili-



tary bases in eighty countries (or 85 percent of all overseas military bases), US spheres of influence extend far beyond “its hemisphere”. And this is particularly visible in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and increasingly, in the Indo-Pacific, where, in the words of European Union foreign policy chief Joseph Borell, “the future of our planet and of history will be decided”, and from where by 2030, the overwhelming majority – 90 percent – of the 2.4 billion new members of the middle class are expected to reside.

Entering the Pacific

Look no further than the growing process of NATOisation in the Indo-Pacific, which became further evident after the signing of 2021’s AUKUS security pact between Australia, the US and the United Kingdom.

The pact, under which Canberra is to spend up to \$368bn on nuclear-armed submarines, poses a major proliferation risk and represents a violation of the spirit of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It is targeted at China. It is worth remembering that Australia and New Zealand, together with 11 Pacific island states, are signatories of the 1986 Treaty of Rarotonga, which declared the South Pacific to be a nuclear-free zone. The treaty was, to a large extent, a response to the testing of nuclear bombs in the Pacific: Between 1946 and 1966 alone, the US, the UK and France carried out some 300 nuclear detonations in the Pacific. Back in 1952, NATO’s first Secretary General Lord Hasting Ismay clarified that NATO was about keeping “the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down”.

AUKUS, on the other hand, is effectively an anti-China military alliance, and its main *raison d’être* is to limit Beijing’s increasingly assertive claims to the territories and maritime zones in the East and South China seas. At the same time, AUKUS aims to enable the US to project power across – and preserve its “sphere of influence” in – the Western and South Pacific, an area which is about 8,500km (5282 miles) from the US coast. Just as important as AUKUS, is a less talked about trilateral strategic grouping composed by Japan, the Philippine and the US (JAPHUS), which on June 1 launched its first-ever joint naval drills. This alliance – like the Quad security dialogue with Australia, India and Japan – will further enable Washington to implement its “integrated deterrence” policy against China’s hardening posture over Hong Kong, Taiwan (which manufactures over 60 percent of the world’s semiconductors and 90 percent of the most advanced ones) and other key strategic areas.

In the eyes of many Chinese intellectuals and politicians, both Taiwan and Hong Kong represent today the ultimate litmus test to heal from the final spillover effects of a “century of humiliation”, the expression adopted in China to refer to the period of intervention and subjugation of the Qing dynasty and the Republic of China by Western powers and Japan from 1839, when the British authorities attacked China due to the emperor’s decision to make opium illegal, to the 1940s.

So when Chinese and American officials speak, as happened when US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Chinese leader Xi Jinping on June 19, or when US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen visited Beijing in early July, are they listening to each other? Or are they participating in what philosopher Martin Buber described as “monologues disguised as dialogue”? Buber defined these as dialogues “in which two or more persons, meeting in space, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways” – effectively ending up talking to themselves. Buber wrote these words – in a different context of course – in 1947. Almost eight decades later they appear more prescient than ever, both in the Indo-Pacific and the world at large.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/7/20/are-china-and-the-us-listening-to-each-other>

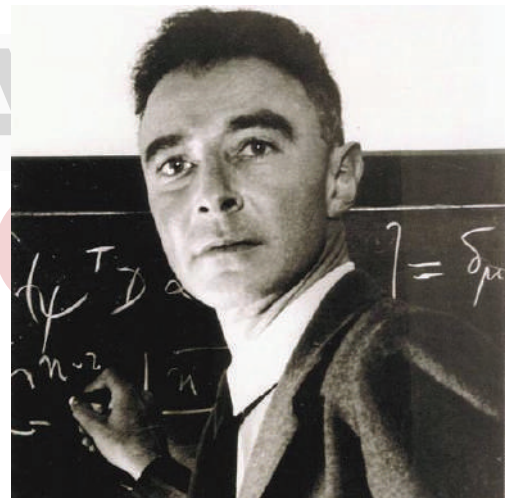
J. Robert Oppenheimer

Responsible the Design of Atomic Bomb

J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967) was an American theoretical physicist. During the Manhattan Project, Oppenheimer was director of the Los Alamos Laboratory and responsible for the research and design of an atomic bomb. He is often known as the “father of the atomic bomb.” By the time the Manhattan Project was launched in the fall of 1942, Oppenheimer was already considered an exceptional theoretical physicist and had become deeply involved in exploring the possibility of an atomic bomb. Throughout the previous year he had been doing research on fast neutrons, calculating how much material might be needed for a bomb and how efficient it might be. Although Oppenheimer had little managerial experience and some troublesome past associations with Communist causes, General Leslie Groves recognized his exceptional scientific brilliance. Less than three years after Groves selected Oppenheimer to direct weapons development, the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan. As director of the Los Alamos Laboratory, Oppenheimer proved to be an extraordinary choice. Oppenheimer was married to a botanist, Kitty. They had two children, Peter and Toni.

Early Life

Oppenheimer was born on April 22, 1904. Oppenheimer's family was part of the Ethical Culture Society, an outgrowth of American Reform Judaism founded and led at the time by Dr. Felix Adler. The progressive society placed an emphasis on social justice, civic responsibility, and secular humanism. Dr. Adler also founded the Ethical Culture School, where Oppenheimer enrolled in September 1911. His academic prowess was apparent very early on, and by the age of 10, Oppenheimer was studying minerals, physics, and chemistry. His correspondence with the New York Mineralogical Club was so advanced that the Society invited him to deliver a lecture—not realizing that Robert was a twelve-year-old boy. He graduated as valedictorian of his high school class in 1921, but fell ill with a near-fatal case of dysentery and was forced to postpone enrolling at Harvard. After being bedridden for months, his parents arranged for him to spend the summer of 1922 in New Mexico, a haven for health-seekers. Robert stayed at a dude ranch 25 miles northeast of Santa Fe with high school teacher Herbert Smith as a companion and mentor. From there, he took five- or six-day horseback trips in the wilderness. This experience restored Oppenheimer's health and instilled a deep love for the desert high country. Oppenheimer enrolled at Harvard in September 1922. He graduated in three years, excelling in a wide variety of subjects. Although he majored in chemistry, Oppenheimer eventually realized his true passion was the study of physics. In 1925, Oppenheimer began his graduate work in physics at Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge, England. J. J. Thomson, who had been awarded the 1906 Nobel Prize in Physics for detecting the electron, agreed to take on Oppenheimer as a student. At Cavendish, Oppenheimer realized that his talent was for theoretical, not experimental, physics, and he accepted an invitation from Max Born, director of the Institute of Theoretical Physics at the University of Göttingen, to study with him in Germany. Oppenheimer had the good fortune to be in Europe during a pivotal time in the world of physics, as European physicists were then developing the groundbreaking theory of quantum mechanics. Oppen-



heimer received his doctorate in 1927 and accepted professorships at the University of California, Berkeley, and the California Institute of Technology. At Berkeley, he became good friends with Ernest Lawrence, one of the world's top experimental physicists and the inventor of the cyclotron. Lawrence named his second son after Robert.

Later Years

After the war Oppenheimer became an advisor of the Atomic Energy Commission, lobbying for international arms control. Beginning in 1947, Oppenheimer directed the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, where he convened great scientists. "What we don't understand, we explain to each other." His security clearance was revoked in 1954 in a hearing during the Second Red Scare. Oppenheimer's old Communist sympathies were dredged up and his clearance was revoked a mere 32 hours before it was set to expire. Oppenheimer had made political enemies by arguing against the development of the hydrogen bomb, and revoking his clearance stripped him of political power. The scientific community was outraged at the treatment of Oppenheimer, and reviled Edward Teller, who testified against him at the hearing. For more information, please see Oppenheimer Security Hearing. Along with Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, and Joseph Rotblat he established the World Academy of Art and Science in 1960. He continued lecturing around the world, and was awarded the Enrico Fermi Award in 1963. He died of throat cancer in 1967.

J. Robert Oppenheimer's Timeline

1904 Apr 22nd Born in New York, New York.

1911 Sep Enrolled in the Ethical Cultural School in New York City.

1921 Graduated as valedictorian of his high school class.

1922 After being bedridden with dysentery, spent the summer in New Mexico to recuperate.

1922 Enrolled at Harvard University.

1925 Began graduate work in physics at Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge, England under J. J. Thomson.

