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Editorial



Dr. Busharat Elahi Jamil

About ten million Pakistanis are living, serving and representing Pakistan in different countries. Pakistani doctors are influential particularly in USA. Moreover, in Gulf countries, Pakistani nurses and labour class has been proving its importance for decades. Pakistani students also mark their tag with academic brilliance in foreign universities. Overseas Pakistanis truly represent their country by not only serving the neighbourhood but also the motherland boosting the economy as well as adding up in the foreign reserves of Pakistan. Still, overseas Pakistani is the face of the Country and a tool to improving its true image. In response of the recent statements of Khawaja Asif in the Parliament and two media persons on national media, the concerns of overseas Pakistanis are justifiable. These rubbish statements diffuse an atmosphere of hatred and abhorrence. Regardless of one's settlement in a foreign land, his heart would never stop beating with the homeland and anything touching the sentiment would hurt deeper. Above mentioned statements are not only rubbished but also ill use of the given platforms. Nobody is accredited to judge or evaluate one's patriotism or loyalty. All Pakistanis living abroad come under the same definition of overseas either living in Gulf, Europe or North America etc. I want to induce Mr. Khawaja Asif that his party is ruling somehow on the Country for last 35 years and if they had made the country prosperous, these people would not have left Pakistan and settled in other Countries. Moreover, if the facilities available to the ruling elite, would have been available to the common Pakistanis, there were better chances that this

brain drain would have stopped and contributed enormously in the development of the Country.

The ineligible political and authoritative regimes since 1947 are also entirely responsible of Brain Drainage from Pakistan. Brain Drainage is one of the imperative and tragic glitches of Pakistan. But regrettably, no one has ever addressed the issue and tried to channelize this energy and potential. Around four to five hundred thousand Pakistani are shifting abroad to work or for permanent settlement. Country's economy, corruption, nepotism (particularly in political parties), less or no opportunities, religious extremism, terrorism and uncertainty are the major causes of this brain drainage. According to the reports (Tribune, December 12, 2022) 288,000 in 2020, around 225,000 in 2021 and 765,000 educated Pakistanis left Pakistan in 2022 and settled outside Pakistan for better job opportunities or living. Only in 2022 more than ninety thousands highly educated people settled outside Pakistan. Mostly the youth is using illegal ways to travel and settle abroad swelling human trafficking all time high. The recent vessel sunk incident in Greece, in which more than 300 Pakistanis died is the worst example of the social, economic and political apathy of Pakistani society and political regime. Unfortunately, due to the political and economic erroneous policies and non-serious behaviour of the current PDM regime there is a growing resentment among the Pakistanis back at home as well as abroad damage the very fabric of nationalism and solidarity.

A Second Trump Presidency Poses a Grave Threat to LGBTQ+ Rights | Opinion

By: Liam Barrett

Whatever political hurdle is put in front of him, former President Donald Trump somehow manages to leap over it. Twice impeached? Easy. A federal indictment for hiding classified documents in a bathroom? No bother. Possible criminal charges for election interference and inciting an insurrection on Jan. 6? No problem. It's likely that Trump's bid for the Republican nomination will be a shoo-in, since polls place him atop the GOP's ongoing presidential primary race. It helps that Trump's disciples, both in and out of office, label him their messiah but turn a blind eye to the abysmal reputation he has with a vast majority of the American public. If Trump reclaims the White House, it would only empower him to foment an assault on democracy and the rule of law, thus painting a harrowing portrait of America's future. It's an image that acts as a stark warning to LGBTQ+ Americans especially, since he has already threatened to sound the death knell on their rights at the federal level. State Republicans have been busy laying the groundwork for Trump's pilgrimage back to D.C. His involuntary exile in Mar-a-Lago has spurred a crass alt-right takeover in which anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment reigns supreme. Over 500 anti-trans bills have swept through state legislatures, greatly surpassing the number in 2022. Whether that's clamping down on gender-affirming care for minors, or prohibiting trans athletes from participating in sports, Republicans are bent on imperiling the rights of trans Americans. They do so while ignoring concrete evidence that shows gender-affirming health care only improves the mental and physical well-be



ing of trans individuals, minimizing the plight of anxiety and depression. Yet listening to experts is not what the GOP is particularly adept at, as railing against wokeism is deployed as a distraction to avoid discussing the blank pages found in their policy playbook. To bolster its war on woke, the GOP is also to blame for the banning of books from public and school libraries, targeting LGBTQ+ content specifically. Conservatives restricting access to certain literature has risen year-on-year, with 26 percent of titles alone banned for featuring queer characters. Fear and loathing surrounding the LGBTQ+ community have reached new heights. It loiters when drag queens face a visceral backlash for reading stories to children, and when an overzealous right-wing Supreme Court boasts of one day overturning laws that protect same-sex marriage. This fearmongering around queer issues has reached a fever pitch since the first Trump administration, where trans personnel were prohibited from serving in the military and Pride Month was only acknowledged once. If Trump will inhabit the White House for what will be a further calamitous four years, upheld by a possible Republi-

can-controlled Congress, and a supermajority on the court, laws like the recent codification of same-sex marriage rights risk being rolled back by his acolytes. It's clear as day that he's never been a LGBTQ+ ally. Last year, a revelatory book shed light on Trump's decades-long obsession with outing aides and reporters amid his circle. His tendency to question the sexuality of his friends and foes did not prevent the likes of PayPal founder Peter Thiel, or late attorney Roy Cohn, from pledging allegiance to their leader. The focus on right-wing nationalist politics seemingly overrides any attempts at inclusivity within Trump's orbit. Trump voiced concern with Republicans imposing near-total abortion bans once it muddled the waters for MAGA fans running in last year's midterms. He once proclaimed to be pro-choice, a position he may want to recycle to win back waning support from moderate conservatives. However, his utter disdain for so-called gender ideology, on top of his reluctance to fully embrace all colors of the rainbow, stands tall. This month marks the celebration of Pride across the globe. An irony since LGBTQ+ individuals in the nation leading the free world are suffering the consequences of a political party veering toward authoritarianism. Banning books, protesting drag queens, and rolling back basic protections for a vulnerable community continue at pace. With a possible Trump comeback, it could permit those currently waging war on queer rights to be bolder. This doesn't have to be the case. Queer Americans and their allies have a task ahead of 2024, and it requires raising the alarm loud enough to ensure that Trump, whether in an orange jumpsuit or otherwise, never holds the keys to the White House again.

<https://www.newsweek.com/second-trump-presidency-poses-grave-threat-lgbtq-rights-opinion-1807314>

King Charles extends support to Prince William for 'Homewards' project



Britain King Charles has extended support to his elder son Prince William after the Prince of Wales launched a new project 'Homewards' - a UK-wide programme to end homelessness. The palace, on behalf of the King, retweeted Prince William's message after he unveiled the project, saying "Today we are incredibly proud to unveil #Homewards - a UK-wide programme to end homelessness."

King Charles also tweeted in support of Prince William, "As a new five-year programme @HomewardsUK is launched, The Prince of Wales is unveiling six flagship locations to be given new space, tools, and relationships showcasing what can be achieved through collective efforts to prevent homelessness." The future king launched the new UK-wide initiative aiming to show that it is possible to end homelessness and make it "rare, brief, and unrepeated", Kensington Palace announced.

"In a modern and progressive society, everyone should have a safe and secure home, be treated with dignity and given the support they need," William said in a statement.

US media blind to American war carnage

By Norman Solomon



On the first day of March 2022, visitors to the New York Times homepage saw a headline across the top of their screens in huge capital letters:

ROCKET BARRAGE KILLS CIVILIANS

It was the kind of breaking-news banner headline that could have referred to countless US missile attacks and other military assaults during the previous two decades, telling of civilian deaths in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and elsewhere. But those “war on terror” killings did not qualify for huge banner headlines. What stirred the Times to publish one quickly about civilian deaths was, as reported on the front page of its print edition, “a deadly Russian rocket assault on Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second-largest city, that raised new alarms about how far the Kremlin was willing to go to subjugate its smaller neighbor.” During the months that followed, The New York Times was among thousands of American outlets devoting the kind of news coverage to Russia’s war in Ukraine that would have

been unthinkable while reporting on US warfare. Early in April, 40 days after the Russian invasion began, a jarring headline in all capitals, “HORROR GROWS OVER SLAUGHTER IN UKRAINE,” spanned the top of the front page of the Times print edition. During April, 14 stories on the newspaper’s front page “were primarily about civilian deaths as a result of the Russian invasion, all of which appeared at the top of the page,” researchers at Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) found. During a comparable period, after the US invaded Iraq, the Times published “only one story about civilian deaths at the hands of the US military on the front page.” By any consistent standard, the horrors that the US military had brought to so many civilians since the autumn of 2001 were no less terrible for the victims than what Russia is doing in Ukraine. But the US media coverage has been vastly more immediate, graphic, extensive, and outraged about Russia’s slaughter than America’s slaughter.

War is hell - everywhere

On the rare occasions when a major US news outlet provided in-depth reporting of civilian deaths caused by American forces, the pieces were usually retrospective, appearing long after the fact, postmortems with little political impact and scant follow-up, hardly making a peep in media echo chambers. No matter how sophisticated its high-tech weaponry, the large-scale Russian warfare in Ukraine is barbaric. That the same could also be said about American warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq was a truth nearly taboo to utter in US mass media. Both the United States and Russia had brazenly flouted international law, crossing borders and persisting with massive lethal force. Coherent principles would condemn and illuminate each instances. But despite press freedoms in the United States, very few big-name journalists and their imitators in the profession have been willing to break ranks with the gist of Washington's official war narratives, which are, at bottom, not much more nuanced than assuming that America's exemplary national character has been mobilized to defeat the unmitigated evil of the foe. Nationalism masquerading as journalism covers war in darkness and light, telling us for whom the bell tolls. And so, when Russia invaded Ukraine and proceeded to terrorize, kill and maim, the US media were all-hands-on-deck with empathetic, poignant reporting via TV, radio, print, and online outlets. But when American missiles and gravity bombs hit population centers over the previous two decades, the human tragedies rarely got anything more than short shrift in the US media. The extreme differences in the quantity and tone of coverage reflected, and reinforced, the agendas of war-makers based in Washington.

<https://asiatimes.com/2023/06/us-media-blind-to-american-war-carnage/>

Two big asteroids nearly a kilometer wide headed toward Earth, Nasa tracking closely



Two big asteroids are coming close to Earth as they move ahead in their orbits around the Sun. The two asteroids are predicted to be between 500 to 850 meters in diameter. Asteroids are rocky objects that orbit the Sun and are remnants from the early solar system formation and can vary in size from small boulders to massive bodies several hundred kilometers in diameter. The two asteroids coming close to Earth have been dubbed 488453 (1994 XD) and 2020 DB5. While 488453 (1994 XD) will come close to Earth on June 12, the 2020 DB5 is expected to rendezvous with Earth on June 15. Both asteroids have been classified as potentially hazardous asteroids as their diameters are larger than 150 meters. **Asteroid 488453 (1994 XD)**

Asteroid 488453 (1994 XD) will have a close approach to Earth on Monday and is expected to move past at a staggering speed of 77,292 kilometers per hour. The asteroid, during its close approach, will come as close as 31,62,498 kilometers to Earth. The asteroid last visited Earth over a decade ago on November 27, 2012, and as it moves around in its orbit, it will next return to Earth seven years later in 2030.

Asteroid (2020 DB5)

Asteroid (2020 DB5) will fly close to Earth on June 15 coming nearly 43,08,418 kilometers to the planet. The asteroid is moving at a speed of 34,272 kilometers per hour and last visited Earth in 1995.

