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Islamic Marriages must be registered to protect Muslim women



Zakaria Virk, Editor

The UK government must ensure to register all Islamic marriages in order to protect Muslim women from abuse and destitution. Women are trapped in “marital captivity” in the United Kingdom, as the government has refused to make the registration of sharia marriages mandatory.

This is in view of the fact that polygamous marriages and Islamic divorce – which permits the man to instantaneously divorce his wife but makes it far more difficult for the woman to initiate divorce proceedings – puts wives at risk.

Take the case of Mrs Nasreen Akhter and Mohammed Shabaz Khan, who have four children had an Islamic wedding ceremony in a west London restaurant in 1998 in the presence of an imam and about 150 guests, but no civil ceremony subsequently took place, despite Mrs Akhter repeatedly raising the issue.

They separated in 2016 and Mr Khan tried to block his wife’s divorce petition two years ago on the basis they had not been legally married in the first place. The High Court ruled in 2018 that the couple’s Islamic “Nikah” ceremony fell within English marriage law.

But the Court of Appeal said that it was an “invalid” non-legal ceremony. Mrs Akhter argued their Islamic faith marriage was valid, as was her application for divorce, and that she was entitled to the same legal protection and settlement offered in the UK to legally married couples. Her application for divorce was

analyzed during a trial in the Family Division of the High Court and Mr Justice Williams delivered a written judgment in the summer of 2018.

The Court of Appeal overturned that decision in February 2020 and said the marriage was “invalid” under English marriage law. It explained the wedding was “a non-qualifying ceremony” because it was not performed in a building registered for weddings, no certificates had been issued and no registrar was present.

A report *Fallen through the Cracks* - prepared by Emma Webb of CIVITAS think tank states that of the 100,000 sharia marriages that are held each year in Britain, only around 25 per cent are actually registered with the government. But there is hesitation on the government part to have Islamic marriages (Nikah) registered because people in the government are afraid of accusations of being Islamophobic if they crack down on the unregistered marriages and view the practice of sharia marriages as a “social and religious” problem that should “be dealt with by the community rather than the law”.

The author of the study, Emma Webb, told *The Telegraph*: “Despite calls from Muslim women activists and the international bodies, every day women continue to suffer horribly because of completely unjustifiable shortcomings in our legislation.”



Pakistan India Education Systems Compared

By Prof Pervez Hoodbhoy



ON July 29, Narendra Modi's government unveiled what it calls a groundbreaking new national education policy (NEP 2020). The 65-page document's wide range — from primary to university — forces me to consider here just a single issue: To what extent does NEP reflect the BJP ideology of Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan? And how does it compare against Pakistan's newly declared single national curriculum with logo: one nation, one curriculum?

At face value NEP is innocuous, even charming. It speaks of India's rich heritage, the ancient universities of Nalanda and Takshashila, mathematicians like Bhaskaracharya and Brahmagupta, jnan (knowledge) and satya (truth) etc. The goal of education is: "complete realization and liberation of the self". Who can possibly object? Still better: my computer word search yielded only two occurrences of the word 'religion', both times in the harmless context of NEP's purported inclusion of all religions.

NEP also engages our anti-colonial sensibilities: Indian children up to grade 6-7 can learn English if they want but, under its new three-language formula, states and regions can choose their languages provided at least two of the three are native to India. In principle Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Christian students will use the same books,

study side by side in the same classrooms, and take the same exams. Wonderful!

But inside NEP's not-so-hidden agenda are the clear wishes of RSS, the BJP's ideological parent. RSS follows its guru, M.S. Golwalkar, who suggested India learn from Hitler in keeping races pure. In 1947, RSS wanted all Muslims remaining in India expelled to Pakistan. Then a minority, it now enjoys full state support. India must look towards its glorious past, declares NEP, with that past exclusively Hindu. Although Sanskrit is a culturally dead language, NEP calls it the fount of all sacred and secular knowledge. Urdu, on the other hand, although spoken by tens of millions of Indians and once the language of the Bombay film industry, is absent from a list that includes Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit.

All education policies are cooking recipes; the final product depends upon ingredients. NEP hints at, but leaves unspecified, what textbooks will contain. Will history be dispassionately presented as a series of invasions which, layer by layer, built Indian culture over the millennia? Or are Muslims merely wicked temple-destroyers who shattered the seraphic heaven of Mother India? One worries because in BJP-ruled states, leaders have demanded removal of references to

Mughal emperors Akbar and Aurangzeb to make space for Hindu kings like Maharana Pratap and Shivaji. Interestingly, RSS's nativism appears driven more by its anti-Christian agenda than its anti-Muslim one. Since the days of Lord Macaulay, convents and other English-medium Christian missionary schools have been the mainstay of modern Indian education. But today, tens of thousands of RSS-associated vernacular language schools stand against them. These will gain from downgrading English. RSS pracharaks are jubilant but Indians face a reality check. English-medium schools, not traditional patshalas and gurukuls, modernized India and gave it global clout. While India can name its satellite 'Aryabhata', Isaac Newton's laws actually guided it into orbit. Even the BJP minister whose signature is on NEP, Prakash Javedekar, knows this. From Indian press reports I found that he, along with nine other BJP ministers, has also sent his children to study abroad. NEP is a step backward for India's national integration. In spite of 30 languages, 130 dialects, and well over a dozen faiths, India took barely 50 years to create a national identity after Jawaharlal Nehru set it on a secular track. Most Muslims, Sikhs and Christians were then proud to declare themselves Indian. But, as Indian secularism retreats, this is now disappearing.

Pakistan's new education policy, only parts of which are known so far, is much more upfront on creating a religion-based society. The goal is to put madrasahs at the same level as all other kinds of schools. Henceforth, bearded men from the Ittehad Tanzimat-i-Madaris (Coalition of Madressah Organisers) will decide what Pakistani children will learn and will also scrutinize their textbooks.

Religious materials are mandatory from nursery classes onward. The new Class 1-5 curriculum is extremely detailed and reveals more religious content to be memorized than even madrasahs require. Discrimination is automatic. Since non-Muslim students cannot be allowed to study from the Holy Book, they must be separated. Major

changes are afoot at higher levels as well. The governor of Punjab, Ghulam Sarwar, told me during an exclusive one-on-one meeting in his office on July 23 of his decision to make the award of all university degrees in Punjab contingent upon studying the Holy Quran together with translation. Doing so, he said, will ensure that our university students learn Arabic. He did not elaborate on how this would help make better doctors, economists, engineers, or scientists. For building national identity Pakistan seeks to Arabicize and Islamize whereas India wants to indigenize and Hinduise. The BJP's way is more subtle than Pakistan's but cleverer because it understands the enormous power of culture. Programs such as 'Aik Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' aim at developing a multilingual, multicultural (but not multi-religious) Indian national identity. Compare that with education policies in Pakistan where regional cultures and languages find only fleeting references.

With no lessons learnt from 1971, Pakistan still assumes that solidifying its Islamic identity will somehow create national integration. Even something as mild as the 18th Amendment, which entrusts education to the provinces, has the sword of Damocles hanging over it. The new education policies of India and Pakistan will further divide them, both from each other as well as within each country. Majoritarian consensus against their respective religious minorities will be hugely strengthened. The Indian policy is milder in tone than Pakistan's but is probably more dangerous simply because it is better thought out and professionally formulated, hence, likely to be more successful when implemented.

On the other hand, the Pakistani policy document is half-baked, wrapped in multiple layers of confusion, and will almost certainly flounder. But if it is implemented, it will lead to *fasaadi* extremism of a kind that operations like *Radul Fasaad* cannot ever defeat.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1573256/pak-india-education-compared>



Pakistan's education 'reforms' are privileging the madrassa system- the fear of English

By Khaled Ahmad

In July 2020, Pakistan saw another so-called reform in education. The government of Imran Khan decided to conclude its “unification” of the three “systems” of education (Urdu medium schools, English medium schools and the madrassa) predictably imposing more of the madrassa on the other two streams.