1926 Moved from Cavendish Laboratory to the University of Göttingen to finish his graduate studies under Max Born.

1927 Received Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Göttingen.

1927 Joined the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, and Caltech.

1942 Jan Organized a program on fast neutron theoretical physics at the University of California at Berkeley.

1942 Jun Joined the Chicago Met Lab to lead an effort on fast neutron physics, and prepared an outline for the entire neutron physics program.

1942 Jul 1942 Sep Assembled theoretical study group in Berkeley to examine the principles of bomb design. Emerged as the natural leader.

1942 Sep 29th Proposed that a "fast-neutron lab" to study fast neutron physics and develop designs for an atomic bomb be created.

1942 Oct 15th General Leslie R. Groves asked J. Robert Oppenheimer to head Project Y, planned to be the new central laboratory for weapon physics research and design.

1942 Oct 19th Vannevar Bush approves Oppenheimer's appointment in meeting with Oppenheimer and General Groves.

1942 Nov 16th General Groves and Oppenheimer visit the Los Alamos, NM mesa in New Mexico and select it for "Site Y."

1943 1945 Director of the Los Alamos Laboratory.

1945 Jul 16th To his immense relief, witnessed the successful Trinity test.

1945 Oct 16th Resigns as director of Los Alamos Laboratory, accepting a post at CalTech.

1947 Became director of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey.

1954 Jun 29th Oppenheimer's security clearance was revoked by the US Atomic Energy Commission, just 32 hours before it was set to expire.

1963 Dec 2nd Received the Enrico Fermi Award.

1967 Feb 18th Died in Princeton, New Jersey.

[https://ahf.nuclearmuseum.org/ahf/profile/j-robert-oppenheimer/#:-:text=J.%20Robert%20Oppenheimer%20\(1904%2D,design%20of%20an%20atomic%20bomb](https://ahf.nuclearmuseum.org/ahf/profile/j-robert-oppenheimer/#:-:text=J.%20Robert%20Oppenheimer%20(1904%2D,design%20of%20an%20atomic%20bomb)

Forgotten Histories



By: Arifa Noor

IT turns out this Eid, many people of Pakistan didn't just have their hands full with animals and qurbani or other festive chores. A report in Dawn claimed that many also found the time to keep the police on their toes and ensure the 'wrong' kind of people did not celebrate Eid. In at least two such complaints, the police were told to make sure the Ahmadi community did not sacrifice animals, which is a ritual for Muslims. Apparently, FIRs were also registered against those who did not heed the warnings duly issued by the police. This is a story which made it to the papers for usually our treatment of this community is so routine that it rarely makes it to the press. Indeed, stories of the desecration of their graves or other forms of harassment usually pass without remark. Our success in othering our own countrymen, especially on the basis of religion or even sectarian differences, is an example of continuity in policy that perhaps is unmatched; even our obsession with real estate came much later. And proof of this can be found in the barrage of news stories which simply tell of events such as the kidnapping or conversion of Hindu girls or the targeted killings of Sikhs. What life for anyone of our minorities is like, their day-to-day existence, we never really learn of. The 'other' simply exists. There is little else to be aspired to. Only perhaps in death or some extreme hardship are they worthy of some sympathy. This is one area, where perhaps India has caught up with us, despite our completely different trajectories in other areas where our neighbour is seen as an economic powerhouse being courted by the world.

It seems that Pakistan and India are hurtling down the same path of religious intolerance.

The land which once celebrated Amar Akbar Anthony is now one where stories of minorities being mistreated have become common. Just recently, two such men were brutally beaten on the suspicion of carrying beef; while one of them has since died, the other was said to be in hospital with brain injury. Our journey here has been rather different: with the Muslim faith providing the main ideological bulwark for this country, it is little wonder majoritarianism was pushed in one form or the other from the first day in Pakistan, the Aug 11 speech notwithstanding. And then, of course, the arrival of Ziaul Haq was simply the cherry on top, in more ways than one. His reign also absolved the rest of us of any responsibility or blame for the state of affairs, for it was far easier to put all the horrors of religious intolerance at his door. India, on the other hand, opted for a secular, more encompassing approach to unite a more diverse society. But that appears to be a lifetime ago now. Amar Akbar Anthony has given way to Padmavat. And while our Islamisation project was a top-down affair from day one, India has followed suit only recently — but the change has come, decisively, or so say some. Now it seems, the two neighbours are hurtling down the same path.

From a distance, it doesn't seem this journey has any roadblocks or turns which can take us in different directions. At home, there appears to be little in our politics to suggest any party or government can chart a different course; one simply has to examine the legislative record of the Punjab Assembly where every conservative and regressive law has garnered — across the aisle — consensus to understand this. And from the little I hear of our next-door neighbour, few feel that even if a different government were to be elected, it would lead to big changes on the issue of tolerance. As an aside (it is called an 'aside' because little matters in comparison to the issue of citizens being in danger or facing humiliation simply for their faith into which they were born), this obsession with majoritarianism manifests in other ways as well. Consider that in Pakistan, while we are vocal about state-imposed censorship, we rarely speak of how much we self-censor when it comes to issues related to religion.

So much so that few are willing to speak up for cases such as Junaid Hafeez's and the need for reform in our laws, which lead to the needless and cruel incarceration of people such as him. It is far easier and safer to keep silent than speak up. However, personally what intrigues me is not how we got here but how significant this period may turn out to be in the history of the region. After all, the subcontinent has always appeared to be a region far too populous and far too diverse to be too homogenous in terms of language, culture or religion. None of its rulers were able to impose a specific religion on the area, and to date, some of the most admired monarchs tend to be the ones who celebrated the diversity of the land. Not just that, this was also a land which became home to so many who came from afar (for different reasons) and settled here, never to return — or to push out the locals. This doesn't only include those who came with raiding armies such as the Mughals. Consider the Parsi community, which escaped persecution in their homeland of Iran to settle in the subcontinent. How generous and tolerant a culture or land it must have been for a persecuted community to settle here and call it home. It is a story that never fails to make me a wee teary-eyed, especially at present. Was it the only such example of the land providing refuge and a home to those who needed it? And what was it about the subcontinent that people looking for a new start as well as safety were willing to risk the journey here? But today that is just history. History that we are not even proud of, for we would rather write or squabble over the wars and the invasions that comprise the official story of this land.



IMPORTANT NOTICE

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Expanding Cyber-Crimes: How to prevent and control?

By Muhammad Shahbaz Ali Advocate



Internet is, no doubt, a ready-made miraculous ocean of the treasures of information, entertainment, and education. A person of every age, region, religion, community and profession can utilize this ocean, at the one single click of his/ her finger, living at any corner of the world. This internet is a researcher's library, the educator's institution, the doctor's teaching-hospital, the engineer's technical skills, the designer's art, the entertainment seeker's studio, the student's teacher, the player's play-ground, and every thing for every one. The benefits and utilizations of today's information & Communication Technology (ICT) are unbelievable, which has digitalized every walk of life, like a living miracle of a soft revolution. Cybercrime has become expanding phenomenon all over the world and Pakistan stands at the 7th top position in the electronic crime committers. Common people cannot understand the cunning nature of the cyber criminals as they are unable to grasp any fixed shape of these crimes. Any exact definition of cyber crime has not been coined yet but it can be described as a criminal act carried out on internet. According to Grabosky cyber crime means, "Any computer related crime such as digital child pornography, piracy, stalking, forgery, harassment and intellectual property, hacking or drug trafficking with digital proof." (Grabosky 2004). In Pakistan cybercrime is immensely increased in the present decade, but its nature is different in teenagers, children and mature ones. With the expanding growth of internet in Pakistan, there is also exceptional crime rate as well. Presently, the internet has penetrated very rapidly in the society and every department of the govt that Pakistan is bound to regulate its process by law. But it has its dark side too. Like other crimes in the world, it has also created space for the criminals to commit cyber crimes and befool the ignorants by making fake accounts, hacking acts, and other cyber crimes. Mostly, unavailability of net service (DDoS), the remote hacker's Botnets, the stealing of funds by identity thefts, the harassments by cyber stalking, the social engineering by phone or email, the malware of unwanted programs called Pups, the Phishing by malicious emails, the sharing of prohibited and illegal contents, the online scams for money, the control of other's computers by exploit kits, and the internet gambling like casino games, lucky draws and other skill games etc. The prominent cybercrimes observed on internet in Pakistan are sometimes turned into cyber terrorism when terroristic cyber attacks are carried out. Today, social media is full of fake accounts, fake posts, fake information and fake pics. The job posts are just for taking money out of the applicants. The fake offer letters of jobs are drafted in