Utah primary schools ban Bible for 'vulgarity and violence'

A school district in the US state of Utah has removed the Bible from elementary and middle schools for containing "vulgarity and violence". The move follows a complaint from a parent that the King James Bible has material unsuitable for children. Utah's Republican government passed a law in 2022 banning "pornographic or indecent" books from schools. Most of the books that have been banned so far pertain to topics such as sexual orientation and identity. The banning of the Bible comes amid a larger effort by US conservatives in states to ban teachings on controversial topics such as LGBT rights and racial identity. Bans on certain books deemed offensive are also in place in Texas, Florida, Missouri and South Carolina. Some liberal states have also banned books in some schools and libraries, citing perceived racially offensive content. The Utah decision was made this week by the Davis School District north of Salt Lake City after a complaint filed in December 2022. Officials say they have already removed the seven or eight copies of the Bible they had on their shelves, noting that the text was never part of students' curriculum. The committee did not elaborate on its reasoning or which passages contained "vulgarity or violence". According to the Salt Lake Tribune newspaper, the parent who complained said the King James Bible "has 'no serious values for minors' because it's pornographic by our new definition", referring to the 2022 book-ban law. The Utah state lawmaker who wrote the 2022 law had previously dismissed the Bible removal request as a "mockery", but changed course this week after calling it a "challeng-



ing read" for younger children. "Traditionally, in America, the Bible is best taught, and best understood, in the home, and around the hearth, as a family," Ken Ivory wrote on Facebook. The district's ruling determined that the Bible's content does not violate the 2022 law, but does include "vulgarity or violence not suitable for younger students". The book will remain in place in local high schools. Bob Johnson, the father of a primary school student in the Davis School District, told CBS News that he opposes the Bible's removal. "I can't think of what's in the Bible that you would have to take out of it. Its not like there's pictures in it," he said. The district is not the first in the US to remove the Bible from its shelves. A Texas school district last year pulled the Bible from library shelves after complaints from members of the public opposed to conservatives efforts to ban some books. Last month, students in Kansas requested to have the Bible removed from their school library.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-65794363>

US Navy acoustic system detected Titan sub's likely implosion



A top secret United States Navy acoustic detection system picked up a sound “anomaly” in the North Atlantic that was likely the fatal implosion of the Titan submersible that was lost with five people on board while on an expedition to the wreck of the Titanic. According to a senior military official, the Navy went back and analysed acoustic data after the Titan submersible was reported missing on Sunday and found an anomaly “consistent with an implosion or explosion in the general vicinity of where the Titan submersible was operating when communications were lost”. The Navy passed the information on to the US Coast Guard, which continued its search for the Titan because the Navy did not consider the data to be definitive, the senior Navy official told the Associated Press news agency on Thursday. The Wall Street Journal was the first to report the Navy’s involvement and the detection of the acoustics from the deep sea, the latest piece in the jigsaw regarding the fate of the

Titan and its five occupants following the discovery of debris on Thursday that was consistent with the missing vessel operated by OceanGate Expeditions. A remotely operated underwater vehicle (ROV) found five major fragments of the 6.7-metre (22-foot) Titan submarine in a debris field on the seabed some 488 metres (1,600ft) from the bow of the wreck of the Titanic, which rests 4km (around 2.5 miles) beneath the surface of the ocean, in a remote corner of the North Atlantic, US Coast Guard Rear Admiral John Mauger told reporters. “The debris field here is consistent with a catastrophic implosion of the vehicle,” Mauger said. The fragments found included the Titan’s tail cone and two sections of the pressure hull. No mention has been made of whether human remains were sighted. The five on board the Titan were OceanGate’s founder and chief executive officer Stockton Rush, who was piloting the vessel; a United Kingdom billionaire businessman and explorer Hamish Harding,

58; Pakistani-born businessman Shahzada Dawood, 48, and his 19-year-old son, Suleman, both UK citizens; and French oceanographer and renowned Titanic expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet, 77, who had visited the wreck dozens of times. Al Jazeera's Gabriel Elizondo, reporting from Boston in the US, said the US Navy was now collecting debris in order to analyse what remained of the Titan as part of a wider investigation into how the accident occurred. According to Elizondo, the US Navy confirmed on Thursday evening that "a top-secret acoustic detection system" had picked up sounds "similar to what would have been an implosion on Sunday near where the Titan went missing". With the fate of the Titan and those on board now known, attention has turned to the Titan's safety record and its suitability for ferrying tourists to the Titanic wreck site. Director of the Hollywood blockbuster "Titanic" and renowned deepsea explorer James Cameron said many warnings were ignored about the safety of the Titan. Cameron said the submersible had been the source of widespread concern in the close-knit ocean exploration community. He equated the warning around the Titan with those of warnings issued to the captain of the Titanic more than a century ago. "I'm struck by the similarity of the Titanic disaster itself, where the captain was repeatedly warned about ice ahead of his ship, and yet he steamed at full speed into an ice field on a moonless night, and many people died as a result," Cameron told ABC News. "And for a very similar tragedy, where warnings went unheeded, to take place at the same exact site ... I think it's just astonishing," he said. Cameron - who in 2012 became the first person to make a solo dive to the very deepest part of the ocean in a submersible he designed and built - said the risk of a sub imploding under pressure was always "first and foremost" in engineers' minds. "Many people in the community were very concerned about this sub," he said of the ill-fated Titan. "A

number of the top players in the deep-submergence engineering community even wrote letters to the company, saying that what they were doing was too experimental to carry passengers and that it needed to be certified," he said. The Reuters news agency reported on Thursday that liability waivers signed by passengers on the Titan may not shield the vessel's owner from potential lawsuits by the victims' families.

The passengers, who paid as much as \$250,000 each for the journey to 3,810 metres (12,500ft) below the surface, are believed to have signed liability waivers that mentioned the possibility of death three times on the first page alone. Waivers are not always ironclad, and it is not uncommon for judges to reject them if there is evidence of gross negligence or hazards that were not fully disclosed, legal experts told Reuters. "If there were aspects of the design or construction of this vessel that were kept from the passengers or it was knowingly operated despite information that it was not suitable for this dive, that would absolutely go against the validity of the waiver," said personal injury lawyer and maritime law expert Matthew D Shaffer, who is based in Texas. The degree of any potential negligence and how that might impact the applicability of the waivers will depend on the causes of the disaster, which are still under investigation.

OceanGate is a small company based in Everett, Washington, and it is unclear whether it has the assets to pay significant damages, were any to be awarded, but families could collect from the company's insurance policy if it has one. Families could also seek damages from any outside parties that designed, helped build or made components for the Titan if they were found to be negligent and a cause of the implosion.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/6/23/us-navy-acoustic-system-detected-titan-sub-likely-implosion>

China lashes back as Biden labels Xi a 'dictator'



China hit back on Wednesday after US President Joe Biden referred to President Xi Jinping as a “dictator”, saying the remarks were absurd and a provocation, in an unexpected spat immediately following efforts by both sides to lower tensions. Biden’s comments came just a day after top US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Beijing to stabilise bilateral relations that China says are at their lowest point since formal ties were established. Attending a fundraiser in California, Biden said Xi was very embarrassed when a suspected Chinese spy balloon was blown off course over US airspace early this year, making a personal comment on the Chinese leader when Blinken said on Monday the “chapter” should be closed. “The reason why Xi Jinping got very upset in terms of when I shot that balloon down with two box cars full of spy equipment in it was he didn’t know it was there,” Biden said. “That’s a great embarrassment for dictators. When they didn’t know what happened. That wasn’t supposed to be going where it was. It was blown off course,” Biden added. Xi became China’s most powerful leader since Mao Zedong after securing a precedent-breaking third term as president in March and head of the Communist Party in October. Biden also said China “has real economic difficulties.” A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said Biden’s remarks were “extremely absurd” and “irresponsible”. Expressing China’s strong dissatisfaction, foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said Biden’s comments seriously violated facts, diplomatic protocol and China’s political dignity. “They’re an open political provocation,” she told a news conference. Asked how aware Xi had been about the balloon’s movements, Mao reiterated China’s previous explanation that

the passage of the balloon through US airspace had been unintended and caused by circumstances beyond its control.

‘Big mouth’ “Biden’s big mouth is a loose cannon,” said Wu Xinbo, director of the Centre for American Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai. “Mutual trust is what China has been stressing, so Biden’s comments are very destructive and damaging,” Wu said, while adding that the remarks may not totally undo what Blinken had achieved on his China visit. Blinken and Xi agreed in their meeting on Monday to stabilise the intense rivalry between Washington and Beijing so it did not veer into conflict. While no breakthroughs were made during the first visit to China by a US secretary of state for five years, both sides did agree to continue diplomatic engagement with more visits by US officials in the coming weeks and months. Biden said later on Tuesday that US climate envoy John Kerry may go to China soon. A day earlier, on Monday, Biden said he thought relations between the two countries were on the right path, and he indicated that progress was made during Blinken’s trip. Chiming in from Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Biden’s comments contradicted the efforts of his secretary of state to ease tensions with Beijing, describing the remarks as “incomprehensible”. “These are very contradictory manifestations of US foreign policy, which speak of a large element of unpredictability,” Peskov told reporters on Wednesday. However, that’s their business,” Peskov said. “We’ve our own bad relations with the United States of America and our very good relations with the People’s Republic of China.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1760951/biden-equates-chinas-xi-with-dictators-at-donor-reception>

White House urged to hold ‘meaningful talks’ with Modi

By: Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: Dozens of US President Joe Biden’s fellow Democrats urged him on Tuesday to raise human rights issues with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the latter’s visit to Washington this week, according to a letter sent to Biden. Modi left for Washington on Tuesday for a visit projected as a milestone in ties between the two countries. However, the lawmakers said they were concerned about religious intolerance, press freedoms, internet access and the targeting of civil society groups. “We do not endorse any particular Indian leader or political party that is the decision of the people of India but we do stand in support of the important principles that should be a core part of American foreign policy,” said the letter, led by Senator Chris Van Hollen and Representative Pramila Jayapal. A total of 75 Democratic senators and members of the House of Representatives signed the letter, sent to the White House on Tuesday and reported by Reuters. Modi will address a joint meeting of the House and Senate on Thursday, one of the highest honours Washington affords to foreign dignitaries.

Human Rights Watch also urged the administration and congressional leaders to hold “meaningful discussions” on human rights issues, as US and Indian officials indicated that major defence and trade agreements may be signed during the June 21-24 visit. Acknowledging the significance of the visit, HRW pointed out that under Mr Modi, “respect for civil and political rights has markedly deteriorated.”

It urged US administration and congressional leaders to encourage Mr. Modi to “take



robust action to stem discriminatory policies and practices against minorities and other marginalized groups.” On June 22, when Mr. Modi will address a joint session of the US Congress, Congresswoman Ilhan Omar will host a policy briefing on human rights violations in India. Other US lawmakers will also join Ms. Omar, a Minnesota Democrat, in exposing how the Modi government treats minorities, particularly Muslims, in India. It’s no surprise that Washington sees Mr Modi’s visit as an opportunity to strengthen a relationship that many believe can be useful for countering China. A recent survey showed that 70pc Americans like India as compared to only 15pc who like China. Major announcements expected during the visit are US approval to manufacture General Electric engines in India for its domestically produced fighter jets, India’s purchase of 31 armed MQ-9B Sea-Guardian drones made by General Atomics worth \$3 billion, and removal of US obstacles that prevent smoother trade in defence and high technology.

One Lifetime Really Enough?

By: Rumana Ashraf

A quote by Benjamin Franklin is displayed in white text on a dark, semi-transparent rectangular background. The background image shows a vast, calm sea under a cloudy sky, with a small bird in flight in the upper right. The quote reads: "A long life may not be good enough, but a good life is long enough." Below the quote, the name "Benjamin Franklin" is written in white text on a small red rectangular background.

A long life may not be
good enough, but a good
life is long enough.

Benjamin Franklin

One Lifetime Really Enough?