It announced an Islamic course at the Master's level, and allowed raids on printing presses in Punjab province to confiscate “hostile” publications. Since education is a provincial subject, Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa are bound to bear the brunt of this “reform” as they

are ruled by K h a n ' s Tehreek-e-Insaf party. already “religiously oriented” educational system will be further Islamised. (Express Photo) Teachers labeled “liberal”



and “secular” are the first to be rendered jobless under the looming reform. Nuclear physicist Pervez Hoodbhoy and another “science” teacher have been sacked from a Lahore University as a foretaste of what is to come. Hoodbhoy's thesis is that the reform will make the madrassa dominate the other two streams and that an already “religiously oriented” educational system will be further Islamized. Pakistan's universities are not recognized outside Pakistan because of the heavy ideological content in their syllabi and the daunting presence of religious-fundamentalist elements in them. The problem with education in a Muslim state is its reluctance to impart “analytical and critical” thinking. When a Pakistani educationist sits down to frame

textbook content, he is scared of the “critical” trait of the human mind. His objective is to prevent the student from applying a “critical” yardstick while analyzing “ideology”. The recent law allows the Punjab administration to form vigilante groups that could assault publishing houses to cull “objectionable content” and destroy it and subject the publisher-writer to punishment. Pakistan is not alone among the Muslim states to have an educational system hostile to “free knowledge”. The Arab world is equally crippled while Iran and Turkey have

succumbed to Islamism and its anti-knowledge worldview. The other negative factor in the Muslim world is the frequent incidence of war that upsets the intellectual conditions required for

education, replacing it with “propaganda”.

There is also the rise of Islamism that damages the edifice of rational learning. Boko Haram, an Islamic revival terrorist organization active in several states in Africa, attacks “rational” (read English-medium) institutions and translates its own name as “English-medium education not allowed”.

The other factor negating education is the incidence of violence in the shape of war and civil war. In the case of Pakistan, there is little money left after “fighting” or “preparing” for wars and there is simply no money left in the kitty for education after meeting the expenditure on the armed forces. In the Arab world too, there is frequent war during which no one thinks of

education. Teachers too are a problem. Most of the primary school teachers in Pakistan are madrasa graduates who have acquired knowledge that equips them for no secular profession. Children in most state-funded schools get poor training in math and history as fact-based narrative. The state sector education mostly relies on brainwash as teaching methodology. Looking for good teachers is a problem of the Islamic world where war and high birth rate outstrips the capacity of the state to produce good teachers capable of imparting “modern knowledge”. In an article in Arab News, Zaid M Belbagi wrote: “Compounded by record levels of teachers reaching retirement age alongside unprecedented numbers of children entering the education system, UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics indicated that 1.6 million new teaching posts will need to be created in the Arab world if universal education is to be achieved. This figure is likely to increase.”

Huma Yusuf in Dawn (May 7, 2018) states: “The threats to critical thinking and debate come from many sources: So-called state functionaries, student wings of religious political parties, firebrand students wielding blasphemy charges, politicized academics, complicit university administrators, and even right-wing media commentators who name and shame educational institutions, forcing them to go on the defensive and resort to self-censorship to protect students from mobs.”

It is curious that English and its “logical-sequential” discourse should disturb Imran Khan, who frequently lambasts modern “liberal” Pakistanis. His clubbing together of the three systems of education in Pakistan and squeezing “one system” out of them is typical of the Muslim educationist who is scared of English as a purveyor of rational thought. This article first appeared in the print edition on August 8, 2020 under the title ‘The fear of English’. The writer is consulting editor, Newsweek Pakistan.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/pakistan-education-reform-madrasa-system-6544847/>



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MOHIUDDIN ABBASI
Editor-in-chief

The Lahore Resolution – a landmark document



By Prof Hamza Virk

India Act, 1935 because it was “totally unsuited to and unworkable in the peculiar conditions of this country and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India.”

2. The Muslims would not accept any revised constitutional plan unless it was framed with “their consent and approval.”

The resolution for the establishment of a separate homeland for the Muslims of British India passed in the annual session of the All India Muslim League held in Lahore on 22–24 March 1940 is a landmark document of Pakistan’s history. The passing of the resolution marked the transformation of the Muslim minority in British India into a nation with its distinguishing socio-cultural and political features, a sense of history and shared aspirations for the future within a territory. The Lahore Resolution, popularly described as the Pakistan Resolution, employs modern political discourse for putting forward its demand rather than using a religious idiom for creating a religious-Islamic state for protection of Islam from the onslaught of other religions of India. It made worldly demand keeping in view the peculiar problems of the Muslims of British India, the political experience of the Muslim community and the prevailing debate about the ways to protect Muslim identity, rights and interests against the backdrop of the modern state system established by the British in India. The Resolution addressed the Muslim question in the political and constitutional context of British India and pointed out to the course of action the Muslim League intended to adopt to secure the Muslim identity, rights and interests. It emphasised the principles that were relevant to modern state system and the political context of British India. It made five specific demands:

1. The Resolution rejected the federal system of government as envisaged in the Government of

3. The adjacent territorial units should be demarcated into regions that may involve some territorial adjustments in a manner “that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in north-western and eastern zones of India “become “independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.”

4. The resolution offered “adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards for religious minorities” in the Muslim majority units for the “protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.” Similar rights will be given to the Muslims in “other parts of India.”

5. The Muslim League Working Committee was asked to formulate a constitutional scheme on the basis of the principles outlined in the Resolution. Initially the Muslim League demanded separate electorate for the Muslims so that they could elect their representatives. Later, it sought adequate Muslim representation in the cabinets and state services/jobs. It also demanded constitutional safeguards and guarantees for the Muslims. It supported federalism with autonomy for provinces, hoping that the Muslims would be able to exercise power effectively in the Muslim majority provinces which would not only boost the Muslim community but also provide greater opportunity for advancement of Muslim rights and interests.

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The Defiance of Pakistani Atheists

By Kunwar Khuldun Shahid

For Pakistani atheists, a hitherto intangible demographic, the 2010s was a decade that simultaneously gave them an identity and took it away. The voice they found in the digital sphere at the start of the 2010s, albeit under the cloak of anonymity, has largely been stifled.

With the boom of the internet and the rise of social media, Pakistani atheists and agnostics found safe spaces online around the turn of the decade. This grew into the creation of a Facebook group, Pakistani Atheists and Agnostics (PAA) and an official website in 2011 – the same year that the country saw its most high profile victim of a blasphemy accusation, former Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer. The atheist boom online was a grand paradox in itself, given that not only was Islamic terrorism at its apogee at the time, but the Taliban and their apologists enjoyed wide approval and sympathy. And yet mainstream media gave coverage to atheists in the country, with English publications even providing space to some camouflaged critiques of Islam at the time as well.

By 2012, the percentage of atheists in Pakistan had doubled to 2 percent from the 1 percent in 2005, as per Gallup polls – although the sample size of a few thousand might not be accurately representative. The Pakistani census doesn't categorize atheism, a theological position that carries the death penalty in the country. Pakistan is one of 13 countries where atheism is punishable by death. Although the Sharia clauses infused in the constitution don't explicitly mention atheism, under orthodox Islamic interpretations apostasy – leaving Islam – is largely interpreted as blasphemy, which is a capital offence in the country. This prompted many Pakistani atheists to create an anonymous online identity, which they used to express their religious views on social media, eventually forming groups of like-minded individuals. "For most Pakistani atheists, PAA and other social media [groups]

provided space for their first ever meeting with another Pakistani atheist," the founder of PAA, who goes by the pseudonym Hazrat Nakhuda, told The Diplomat. "Pakistani atheists then started having meet ups [in the early 2010s]. A lot of very active [PAA members] transformed into actual real life groups of friends," he added. The growing space for religious dissent meant that many Pakistani atheists created their own websites and Facebook pages, some of which started garnering large followings. Among these was "Rants of a Pakistani Citizen," which often used irony and humor to critique both religion and state. "Initially it was surprising to find out so many people share these opinions. And so many people inboxed me saying there are a lot of posts they agree with, but can't publicly like or comment on them," said the founder of the page, known among his followers as Rants, while talking to The Diplomat.

This digital space was swiftly taken away by the state in a five-month span. Pakistan passed its cybercrime law in August 2016 and then secular bloggers and social media activists were abducted in January 2017.