homes and presented to the applicants from the foreign companies. In such ventures, a Pakistani man deals with the customers and another Pakistani living in USA / Canada or Europe gives the final touch to the fake deal just for money. Even both the agents show their fake cards to satisfy the clients. Similarly, most of the loan apps and their advertising posts pretend to be real but their loopholes of language, artificiality and big offers etc. expose their fake origin. So, cyber space has become the crime ground for the cybercrime committers. Further more, the criminal attitude of digital piracy, the direct contact with teenagers and children to engage them in sexual acts and persuade them to exchange pornography etc. The face book, you tube, SMSs and fake WhatsApp messages are the main tools on social media crimes in Pakistan. Although Pakistan has formulated some cyber crimes laws like, Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 (PECA), Payments & Electronic fund transfer Act, 2007, and Electronic Translations Ordinance 2002, but they are not sufficient laws to control the Cyber crimes in Pakistan. Similarly, the Cyber Crime wing, CCW, of FIA guided by PECA is not producing desired results. Social Media has more fake accounts than real ones but there is no law to trace and punish them. China and Saudia Arabia have successfully implemented the internet filtering for the net users at the ISPs and Govt level for the purpose of blocking websites with the keywords of terrorism, bomb-making recipes and pornography etc. But proper legislation is required to infiltrate the incoming net traffic before it's access to the net users. The people committing cybercrimes should be dealt strictly and laws amended with the passage of time. To deal with cybercrimes in Pakistan, "Prevention of Electronic Crime Act" was legislated in 2016 and FIA was given authority to enforce it. FIA has tried to implement it successfully but still there remains some flaws. Govt level policy on cybercrime is not clear, investigation technique is yet not on the surface, old registration system still prevails, the FIA officials are not fully expert and trained and offices of FIA are established at divisional levels whereas crimes are being committed on street and union council level day by day. Following measures should be taken to control the Cyber Crimes in Pakistan. First of all, further comprehensive Cyber laws should be formulated to regulate the crimes under separate sections which are increasing day by day and missed in PECA. Secondly, the existing PECA is a good foundation for further relevant laws as it is not as detailed as it should be in 2023. Thirdly, the divisional level regional offices of FIA should be established at Tehsil levels where tehsil level courts also be established to decide the crimes. Fourthly, cyber crime wings should be established in every Police Station for FIR as police is registering FIR of other crimes. If FIA, military, academia and police deal the cybercrimes at different levels, crimes can be controlled collectively.

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Part - 10

Forced Marriage: A Violation of Human Rights

By **Munazza Abbasi M.A LL.B (Hons)**



The practical effects of the Forced Marriage Act

As discussed in the previous issue, mediation has proved to be an erroneous solution to the issue of forced marriage. The Forced Marriage Act therefore, whilst taking this into account, resolves this issue by offering that proceedings for protection against a forced marriage are to be brought through family courts instead of mediation. Orders can be made on an ex parte basis, where legal proceedings can be brought by one person in the absence of, and without representation or notification of the other parties. The FMA brought about new changes, and is considered to be “a major step in the right direction.” For the first time, powers of arrest are attached to incidents where there has been violence used against a victim. Such powers could previously only be attached by the High Court. Such a tool, therefore, has proved to be “a valuable and essential weapon in the fight against forced marriage” (Per Judge Munby J).

Emphasis is to be positioned on the fact that a third party, which could be anyone, can apply for the protection order on behalf of the victim, against anyone who may have a role in the forced marriage that has, or is about to take place. The geographical scope is not limited to the jurisdiction of England and Wales as conducts occurring abroad in connection with the forced marriage can be given an injunction. This potential international scope of the orders raises significant issues of international enforcement. Furthermore, legal aid is offered to victims abroad. However, the court will not delay a case if forms are not returned on time. The FMA 2007 is an important social reforming statute...protecting the right to marry. However, as Lord Dholakia suggests that “Its effectiveness however, can only be judged in practice”. For example, the act against female genital mutilation has been on the books for 23 years without a single prosecution being made on it. The Act must therefore be supported in co-operation with other resources, as Baroness Uddin stated that “a solitary Act...without sufficient practical and mainstream support...will not be able to eradicate forced marriage.” On the contrary, some organisations such as Imkaan, a non-profitable organisation, have expressed the concern that the Act may deter some women from coming forward, as it asks them to completely isolate themselves from their family and community in a very public way. Furthermore, the rules that govern the validity of marriages under the UK law, is the recognition that marriages vary depending on the country in which they took place. For example, if a marriage is regarded valid in the country where it took place, under most circumstances it will also be considered valid in the UK. Therefore, legal advice must be sought. The outcome varies where it is a religious or civil marriage. For instance, a religious divorce is not valid in the UK. However, authorities should never assume that a marriage is invalid simply because the victim says it was forced. In some circumstances, this will not be the case. As Munby J suggests, that “the real danger is the danger of stereotyping... it is important not to jump to assumptions based on stereotyping” that an allegation made against someone forcing the victim into marriage must be correct. In some cases, that person could be entirely innocent. This concern was also raised in the second reading of the FM Bill in the House of Lords by Lord Sheikh, representing the Conservative Muslims Forum. Therefore, the problem of proof in forced marriage cases is no less difficult than in other cases, such as rape.

Success of the Act:

Family law lawyer Anne-Marie Hutchinson OBE, who has dealt with cases of involuntary marriages confirms that since the FMA 2007, there has been an increase in the cases of forced marriages. Especially those designated to county courts are coming forward. However, as she correctly states that it is “not an increase in the incidents, but in the identifying of them.” Jasvinder Sanghera, head of support group Karma Nirvana, said that since the law was announced on 25 November, “the number of calls we have been taking has tripled”, as more young people feel that they are able to come forward. Those cases that previously would have been concealed or unreported by victims are now being reported, not just by the victims, but also by persons fearing for the victim’s safety and protection.

A breakthrough of the success of the Act was seen in the case of Dr Humeyra Abedin. A Bangladesh court’s decision in Dhaka to order her release has been hailed involved a Bangladeshi doctor in the UK who went to Bangladesh to pay a visit to her as a “landmark” ruling by her lawyer Anne-Marie Hutchinson OBE. The case “sick” mother. On reaching the country, she realised that her mother being ill was merely an excuse to get her to go to Bangladesh so she could get married to a spouse her parents had chosen for her. On immediate arrival she was locked into a room, with her passport and travel tickets confiscated. She could not escape the marriage, as she was held captive for four months in her native country, with four to five guards watching over her at any one time, and she was coerced into going ahead with the marriage ceremony. She was daily injected with anti-psychotic drugs and mood stabilisers at a psychiatric hospital, and told she would not be discharged until she declared that she will not be returning to the UK and will break all connections with anyone in the UK.

The only support she received was from her cousin who contacted lawyers at a human rights NGO, Ain o Shalish Kendro (ASK), who intervened. The High Court of Dhaka ordered her parents to come to the court and present her in person, which her parents refused to obey on many occasions. They felt that Humeyra should remain in their custody on the basis that she was not married and that she was mentally ill. The UK intervened when she managed to smuggle out an email to a friend in the UK. The High Court ordered the Commissioner and court officers at the trial where she was finally presented in person, to escort her to the British High Commission to ensure her safe return to the UK. It was the first case that utilised the FMA 2007, through which injunctions were successfully issued against Dr Abedin’s parents, a paternal uncle and the man she was allegedly forced to marry. Mr Justice Coleridge said “I shall grant further orders to protect Dr Abedin and prevent her being removed from this country again.” The case received immense media coverage especially due to its timing (shortly after the FMA 2007 came into action), and because she was unusually very educated, and was abroad. It was the first case where the UK used the new legislation to help a victim who was not a British national. However, as her lawyer suggests, the issue of nationality is not of relevance under the Act. The case is a landmark case, as “[t]he profile it’s [the case] received means that other people will feel that they can come forward and seek the relief that, as Mr Justice Coleridge said, they’re entitled to.”