Since the beginning of mankind's existence, human beings have pondered and tossed around the question of immortality and the extension of human life past all reason. The idea of immortality is a concept that has been historically researched by ancient civilizations, hypothesized, and tested by modern scientists and comically interpreted in many films in the entertainment industry for amusement. In 16th century France, women in the French court were said to have consumed drinks made from a dilution of liquid gold chemically altered in an effort to preserve their youthful appearances. Another example is in ancient China, when an elixir of life was made and consumed by select individuals in the hopes of increasing their lifespan beyond that of a normal range. It is interesting to note that the main ingredients in this tonic was noted to be a mixture of mercury, sulfur and honey that would evidently lead to their untimely deaths - the opposite of what they had hoped to achieve. Another example is of Mary Shel-

ley, the author of the classic fictional book *Frankenstein*, who tells a story of a scientist named Victor Frankenstein who tries to play God by bringing life into his creation of a monster that would represent his ability to defy mortal life. Regardless of whether immortality is a subject of research for researchers, or turned into classic-fictional plots for the entertainment industry, the concept has been one that has spread into divergent ideologies of thinking. However, one question then arises, is one lifetime enough? The Holy Quran says "We granted not everlasting life to any human being before thee. If thou shouldst die, shall they live here forever?" (Holy Quran 21:35) This verse identifies two important facts - (1) That every religious scheme before the time of The Holy Prophet (saw) was to experience an inevitable end or metaphorical death that ultimately made only the true Islam reign supreme, sovereign, and very much full of life. (2) No human can escape death, including the Holy Prophet (saw) because Allah has made it so that only himself can be immortal and out-live

time (Commentary of The Holy Quran). The simple answer to this question is that God Almighty has indeed given enough time for us to achieve both worldly matters and most importantly spiritual enlightenment, however it is often how an individual perceives his/her own life at the time of death that they either agree or disagree with this. It is important to note that one of the reasons behind the idea of life and will is to test us as individuals and attain nearness in both body and soul towards our creator. All these factors put together is what achieves calm of mind in life and a sense of peace in the heart. This is what the Holy Quran and Islam says about this matter, and there is also objective- scientific research that supports and parallels these teachings. Erik Erikson, a German-American Psychologist is credited to have come up with what is called the Stages of Psychosocial Development - a chart that explains how an individual thinks and behaves from birth to death. There are 8 stages starting from infancy leading up to old age. The last stage is categorized as the stage of ego integrity vs. despair which consists of only individuals who are 65+ years of age. This is the stage where Erikson explains that the senior individual looks back on his/her own life and is either at peace with what they have achieved in life and where they are now, or struggles with their past and is unhappy with how their life turned out. Erikson explains that it is as a result of every action, experience, direction, and path an individual took that leads him/her up to this final near end-of-life pondering that makes the senior individual look back into his/her own past and conclude whether he/she is either happy or unhappy with how they lived their life. Individuals who are happy make peace with the idea of their inevitable death and await it patiently with a peace of mind and heart; they believe one lifetime is enough. Those who are not happy struggle with their inner turmoil until inevitable death reaches them; they believe one lifetime was not enough, and wish they could do it over

again differently. Quran talks about it "And spend out of that with which We have provided you before death comes upon one of you and he says, 'My Lord! if only Thou wouldst grant me respite for a little while, then I would give alms and be among the righteous. And Allah will not grant respite to a soul when its appointed time has come; and Allah is Well-Aware of what you do. (63-11-12). A story in children's literature for analysis relating to this topic describes, there was once a king in a far-off land who reigned over his people in greed. He collected amulets of gold, built a luxurious castle for himself, and spun stories of how he was the most honorable King the heavens had ever seen. He reveled in his glory so much, that he ultimately dismissed his own wife and children from his company claiming that they were not fit to be in his presence. One day the king was given the power of everlasting life and immortality by the heavens - a sign he perceived as a gift. Years went by and the king lived century after century after century, outliving all his people, and generations after that. Many centuries later out of despair and loneliness he begged the heavens for death - for he could not bear his deserted and empty existence any longer. He wondered what use his wealth was without his people to share it with, what use his time was without his companion to spend it with, and what use his castle whose walls only echoed his own voice. After his repentance, he was eventually granted death - which turned out to be the truest gift and the best ending to a life well-lived. The moral of this story is essentially that it is not about the quantity of years that makes it how well one can live life, but the quality of how well one lived them. Mankind will never truly be happy with a never-ending life. If God were to grant a human with immortality, inevitably that individual will ultimately beg for death. Only peace of heart and soul can be achieved by having connection to Allah the almighty. one lifetime will truly be enough.

The real problem with Israel's 'collective punishment'



By: Belén Fernández

In September 2006, I paid my first visit to Lebanon, arriving 34 days after the 34-day summer assault by the Israeli military that had killed some 1,200 people in the country. While Israel was subsequently revealed to have planned the war in advance, the alleged casus belli was the cross-border kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hezbollah, which had intended to use them as bargaining chips to secure the release of Arab prisoners in Israeli jails. I was 24 years old, and it was my first up-close view of Israeli military handiwork: decimated villages, bombed-out bridges, craters in the ground where apartment buildings had once stood. The Lebanese novelist Elias Khoury would describe the scene as follows: "It is devastation. It is a pure devastation that is like nothing you have ever seen—apart from devastation. Ruins stretching to the horizon, challenging the sky." My friend Amelia and I spent two months hitchhiking through the wreckage of Lebanon, staying in the homes of beneficent strangers and being continuously force-fed in accordance with rules of Lebanese hospitality. By the time we left, "pure devastation" had become so normalised in our eyes that intact buildings had begun to seem disfigured. The 2006 war is but one of numerous Israeli operations denounced by human rights organisations and other appointed upholders of global ethics as collective punishment, a war crime under international humanitarian law. According to Article 33 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, "no protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed." Indeed, on the surface, "collective punishment" appears to be a pretty apt description for flattening entire

villages, saturating a country with millions of cluster bombs, and sending an attack helicopter to slaughter children in the back of a pick-up truck. But the term fails to fully hit the mark – although I, too, have admittedly used it on various occasions. The implication remains that it is merely the "collective" part of the punishment that's the problem, and that Israel is still entitled in principle to mete out non-collective punishment in Lebanon. This is despite Israel's own criminal track record in the country and integral role in generating the conditions for violence. To be sure, kidnapping some soldiers is a rather anticlimactic "offence" when compared with the apocalyptic 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon that killed tens of thousands of people and spawned Hezbollah in the first place – or with the torture-happy 22-year occupation of south Lebanon that ended in 2000. Speaking of occupation, jump across Lebanon's southern border to occupied Palestine and you'll find no shortage of collective punishment charges levelled against Israel by United Nations experts, Human Rights Watch, and the like. Again, the terminology would appear to constitute an accurate assessment of a panorama defined by intermittent military massacres, the asphyxiating blockade of the Gaza Strip, and continuing home demolitions in the West Bank. In the summer of 2014, for example, the Israeli army killed 2,251 people in Gaza over a period of 50 days, including 551 children – a "pure devastation", if you will, that was allegedly in response to rocket fire from Hamas into Israel. And over just three days in August of last year, in an operation dubbed Breaking Dawn, Israel presided over the slaughter of

at least 44 Palestinians in the besieged coastal enclave. Among the dead were 16 children. According to the Israeli government, the bloody affair was a “preemptive” act against the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group – which perhaps raises the morbid possibility of a new category of “preemptive collective punishment”. But again, the “collective punishment” charge is inadequate from a perspective of justice – suggesting as it does that the Palestinian resistance to Israel’s occupation is a fundamentally criminal and punishable offence, as long as the punishment is meted out non-collectively. After all, Palestinian violence does not occur in a vacuum. It occurs within a context of 75 years of Israeli subjugation, dispossession, ethnic cleansing and massacres. Rockets fired from within an occupied, blockaded, and bombarded territory are a response to Israeli violence. In the West Bank, meanwhile, Israel’s rampant demolition of the homes of suspected Palestinian “terrorists” must obviously be denounced. And yet here, too, the “collective punishment” charge implies the validity of individual punishment of Palestinians whose own actions are a direct result of decades of barbaric Israeli policy. Those who decry Israeli collective punishment no doubt mean well, but one can’t help but wonder whether the use of the terminology ultimately works to invalidate the right to resistance. In The Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law, Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier – legal director of Doctors Without Borders (Médecins sans Frontières, or MSF) – references a fitting quote from French-Algerian philosopher and writer Albert Camus: “Calling things by the wrong name adds to the affliction of the world.” By terrorising Palestinians, Israel already adds considerably to the affliction of the world. And in the absence of any sign of improvement, perhaps it’s time to rethink how we talk about it.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/6/16/the-real-problem-with-israels-collective>

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WHO advises not to use non-sugar sweeteners for weight control in newly released guideline



The World Health Organization (WHO) has released a new guideline on non-sugar sweeteners (NSS), which recommends against the use of NSS to control body weight or reduce the risk of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). The recommendation is based on the findings of a systematic review of the available evidence which suggests that use of NSS does not confer any long-term benefit in reducing body fat in adults or children. Results of the review also suggest that there may be potential undesirable effects from long-term use of NSS, such as an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and mortality in adults. "Replacing free sugars with NSS does not help with weight control in the long term. People need to consider other ways to reduce free sugars intake, such as consuming food with naturally occurring sugars, like fruit, or unsweetened food and beverages," says Francesco Branca, WHO Director for Nutrition and Food Safety. "NSS are not essential dietary factors and have no nutritional value. People should reduce the sweetness of the diet altogether, starting early in life, to improve their health." The recommendation applies to all people except individuals with pre-existing diabetes and includes all synthetic and naturally occurring or modified non-nutritive sweeteners that are not classified as sugars found in manufactured foods and beverages, or sold on their own to be added to foods and beverages by consumers. Common NSS include acesulfame K, aspartame, advantame, cyclamates, neotame, saccharin, sucralose, stevia and stevia derivatives. The recommendation does not apply to personal care



and hygiene products containing NSS, such as toothpaste, skin cream, and medications, or to low-calorie sugars and sugar alcohols (polyols), which are sugars or sugar derivatives containing calories and are therefore not considered NSS. Because the link observed in the evidence between NSS and disease outcomes might be confounded by baseline characteristics of study participants and complicated patterns of NSS use, the recommendation has been assessed as conditional, following WHO processes for developing guidelines. This signals that policy decisions based on this recommendation may require substantive discussion in specific country contexts, linked for example to the extent of consumption in different age groups. The WHO guideline on NSS is part of a suite of existing and forthcoming guidelines on healthy diets that aim to establish lifelong healthy eating habits, improve dietary quality and decrease the risk of NCDs worldwide.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/15-05-2023-who-advises-not-to-use-non-sugar-sweeteners-for-weight-control-in-newly-released-guideline>

The Supreme Court Confirms We Need to Protect Civil Rights | Opinion

By: Alanah Odoms



The Supreme Court recently ruled against Alabama Republicans, requiring the state to redraw congressional districts in support of greater representation of Black voters. This ruling shocked civil and voting rights activists, including me, as we expected the conservative Roberts Court to further disenfranchise voters of color. If the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Alabama Republicans, they would have gutted the last protections of the Voting Rights Act (VRA), the landmark civil rights law from the 1960s. The Roberts Court already invalidated a central part of the law in 2013, which required states with a history of discrimination to obtain "preclearance" from the federal Justice Department before making any changes in their voting laws. If the Republicans won this most recent case, the Court would have invalidated the last remaining recourse against disenfranchisement for voters of color, which made it illegal to dilute representation of racial groups. Instead, Chief Justice Roberts joined with Justice Brett Kavanaugh and the Court's liberal members to protect the one last tool for civil rights that the VRA gave us. The justices reaffirmed race as something that requires protection. The Roberts Court

essentially confirmed what we all already know: That we are not in a post-racial society. Racism is still alive and well. Those who have power will use it to hold back those without power, and in this country, power and race are so closely aligned that they are basically the same thing. In her dissent in the 2013 case, former Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg made an analogy to show why the protections from the VRA are still needed: "[T]hrowing out preclearance when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory changes is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet." Justice Ginsburg was proven correct soon after the 2013 decision. Within 24 hours, Texas, which previously would have had to get approval from the Justice Department for any changes in their voting laws, announced they would begin implementing a strict voter ID law, which made it harder for people of color to vote. The Brennan Center for Justice found that "states previously covered by the preclearance requirement have engaged in significant efforts to disenfranchise voters" since the requirement went away. If the Roberts Court further weakened the VRA this time

around, we would have seen the same thing. There are about 30 cases right now involving Section 2 of the VRA, which was the portion of the law in front of the Supreme Court. Almost all of these are in the South, the same states that have a history of discriminatory voting laws. Luckily for those of us who care about freedom and our country's founding ethos of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, these cases will be buttressed by the Supreme Court's decision. This will lead to the redrawing of racially discriminatory maps across the American South. With the balance of power realigned in Congress, state legislatures, and state supreme courts, we might have a real chance to defeat discriminatory laws seeking to reduce the rights of the LGBTQ+ community, limit the teaching of inclusive American history, and attack reproductive liberty. The Supreme Court's decision, surprising as it is, shows that even the most conservative actors understand the need for voting rights protections, and that they see the disenfranchisement of Black voters as the attack on our democracy that it is. We are living in an echo of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. This is a different time, but the issues are still the same. As the marginalized seek out greater representation and equal rights, those in power will push back and try to keep them down. This is happening not just for voters of color but also for women's reproductive rights, transgender rights, and queer rights. Just like in the 1960s, Congress needs to recognize this conservative backlash to an expansion of rights as a threat to our democracy. A good place to start? Passing the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would reinstate the pre-clearance provisions that were struck down by the Court in 2013. This will help expand freedom and self-determination, rather than limiting it.