The draconian cybercrime law ensured that blaspheming online carried the death penalty. Meanwhile, the secular bloggers were abducted under the unsubstantiated pretext of running pages that posted "blasphemous content." The kidnappings were part of a broader crackdown on anonymity. "It's ridiculous that anyone would go after people who are just making memes or posting their opinions. It definitely silenced a lot of voices. If I were in Pakistan, I would definitely be more cautious," said Rants, whose page has been taken down multiple times by Facebook and banned in Pakistan. Similarly, the PAA group ceased to exist, and its Facebook page was blocked in Pakistan. The last tweet sent out by PAA's handle was in December 2015. A member of the then PAA, who goes by the

name Billi Musashi, revealed that the group had been compromised. “There were some people who pretended to be atheists to join the groups and then posted screenshots of conversations here and there – and outed [members] too. [As a result] safe spaces and groups have shut down. There is more distrust [now] – atheists feel threatened,” she told The Diplomat.

The Diplomat has further learnt that the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had direct access to PAA. The FIA even summoned admins of other secularist groups over blasphemy allegations.

When the Islamabad High Court (IHC) declared that “blasphemers are terrorists,” PTA chairman Dr. Syed Ismail Shah vowed in court hearings to increase the crackdown. That resulted in arbitrary bans on pages like Bhensa, Mochi, Roshni, and satirical news website Khabaristan Times.

The crackdown by the PTA and Pakistan’s Information Ministry led to the BBC doing a documentary called “Diary of a Pakistani Atheist,” underlining the fear among the atheists in the country while also showcasing how they have carved out a sense of community.

An example of the online crackdown pushing atheists to be warier of the digital space can be seen in how the hashtag #ملحد_پاکستانی_کروڑ_ایک or “Aik crore Pakistani mulhid” (10 million Pakistani atheists) that used to trend on Darwin Day annually, hasn’t done so since 2017. “Perhaps the person who arranged the aik crore hashtag got scared of the likes of the Tehrik-e-Labbaik. Back in the day our biggest threat was a group of hackers in Zaid Hamid’s group. And we thought that was big!” said Hazrat Nakhuda. The 10 million figure was a presumed extrapolation from the Gallup survey. However, while recent surveys in other Muslim countries have showed a fast-growing trend of individuals leaving Islam, Pakistan hasn’t had any survey on atheism since 2012.

In fact, atheism in Pakistan has had barely any coverage, not even in the international media, since September 2017 when the United Nations Human Rights Council took up a written statement by the International Humanist and Ethical Union entitled “Dangerous situation for Freethinkers and

Humanists in Pakistan.” In private conversations, many who self-identify as atheists, across the demographic divide, reveal that while there has been a mass exodus of atheist accounts from social media, safe spaces for the freethinkers still exist across the country, including rural areas where many of the PAA members came from. Many of these spaces exist in educational institutes, ranging from closed groups to open debating societies, which have traditionally allowed room to discuss the philosophical aspects of irreligion as long as one steers clear of mocking Islamic personalities. However, many confess that particular line is getting harder to discern, given how even educational institutes aren’t entirely secure from fatal blasphemy accusations. The case of Mashal Khan, a journalism student at Abdul Wali Khan University lynched by fellow students in April 2017 is still fresh in memory for many. Junaid Hafeez, a former professor at Bahauddin Zakariya University, has been languishing in prison since March 2013 over a blasphemy allegation that legal experts say wasn’t even worthy of an FIR. The lawyer who took up Hafeez’s case was shot dead in May 2014. And yet Pakistani atheists say that the trend of abandoning religious orthodoxy has never been higher among the youth as it is today. “This generation is fast being exposed to other people’s cultures and ideas and is realizing that religious belief is just an accident of birth,” Ali A Rizvi, the Pakistani-Canadian author of *The Atheist Muslim: A Journey from Religion to Reason*, told The Diplomat. “A lot of young people write to me and say that’s exactly what I am: an ‘atheist Muslim.’ [Because] many of the Pakistani atheists remain closeted – they are atheists, but have to present themselves as Muslim,” added Rizvi. Rizvi, who also cohosts “Secular Jihadists,” says his podcast has a large following from Pakistan. “The ongoing online crackdown isn’t going to affect the growth of atheism in Pakistan. You can temporarily silence them through terror and fear, but you can no longer force people into thinking [certain] things. This is going to severely backfire on the Pakistani state and establishment,” he said.

<https://thediplomat.com/2019/08/the-defiance-of-pakistani-atheists/>



Pakistan-born astrophysicist Nergis Mavalvala named dean of MIT School of Science



Pakistan-born quantum astrophysicist Nergis Mavalvala has been named the new dean of the MIT School of Science, one of the five schools of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), it emerged on Tuesday. According to MIT News, she will become the new dean from September 1 and will succeed Michael Sipser, who will return to the faculty as the Donner Professor of Mathematics after six years of service. She has received numerous awards and honors' for her research and teaching, and since 2015 has been the associate head of the Department of Physics. Mavalvala will be the first woman to serve as dean in the School of Science."

It added that Mavalvala was "energized and optimistic" about the role ahead, even as she acknowledged the unprecedented challenges the school and the institute as a whole were facing during this difficult time. "We're in this moment where enormous changes are afoot," she said. "We're in the middle of a global pandemic and economic challenge, and we're also in a moment, at least in US history, where the imperative for racial and social justice is really strong. "As someone in a leadership position, that means you have opportunities to make an important and hopefully lasting impact," she said. Meanwhile, MIT President L. Rafael Reif stated that Mavalvala's "brilliance as a researcher and educator speaks eloquently for itself". "What excites me equally about her appointment as dean are the qualities I have seen in her as a leader: She is a deft,

collaborative problem-solver, a wise and generous colleague, an incomparable mentor, and a champion for inclusive excellence. "As we prepare for the start of this most unusual academic year, it gives me great comfort to know that the School of Science will remain in such capable hands."

The report added that the news was announced by Provost Martin Schmidt via a letter emailed to the MIT community in which he said:

"I very much look forward to working with her and to benefiting from her unerring sense of scientific opportunity, infectious curiosity, down-to-earth manner and practical wisdom.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1575089>



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Pakistan Court: 14-year-old Christian girl kidnapped must remain with her kidnapper

By John Hayward

A court in Pakistan ruled in August that 14-year-old Christian girl Maira Shahbaz voluntarily converted to Islam and is legally married to an older Muslim man named Mohamad Nakash, even though Maira and her family say Nakash kidnapped her at gunpoint with two accomplices during the coronavirus lockdown in April 2020.

If the ruling stands, Maira will be forced to return from the shelter where she is staying to the home where she was held hostage. Witnesses say Maira was walking home on April 28 in the town of Madina when Nakash and two accomplices forced her into a car, fired several gunshots into the air, and sped away.

When her family reported the kidnapping, Nakash produced a "marriage certificate" that listed the girl's age as 19, even though her family has a birth certificate proving she is only 14. The certificate listed the date of the marriage as last October, six months before Nakash abducted Maira. The Muslim cleric who ostensibly signed the birth certificate denied any involvement in the "marriage" when questioned. In July, the Shahbaz family prevailed upon the top cleric of a local mosque to issue a fatwa (religious edict) that Nakash's marriage certificate was invalid. Human rights activists supported the family by pointing out that not only was the imam's signature on the document fraudulent, but Nakash was already married to another woman not mentioned on the document. Polygamy is legal but regulated in Pakistan, and one of the regulations is that existing wives must give written approval for additional marriages. Marriage to girls under the age of 16 is technically illegal, but activists complain the Child Marriage Restraint Act is not vigorously enforced and often set aside in favor of Islamic sharia, which allows girls to be married off once they experience their first menstrual cycle. The United Nations rates Pakistan as one of the worst countries in the world for child brides, with some 3 percent of girls wedded before the age of 15. Pakistan has a law against forced religious conversion that stipulates a minimum age of 18 for



changing religions without parental consent. This law also encounters resistance from Islamists who cite sharia and Muslim historical precedents for young children converting to Islam....