The second incident of availing the protection orders was seen in a case in Lancashire where the police applied for orders to prevent a father from taking his daughter to Pakistan for marrying a partner he had chosen for her some years ago. The father was made to forfeit his passport and was successfully prohibited from taking his daughter abroad, safeguarding her position in the UK. Forced marriage no longer remains a “taboo topic”, and it is suggested that the Forced Marriage Act will go a long way towards tackling that pernicious practice, and is a shining example of cross-party co-operation to tackle the dreadful problem of people who are forced to marry. Furthermore, the point of a law against forced marriage is that it would enshrine a woman’s right to say ‘no’ sending a powerful message that Britain regards all young women, regardless of their origin, as individuals and not possessions.

Quebec's public health

insurer hangs up on Anglophone woman for speaking English

By: Allison Hanes

Susan Starkey's husband has been "through hell" in the last five months, going from a "fairly fit" 82-year-old to having to be fed with a tube. "There was twice when we didn't think he was going to make it," said Starkey, a 75-year-old Pointe-Claire resident, using her maiden name to protect her spouse's privacy. After being hospitalized for five months at three different institutions, her husband was finally strong enough to return home in June, albeit with a feeding tube. His only nourishment is a special prescription diet of ISO-Pro that Starkey picks up at their local pharmacy.



The first time she went to get it, the formula was not covered by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec. The second time it was. The third time it was partially subsidized. The pharmacy told Starkey she had to call RAMQ to sort things out. But when she tried to explain the situation in English to the public servant who answered the phone, he refused to listen. "He said: 'I don't have to speak to you in English, speak French.' And I said: 'I can't speak enough for you to understand me or me to understand you.' He said: 'Then go get somebody.' I said: 'I can't, I'm alone,'" Starkey recounted. "I said: 'Is there nobody there who can speak to me in English?' And that's when he hung up on me." It wasn't that the civil servant at the end of the line wasn't capable of speaking English. "He spoke English like you and I. He had no accent, anything," she said. "He wouldn't let me speak any English. He just kept cutting me off. "At the end, I said: 'We were guaranteed (English) for medical things.'" When Bill 96 was adopted over a year ago, serious concerns were raised that access to health services in English would be compromised by the sweeping measures to promote French. But if we are to take Quebec Premier François Legault at his word, the law "changes nothing" when it comes to health care. Legault has repeatedly insisted that any claims to the contrary are unfounded "disinformation." "I want to reassure anyone speaking English, including immigrants, that we will not refuse to treat patients in English if it's needed," he said. And at no point during her husband's five-month medical odyssey at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Ste. Anne's Hospital and the Catherine Booth rehabilitation facility did they encounter any issues with being served in English. "Everyone was wonderful," Starkey said — or at least until she had to call up the RAMQ. But — though it may be lost on the average Quebecer — it turns out there's a distinction to be made between health care and health insurance when it comes to changes under Bill 96. According to Caroline Dupont, a spokesperson for the RAMQ: "The services of RAMQ are not considered as part of the services offered by the health network. We must conform with the dispositions of Bill 96. In keeping with the new articles of the Charte de la langue française, ministries and government organizations, including the RAMQ, must demonstrate the exemplary use of French." So since June 1, the RAMQ — like the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec or city hall — is allowed to communicate in English only with a narrow subset of the population. Those deemed eligible include Quebecers who have previously received services in English, Indigenous people and immigrants who have been here less than six months. Those seeking services in English, whether from the RAMQ or the Régie du bâtiment, must now "attest" in "good faith" that they qualify — even to simply look at the English content on a public website. However, Dupont said the RAMQ has adopted a two-year transitional policy to "modulate the duty of exemplarity to respond to the needs of our clientele," if all reasonable efforts to communicate in French have been exhausted and "the exclusive use of French to accom-

plish the mission of the RAMQ would be compromised.” That health insurance doesn’t count as health care given how closely they are entwined is one of those subtle nuances of Bill 96 that expose its absurdities and the emptiness of promises about nothing changing. But it still doesn’t explain — or excuse — Starkey’s experience, since both she and her husband should qualify for service in English no matter what. Her husband is an anglophone who has lived in Quebec all his life. And though she was born in Alberta, Starkey has spent most of her adult years here, first arriving in 1968. The guy on the phone didn’t even try to ascertain if she was “entitled” to speak to him in English. But anecdotally, some public servants may be interpreting Bill 96 more rigidly, while others may legitimately fear repercussions if they fall afoul of the new rules, even to be helpful. Some may be overzealous. And a few may be emboldened to be jerks. A bureaucrat in the province’s Ministry of Natural Resources recently rejected a death certificate issued by Quebec in English to settle an estate without a certified French translation, while the off-island municipality of Notre-Dame-de-l’Île-Perrot decided not to show any English films during its outdoor screenings this summer out of concern it could violate Bill 96. But these examples, though ridiculous, pale in comparison to the heartlessness of refusing to help a vulnerable senior. The ISO-Pro that Starkey’s husband needs is expensive and the couple don’t have private insurance. Her husband can’t speak or advocate for himself. Starkey said she has been under immense stress and has put off her own surgery for spinal stenosis to care for her husband. The ordeal with the RAMQ left her shaken. “It took me two days to be able to talk about it. I got off the phone, I was stunned. I was so humiliated because I’ve taken a gazillion French courses. But I’ve had a couple of bad head injuries where I’ve lost most of it. And I was never very good at language or at music. I can speak more than I can understand,” she said. “I was so humiliated and angry.”

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/columnists/allison-hanes-hung-up-on-by-the-ramq-for-speaking-english/wcm/33b057eb-aaaa-4750-9d94-3519c257a55c>

Neither Living Nor Dead Ahmadis Protected In Jhelum As Graves Vandalized

Unidentified vandals have defaced and smashed the tombstones of some Ahmadi elders in Jhelum. Locals said that the vandals had sprayed the epitaphs on at least two graves with black paint and ink, while some tombstones were also smashed. The graves belonged to three elders of the local Ahmadiyya community and are highly respected. The defaced graves were noticed by locals recently, and they believe that the activity was conducted in the second week of July. This is not the first such incident where Ahmadi graves have been vandalized, nor of Ahmadis being targeted in Jhelum in recent weeks. Earlier in July, police demolished the minarets atop an Ahmadi worship place in the Kalan Gujar area of the district after the local head of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) chapter threatened the police they would take voluntary action unless the minarets were demolished before Muharram. On July 5, unidentified individuals vandalized the graves of three Ahmadis buried in the joint cemetery at Qaziyan Chowk in Kotli, Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK). In the first week of July 2023, the local administration of Sheikhpura in the neighbouring Punjab province removed the inscriptions and epitaphs from the graves of 10 Ahmadis buried in the joint cemetery of Kijarwala.



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<https://www.thefridaytimes.com/2023/07/20/neither-living-nor-dead-ahmadis-protected-in-jhelum-as-graves-vandalized/>



United Nations

UNITED NATIONS STATEMENT

Türkiye must not deport members of the **Ahmadi Religion** of Peace and Light seeking asylum: UN experts

GENEVA (4 July 2023) – UN human rights experts* are asking Türkiye not to deport over 100 members of a persecuted religious minority who were detained at the Turkish-Bulgarian border last month. They also called on the Government to conduct a proper risk assessment of their situation to prevent any refoulement that may result in serious violations of their rights. “Under international law, the Government of Türkiye is called to act in line with its obligation not to deport 101 members of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light, who may be at risk of serious human rights violations if they are returned to their countries of origin,” the experts said. On 24 May 2023, a group of 104 members of the religious minority, including 27 women and 22 children, presented themselves at the Turkish side of the Kapikule border seeking access to asylum in Bulgaria. Turkish Police reportedly blocked them using excessive force, resulting in the injury of at least 30 members of the group, including nine women. Turkish authorities took them into custody at the Edirne police station. The experts said many reported having been tortured or subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment by police officers, including beatings, sexual harassment and intentional deprivation of sleep. The group was then transferred to the Edirne deportation centre and the Turkish Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a deportation order for 101 individuals.