<https://www.newsweek.com/supreme-court-confirms-we-need-protect-civil-rights-opinion-1806789>

Messi recalls 'massive disappointment' of PSG Champions League woes

Lionel Messi has called his start at former club Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) "very tough", dubbing two successive failed Champions League bids a "massive disappointment". "I came to Paris because I liked the club, because I had friends in the dressing room ... it seemed easier for me to adapt rather than another destination I could have gone to," Messi told beIN Sports in an interview broadcast on Sunday. "In reality, it was a very tough adaptation, much harder than I expected ... with a new game plan, new teammates, a new city. "I arrived late, I didn't have a pre-season. The start was difficult for me, my family." Messi, 36, signed for PSG in the summer of 2021 after 17 seasons at Barcelona, but will now head Stateside to Inter Miami in the MLS after quitting the French capital. Messi's first season, during which he scored 11 goals in 34 games for PSG, was made harder after he contracted Covid during the winter break back in Argentina, meaning he was sidelined for a month. "It took me time to refind my physical form," he admitted, adding that the 2022 World Cup in Qatar — which Messi won with Argentina — also took its toll. "It's not an excuse but the World Cup played a big role. Some came back later than others, some were injured, like Neymar. "I think, generally, the level of Ligue 1 and the Champions League was affected by the World Cup." Messi admitted that Champions League losses to Real Madrid in 2022 and Bayern Munich this season were a "massive disappointment". There were even sections of PSG fans who turned on Messi, whistling at him from the stands. "In the beginning, it was great, I received a lot of encouragement ... but later on a part of the Parisian fanbase treated me differently. The majority treated me well, but there was a rupture with a part of the public," he acknowledged.

Why Turkey, Hungary are blocking Sweden from NATO

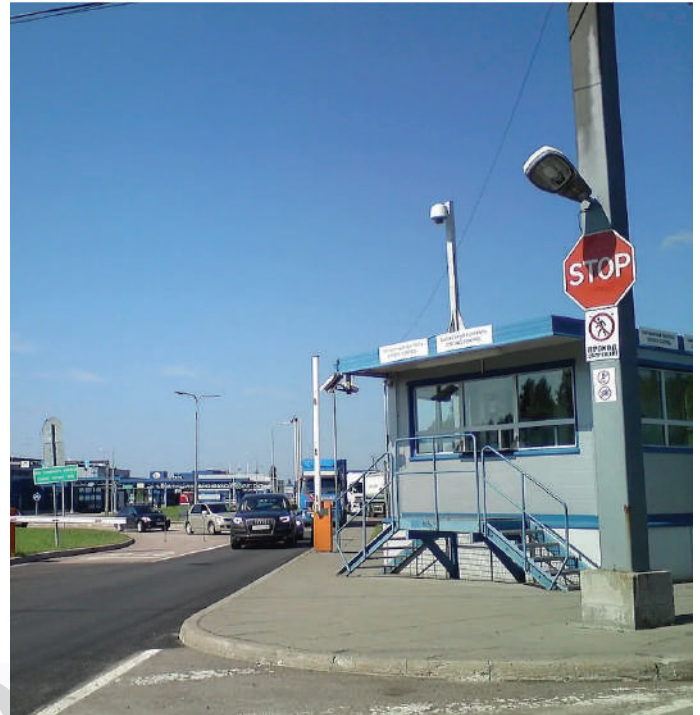
By: Vijay Prashad



On July 11-12, the 31 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will hold their annual summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. To prepare for the summit, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg met with US President Joe Biden to discuss the agenda. They spoke about the importance of Western support for Ukraine “for the long haul,” and Stoltenberg told Biden that “he looks forward to welcoming Sweden as a full member of NATO as soon as possible.” In their joint press conference on June 13, neither Biden nor Stoltenberg mentioned anything about Ukraine’s membership of NATO, although both hoped that Sweden would become a member “very shortly,” as Biden said. Despite noises in the German Bundestag from Christian Democratic members, such as urging by Roderich Kiesewetter, to bring Ukraine into NATO, there seems to be no appetite for any such move at present, least of all from German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who is being very cautious. Germany is wary of allowing Ukraine into NATO during a war, but has no problem – in principle – with Ukraine’s membership. With Sweden, the chessboard is far more complicated.

Finland joins, but not Sweden

In May 2022, Finland and Sweden applied to join NATO, a military alliance that had at that time consisted of 30 countries (the most recent entrant being North Macedonia in 2020). At that time, Stoltenberg said of the applications, “It is great to see you both.” Indeed, it was widely expected that these applications would be fast-tracked and that all four Scandinavian states would



be within the military camp of NATO. Norway and Denmark were both founder members in 1949 (Denmark’s accession was particularly necessary so that the US could build a vast base on Danish-colonized Greenland – Pituffik Space Base, the northernmost US military base – in 1951, displacing the local Inuit population). On April 4, 2023, NATO welcomed Finland into the alliance. “Joining NATO is good for Finland,” Stoltenberg said. “It is good for Nordic security, and it is good for NATO as a whole.” Finland shares a very long (1,338-kilometer) border with Russia, the longest of any European Union or NATO state. By joining NATO, Finland has doubled the NATO-Russia border. Finland began to build a border fence along the “riskiest areas,” notably where Russian migrants might try to cross over. Social media in Finland mocked pictures of the fence released by the Border Guard, saying

it was just about useful for stopping horses; the “fence is not for horses,” responded Lieutenant-Colonel Jukka Lukkari. At the ceremony to welcome Finland into NATO, Finnish President Sauli Niinistö said his country’s membership is “not complete without Sweden.” Standing beside him, Stoltenberg said, “I look forward to also welcoming Sweden as soon as possible.” So why was Sweden not taken into the Western military alliance? In 1949, when NATO was established, the principle of decision-making adopted by the members was that of “consensus,” which means that all countries must agree to any decision; this consensus decision-making applies particularly to the question of membership. Two NATO members, Hungary and Turkey, ratified Finland’s entry to NATO but blocked that of Sweden. That they allowed NATO to welcome Finland, which unlike Sweden has a direct border with Russia, shows that it is not the war in Ukraine that troubles these two countries. They have other problems, directly with Sweden.

The Sweden problem

At a press conference in Washington with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and NATO’s Stoltenberg, Vivian Salama of The Wall Street Journal asked, “Are you concerned that Turkey is increasingly becoming a disruptive ally?” Both Blinken and Stoltenberg ducked the question, which led Kylie Atwood of CNN to ask directly about NATO membership for Sweden. Stoltenberg obliquely noted Turkey’s concerns regarding the presence of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in Sweden. “All NATO allies are of course ready to sit down and address those concerns, including the threats posed to Turkey by PKK,” Stoltenberg said. In 2009, when Sweden held the presidency of the Council of Europe, then-prime minister Fredrik Reinfeldt promised to shepherd Turkey into the European Union. Relations at that time were robust. Turkey’s war in recent years

on the Kurdish minorities in the southeast of the country and in northern Syria roused the exiled Kurdish community in Sweden. Protests in Stockholm have annoyed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has repeatedly called in the Swedish ambassador to Ankara to complain about these protests. When an effigy of Erdogan was burned by the Rojava Committee of Sweden, Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billström wrote on Twitter, “Portraying a popularly elected president as being executed outside City Hall is abhorrent.” This statement was not sufficient. Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said his country had weak “anti-terror” laws and that his government was in talks with Ankara to see what could be done. On his way to Azerbaijan on June 14, Erdogan dismissed the possibility that Sweden would be allowed to enter NATO next month. In May, Hungarian President Viktor Orban went to Doha to attend the Qatar Economic Forum. He was asked why his ruling alliance, Fidesz-KDNP, which dominates the parliament (135 of 199 seats), refuses to ratify Sweden’s entry to NATO. Orban bluntly said he would not back down because “Sweden unfairly expresses a damaging opinion about the situation of democracy and the rule of law in Hungary.” Sweden is not alone in these concerns, which were made very strongly by 13 Hungarian intellectuals in a powerful book, *Igazságosság – demokrácia – fenntarthatóság*, last year. Orban was very upset with Sweden for its support of an EU parliamentary report from September 2022 that described the Hungarian political system as “a hybrid regime with parliamentary autocracy.” Unless Sweden revokes this attitude, Budapest says, it will not allow it to join NATO.

<https://asiatimes.com/2023/06/why-turkey-hungary-are-blocking-sweden-from-nato/>

Carson Jerema: RCMP obfuscations come to Justin Trudeau's rescue in SNC Lavalin scandal

By: Carson Jerema

So it turns out the RCMP was, in fact, investigating allegations of political interference into corruption charges against engineering firm SNC Lavalin. The story, first published by the National Post Monday morning, was not part of some Conservative plot or the result of “irresponsible journalism,” as all-purpose Liberal cheerleader Gerald Butts put it. The scandal, which involved the prime minister in a central role, was under police scrutiny until at least January of this year and no matter how much Liberal partisans want to conjure up conspiracy theories, this is a fact. The Mounties, as was initially reported, denied an access to information request seeking details about any investigation into Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and others who tried to pressure former attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould into intervening in the prosecution of SNC Lavalin, which is politically important in Quebec. The ethics commissioner previously found that Trudeau had broken ethics laws. In a letter to advocacy group Democracy Watch dated May 25, the RCMP explained that 86 of 96 pages were redacted because “this matter is under investigation.” The RCMP’s default to secrecy is notorious. A “matter” being “under investigation” is not some spell that precludes making information public, but, as any reporter who has covered the RCMP knows, the Mounties sure do believe it’s magic. The scandal, which involved the prime minister in a central role, was under police scrutiny until at least January of this year and no matter how much Liberal partisans want to conjure up conspiracy theories, this is a fact. The Mounties, as was initially reported, denied an access to information request seeking details about any

investigation into Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and others who tried to pressure former attorney general Jody Wilson-Raybould into intervening in the prosecution of SNC Lavalin, which is politically important in Quebec. The ethics commissioner previously found that Trudeau had broken ethics laws. In a letter to advocacy group Democracy Watch dated May 25, the RCMP explained that 86 of 96 pages were redacted because “this matter is under investigation.” The RCMP’s default to secrecy is notorious. A “matter” being “under investigation” is not some spell that precludes making information public, but, as any reporter who has covered the RCMP knows, the Mounties sure do believe it’s magic. In a country where passport applications can cause the machinery of government to seize up, the suggestion that different parts of the RCMP are clueless as to what each is doing seems plausible. Yet in the hours between when the National Post story was published and the details were clarified, the way in which the RCMP responded publicly to this issue would seem, at least to a cynical observer, calculated to benefit Trudeau and those around him. At 5:30 p.m. ET, an email from the Prime Minister’s Office directed National Post inquiries to the RCMP, which at this point also still hadn’t responded to the Post. At the time, it might have seemed like both the PMO and the police were trying to evade questions from a reporter, as is often the case. But then, at 6:01 p.m., the RCMP posted on Twitter that it “can confirm it is not investigating allegations of political interference in the trial of SNC Lavalin.” This post, which rests on the words “it is not,” was obviously lacking context, and

clearly did not deny that the Liberals were ever under investigation. Nor did it allude to the fact that the RCMP did state in May that the matter was still being investigated, or that this statement was apparently an error and that the file was closed four months prior. As a way to inform Canadians on a matter of intense public interest, the tweet was less than useless. But it was enough for Liberal partisans and Trudeau apologists, including those in the media who work for Post competitors, to gleefully declare that the story was false or based on “questionable claims,” as one Toronto Star columnist posted on social media. The same people who chastise other reporters for writing crime stories based on what police tell them — racist propaganda, if you haven’t heard — took a carefully worded RCMP tweet as gospel, so desperate are some journalists in this country to wipe away any dirt that may sprinkle upon the prime minister. The police are lying and cannot be trusted — defund them! — unless, of course, they say something that could be generously interpreted as exonerating a Liberal, then what the police say is sacrosanct. We don’t know the exact details or reasoning that led to the RCMP’s infuriating communications on Monday. The end result of this latest SNC Lavalin story, whether intended by the RCMP or not, was for the police to run interference for the Trudeau Liberals. The story should have been about the revelation that the government was under investigation, at least at one point, or if the RCMP had not redacted its files, a story about why it concluded an investigation without criminal charges. Instead, it became a story about RCMP incompetence, and completely bogus allegations of journalistic malfeasance. The public remains in the dark and that suits the prime minister just fine.

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/carson-jerema-rcmp-obfuscations-come-to-justin-trudeaus-rescue-in-snc-lavalin-scandal>

Stonehenge-like 4,000-year-old sanctuary discovered in Netherlands



AMSTERDAM: Archaeologists have discovered a 4,000-year-old sanctuary made up of ditches and burial mounds in the central Netherlands that they believe may have served a similar purpose to Stonehenge.

Like the famous stone circle in southern England, the sanctuary — which was as big as at least three soccer fields and built with soil and wood — was built to align with the sun on the solstices.