The Shahbaz family has reportedly had little contact with Maira since she was kidnapped. According to Sandhu, Maira's mother Nighat Shahbaz collapsed and was treated to [sic] a heart attack when seeing her for the first time since her abduction at a May court hearing. Nighat Shahbaz refused to speak with reporters after the Lahore High Court ruling. "Around 1,000 Christian and Hindu women are abducted each year in Pakistan and typically forced to convert to Islam," the UK Telegraph reported, quoting the Movement for Solidarity and Peace. Christians make up about two percent of Pakistan's population. Lawyer Khalil Tahir Sandhu, who represented Maira in court, told ACN: "It is unbelievable. What we have seen today is an Islamic judgment. The arguments we put forward were very strong and cogent." In the courtroom, Mr Tahir Sandhu detailed 11 arguments in support of his client, chief of which involves an official birth certificate showing Maira was only 13 last October, the month of her alleged marriage to Mr Nakash.

<https://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2020/08/06/pakistani-court-rules-14-year-old-christian-girl-must-remain-married-muslim-kidnapper/>



Impact of COVID-19 on climate change



By **Badaruddin Abbasi**

Climate Change in when the ordinary long-terms climate plan a region are adjusted for an opened up period of time, routinely decades or longer, outline checking move in wind plans, the ordinary temperature or the whole of precipitation, etc. these changes can impacts one or more regions or in fact the complete planet at the same time.

According to the majestic society course of action center, changes in climate are caused by varieties inside the include up to entirety of essentialness that's kept interior the Soil environment. These assortments in imperativeness are at that point

s p r e a d o u t around the globe essentially by ocean streams as well as wind and climate plans to impacts the climates of different regions Natural plan such as volcanic emissions, varieties in soil

circle or alter within the sun's concentrated are conceivable causes of climate change. Be that as it may, human action can too cause changes to the climate; for case greenhouse gasses emissions or cutting down forest. Global warming causes climate change, so both the terms are outstandingly much related. Global warming is the term utilized to depict the current increase inside the earth's typical temperature. Climate change insinuates not only to global changes in temperature but as well to change in wind, precipitations, the length of seasons as well as the quality and repeat of uncommon climate events like dry seasons and surges. Another difference between the two terms is that global warming can be a around the worldwide, though climate change can be seen at global, regional, or without a doubt

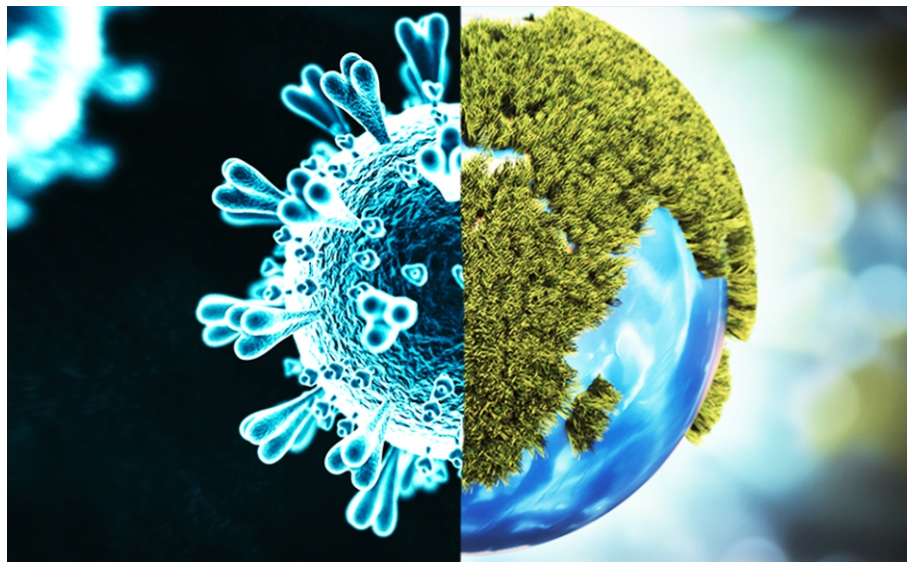
more adjacent scales. But both global warming and climate change can as well make different influence depending on the geography as well as the adjacent inhabitants (Plants, animal, etc).

Humans have enhanced the greenhouse impacts and are causing climate change. The greenhouse effect is the result of the interaction of the sun's essentialness with greenhouse gasses inside the earth's environment. Since the industrial revolution, the components interior the earth's

discuss that keep the greenhouse effects consistent are not in change. The amount of the greenhouse gasses inside the planet's atmosphere is the highest it has been inside the 3 million a long

time. Human have increased greenhouse gas level which have enhanced the greenhouses effect to the point where as well much warm is being caught inside the Earth's atmosphere. This overabundance heat make global warming which impacts the planet's climate plans and leads to different climate changes around the world.

More prominent quality of exceptional climate in fact like: heat waves, tropical cyclone, floods, and other major storms. Increasing number and sizes of forest fire, Rising sea levels (expected to be as high as two feet by the conclusion of the taking after century).Melting glacier and polar ice. Increasing acidity in the ocean, resulting in bleaching coral reefs and damage to oceanic wildlife.The corona virus condemned COVID-19 was first traced and reported back on the 1st of November in the



Wuhan city of china and has since wreaked havoc worldwide. With over 23.7 million reported cases and approximately 814,038 deaths and Recovered 16.1 million to date it was declared a global pandemic on the 24 August-2020. The corona virus condemned COVID-19 was to begin with followed and detailed back on the 1st of November within the Wuhan city of china and has since wreaked destruction around the world. With over 23.7 million detailed cases and roughly 814,038 deaths and in good health 16.1 million to date it was announced a global pandemic on the 24 August-2020.

A global crisis has dazed the world. It is causing a horrendous number of Deaths, making people on edge to require off household, and driving to budgetary hardship not seen in various periods. Its impacts are undulating over the world. Clearly, I am talking nearly COVID-19. But in reasonable numerous decades, the same depiction will fit another around the world crisis: climate change. As horrendous as this widespread is, climate change can be more regrettable. I realize that it's troublesome to think nearly a issue like climate change right now. at what time disaster strikes, it is human life to extend because it were roughly get together our most provoke needs, especially when the disaster is as loathsome as COVID-19. But the reality that altogether higher temperatures appear distant off inside long-term does not make them any less of a problem—and the because it were way to preserve a key remove from the foremost exceedingly terrible conceivable climate results is to enliven our efforts now. In fact as the world works to stop the novel corona virus and begin recovering from it, we as well have to be act directly to preserve a vital remove from a climate adversity by building and passing on improvements that will let us slaughter our greenhouse gas emanations.

15 On the off chance merely ought to get it the kind of hurt that climate change will apportion, see at COVID-19 and spread the torment out over a much longer period of time. The incident of life and budgetary sadness caused by this far

reaching are on standard with what will happen routinely if we do not eliminate the world's carbon emissions. Let's see to start with at the mishap of life. Different people will be butchered by COVID-19 versus by climate change, Since we got to compare events that happen at unmistakable centers in time—the far reaching in 2020 and climate change in, say, 2060—and the global population will change in that time, we can't evaluate the total the numbers of death. As an alternative we are going utilize the death rate: that's, the figure of death per 100,000 persons. The amplify of likely impacts from climate change and from COVID-19 changes exceptionally a spot, depending on which financial related illustrate you utilize. Other than the wrapping up is clearly identifiable.

Inside the taking after decade or two, the monetary hurt caused by climate change will likely be as terrible as having a COVID-sized pandemic each ten a long time. And by the wrapping up of the century, it'll be much more horrendous in case the world remains on its current outpourings way. We have to be make a organize to preserve a key separate from a climate disaster—to utilize the zero-carbon gadgets we have in time, make and pass on the various improvements we still require, and offer assistance the poorest change to the temperature raise that's as of presently shot in.

A far reaching was for all bury and purposes unavoidable. The world did not do adequate to induce prepared, and presently we are endeavoring to form up for misplaced time. Usually frequently a warning narrative for climate change, and it centers toward a recovered advance. In the event that we start directly, tap into the command of knowledge and progression, and ensure that courses of action work for the poorest, prepared to avoid making the same error with climate change.