“Since the inception of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light in 1999, its members have been labelled as heretics and infidels and are often subjected to threats, violence, and illegal detention,” the UN experts said. “They are particularly at risk of detention due to blasphemy laws, in violation of their right to freedom of religion or belief,” they said. The group is composed of individuals who moved to Türkiye from different Muslim-majority countries having fled due to religious persecution. The experts said one of the individuals at risk of deportation spent six months in jail in his country of origin, having been accused of crimes such as denigrating Islam and offending the Prophet. Another 15 were recently released on bail after being arrested for belonging to what is considered a ‘deviant sect’ in their country. “The prohibition of refoulement is absolute and non-derogable under international human rights and refugee law,” the experts said. “States are obliged not to remove any individual from their territory when there are substantial grounds to believe the person could be subjected to serious human rights violations in the State of destination,” the UN experts said. “Given the risks of human rights violations this group faces as a religious minority, Türkiye is required to make an individual, impartial and independent assessment of the protection needs of each person and the risks they may face if returned to their countries,” the experts said.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/07/turkiye-must-not-deport-members-ahmadi-religion-peace-and-light-seeking>

Tunisia to receive €1bn from EU to combat people smuggling and bolster economy

DUBAI: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and the premiers of two EU member states will travel to Tunisia on Sunday to finalize a deal worth more than €1 billion (\$1.12 billion) that aims to combat people smuggling and human trafficking, and help boost the country's ailing economy. Citing unnamed sources, The Guardian newspaper reported on Friday that the prime ministers of Italy and the Netherlands will join the head of the commission to sign off on a memorandum of understanding with the Mediterranean country. The trip comes a month after the



three European leaders reportedly flew to Tunisia to propose a €900m package of financial assistance, with a further €150 million to support reforms ordered by the International Monetary Fund. The follow-up trip will come shortly after a number of European parliamentarians warned against handing Tunisia the deal on a "silver plate" amid growing fears of a "break-down" in the country's democracy.

As part of the package, a further €105m would be allocated as part of a new partnership to fight people-smuggling and human trafficking, and prevents the tragedies of migrants who drown while trying to reach other countries in the hope of a better life. After the Tunisian president Kais Saied's announcement that his country would not be Europe's "border guard," the EU has been eager to stress the wider economic benefits of the package in a bid to end an impasse in negotiations. The Guardian said the EU was eager to sign the memorandum to show member states in which migration has become a major political issue that it is working to reduce numbers of people crossing borders. This month, Mark Rutte, prime minister of the Netherlands, said he would quit politics after upcoming elections because the Dutch government had collapsed in a disagreement over migration. The agreement with Tunisia has been heavily criticized by some members of European parliaments. "It was not right that Tunisia should be given €1 billion on a silver plate. That cannot happen," said French MEP Mounir Satouri. Matjaz Nemec, a Slovenian MEP for the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, said: "The European Union cannot be part of, or complicit in, the breakdown of Tunisian democracy by President Saied. We need all European institutions united in our call that the money released needs to be conditioned on full respect for human rights, democracy and, of course, rule of law." The EU package includes a comprehensive air-transport agreement that could help boost tourism and a €150 million digital cable link to Europe to support research and education. Under a compromise deal worked out last month, new legislation on processes for asylum seekers will allow individual countries to decide whether Tunisia should be considered a safe country for migrants.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2338231/middle-east>

Muslims stand ‘shoulder to shoulder’ at **largest Islamic convention in UK**

The largest Islamic convention in the UK is taking place this weekend where around 40,000 Muslims will gather from at home and overseas.

By: Hannah Cottrell



Muslims spoke about the importance of “standing shoulder to shoulder” as a community as they attended the first day of the largest Islamic convention in the UK. Around 40,000 Muslims are expected to attend the Jalsa Salana, which began on Friday and ends on Sunday – with some travelling from overseas to reach Oakland Farm in Alton, Hampshire, where the convention takes place. Fraz Ahmad, 19, a law student from Bradford – who said he journeyed for five hours on Friday morning to reach Alton, told the PA news agency: “I think it’s really important to remove the misconceptions around Islam and change the narrative, change the perspective, that people have upon it. “By people coming here and having a look at what true Islam looks like, and what we believe Islam is about, that’s the only way that narrative is going to change.”

The convention, which is in its 57th year, was formed with the help of around 5,000 volunteers from the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, which is deemed to be the fastest growing sect within Islam. The convention offers people that chance to come together to “self-reflect” and “focus on spiritual goals for the coming year” and also features several highly symbolic services and sermons from the leader, or Caliph, of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad. On Friday, the Caliph hoisted the flag for the community alongside the Union flag, which was raised by Rafiq Hayat, the national president of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association in the UK. It was followed by a sermon from the Caliph, who addressed the current issues facing the community and society as a whole. Across the weekend, around 270,000 meals will also be prepared onsite by the volunteers, and the bread factory at the convention provides around 9,000 rotis – a flatbread which is eaten with

meals – every hour for the attendees.

Sarah Ward, a 43-year-old primary school teacher from Kingston, south-west London, said it is “really nice” to see the diversity of the Muslim community as well as the unity that comes with the convention. “We know, as Muslim women, we’re very diverse, we’re not monolith, we’re from different backgrounds, we have different skills, we have different passions, we do different jobs, but we come together as one community,” the mother-of-three told PA. “We’re united under our Caliph, and it’s really nice to see that diversity yet that unity that’s there.” Of the Jalsa Salana, Ms Ward added: “As much as Jalsa changes – in that the marquees might be bigger or we might have more facilities – the essence of why we come to Jalsa is exactly the same. “We come here to listen to the speeches of our Caliph, to self-reflect, to self-improve.

“It’s a pause in the year where we come together and we just have that space to enjoy our sisterhood and focus on our spiritual goals for the coming year, and you always come away quite refreshed.” Munazzah Chou, 38, from Farnham, said the five daily prayers – which also include an “extra special” morning prayer at the convention – are made “more amazing” due to the “sheer scale” of the Jalsa Salana. “During Jalsa, everybody gets together and it’s an amazing experience,” Ms Chou, a doctor, told PA. “Prayer, in general, is all about coming together, standing shoulder to shoulder in a row, there’s no hierarchy, and during Jalsa, the sheer scale of it makes it more amazing.” The mother-of-three added that the convention provides “the feeling of sisterhood” and allows attendees to “[express] our morals”.

“Hospitality is a huge part of being a Muslim, so being hospitable towards travellers and everybody you meet, it’s a big part of that, and every year we get an experience of that”, she added. Meals are to be cooked onsite over the course of the weekend, with 772 pots of food made to cater for the convention on Friday alone. The kitchen also plans to prepare around 270,000 meals in total from South Asian and European cuisines across the three days.

Javed Uddin, 57, from Leicester – who has been preparing meals for the convention for over 20 years, said he “loves working here”. “We’re all different ages, we come from different parts of the UK and abroad, and we all work together,” Mr Uddin told PA. “We usually cook dahls, which is lentils, in the afternoon, and then we cook lamb and potatoes in the evening.” Mr Uddin, who works at Asda, added: “When you do worldly things, you can work here like 14, 15 hours, which I’ve done many times, and you’re shattered and finishing at three, four, five o’clock in the morning, but it just keeps you going.”

The site is also equipped with a roti-making factory, which produces around 9,000 rotis every hour which are then hand-packaged and sent across the site. Fathay Rashid, 31, from London – who has been working in the onsite factory for around 10 years, said around 350,000 rotis will be prepared across the course of the three-day convention. “All the people you see every year, they’re like family, home.” On Saturday the Caliph will address the women in the female section of the convention, while all attendees will gather to pledge allegiance to the Caliph in a human chain formed of 40,000 people on Sunday. Mr Rashid, who is a pilot, said they begin making the dough batches for the roti at 3am, the bread of which consists of whole wheat flour, water, sugar and yeast. Of his role at the Jalsa Salana, he said: “I love it. Every year I come back to do this, it’s voluntary work.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/muslims-islamic-alton-hampshire-ahmadiyya-muslim-community-b2384129.html>

In Japan, which bans dual custody, a table tennis star refuses to hand back her son to her ex

By: Mari Yamaguchi

TOKYO: Japan's once beloved table tennis star Ai Fukuhara is at the center of a child custody feud following the breakup of her marriage to a Taiwanese player who was also a star in the sport in his country. On Thursday, her former husband Chiang Hung-chieh and his lawyers demanded Fukuhara return their younger child she took to Japan last year and has since refused to send back in alleged breach of a joint custody agreement. Unlike many other countries, Japan doesn't allow dual custody take the children for their divorced parents. Only one parent can take the children, though the other parent can gain visitation rights. In some cases, the parent with custody blocks contact with the other one. There have been some high-profile cases of custody disputes brought up by foreign husbands divorced from Japanese women accusing them of child abduction.