The archaeologists also discovered offerings, including animal skeletons, human skulls and valuable items such as a bronze spearhead, at the spots where the sun shone through the openings, according to a statement from the municipality of Tiel, a town around 70 km east of Rotterdam where the site was excavated.

“The largest mound served as a sun calendar, similar to the famous stones of Stonehenge in England,” said the statement.

FIRST READING: Canadian economic productivity is in freefall



By: Tristin Hopper

Although Canadian economic growth is just barely keeping its head above water, data keep emerging to show that, for the average Canadian, the economic situation is getting progressively worse. New data from Statistics Canada show that Canadian labour productivity has dropped for the fourth consecutive quarter. Compared to this time last year, the average Canadian is now producing two per cent less during every hour they spend at work. And it's not like our per-capita productivity was all that good to begin with. An analysis by University of Calgary economist Trevor Tombe found that Canada's per-person rate of economic output is now on the level of some of the poorest states in the U.S. Ontario's rate of per-capita productivity, for instance, is now about the same as Alabama. And even Alberta – Canada's most unambiguously wealthy province – wouldn't come close to cracking the top 10 among richest per-capita U.S. states.

Tombe noted that recent drops in productivity have effectively erased five years of gains, sending Canada right back to the productivity levels of 2017. If Canada had instead spent those last five years matching the productivity growth of the United States, Tombe estimates that it would have meant an extra \$5,500 in increased economic output per Canadian. "Given how closely wages are tied to productivity, this directly affects our living standards and, in my view, poses a bigger affordability challenge than recent high inflation," he wrote. The new figures on dropping productivity add to revelations in May that Canada was already well into a "per-capita" recession. Official figures show that Canada has not

met the technical definition of a recession: two consecutive quarters of negative growth. As of the last count, GDP growth stood at 0.3 per cent in the last quarter of 2022, just enough for policymakers to be able to say that the economy isn't contracting. But those statistics change when accounting for the fact that Canada is packing in unprecedented numbers of new immigrants, meaning that a relatively stagnant national economy is now being shared among a pool of people that is getting three per cent larger every year. Over the weekend, the Canadian population officially passed 40 million people thanks largely to a dramatic scale-up in the country's annual intake of permanent residents. In 2022 alone, Canada added one million newcomers, the equivalent of the entire population of Nova Scotia. The housing-news publication Better Dwelling recently crunched the numbers on Canada's economic performance as measured at a per-capita level. What it found was that, while the aggregate economy may be keeping its head above water, the average Canadian would have experienced the last quarter of 2022 as a 0.9 per cent contraction. "Canadians are likely seeing an erosion in quality of life, and while incomes are rising they aren't rising enough to compete with inflation," wrote Better Dwelling. And overarching everything are OECD projections showing that Canada is on track to become the world's worst-performing advanced economy. In Dec. 2021, a report by the OECD predicted how GDP growth was expected to look in each of the world's developed economic between now and 2060. In terms of "real per capita GDP

growth,” Canada was ranked dead last. For decades on end, the Canadian economy was expected to yield annual growth rates of no more than 0.8 per cent. So while Canada wouldn’t necessarily decline, its economy would remain stagnant, causing living standards to drop as compared to its peer nations. At the time, an analysis by the Business Council of British Columbia blamed a political class that had “lost interest in efforts to raise workers’ productivity.” “Past generations of young Canadians entering the workforce could look forward to favourable tailwinds lifting real incomes over their working lives. That’s no longer the case,” the council concluded. Former Conservative Leader Erin O’Toole may well go down in history for running the most unconservative Conservative election campaign of modern times. His unsuccessful 2021 election run promised higher spending than the Liberals, and offered little to no pushback on Liberal moves surrounding gun control, immigration, transgender rights, government “anti-racism” initiatives and climate policy, among other things. And as he leaves politics, O’Toole’s main piece of advice was for Conservatives to try that whole strategy again. In an interview with CTV, O’Toole said Conservatives would need to moderate if they wanted to win a majority government. At this precise moment, the most disliked politician in Canada may well be a town councillor in the Alberta village of Ryley. The village is the first to ever employ a new Alberta law that allows petitioned recalls of elected officials. And 250 of the village’s 460 people recently signed just such a petition to fire councillor Nik Lee, a former mayor. Among Lee’s laundry list of alleged malfeasancess: that he nearly doubled the village’s budget overnight, that he began charging \$5,000 every time he attended a meeting, and that he missed meetings altogether for months on end.

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/canadian-economic-productivity-is-in-freefall>

Indian minister scoffs at Obama comment on protecting Muslims



India’s finance minister has derided comments by former US president Barack Obama that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government should protect the rights of minority Muslims, accusing Obama of being hypocritical. During Modi’s state visit to the United States last week, Obama told CNN that the issue of the “protection of the Muslim minority in a majority-Hindu India” would be worth raising in Modi’s meeting with US President Joe Biden. Obama said that without such protection there was “a strong possibility that India at some point starts pulling apart”. Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said she was shocked that Obama has made such remarks when Modi was visiting the US aiming to deepen relations. “He was commenting on Indian Muslims [...] having bombed Muslim-majority countries from Syria to Yemen [...] during his presidency,” Sitharaman told a press conference on Sunday. “Why would anyone listen to any allegations from such people?” The US State Department has raised concerns over treatment of Muslims other religious minorities in India under Modi’s Hindu-nationalist party. The Indian government says it treats all citizens equally. Biden said he discussed human rights and other democratic values with Modi during their talks in the White House. Modi, at a press conference with Biden last week, denied any discrimination against minorities under his government.

Open tendering would help Toronto build a better city

By: Stephen Hamilton



During a recent mayoral debate, candidates were asked if they support open tendering. Their responses were remarkably different. While many Toronto voters may not be familiar with the term, what they should know is that Toronto has a lot to gain by following the lead of every other Ontario city and supporting a competitive bidding process on taxpayer-funded projects. So, what is open tendering? When municipalities want to build infrastructure projects, from police stations to community centres and libraries, they issue tenders and invite all interested and qualified contractors to bid. That's what happens in every single Ontario municipality, except Toronto. This city does not invite bids from all contractors with the background and expertise to build. Toronto only considers bids from contractors whose workers belong to a select group of construction unions. This dated and restrictive process means that billions of dollars in construction work is awarded to the same group of

companies, year after year. It's the reason you see the same construction company signage at many city-run construction sites. It's clear that the more bids there are, the greater the competition. This is open tendering and it has proven benefits. More competition has resulted in major savings in other municipalities where bidding used to be restricted and is now open. For example, research shows the Region of Waterloo is saving approximately \$24 million annually on the cost of building public projects. Similar results have been reported in Hamilton and Sault Ste. Marie. Toronto could benefit too. A recent report found that it could save \$347 million each year. That's funding that would help improve transit security, build more affordable housing or expand mental health supports, without raising property taxes or relying so much on other levels of government for funding. Still, Toronto sticks with its old ways. It doesn't promote a competitive bidding process and instead allows only contrac-

tors with ties to certain unions, to bid on projects. As a result, Toronto doesn't benefit from the expertise of many top social housing contractors that build in Hamilton and Mississauga. They're shut out of city projects, along with their workers.

Some try to argue that open tendering will compromise safety, or lead to lower wages for construction workers. That's simply not true; not when the city's requirement of a certificate of recognition (COR) ensures that only the safest contractors can bid and work on City of Toronto construction sites. Maintaining Toronto's Fair Wage Office and Policy also ensures workers are paid good wages. For instance, Toronto's Fair Wage Policy states that electricians working on city projects must be paid over \$50 an hour, including vacation and holiday pay. Back in 2019, the Ontario government passed legislation that made it possible for every municipality to open up its tendering process and accept bids from all qualified contractors. Although City of Toronto staff recommended the city endorse this legislation, Toronto became the provincial exception, by not supporting open tendering.

Times have changed. Toronto can no longer afford to keep tendering projects the same way it has for decades. Paying far too much for construction work makes no sense, given today's fiscal reality. The city's capital budget has a shortfall of well over \$1 billion and growing, while the state of our infrastructure gets worse. Building a better city takes vision, funding and the collective will to make different choices. A practical starting point is requesting that the province make a legislative change so Toronto has another opportunity to get with the times and get behind open tendering. This simple action would allow Toronto to join all other Ontario municipalities by openly tendering city projects and putting those cost savings to good use.

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2023/06/20/open-tendering-would-help-toronto-build-a-better-city.html>

Meta to block news in Canada after new law



OTTAWA: Facebook and Instagram users in Canada will be blocked from viewing Canadian news, parent-company Meta said on Thursday, after Ottawa passed a bill requiring digital giants to pay for such content. Google, another critic of the Online News Act, has previously said it is considering a similar move. The two Silicon Valley giants have pushed back against the bill, which aims to support a struggling Canadian news sector that has seen hundreds of publications closed in the last decade. "Exciting news! (No pun intended)," Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez tweeted after the bill passed a final hurdle in the Senate on its way to becoming law. He said Meta's decision to block news content was regrettable, but vowed to "stand up for Canadians against tech giants." His office said officials met with Facebook and Google this week and looked forward to further discussions about the new law. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last month slammed Meta for a trial run of blocking Canadian news content for some users, saying the company was being "deeply irresponsible and out of touch" for refusing to pay journalists for their work. Opposition to the bill, he said, was "flawed (and) dangerous to our democracy, to our economy." Google in February had also temporarily limited access to news for Canadian users of its popular search engine.

Forced Marriage: A Violation of Human Rights

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



Prior to June 16th 2014, forced marriages were not criminalised in the UK based on the opinion of Rights of Women as they felt that the issue should be dealt with without disassociating it from the wider context of violence against women, and that there was no rationality in creating a specific offence. Instead of criminalising forced marriage, it was suggested that there should be an enactment of a Violence Against Women Act which criminalises all forms of violence against women. The Church of England had however supported criminalisation, and said it is important that forced marriages are “not unintentionally undermined by legislation in this area”.

As a result of the response to the consultation document, the Government decided against outlawing the practice, for fear that creating a specific offence against the practice would force the issue further underground. However, following the (Per Rt Revd Tom Butler, Bishop of Southwark, <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr0206.html> Fessed 10 April 2009)

consultation reports, many human rights based organisations thought it was a good idea to implement a legislation banning the practice. With the influence of Lord Lester of Herne Hill QC, the Parliament's aim to deliver a more effective, transparent and responsive justice system for victims and witnesses of a forced marriage is apparent through the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007. An Evolution in the law:

The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007

The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 was introduced to Parliament on 16th

November 2006 by Lord Lester of Herne Hill QC, a human rights advocate who has campaigned for Bill of Rights, and for equality legislation in the UK for about 30 years. This Bill supports victims and potential victims of forced marriages to be protected by the law, by granting them protection orders in the form of civil remedies in the family courts (and county court in extreme cases). The FMA 2007 is:

An Act to make provision for protecting individuals against being forced to enter into marriage without their free and full consent and for protecting individuals who have been forced to enter into marriage without such consent; and for connected purposes.

The legislation was introduced as a private member's Bill, and as a public Bill its purpose was to change the law as it applies to the general population. A minority of private members' Bills become law. However, as there was, and there still is, a growing publicity around the issue of forced marriages, it affected the legislation indirectly. “It has said to have become law in record time, because it has won the support of all three main political parties and of grassroots bodies like the Southall Black Sisters, IMKAAN, Ashiana and Karma Nurvana, who work to protect women and children against being forced into marriage.”

The aim of the Bill was to prevent and deter forced marriage, and to provide practical remedies. Lord Lester, explaining his motivations behind the bill, said that on the Bicentenary of the abolition of slavery, it was scandalous that we were turning a

blind eye to the sexual and domestic slavery of women. He said that it had been 30 years since he called for the protection of minority women, and expressed his regret on how little had been achieved since then. The 2007 Act made amendments to a number of previously existing legislations, including the Family Law Act 1996, the Supreme Court Act 1981, the Courts and Legal services Act 2009, the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, and the Access to Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

Amendments were laid to the Bill in the House of Lords in the period 8th May 2007 to 13th June 2007, including the incorporation of the Bill as a new Part 4A of the Family Law Act 1996. The Bill was then brought from the Lords and was ordered to be printed in the House of Commons on 21st June 2007. The committee stages of the Bill in the Commons were considered by the Public Bill Committee members as of 17th July 2007. These proceedings were intended to give the committee members more information on which to make their decision on the passing of the Bill, by taking evidence from outside the Parliament. The FMA 2007 received royal assent on 26th July 2007.