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UK: Conservatives accuse Sadiq Khan of 'misleading' on City Hall move savings



Sadiq Khan has been accused of “misleading” voters by exaggerating potential savings from moving London’s government out of City Hall.

Conservative Party analysis claimed a proposed move to The Crystal building in Newham would save £5.6m a year. The Mayor of London promised moving out of City Hall, near Tower Bridge, would save £11.1m a year in rent and charges. The mayor’s office said the figure was calculated by professionally-qualified finance officers. A spokesperson for the Mayor of London said: “The proposed move to the Crystal Building will save the Greater London Authority (GLA) Group £55m over five years. “The move is only necessary because the government is not adequately funding local and regional government in London for the cost of tackling Covid-19.”

The Crystal was opened in 2012, having been commissioned by Siemens as an exemplar of sustainable design Norman Foster-designed City Hall has been the official home of the GLA since it opened in 2002. Under the plans the mayor’s office and London Assembly would move to the GLA-owned The Crystal in the Royal Docks, which was commissioned to be one of the most environmentally sustainable offices in the world.

The move would also see the GLA use office space at Palestra House at Blackfriars, currently used by Transport for London. A formal six-week consultation on the move ended on 5 August. Savings ‘halved’ The Conservatives said Mr Khan failed to include potential lost income from leasing The Crystal and Palestra to private renters in his announcement. If the GLA was to stay put, letting these spaces could generate £4.7m a year, according to the analysis. The Conservatives said Mr Khan also failed to include the £280,000 a year generated by public events held at City Hall and the Crystal under the current set-up. This would halve total savings over five years from £55m to £27.76m, the party said. But the mayor’s office said “significantly lower running costs” at the new sites would be expected “to offset any hypothetical loss of income from renting out The Crystal”.

Susan Hall called on the Mayor of London to “come up with an honest assessment of the cost of moving City Hall” Susan Hall, Conservative leader on the London Assembly, said: “The mayor is misleading Londoners.

<http://thelightnewspaper.co.uk/conservatives-accuse-sadiq-khan-of-misleading-on-city-hall-move-savings/>



UK: All religious marriages must be registered to protect women

By Maya Oppenheim



The government must make the registration of all religious marriages compulsory to stop women suffering abuse and discrimination, a new report has warned. Researchers at Civitas, a social policy think tank, said substantial numbers of Muslim women in the UK are in unregistered religious marriages which leaves them vulnerable to being left destitute with no financial assets or property if their husband divorces them. The report states many women do not realize they don't have legal protections and marital rights due to not registering their marriage after a religious ceremony. Researchers warn the "asymmetric nature" of polygamous marriages and Islamic divorce – which permits the man to instantaneously divorce his wife but makes it far more difficult for the woman to initiate divorce proceedings – puts wives at risk. Emma Webb, the report's author, said: "While successive governments have failed to address this well-known problem, despite calls from Muslim women activists and the international bodies, everyday women continue to suffer horribly because of completely unjustifiable shortcomings in our legislation. "Despite bigamy being illegal in the UK, the fact that religious-only marriages can go under the radar effectively allows men to enter into polygamous relationships that leave the women with absolutely no marital rights or legal protection under UK law. This leaves women and their children vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and destitution – it simply cannot be allowed to continue." The report calls for current legislation to be overhauled so the registration of all religious marriages in England and Wales is compulsory – with researchers arguing this could reduce the prevalence of unregistered polygamous unions which damage "women's rights and mental health". Researchers argue "reluctance" to amend the law on religious marriages could be a "political calculation based on perceptions about religious sensitivity". The report states: "In other words, fear of being called Islamophobic for intervening on an issue relating to Muslim women's rights within their community."

Baroness Cox of Queensbury, a cross-bench

member of the House of Lords, welcomed the report as she called for legislation to "at last" be introduced with "great urgency" due to the fact so many Muslim women in the UK are suffering in ways which would make "Suffragettes turn in their graves". A bid to make religious marriages legally binding in the UK was rejected by judges in February – dashing the hopes of campaigners who warned women are left penniless with no support after the break-up of sharia unions. The Court of Appeal overturned a family court judge's decision that a woman was entitled to apply for maintenance payments from her estranged husband despite the fact they were not legally married. The attorney general had appealed the ruling. The pair, who had an Islamic marriage ceremony, were married for 18 years and have four children together. "The Court of Appeal's decision to deny Muslim women financial remedies by refusing to deem a sharia marriage a void marriage is a travesty of justice," Maryam Namazie, of campaign group One Law for All, said at the time. "The court, like the government, is perfectly happy to relegate minority women to kangaroo courts and faith-based parallel legal systems in order to appease fundamentalists and manage minority communities at the expense of women's rights."

A 2017 poll found almost all married Muslim women in the UK had had a nikah, an Islamic marriage ceremony, while nearly two-thirds had not also had a civil ceremony. In 2018, a Home Office-commissioned review into the application of sharia law reached the view that Muslims in the UK should undergo a civil marriage as well as a religious ceremony to make sure women are protected under the law. While the report said the measure was needed to lessen "discriminatory practices" in the councils, it argued abolishing sharia councils was "not viable" and they were "fulfilling a need in some Muslim communities". Campaigners previously told The Independent British women were increasingly being pressured into polygamous relationships or left without child support when relationships break up because UK law does not offer adequate protection to spouses in religious marriages. Activists warned women are being forced to go through religious courts, which make rulings that make them stay with partners they want to leave, or rule them unable to claim money or property from their de facto husbands after marriages break down.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/religious-marriages-register-muslim-women-uk-abuse-a9663441.html>



USA: Trump won't leave office peacefully, his former lawyer Cohen claims in upcoming book



Cohen is completing the last two years of a three-year prison sentence at home after pleading guilty to campaign finance charges and lying to Congress. He was released from prison in May amid coronavirus fears, only to be returned in July after making it known that he planned to publish *Disloyal*. As with

Michael Cohen's memoir about U.S. President Donald Trump will be released Sept. 8 by Skyhorse Publishing, which confirmed the news to The Associated Press. The book is called *Disloyal: The True Story of the Former Personal Attorney to President Donald J. Trump*. "Disloyal is the most devastating business and political horror story of the century," according to a Skyhorse statement shared with the AP. "It is a story that you haven't read in newspapers, or on social media, or watched on television. These are accounts that only someone who worked for Trump around the clock for a decade — not a few months or even a couple of years — could know."

Earlier in the day, Cohen had released the book's foreword, writing of his estranged former boss, "He wouldn't mind if I was dead."

In the foreword, dated in March, Cohen writes he's "certain that Trump knows he will face prison time if he leaves office," pointing to legal problems that continue to swirl around the president, including an apparent investigation into Trump Organization tax claims. "Trump will never leave office peacefully," Cohen writes. "The types of scandals that have surfaced in recent months will only continue to emerge with greater and greater levels of treachery and deceit. If Trump wins another four years, these scandals will prove to only be the tip of the iceberg."

testimony he gave to Congress before heading to prison, Cohen writes in the book that Trump was interested in pursuing a hotel project in Moscow well into the 2016 presidential campaign despite denying ties to Russia. "I know because I personally ran that deal and kept Trump and his children closely informed of all updates, even as the candidate blatantly lied to the American people," says Cohen. Since becoming president, Cohen says, Trump has "become the worst version of himself."

The U.S. government dropped its effort to silence Cohen late last month after an agreement was reached between government lawyers and Cohen lawyer Danya Perry that lifted a ban on Cohen speaking publicly. Cohen's charges stemmed from his efforts to arrange payouts during the 2016 presidential race to keep the porn actress Stormy Daniels and model Karen McDougal from speaking out about their alleged extramarital affairs with Trump, who has denied the affairs. He has said that Trump directed him to make the payments.

Skyhorse has a history of taking on books by controversial public figures, including a memoir this spring by Woody Allen that had been dropped by Hachette Book Group.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/cohen-trump-disloyal-book-1.5686187>



Why Muslims Must Discard Urdu Medium Schools

By Arshad Alam

One of the major recommendations in the New Education Policy 2020 is that as far as possible, education should be made available in the mother tongue of students. This sounds extremely progressive and educationists the world over have noted the benefits of



conducting education in the mother tongue. The argument is that if there is a fit between the home language and school language, then learning happens better. However, this perspective assumes that there is a certain standardization of spoken languages which has already taken place.