The couple were legally divorced under Taiwanese law in July 2021 after five years of marriage. They agreed to share custody of their two children — a daughter and a son. Both had been living with Chiang until last summer, when Fukuhara returned to Japan with the younger child. The plan was for the boy to spend the summer with Fukuhara in Japan, but she has since cut off contact with her ex-husband, refusing to bring the son back to Taiwan, Chiang's lawyers told a joint news conference in Tokyo. Chiang urged Fukuhara to follow the Japanese family court ruling and "bring the younger child back to me as soon as possible." In Japan, where child-rearing and homemaking are still viewed as women's tasks, mothers are still considered to be primarily responsible for children. Women whose marriages break down often end up as single mothers.

Joint custody has become a divisive issue in Japan because of concerns that it would be more difficult to protect victims of domestic violence. Chiang's Japanese lawyer, Aiko Ohbuchi, said Chiang won a court decision on July 20 ordering Fukuhara to return the child to him in Taiwan immediately. The next day, Chiang's side asked the court to enforce the order. However, the Taiwanese player said he hoped Fukuhara would hand over their son, out of worry that such a process may hurt the boy's feelings. Ohbuchi said Fukuhara and the son's whereabouts are unknown and Chiang is worried that he may never get to see their son again. However, the lawyer said that Chiang wouldn't give up and his side may eventually have to consider filing a criminal complaint accusing Fukuhara of child abduction if she continues to ignore the court orders. Fukuhara's lawyers on Wednesday issued a statement on social media urging Chiang not to reveal details of their disputes with their case in Taiwan still pending.

<https://japantoday.com/category/national/in-japan-which-bans-dual-custody-a-table-tennis-star-refuses-to-hand-back-her-son-to-her-ex>

USC researchers use AI to help translate Bible into very rare languages

By: Fiona André



(RNS) — Out of the 7,100 languages that exist, the Bible has been translated into more than 700, making it the most-translated book in the world. Yet, those remaining languages — many of them extremely rare — have vexed Bible translators for decades. Two scientists are looking to new advancements in artificial intelligence to help close the gap. “We want to reach all the languages on earth; the goal is to reach everyone,” said Joel Mathew, a research engineer who alongside Ulf Hermjakob recently launched the Greek Room, an AI-powered technology to help streamline the highly technical process of biblical translation. Combining Hermjakob’s long experience with natural language processing technologies and Mathew’s field knowledge of Bible translation, the two USC Information Sciences Institute researchers developed the technology with an aim to target “very low-resource languages that are not even in the top 500,” said Mathew. The Greek Room includes three main tools: spell-checking, word alignment that ensures consistency in translation, and Wildebeest, used to detect improper characters in a script. The two scientists met in 2015 when Mathew joined USC to complete a master’s degree in computer science. There, he met Hermjakob in the AI division of the Information Sciences Institute. They bonded over a shared passion for languages and their Christian faith. Mathew, the son of two Bible translators, has observed firsthand the difficulties that come with manual translation by local church members. In his hometown, New Delhi, he took notes of all the tasks that technology could accomplish.

Spell-checking usually requires many people and time, he explained. In the context of translation into rare languages, only local church members are qualified and they don’t have technology to back their work. “These are not trivial problems; these are very hard problems. But big companies are not interested in solving them; it’s not their business model to target very rare languages,” he said. When Mathew shared with him some of the problems Indian translators faced on the ground, Hermjakob jumped at the occasion. “I always had this feeling to know how, at some point, I could apply my skills to my faith,” said Hermjakob, who earned a Ph.D. in computer science from the University of Texas. With their project, Mathew and Hermjakob want to work on languages that do not even have a written system, grammar codes,

dictionaries or spell-checkers. “We are thinking of languages like Uyghur or Oromo (Oromo is spoken in Ethiopia and Northern Kenya),” said Hermjakob. Recently, they have been approached by an Indian consultant specifically interested in the spell-checking and world-alignment tool for Bible translation in Kolami, a language spoken in western India that counts 130,000 native speakers. The Greek Room also hopes to change the traditional model of Bible translation. Historically, translations were done by Western missionaries, who could only work on two languages at most in their lifetime, explained Hermjakob. With the Greek Room, the two researchers encourage a local church-driven model.

“Local churches and local language communities are asking for translations of the Bible in their heart language,” explained Mathew, adding that in a multilingual context, the heart language is the one in which people express their deepest feelings and is usually their native language. This first version of the Greek Room focuses on quality control so translators can prioritize other tasks that require more judgment, like finding a way to translate a concept that doesn’t exist in a given language. In their next version, the two researchers want the tool to suggest better translations. Now that their codes and data are available on GitHub, they hope other users will integrate their research into their tools and innovate further. Their initiative, supported by the Wycliffe Bible Translators USA organization, is part of a broader program directed by Every Tribe, Every Nation that hopes to make the Scripture available in every language by 2033.

<https://religionnews.com/2023/07/05/usc-researchers-use-ai-to-help-translate-bible-into-very-rare-languages/>

Doctors re-attach boy's head after he was 'internally decapitated' while riding his bike



Surgeons in Israel successfully managed to re-attach a boy's head after he was hit by a car while out riding his bike. The team of doctors in Israel reattached the head of Palestinian Suleiman Hassan, 12, after he suffered an internal decapitation when he was hit by a car. The procedure involved surgically re-attaching the base of his skull to the top of his spine. Internal decapitation is an extremely rare injury which occurs when a sudden impact causes the ligaments and muscles holding the head to the top vertebrae of the spine to tear. Doctors said the boy's head had 'almost completely detached from the base of his neck' - but the skin and major blood vessels remained intact. The boy underwent several hours of surgery at Hadassah Ein Kerem's Trauma Unit in Jerusalem in early June. The hospital waited until now to announce the results. One of the surgeons who saved his life, Dr Ohad Einav, told The Times of Israel: “We fought for the boy's life.” “The procedure itself is very complicated and took several hours. While in the operating room, we used new plates and fixations in the damaged area. “Our ability to save the child was thanks to our knowledge and the most innovative technology in the operating room.” The injury is treated by fusing the skull and spinal column together using rods, screws, plates and possibly bone grafts. Suleiman's father said: “I will thank you all my life for saving my dear only son. Bless you all. “Thanks to you, he regained his life even when the odds were low and the danger was obvious. “What saved him were professionalism, technology and quick decision-making by the trauma and orthopedics team. All I can say is a big thank you.”

<https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/doctors-head-reattached-israel-palestinian-boy/>

New Jersey Man Cut Down 32 Trees

On His Neighbor's Property For A Better View & Now Faces \$1.5 Million In Fines

A homeowner in New Jersey decided that their view of the Manhattan skyline wasn't good enough and took a chainsaw to 32 of their neighbor's trees that stood on lower hillside. Grant Haber, who is a munitions expert, is the person who hired the crew to cut down the trees on property owned by Samih Shinway. Originally, Haber was hit with a fine of \$32,000 dollars (\$1,000 per fallen tree). However, an ordinance within the New Jersey town of Kinnelon specifically states that if a tree is illegally removed, the person who did the removal is obligated to replace it with another tree exactly like it, or even a superior species. So now, the fees are mounting to \$1.5 million dollars in replacement fees and fines, according to officials. Shinway was clearly heartbroken by his neighbor's decision to axe some of his trees, and though they are being replaced, he admitted he is still angered by the whole situation. Where does that \$1.5 million dollars come from you may be asking? Well, replacing the trees would be quite the difficult task. The site where the oak, maple, and birch trees used to stand would require a road built up to it, along with nurturing and watering the trees for the following two years. Including those prices with the replacement trees, new soil, and clean up would quickly add up to \$1.5 million dollars, as hard as that it to believe. I'd say that Shinway might be milking the whole thing a little bit, but good for him. The trees were on his property, and like how parents tell their kids sometimes when they are acting up, it was his house, his rules. And speaking of rules, Grant Haber (in addition to forking over money) faces a trespassing charge, as well as 32 separate illegal tree removal charges. As for Shinway, he just wants the trees replaced as fast as possible, though nothing will be able to replace the originals that ranged from 20 to 150 years old. The contractors that Haber hired to help cut down the trees will also possibly face fines around \$400,000, so the whole thing has turned into quite the legal mess. All for a better view of the cityscape and surrounding mountains... I'm thinking you might be bored with all of this "fine" this and "replant tree" that, so how about a TikTok that explains the situation and gives some commentary on the story? Yeah, I thought you'd probably be excited about that:

Farmer Harvests Between New Apartment Buildings Instead Of Selling His Land

First off, farmers aren't appreciated nearly enough for what they do, and how hard they work. These TikTok kids wouldn't last 30 seconds dancing in an Iowa cornfield, mid July. For one guy (in Poland), he took standing your ground to an entirely new level...