It came into force on the 10th Centenary of the White Ribbon Day, 25th November 2008. In 1999, the UN officially recognised 25th November as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This date is significant given that the White Ribbon is a symbol of hope for a world where women and girls can live free from the fear of violence. Wearing the ribbon is about challenging the acceptability of violence by getting men involved, helping women to break the silence, and encouraging everyone to come together to build a better world for all. The FMA 2007's coming into effect on this date signifies great importance for the protection of women against forced marriages.

A snapshot on the Contents of the Forced Marriage Protection Orders

Under this Act, the courts have the power to make forced marriage protection orders to stop someone from forcing another person into marriage. The courts have a wide discretion in the type of injunctions they will be able to make to enable them to respond effectively to the individual circumstances of the case and pre-empt forced marriages from occurring. Furthermore, courts have powers of arrest to orders, whereby if someone breaches an order they can be arrested. It also enables third to apply for an injunction on behalf of somebody else. Hopes been expressed that the approach of the bill, in using civil, rather than law provisions will encourage victims to seek protection because it would not involve reporting family members to the police. It was prepared together with the Southall Black Sisters and a team of leading family lawyers exercising practical experience of working in this field. Many of the provisions in the Act were influenced by a number of Government consultations and reports discussed above in chapter two. Additionally, the provisions also surfaced from the Odysseus Trust consultation that was carried out after the Bill was introduced into Parliament. The FMA is applicable to England and Wales only, excluding Scotland, as the Scottish legislation governing the issue differs somewhat from the English legislation. The distinguishing features of the Scottish Bill are that all civil remedies are prohibitive, and must be sought directly by victims of forced marriages. Another significant distinction is that the powers of arrest are very limited, as they cannot be used against third parties. On the contrary, under the FMA 2007, protection orders may not always be prohibitive as it also positively requires someone to do something. An example of this positive requirement, is for someone to produce their passport. Other orders that the court may make include preventing contact, revealing the whereabouts of the victim, stopping intimidation and violence, and stopping someone from being taken

abroad. Unlike the Scottish legislation, the FMA offers that a third party may apply for a protection order on behalf of the victim with the leave of the court. A third party for this matter, might be a local authority, which are easily identifiable to the community, and confidentially have links with local voluntary organisations, thus having an understanding of the dynamics of forced marriage. Such voluntary organisations, in some cases are the first contact for victims of forced marriage and on whom victims place their trust on. They must therefore be aware of the 'one-chance' rule. This rule is that as they are the first contact for many victims, they may only get one chance to speak to a potential victim and thus may only have one chance to save a life. It is therefore, arguable that a voluntary sector organisations and statutory agencies should be regarded as a third party, as they may be viewed as more approachable by victims than a local authority.

Airport worker dies after plane engine 'ingests' him



WASHINGTON: US regulators said on Sunday they are investigating an incident in which a Texas airport worker was killed after being sucked into a passenger plane engine. A Delta flight had arrived in San Antonio, Texas from Los Angeles on Friday night and was taxiing to the gate with one engine on "when a worker was ingested into that engine", the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said in a statement. "The NTSB is continuing to gather information about the event," it said. The worker was employed by Unifi Aviation, a company the airline giant contracts with for ground crew operations, according to local media. Delta told San Antonio broadcaster KENS 5 that the company was "deeply saddened" by Friday night's events and that it is "cooperating with authorities as they begin their investigation." Unifi Aviation told the broadcaster the incident was "a tragic accident". "From our initial investigation, this incident was unrelated to Unifi's operational processes, safety procedures and policies," the company said. On Wednesday, regional carrier Piedmont Airlines was fined \$15,625 by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), another regulatory body, for the death of a ground crew worker last year in a similar incident. "Proper training and enforcement of safety procedures could have prevented this tragedy," an OSHA official said. Piedmont is a subsidiary of carrier American Airlines.



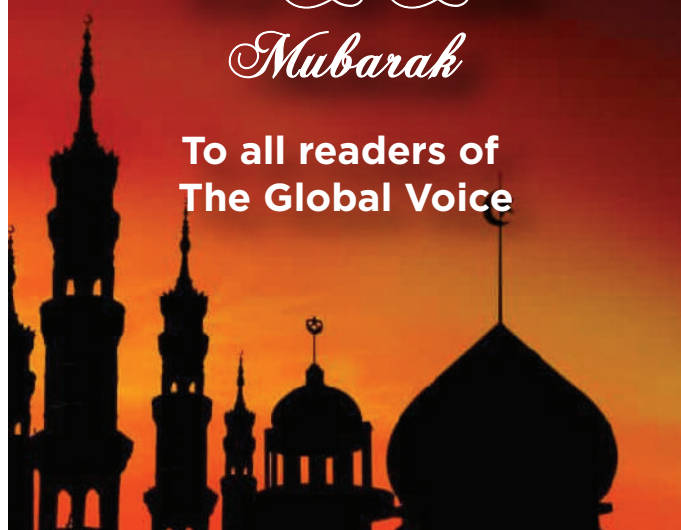
Mohiuddin Abbasi
Chief Editor



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**To all readers of
The Global Voice**



Global Top 50: Nida Usman Wins Another Int'l Award For Rights Activism

Pakistani women rights activist Advocate Nida Usman Chaudhary is among the top 50 women globally to have won an award, it emerged on Friday. The activist is one of the recipients of this year's 'Leadership Award in Women Rights and Activism' under the 'Top50 Professional & Career Women Global Awards - Thirteenth Edition' 2023, in Sri Lanka. The winners were selected out of 102 nominations from all over the world, as per a press release. The nominees were finalised by Women in Management (WIM), Sri Lanka in collaboration with Women in Work, a partnership between the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Australian government. "Your remarkable achievements and dedication to your profession have been recognised by our esteemed panel of judges, who have identified you as one of the Top 50 women leaders in the world," read the letter issued by WIM founder and chairperson Dr. Sulochana Segera. "Your hard work, perseverance, and commitment to excellence have set you apart from your peers and have made a positive impact on your industry and the lives of those around you," she added. Expressing her delight, Nida said, "Of course it feels nice to have our work being acknowledged globally but what really gives joy at times like these is to see our country, Pakistan's name being counted in the list among other countries and to know that somewhere we or our work may have been the reason for that, is one of greatest blessings from Almighty for which I am so so grateful." She further said, "More than our individual or personal success, it is the representation for the country that really makes this so worthwhile. I take it as a huge responsibility and a source of



encouragement to do the work we do with even more dedication and commitment and hope that it can continue to inspire transformative change at home and abroad." The award highlights and honours women in the national, regional, and global economy and celebrate their achievements, experience and creativity in leading the institutions, professions and businesses in an efficient and effective manner. It aims to recognise women who excel in their careers, businesses and everyday life while inspiring others, highlight men who have committed towards gender equality & diversity, and encourage legislative, public and private executive authorities, civil society for their contribution towards gender equality, diversity, social responsibilities, climate and environment actions and good governance. The honour is also aimed at appreciating institutional and individual efforts, initiatives and projects that target mainstreaming diversity. Nida will receive her award on June 17 (Saturday) at a ceremony to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The 'Top50' awards, launched in 2011 with a mere five awards, has now recognised over 890 women leaders, representing a wide array of professions such as banking and finance, hospitality, media, legal, logistics and supply chains.

Migrant crisis: Tunisian fisherman finds dead bodies in his net

As the number of migrants trying to reach Europe grows so does the number of deaths in the Mediterranean. While European Union officials struggle to contain the exodus, the plight of those fleeing poverty and persecution is leaving its tragic mark on the shores of Tunisia. As the sun creeps above the horizon off the shores of its eastern coast, fisherman Oussama Dabbebi begins hauling in his nets. His face fixes anxiously on its contents, because sometimes fish are not all he finds. "Instead of getting fish, I sometimes get dead bodies. The first time I was afraid, then step by step I got used to it. After a while getting a dead body out of my net is like getting a fish." The 30-year-old fisherman, clad in a dark, hooded sweatshirt and shorts, says he recently found the bodies of 15 migrants in his nets over a three-day period. "Once I found a baby's body. How is a baby responsible for anything? I was crying. For adults it's different because they have lived. But you know, for the baby, it didn't see anything." Mr Dabbebi has fished these waters near Tunisia's second city of Sfax since he was 10 years old. In those days he was one of many casting their nets, but now he says most fishermen have sold their boats for vast sums to people smugglers. "Many times smugglers have offered me unbelievable amounts to sell my boat. I have always refused because if they used my boat and someone drowned, I would never forgive myself." A short distance away a group of migrants from South Sudan - which has been hit by conflict, climate shocks and food insecurity since its independence in 2011 - are walking slowly away from the port. All ultimately hope to reach the UK.

One explains that they have reluctantly abandoned a second attempt to cross to Italy because of an overcrowded boat and worsening weather. "There were so many people and the boat was very small. We were still going to go, but when we pushed away from the shore it was really windy. There was too much wind." According to Tunisia's National Guard, 13,000 migrants were forced from their often overcrowded boats near Sfax and returned to shore in the first three months of this year. Between January and April this year some 24,000 people left the Tunisian coast in makeshift boats and made it to Italy, according to the UN refugee agency. The country has now become the biggest departure point for migrants trying to reach Europe. Libya previously held this dubious accolade, but violence against migrants and abductions by criminal gangs have led to many travelling to Tunisia instead, before heading on to Europe. Though the boat involved in last week's disaster off the Greek coast, which has left at least 78 people dead and an estimated 500 missing, had sailed from Libya. Many of their rusting and rotting vessels lie either half-submerged in water or stacked in huge piles next to Sfax's port. Forlorn reminders of the dangers of the world's deadliest known migration route. Another stark reminder can be found at the cemetery on the outskirts of the city. Rows of freshly dug graves lie empty in an extended part of the graveyard, waiting for the next loss sea disaster. But they will not be enough. A new cemetery entirely dedicated to migrants is now being planned. In just one two-week period earlier this year, the bodies of more than 200 migrants were

retrieved from the sea here. Across the whole Mediterranean, more than 27,000 people are known to have died trying to reach Europe since 2014. This accelerating tragedy is causing great difficulties for the city. The director of the regional health authority, Dr Hatem Cherif, says there simply are not the facilities to deal with so many deaths. "The capacity of the hospital mortuary is a maximum of 35 to 40. This is usually sufficient, but with all this influx of bodies, which is getting worse, it's way past the numbers we can take." As many as 250 bodies were brought to the mortuary recently. Most had to be placed in a chilled adjoining room, grimly named the "catastrophe chamber", one on top of each other. Though Dr Cherif was keen to point out that all will be buried in separate, numbered graves. Many of those who die are unidentified, so DNA tests are being organised and the results carefully stored. The idea is to enable relatives searching for loved ones to see if they are buried here, by checking for matches with their own DNA. Three hours' drive north-west of Sfax, several hundred members of Tunisia's black minority, many of them women and children, are camped in small tents outside the offices of the International Organization for Migration in central Tunis. All were evicted from their homes and sacked from their jobs in the city after an incendiary, racist speech in February by the country's President Kais Saied. He claimed "hordes" of illegal migrants were entering the country as part of a "criminal" plan to change its demography. These comments were widely viewed as an attempt to find scapegoats for the country's economic crisis, which has led many desperate Tunisians to become migrants themselves. Pointing to a recent stab wound on his arm, a young man originally from Sierra Leone - which still recovering from a brutal civil war that ended in 2002 - says that since the president's speech, knife-wielding local youths have assaulted many people here. "Some Arab boys came here to attacks us. The police

said they would keep us secure if we stay here. But if we go outside of this area, we are not safe." This worrying situation and the continued jailing of opponents and erosion of civil rights by the country's president appear to be less of a priority for EU officials than curbing the flow of migrants. So far this year more than 47,000 migrants have arrived in Italy, a three-fold increase on the same period of last year and demands have grown for something to be done. During a brief visit here earlier this month a visiting delegation led by the head of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen promised a possible financial support package of nearly 1bn euros (\$1bn; £850m). If approved, around a tenth of this sum would be spent on measures to tackle human trafficking. Last week's tragedy off the Greek coast has heightened demands for something to be done. Yet with many migrants so desperate and people smuggling so profitable for traffickers, stopping the flow of small boats will not be easy. Crowds of migrants from all over Africa and parts of the Middle East gather in groups in shaded spots of the streets of Sfax. Some have funds to pay for a place on a trafficker's boat, others live in limbo, unable to even pay for their food and shelter. Many have either lost their passports or had them stolen, while some never had one having left their countries illegally. All have heard of the deaths of so many who tried to reach Europe, but it seems desperation continues to trump danger, as a young man from Guinea made clear. "We cannot go back to our country because we don't have money or passports. I'm not afraid. I'm starving, there is so much poverty [at home] and my parents have nothing. I don't want my children to live like that. I need to go." The tragedy is that this basic human aspiration for a better life so often comes at such a very high price.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-65952520>