Thus it makes perfect sense that communities in Quebec (Canada) would want education in the French as a certain standardization of that language has already taken place. The Indian situation is markedly different. Forget about standardization, many mother languages do not have a script at all, defeating the whole purpose of education in the mother tongue. For Muslims, the impact of NEP's language policy might further compromise their already dismal educational condition. Linguistically, Muslims are a diverse community in India. They mostly converse in the respective languages of the state in which they live. However, owing to a number of factors, the perception about Indian Muslims is that Urdu is their mother tongue. For a long time, Muslims have demanded to be educated in the Urdu language. And it is not only Muslims, but also the policy makers of this country who have seen Urdu and the default mother tongue of all Indian Muslims.

Thus it has been argued that one of the important

reasons for Muslim educational backwardness is that there are not enough Urdu language schools, as a result of which Muslim students feel alienated within the school environment and eventually drop out. All policy measures with regard to Muslim education have therefore recommended setting up of Urdu medium schools within Muslim concentrated areas.

The NEP 2020 and its emphasis on education in the mother tongue is part of the same thinking on Muslims. But is Urdu the language of Muslims in India? According to the 2011 census, there were only about 5% Urdu speakers in India. Considering that only Muslims will mark themselves as Urdu speakers, it is beyond reasonable doubt that Urdu speaking Muslims are a minority in India. Especially in north India, Urdu has been associated with Muslims. This also looks increasingly fallacious. The same survey tells us that just about 28% Muslims in Uttar Pradesh recorded Urdu as their primary language.

Although Urdu has gained speakers in some south Indian states, this should not be surprising as the Deccan has historically been the birthplace of this language. There seems to be a realisation within the community that education in Urdu language will not serve their material interests anymore. It is not surprising therefore that Urdu as a medium

of instruction is now being replaced by other languages. If this was not the case, then the increase in Muslim enrolment should have meant a corresponding increase in Urdu medium enrolment also. However, in states like Bihar and Jharkhand, this does seem to be the case. Thus for Bihar, for the years between 2007 and 2012, Muslim enrolment (for classes I-VIII) has gone up from 10.7% to 14.7% but their enrolment in Urdu medium has gone down from 46% to 32.2%.

In Jharkhand, the trend is similar. Here Muslim enrolment has gone up from 10% in 2007-2008 to 14.2% in 2011-12, but their enrolment in Urdu medium has decreased from 26% to 15.4%. Kishanganj in Bihar has the highest concentration of Muslims in the state (67.5%). However, even here, while 76% students accessed schooling through Urdu medium in 2007-08, it has come down to only 29% in 2011-12.

Thus, it appears that while the Muslim community is ready to discard Urdu as medium of instruction, the policy makers are hell bent to associate Urdu with Muslims. Languages are basically expressions of power and Muslims are doing well to realize that their needs are better served with learning the existing language of power which is English and Hindi. The community has wasted valuable years by demanding Urdu medium schools and foolishly linking a language with the question of their religious identity. There was a time when Persian and Urdu were languages of power and not just Muslims but also many Hindus learnt these languages. Times have now changed and hence there is no need to be emotionally invested in Urdu.

More and more Muslims need to realize that Urdu will not die because Muslims stop accessing education in that language. Urdu will live through its poetry and those desirous of studying modern Indian history cannot do without learning the language. So much of our history and art is written in this language that Urdu will survive, even

without the patronage of Muslims. Appreciating Urdu for being a repository of knowledge and making it the medium of instruction are two very different things. Muslims should not jeopardize the future of their children by insisting on educating them in Urdu.

This insistence has often led to disastrous consequences. Take the example of Maulana Azad National Urdu University. Muslims lobbied for this university in the name of Urdu and the mandate of the institution is to teach all subjects in that language. This insistence defies common sense: where will one find good teachers equally well versed in social sciences or sciences and also in Urdu?

Naturally, one of the biggest concerns of this university is to translate as many books in Urdu as possible. Granted that it will be able to do, then also what are the employment prospects of graduates from this university. How many Urdu medium degrees will be entertained by the corporate sector? Instead of making such humungous effort, wont it be better that the university starts teaching in English and try to compete with other universities in India? Won't the Muslim interest be better served in this way? But then in order for this happen, Muslims themselves have to liquidate the vested interests which have developed around the question of Urdu.

One of the important recommendations of the NEP 2020 is that quality schools should be established in Muslim concentrated districts. Muslims should grab this opportunity and lobby hard to establish such schools in their localities. However, they should see to it that such schools are not Urdu but English medium. Only this can save the Muslims from their educational obsolescence.

<https://www.newageislam.com/islamic-society/arshad-alam-new-age-islam/why-muslims-must-discard-urdu-medium-schools/d/122658>



Book Review: Mary Trump's memoir exposes a rancid, cruel, heartbroken family



By Heather Mallick, Toronto Star

After finishing Mary Trump's memoir of growing up with her Uncle Donald, I close the book and look at it. It emanates disgust, as if it contains things so rancid they're not even compostable. "Too Much and Never Enough," subtitled *How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man*, is a classic of several genres: misery memoir, political history, case study, J'Accuse. I read this kind of book often, feeling it's my duty, but this one contains so much cruelty to children from tiny to adult, so much sulphur, that I have to COVID-scrub my hands afterwards. Fred Trump, a malevolent, brutal, racist, scheming, tax-dodging real estate developer from Queens, N.Y., fathered five children, Maryanne, Fred Jr., Elizabeth, Donald and Robert, with his wife Mary. Fred was a sociopath and Mary was an absent damaged mother, writes his niece, also named Mary. They ruled over a toxic American family home, punishing, taunting, manipulating, setting up each child against the others, breaking hearts and sending one boy, Fred Jr., to an early grave. Fred Jr. was Mary's father, intended as the heir to the family residential real estate empire. The problem was that he wanted to be an airline pilot rather than run apartment buildings in Queens. So his father set out to destroy him financially, mentally and emotionally, like a human being put on a lathe. The lathe turned and turned, and Fred Jr. became a destitute divorced alcoholic who died of torment and neglect. And that was the kid Fred Trump liked. Donald as a younger child watched his father bully Fred Jr., who would apologize and try endlessly to please an unpleasable man. Fred had no love in him, and any favour he bestowed was "entirely conditional," Mary writes. You obeyed or you were humiliated and terrorized. When the Trump siblings, nieces and nephews were invited to the White House in 2017 for an iceberg lettuce, meat and potatoes dinner, Maryanne told the table, "We've come a long way since that night when Freddy dumped a bowl of mashed potatoes on Donald's head because he was being such a brat" to

little Robert. Everyone laughed, "while Donald listened with his arms tightly crossed and a scowl on his face," just as he did when Obama mocked him publicly in 2011. Trump hates humiliation because he has no inner core of strength to fall back on, but he loves to humiliate those beneath him. "The role that fear played in his childhood and the role it plays now cannot be overstated." Trump learned how to be cruel at his father's knee, and added loud and brash to the mix. Why be cruel at all? one asks. "The cruelty is the point," Mary writes. Gems like that fill the book. And there are revolting scenes: Fred Jr.'s post-divorce exile to a wretched apartment filled with pet snakes; Mary's grandmother nearly choking to death at the table as Trumps ignored her (I call this one "Sounds of the Heimlich Manoeuvre in Another Room"); Fred burying his dead son's ashes despite the son's lifelong terror of burial; Maryanne so poor she begged her mother for Crisco cans of dimes and quarters. Donald Trump was a lousy businessman and a serial bankrupt. Brash carried him through, brash covered failure, and brash made his presidency more grotesque than was ever imagined. Brash Donald cheated his siblings out of their inheritance. Fred Trump developed Alzheimer's and began wearing an obvious wig, along with dyed magenta eyebrows and moustache. Sound familiar? Donald began treating his once-greatest ally, his ailing father, with brutal contempt. Loyal Trumpers, sound familiar?