I get major Beau Bennett (Sam Elliott in *The Ranch*) vibes here with this level of stubbornness, by the way. According to the video, this farmer refused to sell his land to developers as they built up new apartment complexes in the area of Lublin. You see this all the time, all over the world, as towns and cities enter a booming phase of growth. However, you usually don't see such a confident middle finger to the guys in business suits.

"A farmer who cultivates his land among blocks of flats in the city of Lublin in Poland with a population of 350,000.

Black Bear Cub Pops Out Of Stump As Man Cuts Down A Tree

This could have ended poorly in so many ways...

Black bear are some of the most versatile animals out there. They're right at home in all types of terrain (including dumpsters), can swim, run, and climb trees faster than you think possible. They also don't mind being in close proximity to humans, which can cause all sorts of issues, like we see in this video. Unfortunately, there's not many details around where this took place or what the situation was, but a worker was tasked with cutting down two trees that had grown very close to one another when something entirely unexpected happened. As he made the final cut and the trunks crashed to the ground, a black bear cub seemingly

pops up right out of the stump and looks around before scampering off to safety. I mean, what? Was he living in the hollowed out base and was to scared to move when the workers arrived? It sure looks like the trees has seen better days and there was some room at the base. Or was he hiding in the brush next to it and hoped on top just for fun? Either way, this could have gone all sorts of wrong. The tree could have fallen on the poor animal or it could have been cut by the chainsaw. Or, the bear's mama could be lurking just around the corner and the workers could be in some serious trouble. Seemingly, all ended well and both man and bear got away unscathed, but my goodness that was close. You just never know what you'll find while out in the woods.

<https://www.whiskeyriff.com/2023/07/02/new-jersey-man-cut-down-32-trees-on-his-neighbors-property-for-a-better-view-now-faces-1-5-million-in-fines/>

The 1975 cancel Taiwan, Indonesia shows after kiss controversy

The 1975 have cancelled shows in Taiwan and Indonesia after from performing there. The band were recently banned from performing in Malaysia after frontman Matty Healy kissed band-mate Ross MacDonald on stage and criticised the country's anti-rainbow community laws. The band said in a statement on Instagram: "The 1975 regret to announce that their forthcoming shows in Taipei and Jakarta and planned. The band never take the decision to cancel a show lightly and had been eagerly looking forward to playing for fans in Jakarta and Taipei but unfortunately, due to current circumstances, it is impossible to proceed with the scheduled shows." The band recently performed at a three-day music festival in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. However, their performance was cut short and the event was subsequently cancelled following the on-stage deeply regret to announce that the remaining schedule of Festival 2023 has been cancelled following the controversial conduct and remarks by UK artist Matt Healy from the band The 1975. "This decision adheres to the immediate cancella-directive issued... by the Ministry of Communications Digital. "The ministry has underlined its unwavering stance against any parties that challenge, ridicule, or contravene Malaysian laws. "We sincerely apologise to all of our ticket holders, vendors, sponsors, and partners." Healy's on-stage kiss sparked controversy in Malaysia, with the band even receiving criticism from the country's rainbow community, which observed that it could actually lead to even more unwanted scrutiny. Homosexuality is a crime in Malaysia and is punishable by 20 years in prison. However, the decision to cancel the show in Taipei, Taiwan, has surprised many, as the island is known for being one of the most rainbow community-friendly places in east Asia.



<https://www.1news.co.nz/2023/07/23/the-1975-cancel-taiwan-indonesia-shows-after-kiss-controversy/>

Affordable housing is vital for the city's housing crisis.

But we need interim fixes that aren't years away



Can you wait until 2030?

According to Canada's National Housing Strategy, that's the year in which Ottawa will finally put an end to homelessness. Toronto's HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan promises similar utopian outcomes, and provinces and cities across the country have each proposed their own plans to make homelessness a thing of the past by the end of the decade. So if you're living in a tent in a city park, or bothered by the ever increasing number of people who do so, help is on the way. You just have to wait another seven years to receive it. Not exactly reassuring, is it? Especially when navigating the numerous encampments on your way to work, or find room to pitch your tent. And especially when the number of people turned away from homeless shelters is rising precipitously. The city of Toronto reports that in May, an average of 220 people a day were "unmatched" with shelters — which is euphemism for leaving people to fend for yourselves, there's no room at the inn. The inability of shelters to accommodate demand has led to a predictable increase in the number of encampments, with the city reporting 199 tent cities in mid-May, compared to 105 at that time last year. The dismantling of encampments, like what unfolded at Trinity Bellwoods and Alexandra parks in 2021, did not solve the problem. Clearly, people will continue to live on the streets until the problem of homelessness is solved, which is why everyone agrees we need more affordable housing. That said, it's all well and good to trumpet long-term affordable housing plans but what we need right now are immediate, short-term solutions. Given the itinerant nature of the encampments, those solutions to this housing crisis are beyond the capacity of any one city. Consequently, just as the federal, provincial and municipal governments have come together to propose long-term solutions, we need a unified effort by all governments to offer temporary solutions while the development of affordable housing that meets the need is developed. Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow recognizes that new affordable housing takes years to become a reality. She also recognizes that simply sweeping parks clean of homeless individuals is no solution if there's no place for them to go. "It doesn't deal with the problem. You're moving them from park to park to subways to street cars and libraries, street corners and ravines," Chow told the Star during her campaign for the June mayoralty byelection. Short-term solutions could include rental assistance and hotel rooms. During the campaign, Chow suggested the creation of respite centres to provide immediate assistance to homeless individuals, a place where they could connect with local resources and supports. She also pledged to fund 1,000 rent supplemented units that top up up low incomes such as disability benefits to enable individuals to get a permanent place. "It has to be a housing-first policy. . . . You have to have a roof over their head and then they can then get back on their feet," she said. "If they have other problems, you have wraparound services for them, whether it is counselling (for) mental health, drug addiction, treatment, all of that," Chow said. Another possibility is to replace the encampments with large, temporary emergency shelters similar to medical tents erected during natural disasters like hurricanes and earthquakes. These modular shelters could provide centralized social services to residents, while also offering safety, security and sanitation facilities frequently absent from the encampments. British Columbia is constructing a 50-bed modular shelter to replace an Abbotsford encampment that has been plagued by fires and criminal activities. To be sure, the location of such shelters will prove controversial, with the inevitable not-in-my-backyard objections of residents. But since the encampments are already in their backyard, it's preferable to offer