Advocate Salman Assaulted In Court For Representing Ahmadi Lawyer Arrested Under Section 298(C)



Advocate Salman J. Mirza was brutally assaulted by lawyers on the court premises on Monday while presenting arguments to acquire bail for a 76-year-old senior lawyer from the Ahmadiyya community who was booked and arrested for using 'Syed' as a prefix. After being badly tortured by a group of lawyers, advocate Salman was shifted to a hospital to get medical aid. He sustained serious injuries to his entire body, specifically his face. Lawyers' hooliganism is a major concern that is not being addressed by the bars and benches. On April 27, a senior lawyer from the Ahmadiyya community was booked and arrested in Karachi on the complaint of another lawyer over an allegation of using "Syed" in his name. Syed Ali Ahmad Tariq – an advocate of the Supreme Court – was arrested at the City Court Police Station and a First Information Report (FIR), No. 54/23 was registered against him. The lawyer was booked under Section 298 B & C of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) on the same grounds last year. The spokesperson highlighted that the two cases were registered against Tariq in the same police station for

the same reason. On April 16, a mob desecrated the minarets and the dome of an Ahmadi place of worship in Ghooghia, district Sargodha. On the condition of anonymity, an eyewitness said that all this happened in the presence of local police at around 11 pm. It is pertinent to mention here that this place of worship is approximately 118 years old. A fact-finding mission led by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) earlier underscored an alarming uptick in the persecution of members of the community in Gujranwala and surrounding areas –specifically, the desecration of their graves, destruction of minarets at Ahmadi sites of worship, and FIRs filed against the community members for carrying out ritual animal sacrifice on Eid. On February 20, 2023, a 75-year-old Ahmadi doctor named Rasheed Ahmad was shot dead in Gotriala, district Gujrat. Dr Rasheed was shot several times while he was examining patients at his clinic. A dead body of a boy, identified as Hafiz Inam was discovered in nearby fields, and it is most likely that he committed suicide after killing Dr Rasheed. The persecution of Ah-

madis has been on the rise in different areas of Pakistan for some time now. The Punjab province has been the center of it, and the extent of these activities is such that the peaceful Ahmadis were not left alone even during the holy month of Ramazan.



Alibaba founder Jack Ma gives first class as visiting professor at University of Tokyo as he retreats from tech empire



By: Laura He

Hong Kong CNN — Alibaba founder Jack Ma has given his first lecture as a visiting professor to the University of Tokyo, as the high-profile Chinese entrepreneur retreats further from his business empire following a crackdown by Beijing. Ma, who was formerly an English teacher before he became one of China's most successful business figures, taught students at a special two-hour seminar on the evening of June 12, about management philosophy and how they can achieve success, according to a statement from the University of Tokyo on Friday. Ma's talk — to students from Japan, China, India, Malaysia, and elsewhere — was based on "his rich experience and pioneering knowledge of entrepreneurship and innovation," the statement added. Once a flamboyant and outspoken entrepreneur, Ma had largely disappeared from public view after he criticized Chinese regulators during a speech in Shanghai in late 2020. Days after his speech, Beijing called off the blockbuster IPO of his Ant Group, which was expected to be the largest stock offering in world history. The action marked the start of an unprecedented regulatory crackdown on China's internet industry and the private sector, including a record fine of \$2.8 billion on Alibaba Group for violating antitrust rules. Since then, Ma had kept a very low profile and reportedly spent more time overseas, including in Hong Kong, Spain, and Japan, home to his friend and Alibaba investor, SoftBank CEO Masa Son. Ma's whereabouts has attracted continued interest as he was perceived to be representative of China's entrepreneurial confidence. In March, he returned to mainland China to support a landmark restructuring plan by

Alibaba, which split the company into six separate units. His return was a symbolic move and probably a "planned media event" by Beijing intended to appease private sector fears, according to analysts. Ma has appeared in public more frequently this year, with a more visible focus on researching and teaching. In April, the University of Hong Kong announced that Ma would join its business school for the next three years. Ma became a professor at the University of Tokyo on May 1, and his period of stay is until October 31, a profile page of Ma shows. After the seminar, Ma returned to mainland China and attended a math event organized by Alibaba's research team in Hangzhou on Saturday, according to a statement by the Damo Academy. Ma chatted with the finalists of a global math competition held by the academy, which he initiated in 2018, and discussed how the competition will "continue to innovate and bring new fun" to people who love mathematics. Beijing needs the private sector more than ever to shore up growth and create jobs. Multiple indicators show that the country's economic recovery is losing momentum. Retail sales and industrial production both missed forecasts last month, according to government statistics released last week. The unemployment rate for young people aged 16 to 24 hit a fresh record level of 20.8%. The country's top leaders, including Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang, have sought to reassure investors and entrepreneurs that it's safe to invest in the country again. They have also rolled out the welcome wagon for foreign businesses. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/06/19/tech/jack-ma-teaching-japan-university-of-tokyo-intl-hnk/index.html>

Dreams of disruption

By: Dr. Ayesha Razzaque

Some people like superhero movies while others prefer horror movies. My favourite category of movies (and TV series) are tales of founders of companies that built the world we live in. I accept that these stories are subject to some degree of sanitization and embellishment to mythologize the founder, but one hopes that the broad outlines are close enough to the truth. The common thread that runs through the stories about founders of technology companies is the exploration of the entrepreneurial spirit and the transformative power of innovation in the technology industry. These narratives often depict the challenges, triumphs, and personal journeys of visionary individuals who have significantly shaped the digital landscape. 'High Score' is a documentary series on Netflix about the creation of the most iconic and influential video/computer games and the companies like Atari, id Software, Nintendo, and others. These stories highlight the visionary qualities of the founders, portraying them as individuals with foresight and determination to revolutionize the world of technology. They showcase their ability to see beyond the status quo and envision groundbreaking products or services that change the way people live, work, and communicate. 'The Billion Dollar Code' is the David-and-Goliath story of a German technology startup ART+COM founded by Joachim Sauter and Pavel Mayer, funded by Deutsche Telekom, that developed the technology that enabled Google Earth and went up against Google in court. The stories frequently delve into the relentless drive and ambition of these founders. They showcase their unwavering commitment,

often at the cost of personal sacrifices and challenges. And illustrate their determination to overcome obstacles, navigate the competitive landscape, and achieve their goals against all odds. The 2013 film 'Jobs' covers the life of Apple's founders, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, from their college days to the 2001 moment when the company introduced the first-generation iPod, which was followed by the iPhone and iPad in subsequent years. A central theme in these narratives is the emphasis on disruptive innovation. The founders challenge established norms and disrupt traditional industries, introducing groundbreaking technologies or business models that reshape entire markets. They are depicted as catalysts for change, pushing boundaries and creating new possibilities. 'The Playlist' is a Netflix miniseries that tells the story of how Spotify came to be. It is in equal parts about the technological challenges the company had to address to find success and how it upended the way the music industry operated. Although not a technology company, 'Air' was released earlier this year and tells the story of how Nike's basketball division was resurrected by launching the Air Jordan brand by reinventing the relationship sports equipment and apparel makers had with athletes. These stories explore the dynamics of collaboration and rivalry among the founders and their peers. They showcase the complex relationships and dynamics that emerge as these visionaries navigate the competitive landscape, form partnerships, and sometimes engage in intense rivalries with other industry leaders. Although a bit dated now, but 'Pirates of Silicon Valley' is a

1999 film about the founding and rivalry between Microsoft / Bill Gates and Apple / Steve Jobs as it had played out up to that point. Alongside success stories, these narratives also delve into the personal and professional struggles faced by the founders. They shed light on their failures, setbacks, moments of self-doubt, and the toll that the pursuit of their visions can take on their personal lives. Another film, 'Steve Jobs', focuses on the cost of ambition and takes a critical look at the relationship Jobs had with his daughter over the course of his life. These stories highlight the cultural impact of technology companies and their founders. They illustrate how their innovations and companies have transformed society, reshaped industries, and influenced the way people interact, communicate, and consume information. 'The Social Network' is the story of Mark Zuckerberg and the founding of Facebook and the foresight he had for how social networks would change how people communicate and find information on the Internet. Chris Miller's 2021 book 'Chip War' documents the decades-long battle between China and the US over microprocessor technology and the unique place Taiwan occupies in it. It also provides some context for the heightened tensions between the US and China in recent years. Such stories celebrate the indomitable spirit of the founders, their transformative ideas, and the profound impact they have had on the world through technology and innovation. While every founder's path may not be as dramatic, they provide insights into the human stories behind these iconic figures and their contributions to the ever-evolving tech industry. There is a common thread that runs through these stories: no one does it alone. Whoever you look at, very early on, everyone begins by assembling a core team. The people on those teams tend to be exceptionally talented and dedicated. Having talked to a number of tech startup founders in Pakistan, for someone operating out of Pakistan that is often the first

major hurdle or stumbling block. I cannot recall the last time I heard a team of mediocre talent build or accomplish anything truly innovative and therein lies our weakness. That is not to say that finding entrepreneurial success, even in the technology sector, is impossible in Pakistan but that it is rarer and more difficult than it ought to be. However, the talent pool presently available is exceptionally shallow, no more than ankle-deep. The recent economic downturn has exacerbated this crisis of talent even more - many more educated people are trying to emigrate and experienced talent has the advantage. Just as important as technical expertise are professional social skills (better known by the nondescript term 'soft skills'). For years, friends and acquaintances in management positions at all levels have been sharing a steady stream of anecdotes of team members that demonstrate a lack of self-awareness or ownership of one's professional responsibilities. There was a 26-year-old interviewing for an entry-level position who thought himself too experienced, too high up in the pecking order, to be burdened by work tasks on a weekend even when it is crunch time. For another, there was a programmer who had wasted days accomplishing nothing because they got stuck on something. The answer was exactly one Google search away, but the CTO himself had to do the search for them. And so, while essential, technical skills are only one part of the equation. Call them social skills, soft skills, team skills, communication skills, creativity, problem-solving skills, emotional intelligence or common sense - what the world has come to call 21st-century skills are just as essential, and graduates from schools and universities do not have them. And yet, people who have been at the helm of the education system for years have been selling us the dream of a public school and higher education system transformed overnight that will start graduating students as good as any other public education system in the world. A system that

will overnight transform our country from one where virtually no one is capable of following the rules of traffic to one powered by an advanced knowledge economy, leapfrogging over all intermediate developmental stages that every other country had to pass through. The 'research culture' the HEC introduced two decades ago encouraged grift in the name of publications. At the school level, the SNC / NCP is still at an early stage but what has come to light so far is not promising any improvement. On the latter, consider the brouhaha about 'major reforms' being brought to major exams like the SSC (Matric) and HSSC (FSc) of a subset of subjects. Most Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISEs) have around three dozen subjects. Yet, most of them will remain untouched and remain stuck in an era decades past. Whither grand education reform plans? Whither human capital development? Whither dreams of innovations?

Pakistan criticises migration policies after Greece shipwreck



Pakistan and several African nations called for more protections for migrants at the UN Human Rights Council on Monday following the shipwreck off the Greek coast. At least 82 people died and hundreds more are feared dead in the June 12-13 shipwreck along the world's most deadly migration route from Libya to Italy. Pakistan, which had 350 of its nationals aboard the ship that capsized and sank, said the incident was a "grim reminder of the protection gaps". "The human cost of such a status quo is unacceptable," Pakistan's deputy permanent ambassador, Zaman Mehdi, told the 47-member council in unusually frank comments. "Gaps in responsibility sharing, arrangements for the safe and timely search and rescue, disembarkation of all people rescued at sea and accountability must be plugged in the spirit of solidarity." The envoy for Gambia, a country from which many migrants depart on perilous journeys towards Europe, said that the issue required "urgent attention". Felipe Gonzalez Morales, UN Special Rapporteur on Migration, called on states to end the criminalisation of irregular migrants and find regular pathways for them. He also reiterated a call made by hundreds of NGOs for the rights body to create a new international investigative body looking at human rights abuses committed against migrants. The idea is being discussed as part of the ongoing council session in Geneva.