Trump remains a boy, a mean little boy. Mary writes that she wants to end the common practice of referring to his "strategies" or "agendas" as if he has an organizing principle. He does not. Again, he is hollow. Go straight to the heart of an issue with the Star's Opinion newsletter, featuring the latest from our top columnists and more. Whenever Trump says something is the greatest, the best, the biggest, the most tremendous, he is "the same little boy who is desperately worried that he, like his older brother, is inadequate and that he, too, will be destroyed for his inadequacy." Mary's implication is that this will happen on Nov. 3 the election day. Trump may end up a gibbering, addled, enraged mess. So no change there.

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/2020/07/27/>



In July this year a global population study published in the Lancet gave a detailed insight into how the world's population might look by next year. The study is definitely a far more realistic forecast compared to the overly optimistic and often wildly inaccurate United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) projections that have tended to inflate everything from birth rates to population. The Lancet study predicted global fertility would plummet, suggesting that humanity was facing a population decline beginning in 2064 — far earlier than previously expected. But despite their differences, both the Lancet and UNFPA studies predicted significant population growth for Africa. Nigeria, for example, is projected to have 791 million people by 2100, outnumbering China. Yes, you read that right — Africa would become the world's second most populous country behind India, and it is projected to have three billion people by the end of this century, triple that of the present population.

Part of this predicted population boom is likely because Africa's population remains far more religious and socially conservative than many parts of the world. This means it has a low uptake of contraceptives, low rates of abortion and relatively high birth rates. Islam in particular is set to demographically benefit from the fecundity of its conservative African adherents. In 2015, Pew Research indicated that the average total fertility rate of a sub-Saharan African Muslim is at 5.6, significantly higher than the world average of around 2.3-2.5, with 46 percent of Muslims in Africa being under the age of 14.

The soaring African impact on Islam in demographic terms is clear. Currently, Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation with a population of 260-270 million people. It is followed by Pakistan, with around 220 million people. But by the end of this century, Nigeria will



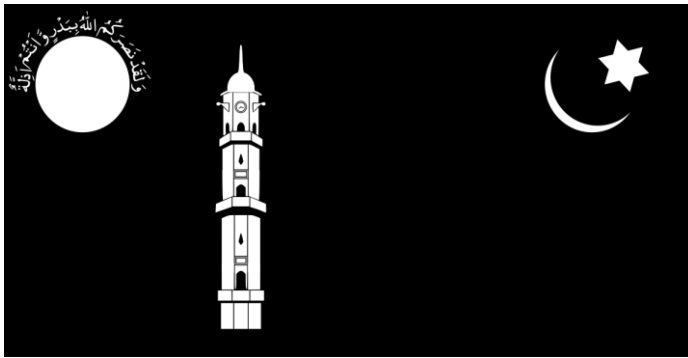
become the world's most populous Muslim majority nation overtaking both Pakistan and Indonesia. Many other African nations with large Muslim populations are also moving in the same direction. Niger, which currently has the world's highest fertility rate at 7, will increase in population by 164 million people between now and 2100, while Egypt and Tanzania will become the world's 9th and 10th most populous countries respectively.

populations are also moving in the same direction. Niger, which currently has the world's highest fertility rate at 7, will increase in population by 164 million people between now and 2100, while Egypt and Tanzania will become the world's 9th and 10th most populous countries respectively.

However, perhaps the best indicator of Africa's demographic influence can be seen in the recent history of two Muslim groups: the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, an extremely persecuted, yet aggressively proselytizing, sect which originated in South Asia, and Shia Islam, the second largest branch of Islam.

The Ahmadiyya

The Ahmadiyya are perhaps the most controversial Muslim sect in the Islamic world. Founded in the late 19th century by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, British India, the Ahmadis believe in unorthodox teachings found nowhere else in the Islamic world. It has been alleged they



do not believe in the key doctrine of the Finality of Prophecy, in which the Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet. But they strenuously deny this claim, arguing they share the belief that Muhammad was the last “law-bearing Prophet”, but consider their own founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, as a “sub-ordinate prophet” who came after him. They argue that in this respect they are no different to other Muslims “who are awaiting the coming into the world of the Prophet Jesus”.

Ahmadiyya Muslims also believe that Ahmad is both the Promised Mahdi in Islam and the Messiah, and that Jesus lived and is buried in Kashmir. Their view on jihad is also very different from Islamists. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad believes that the military use of jihad is no longer needed in the present age and all violent actions do not have justification in the name of jihad. The sect's elected Caliph, who is the great-grandson of the founder, is based in the Ahmadiyya global headquarters in the UK. In a sense, the Ahmadi people occupy a similar position to the Mormon Church in Christianity. They have beliefs that are eccentric and bizarre to mainstream coreligionists but they are largely a peaceful people.

However, unlike Mormons, Ahmadis are one the world's most severely persecuted religious minorities. They are considered non-Muslim in their native Pakistan and are subject to decades of targeted killings, frequent bombings and demolition of their places of worship which are explicitly banned from being called mosques. They are denied Pakistani passports unless they denounce their founder. All of this is the result of a law called Ordinance XX, implemented since 1974 by Pakistan's Islamist president Zia ul-Haq during his Islamisation campaign. Ahmadis are routinely charged with blasphemy and only last

month, an American Ahmadi was gunned down in a Pakistani court while being tried for blasphemy. The shooter was instantly hailed as a “hero” in Pakistan. Therefore, for the estimated 600,000 to 4 million Ahmadis living in Pakistan, life is unbearable and many have moved to the West, including the Caliph of the movement. But the intolerance towards them from other majority Muslims is spreading, with Ahmadis being attacked in the UK. Their mosques have been burnt down in other Asian Muslim majority countries like Indonesia and Bangladesh.

Demographically, the growth of the Ahmadiyya is likely to be very limited outside of natural growth in its place of origin. Decades of anti-Ahmadi education has promoted the idea that “Ahmadis are infidels and blasphemers” in the psyche of South and Southeast Asian Muslims. Members of the sect are subject to severe persecution in Pakistan, making conversion and proselytism very difficult. In order to survive and grow, the Ahmadis need a breakthrough elsewhere.

Ahmadiyya in Africa

Enter Africa, the greatest mission field for the aggressively proselytizing Ahmadis. The Ahmadiyya have a long history of proselytizing and sending missionaries, with some of the first Islamic missionaries in the West being Ahmadi. They also aggressively converted their fellow Muslims in Asia prior to the hardening of attitudes in the subcontinent. But the Ahmadis also have a long history in Africa. The first missionaries arrived a century ago in West Africa, and have had spectacular success among Africans, especially in Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Niger, which coincidentally are also going to be the world's fastest growing countries in terms of population. As a percentage of the national population, Sierra Leone is estimated to be 10-16 percent Ahmadiyya, the highest percentage in the world and much higher than in Pakistan. In Ghana. Ahmadiyya Muslims also make up more than one-sixth of the Muslim population and operate hundreds of schools, colleges and radio stations.

In Burkina Faso, Ahmadiyya radio stations compete aggressively with Sunni Muslim stations to proselytize Africa's previously largely non-denominational Muslims who combine their syncretized traditional animist beliefs with Sufi mysticism. This move has paid off with hundreds of Ahmadiyya mosques being built in Africa, with Ahmadiyya events being well attended by dignitaries and even other Muslim clerics in Africa. (In Africa, many mainstream Muslims including clerics do not find the Ahmadiyya as heretical, in stark contrast to South Asia).

The President of Sierra Leone attends Ahmadi events, something unthinkable in many other Muslim majority nations. Out of the world's estimated 12 million Ahmadis, an increasing majority of them are now living in Africa. According to Pew Research, 15 percent of Tanzanian Muslims are Ahmadi, which translates to more than 2 million people, and 3 percent of Nigerian Muslims are Ahmadi, which implies an Ahmadi population of 2-3 million. Outside of South Asia, the Ahmadiyya's only demographic strength area is in sub-Saharan Africa, where there is a sizeable minority which also enjoys far less discrimination and persecution, which are also important prerequisites for future expansion. In many ways, it can be said that the Ahmadis hit a demographic jackpot.