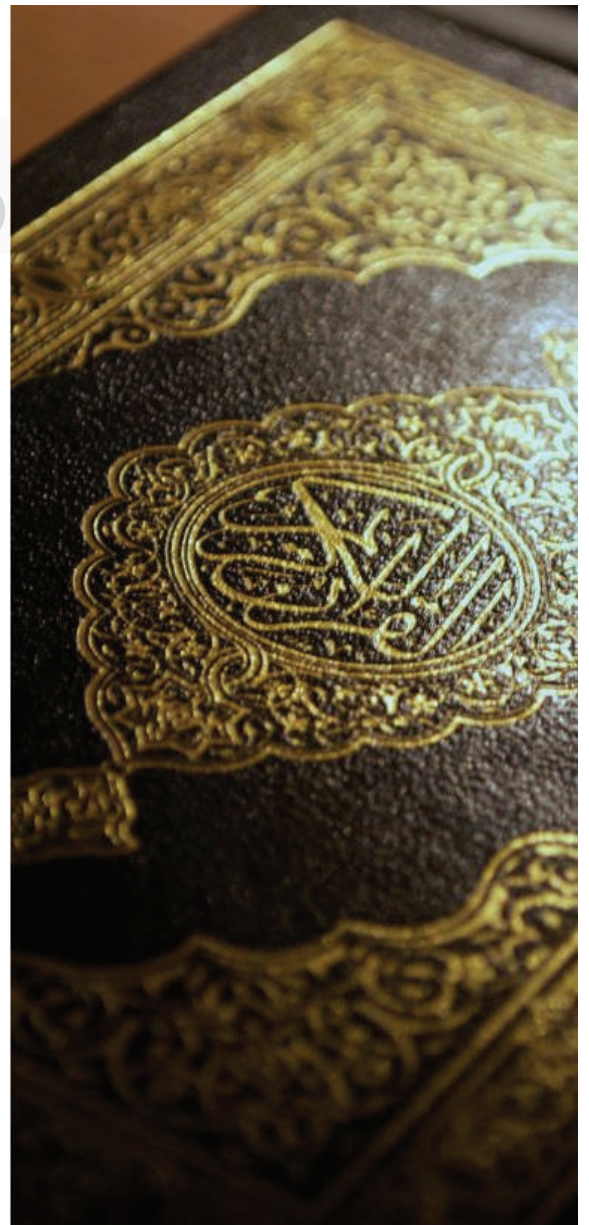
safety and security over crime and conflagration. In any case, such shelters aren't intended to be permanent, and we must ensure that they don't become permanent. The Abbotsford shelter, for example, is expected to operate for a maximum of 18 months while the province identifies an appropriate location for a permanent one. At her first council meeting this week as mayor, Chow found unanimous support for her plan to ease the crisis of unhoused asylum seekers that in turn should ease some pressure on city shelters. That includes opening up new shelter spots and new rent supplement funding which could quickly provide permanent housing to upwards of 1,350 households. It was an encouraging sign of unity to see council act decisively on this urgent issue, with a welcome spirit of collaboration with the senior governments. Short-term solutions such as temporary shelters are the critical next steps to address this crisis immediately while long-term strategies are developed. Both strategies must work together to reach the goal of housing for all.

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/affordable-housing-is-vital-for-the-city-s-housing-crisis-but-we-need-interim-fixes/>

Kuwait to distribute **100,000** copies of Quran in Sweden

KUWAIT: The General Authority for the Care of Printing and Publishing the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) and their Sciences announced the printing of 100,000 copies of the Holy Quran translated into Swedish based on the directives of HH prime minister Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The Chairman of the Authority, Dr Fahad Al-Daihani, said: "The Authority received the mandate to follow up the Minister of Information and Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi to implement the directives and coordinate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in preparation for their distribution in the Kingdom of Sweden." He stated that this initiative, which was preferred by HH the Prime Minister, aims to emphasize the tolerance of the Islamic religion, spread Islamic principles and values, and positive coexistence among all human beings in an atmosphere of love, tolerance and peace. The Cabinet decided during its weekly meeting earlier in the day to print 100,000 copies of the Holy Quran in Swedish and distribute them in the Kingdom of Sweden in order to emphasize the tolerance of the true Islamic religion. The Council confirmed in a statement after the meeting that based on the directives of His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister, the Council decided to assign the General Authority for the Care of Printing and Publishing the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet and their sciences to print 100,000 copies of the Holy Quran translated into Swedish.- KUNA

<https://www.kuwaittimes.com/kuwait-to-distribute-100000-copies-of-quran-in-sweden/>



Trump tells crowd he is the only Republican who can win 2024 election

By Brandon Drenon & North America editor Sarah Smith



Republican presidential hopefuls have shared a stage for the first time in the 2024 White House race at an Iowa campaign event.

Chief rivals Donald Trump and Ron DeSantis headlined the Republican party's annual Lincoln Dinner fundraiser. All 13 candidates were given 10 minutes to speak during the event. Polls show Mr Trump holds a lead over his rivals even as his legal woes mount. He told attendees that he was the only candidate who can win next year's election and suggested this was the only reason he faces a raft of criminal and civil charges. Mr Trump has already insisted he will still run for the White House, even if he is convicted. There were more than 1,200 people in the huge ballroom - all of whom have an outsize influence on who will be the Republican nominee. Many said they have a genuinely open mind about who they will vote for, but there was no shortage of Trump stickers among the crowd.

There was no fun to be had watching the different candidates interacting with each other. They each had their own backstage suite which they popped out of to deliver their ten-minute speech. They actually didn't have to see each other at all. Vivek Ramaswamy captured the room and brought many to a standing ovation as he gave a barnstorming performance - just what he needed to do if he is going to make a breakthrough. Will Hurd's performance will not be forgotten in a hurry - but for all the wrong reasons. The audience appeared genuinely shocked to hear him say Donald Trump is only running for president to stay out of jail. Loud boos and rattling cutlery nearly drowned out the rest of what he had to say - with one man shouting "go home". It was clear he had lost the room. Friday's fundraiser comes a day after new charges were filed against Mr Trump over his alleged mishandling of classified files. Federal prosecutors have widened their criminal investigation into the former president over his handling of government documents after leaving office, but he remains the front-

runner for the Republican nomination.

According to a FiveThirtyEight opinion polling average, Mr Trump is on 52.4%, Florida Governor DeSantis on 15.5% and everyone else is under 10% in the Republican race. Mr Trump may soon be charged in Washington with alleged efforts to overturn the 2020 election results. He has denied all allegations against him. Iowa is the first state where voters will begin the state-by-state process of whittling down the field of presidential candidates until one from each main party remains to compete in the November 2024 election. South Carolina Senator Tim Scott, former UN ambassador Nikki Haley and former Vice-President Mike Pence also attended Friday's event. Chris Christie, the former New Jersey governor, skipped the fundraiser as his campaign focuses on New Hampshire. Mr DeSantis has been in Iowa since Thursday. He has pledged eventually to visit all of Iowa's 99 counties as he seeks to boost his rankings in the state and nationally. The Florida governor has faced criticism - including from within Republican ranks - over new education standards passed for middle schools in his state. A line in the 200-page curriculum, saying that slaves learned useful skills that "could be applied to their personal benefit", has generated controversy.

Mr Scott, one of three black Republican presidential 2024 candidates, told reporters on Thursday: "What slavery was really about was separating families, about mutilating humans and even raping their wives. It was just devastating. "So I would hope that every person in our country - and certainly running for president - would appreciate that." Local opinion polls in Iowa indicate Mr Scott may be gaining momentum. Mr Trump recently lost a supporter in the key state of Iowa owing to a political spat. An Iowa state senator decided to back Mr DeSantis instead, days after Mr Trump criticised Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds for remaining neutral in the 2024 race. "How many times have we gritted our teeth and shook our heads at some of the things that the former president has said?" Jeff Reichman told NPR.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-66333373>



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Ghana:

Hundreds mark PANAFEST, revisit cultural traumas that led to slave trade



Hundreds of Africans on the continent and in the diaspora have converged at Ghana's historic site, Elmina Castle, to celebrate history and relieve cultural traumas that led to the Atlantic slave trade. Called PANAFEST, the celebration was organised by the Upper East Regional office of the Ghana Tourism Authority under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture in collaboration with the PANAFEST Secretariat. "The idea of pan-Africanism is still an idea that is in the formulation to manifestation and maturity and that idea of pan-Africanism of bringing the African people together as one to be empowered of ourselves. It deserves its own rituals and ceremonies that are symbolic of bringing the African spirit together" Rabbi Kohain Halevi, Pan African Festival of Arts and Culture Convener.

The event, which was on the theme: "Reclaiming the African family: confronting the past to face the challenges of the 21st Century", was interspersed with cultural dance performances by the Sandema War Dancers and the Sakoti Dancers. "People still ask me how is Ghana doing because this is the hub of all these African slave trade. Even though it is abolished but it is still in the memory of people so they want to see actually where it did happen and this is the place so it's time for them to come" Nana Kojo Eduakwa, Protocol officer.

Organizers said next year's celebration would start at Pikworo since the region was home to several historical sites, including the regional museum. This was to remind everyone that everything about the slave trade started from Pikworo. official delegations from countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and South America took part in the event. "It's not only about suffering even though the suffering still remains. I think what connects us now is the resistance. It is what has remained, because in Brazilian culture they are so many things that come from Africa and that we only realise once we come here" Luiza Horta, a Brazilian diplomat said.

PANAFEST is celebrated from July 23 to August 2 every year in Ghana.

https://www.google.com/search?q=Ghana:+Hundreds+mark+PANAFEST,+revisit+cultural+traumas+that+led+to+slave+trade&tbm=isch&source=lnms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi39-HB7LOAAxV5VPEDHS43CBUQ0pQJegQIDBAB&biw=1517&bih=714&dpr=0.9#imgsrc=5VQOSksDdS_UMM

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