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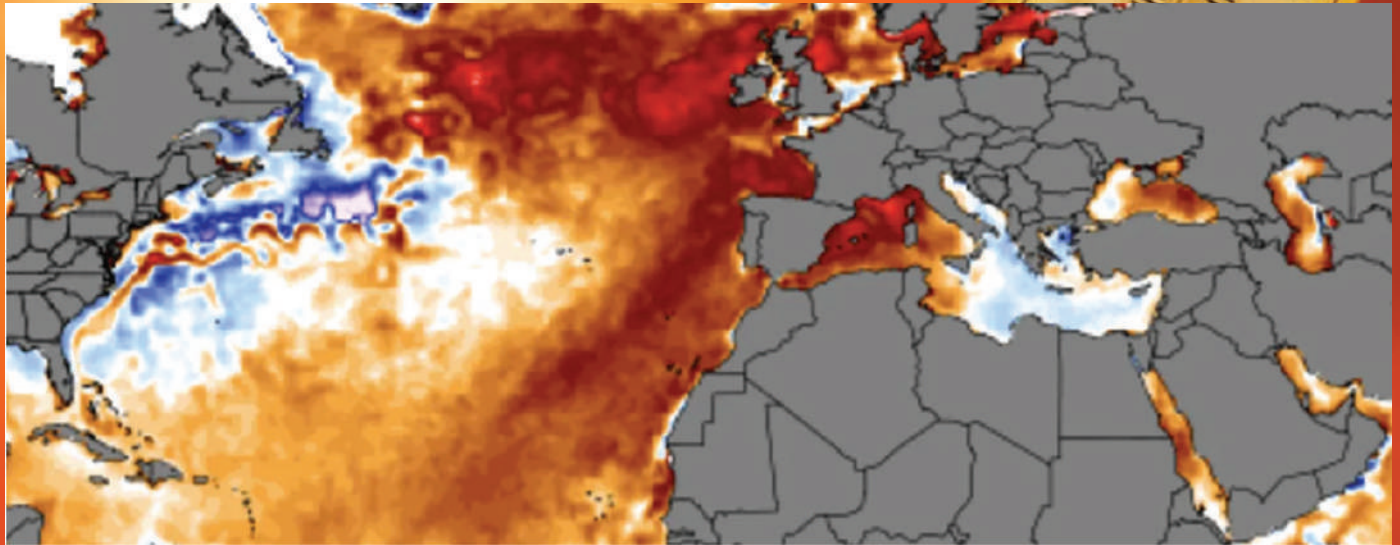
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The North Atlantic is experiencing a ‘totally unprecedented’ marine heat wave

By: Laura Paddison

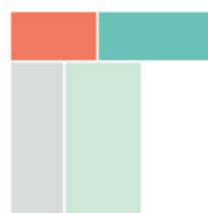


Temperatures in parts of the North Atlantic Ocean are soaring off the charts, with an “exceptional” marine heat wave happening off the coasts of the United Kingdom and Ireland, sparking concerns about impacts on marine life. Parts of the North Sea are experiencing a category 4 marine heat wave – defined as “extreme” – according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In some areas, water temperatures are up to 5 degrees Celsius (9 Fahrenheit) hotter than usual. Global oceans have been exceptionally warm for months. April and May saw the highest ocean surface temperatures for those two months since records began in 1850. The regional picture is even more stark, according to the UK Met Office: Temperatures in the North Atlantic in May were around 1.25 degrees Celsius (2.25 Fahrenheit) above average. “The eastern Atlantic, from Iceland down to the tropics, is much warmer than average. But areas around parts of north-western Europe, including parts of the UK, have among some of the highest sea-surface temperatures relative to average,” Stephen Belcher, the Met Office’s chief scientist, said in a statement. Many scientists are

sounding the alarm. The heatwave is “very exceptional,” said Mika Rantanen, a researcher at the Finnish Meteorological Institute. It is “currently the strongest on Earth,” he told CNN. Richard Unsworth, an associate professor of biosciences at Swansea University in the UK and a founding director of Project-Seagrass, called the Atlantic heat wave “totally unprecedented.” It is “way beyond the worst-case predictions for the changing climate of the region. It’s truly frightening how fast this ocean basin is changing,” he told CNN. Risks are high for marine species, such as fish, coral and seagrass – many of which adapted to survive within certain temperature ranges. Hotter water can stress and even kill them. “There’s a very high potential that animals such as oysters, plants and algae will be killed by this European marine heatwave, particularly within shallow waters where temperatures may super heat beyond the background levels,” Unsworth said. Earlier this month, thousands of dead fish washed up along the Gulf Coast in Texas, a mass death which scientists believe is connected to rising ocean temperatures, as warmer water is able to hold

less oxygen. And in 2021, an extreme heat wave cooked around a billion shellfish to death on Canada's West Coast. Scientists say there are a number of factors behind the extreme heat. "It is the classic combination of the underpinning of human-caused climate change with a layer of natural variation within the climate system on top," the UK Met Office said in a statement. Planet-heating pollution rises as the world continues to burn fossil fuels, which means higher temperatures for oceans and land. El Niño, which tends to have a warming effect globally, is expected to drive temperatures even higher this year. And other factors may also play a role, including a lack of dust from the Sahara, which usually helps cool the region by reflecting away sunlight. "Weaker than average winds have reduced the extent of dust in the region's atmosphere potentially leading to higher temperatures," said Albert Klein Tank, the head of the Met Office Hadley Centre, in a statement. Weaker winds may also have helped increase temperatures, as strong westerly winds typically cool the ocean surface, Rantanen said. Another potential driver of ocean heat could be anti-pollution regulations which require ships to cut sulfur in their fuel, reducing aerosols in the atmosphere. While these aerosols have a negative impact on human health, they also have a cooling impact by reflecting away sunlight. As climate change intensifies, marine heat waves are set to become more common. The frequency of marine heat waves has already increased more than 20-fold due to human-caused global warming, according to a 2020 study. "While we can't in detail predict the intensity, duration and location of severe heating events such as the current marine heat-wave, we know they're increasingly likely to be more prevalent as our climate system collapses further," Unsworth said.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2023/06/20/europe/marine-heatwave-north-atlantic-climate-scn-intl/index.html>



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WHO Director-General's remarks at the Global Forum for Inclusion, Berlin, Germany – 18 June 2023

Moderators, Ms Yang Lang and co-host Mr Ian Harper,

Your Excellency State Secretary the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, Juliana Seifert (Yuliana Zai-fert)

Your Excellency Commissioner Helena Dalli,

Dr Timothy Shriver,
Co-Chairs, Global Youth Leadership Council, Mara Oprea and Anca Oprea

Honourable Ministers, dear colleagues and friends, Good morning, and I apologise that I cannot be with you in person. I thank Germany for hosting the Special Olympics World Games, which is a mark of its commitment to inclusion, human rights, and Health for All. The first Special Olympics was held in 1968, when one thousand athletes competed in Chicago, thanks to visionary founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver. Today, the Special Olympics is the world's largest sports movement for people with intellectual disabilities, with more than five million athletes in 174 countries. Making sport and physical activity inclusive provides lasting benefits in education, health, employment and social integration, while also supporting families and enriching communities. Too often, though, people with disabilities experience a range of health inequities: a greater risk of dying, difficulties accessing care, and stigma and exclusion from education, employment or sport. During the COVID-19 pandemic, mortality rates among people with intellectual disabilities were eight times higher than the general population. Health inequi-

ties like these are often the result of unequal treatment, inaccessible health information, and other structural, social and health system issues. Promoting equity and inclusion for people with disabilities and other marginalized populations in health emergencies is a priority for WHO. And inclusion in sport and physical activity is a priority for improving health and well-being for all. WHO is supporting countries to make health systems more inclusive, through our Disability Guide for Action. And our Sports for Health programme aims to make major sports events safer and healthier, and to advocate for inclusive sport, and equal access to health services. Sport is a powerful tool for improving physical and mental health, but also for building confidence, fostering friendships and social connections, and reducing social isolation. For people living with disabilities, this is especially important, both for social health and for education and employment. In fact, promoting physical activity for adolescents of all abilities remains a major challenge. Globally, four out of five adolescents are not active enough. Promoting physical activity is a key priority for WHO to prevent disease, improve mental health and increase social inclusion. Thank you all for your commitment to promoting and protecting the health of people with intellectual disabilities. We wish you all, especially the athletes, every success for these Special Olympics. I thank you.

<https://www.who.int/director-general/-speeches/detail/who-director-general-remarks-at-the-global-forum-for-inclusion--berlin--germany---18-june-2023>



(Hajj) Real Juneteenth event

By: Masood Ashraf



In America, Juneteenth, a combination of the words June and 19th, is also known as Emancipation Day. It commemorates the day in 1865, after the Confederate states surrendered to end the Civil War, when a Union general arrived in Texas to inform a group of enslaved African Americans of their freedom under President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. Few of the States in America were celebrating this day as a holiday but President Biden declared this day as a Federal Holiday in 2021 officially. However, Quran has addressed and put an end to this issue 1500 years ago. One always admires the unfailing obedience of Prophet Ibrahim(as) towards God when he left his elder son, Ishmael & his wife, Hager in the desert under God's commandment with very little provisions. When he was leaving, she asked him 3 times "why are you leaving us here?" His eyes were full of tears, but could not look back or say anything, but simply raised his finger towards the sky. She understood that it was God's command & she said, "If it is God's command, then He will not destroy us." Prophet Ibrahim(as) also prayed "My Lord, make this a town of peace and provide with fruits such of its dwellers as believe in God and the Last Day." When the provisions finished, Hager ran between Safa & Marwah (two hills) to see if there was a caravan passing by. Then she heard a voice saying, "Hager, Hager, go back to your son. She looked around but did not see any human beings. But when she returned to her son, she saw a spring of water at the spot where Ishmael was rubbing his feet out of thirst. This miraculous spring is called Zamzam & still exists near Kaaba. God's grand plan was to reconstruct the first house of worship on earth at the ruins of the ancient house of God.

"Surely, the first House founded for mankind is that at Becca, abounding in blessings and a guidance for all peoples.3-97" Prophet Ibrahim(as) fervent prayers and his and his wife's sacrifices have been recorded, permanently, in the Holy Quran. "And, our Lord, raise up among them a Messenger from among themselves, who may recite to them Thy Signs and teach them the Book and Wisdom and may purify them; surely, Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.' 2-130" And when Holy Prophet (sa) declared this on occasion of last pilgrimage "Allah has made you brethren one to another, so be not divided. An Arab has no preference over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab; nor is a white one to be preferred to a dark one, nor a dark one to a white one" Millions of Muslims from all over the world will be gathering in Mecca to commemorate these great sacrifices and to act upon those teachings which unites mankind. This is called Hajj (pilgrimage) which will begin on June 26 and will end on June 28th, 2023. This truly is a real Juneteenth event in essence where people of faith from all around the world gather regardless of their skin color or worldly status and bow down to one who created us all equally. Quran states "O mankind, we have created you from a male and a female; and We have made you into tribes and sub-tribes that you may recognize one another. Verily, the most honorable among you, in the sight of Allah, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware. 49-14" American civil right leader Malcolm X wrote a letter after performing the Hajj and his words still are relevant today as they were back then, he states "Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people

of all colors and races here in this ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad and all the other Prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colors. I have been blessed to visit the Holy City of Mecca. I have made my seven circuits around the Ka'bah, led by a young Mutawaf named Muhammad. I drank water from the well of the Zam Zam. I ran seven times back and forth between the hills of Mt. Al-Safa and Al-Marwah. I have prayed in the ancient city of Mina, and I have prayed on Mt. Arafat. There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and non-white. America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered 'white'; but the 'white' attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color. You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to re-arrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have always been a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth. During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and

slept in the same bed (or on the same rug) — while praying to the same God — with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the actions in the deeds of the 'white' Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan, and Ghana. We were truly all the same (brothers) — because their belief in one God had removed the white from their minds, the white from their behavior, and the white from their attitude. I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept in reality the Oneness of Man — and cease to measure, and hinder, and harm others in terms of their 'differences' in color. With racism plaguing America like an incurable cancer, the so-called 'Christian' white American heart should be more receptive to a proven solution to such a destructive problem. Perhaps it could be in time to save America from imminent disaster—the same destruction brought upon Germany by racism that eventually destroyed the Germans themselves. Each hour here in the Holy Land enables me to have greater spiritual insights into what is happening in America between black and white. The American Negro never can be blamed for his racial animosities—he is only reacting to four hundred years of the conscious racism of the American whites. But as racism leads America up the suicide path, I do believe, from the experiences that I have had with them, that the whites of the younger generation, in the colleges and universities, will see the handwriting on the walls and many of them will turn to the spiritual path of truth—the only way left to America to ward off the disaster that racism inevitably must lead to. Never have I been so highly honored. Never have I been made to feel more humble and unworthy. Who would believe the blessings that have been heaped upon an American Negro?

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