Tanzania and Nigeria are on their way to entering the world's top 10 countries by population size. Both countries have a total fertility rate above 5, and Ahmadis are also benefitting from the religious diversity of Africa. Unlike countries in Asia and the Arab world, African countries with large Muslim populations also often have a large Christian and animist population.

This means the abusive majoritarian attitude towards Ahmadis is politically and demographically impossible to implement in Africa, unlike South Asia. In the long run though, this growing demographic clout of black Africans in the Ahmadi world is bound to impact the leadership of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. Ahmadiyya leadership is almost exclusively South

Asian — not just the Caliph, but also the missionaries who come to Africa and are in charge of the affairs in their respective assigned countries. South Asians run the radio stations, deliver the opening speech when new mosques are opened and lead the missionary program. Here, a comparison with the Mormons is relevant, given the high level Mormon leadership from overseas — most coming from the US. But as South Asian Muslims are bound to become a minority in the Ahmadiyya world as African Ahmadis convert and also procreate at far higher rates, that is bound to change. The Ahmadiyya are already establishing and expanding their seminaries (called Jamia Ahmadiyya) in Africa, opening new branches in Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Sierra Leone and Kenya. Inevitably, by the later part of this century, Africa will become the demographic centre of the Ahmadiyya movement. It may even become the secret formula for the Ahmadiyya to become the world's fastest growing Islamic sect, as populations are expected to double, triple and quadruple in many African countries where the Ahmadiyya have a large following.

Shia spreading in Africa as well

Shi'ites, the world's second largest branch of Muslims, are also looking to Africa to boost their demographic fortunes. They are in trouble in their demographic competition with their Sunni brethren. This is because in Iran, the most populous Shia nation, also has one of the Islamic world's lowest birth rates, thanks to an overly successful family planning program initiated by the Ayatollahs who drank the Malthusian overpopulation Koolaid. Now deeply regretting their apparently suicidal policy, as Iran is surrounded by vengeful and fecund Sunni neighbours who hate the Persians, the Ayatollahs have taken a U-turn and ordered a limiting of family planning provisions and an aggressive campaign to encourage Iranians to procreate.

Alas, it may be too late as Iranian fertility has dropped below the replacement rate of 2.1 from a TFR of 6-8 within a generation, and marriage rates have plummeted as well.

Elsewhere, Shi'ite populated countries like Azerbaijan and Lebanon also have some of the lowest birth rates in the Islamic world.

But the demographic salvation of the Shia population may come from, of all places, Nigeria. Nigerian Muslims have traditionally been Sunni but, like the Ahmadis, Shia Islam is making inroads. Iran has aggressively promoted its own version of Islam in Africa from Senegal to Nigeria, and nowhere is it more successful than in Nigeria, where a man named Ibrahim Zakzaky has become the leader of the largest Shi'ite movement in the continent, the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN). Zakzaky has millions of followers — the exact number is unknown, but independent estimates range from 2-3 percent of the Nigerian population, which would mean he has from 4-6 million followers.

Amazingly, this conversion itself only began in the 1980s when Zakzaky himself was Sunni. But after being inspired by the 1979 Islamist revolution in Iran and after returning from years of studying in Tehran, Zakzaky converted many Nigerian Muslims in northern Nigeria who are disgruntled with the corruption of traditional Islamic leaders. This earned the ire of Sunni Islamists in Nigeria and Zakzaky has been imprisoned and his movement has been banned since July last year.

But his millions of followers continue to grow in numbers, not least because they mostly live in the northern Nigerian states of Kaduna and Sokoto which have some of the highest birth rates in the world. Sokoto women have on average 7 children and Kaduna women average 5.9. This means the existing few million Shia Nigerians will become tens of millions by the second half of this century and will grow rapidly, coinciding with the decline of the Iranian population. It is possible that within a few decades most militia fighters recruited by Iran to fight its proxy wars will no longer be Lebanese, Afghan or Iraqi, but Nigerian. For the Ahmadiyya and Shia Muslims, being a minority within Islam has meant persecution and sometimes the threat of extermination. But Africa (with its population

boom continuing, given that it is only in the very early stages of its demographic transition) will become the demographic lifeline of these minority sects.

Africa's religious diversity is also helping to cushion the potential backlash against the expansion of the two sects. However, as their numbers grow, African Muslims regardless of sect or affiliation, will demand to enter the upper echelons of Islamic leadership, as the influence of other Asian and Middle Eastern Muslim countries begins to wane.

In short, the future of Islam is African.

<https://mercatornet.com/islamic-sects-booming-in-africa/65486/>



By Zeenat Hussain

Poem

HEAVEN IS AT HER FEET

From the moment a child opens its eyes.

To the world and its ties:

>>

She nurtures it like a steadfast rock,

Right from pant to frock.

>>

“And I shall guide you,

On the path that I walked on,

>>

Before you came along.

In sickness and in health,

>>

In poverty and in wealth,

Whenever I needed company,

>>

You gave the note to the harmony.

Sit tight little one...”



The Whys and Wherefores of Muslim Backwardness in India



By Ibrahim Syed, Louisville, Kentucky

The East India Company passed the Permanent Land Settlement Act (1793) whereby it created a new class of Hindu collaborators, called gomashtras, or zamindars, who overcharged Muslim peasants, even during hard times, such as famines. The Hindu revenue-collectors, turned overnight into landowners at the expense of the poor Muslim peasants. The Muslims did not learn the English language, and thus denied themselves opportunities of material as well as intellectual progress. Material, because Government jobs were open only to English-knowing persons; intellectual, because the entire body of Western knowledge and learning was shut out from them. Some historians attribute this Muslim backwardness to the fact that Muslims were not pre-disposed to absorb “alien ideas, methods and language of the new rulers”; thus, they failed “to grasp the opportunities available in the new structure of government” To avoid coming under the influence of the new culture, they clung tenaciously to the fundamental teachings of Islam and most of them prevented their children from attending British-patronized educational institutions throughout the different Indian provinces. Muslims fell into a sense of humiliation and grief at the loss of their power, and as a result, they developed bitter feelings towards the British. This bitterness resulted into the 1857 Revolt that shook the Company’s rule to its very foundations.

The Impact of the First Indian Revolt on Muslim Community

Both Muslims and freedom-loving Hindus did participate in the Great Revolt, and in spite of that, the British decided to revenge themselves on the Muslim community, as the latter were regarded as

the bona fide fomenters and the most beneficiaries of the uprising. This anti-Muslim feeling was well reflected in the harshness of British reprisals towards the Muslim community immediately after the Revolt was put down. Besides the expropriation of Muslim landowners, some contemporaries bear witness to many instances of barbaric acts of ruthless vengeance being inflicted indiscriminately by British soldiers, with the connivance of their superior officers, on ordinary Muslims “mass massacres, indiscriminate hangings, inhumane tortures and large scale confiscation of properties were some of the means adopted by the British for the purpose”. To add insult to injury, even Hindus, who had an active hand in the events of 1857, pointed an accusing finger at the Muslim community and joined hands with their new masters, namely the British, in their anti-Muslim campaign. Since the early days when the East India Company imposed its dominion over the Subcontinent, the British had looked down on the Muslim community and saw Muslims as their bona fide adversaries. The events of 1857 were an excuse for the British to get rid of the last vestiges of the Mughal Empire once and for all, as well as curb the Muslim influence in the Indian society. Muslims faced extreme discrimination in all spheres of day-to-day life, and particularly in Government employment. The post-Great Revolt period was probably the gloomiest period in the history of the Muslim community in the Indian Subcontinent.

Madrasas

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Christian missionaries and colonial rulers such as the British opened schools that were based on a Western educational model and offered courses in English, science and technology. Muslims who continued to choose Madrasas over other schools found that they lacked the training needed for well-paid jobs. One drawback is, many Madrasas refused to integrate nonreligious subjects into their curricula. As a result, a dual system of schooling became the norm: one Islam-centred, the other Westernized.

Why Do Parents Choose Madrasas?

There are thousands of madrasas in the Indian subcontinent, Arab countries and African Muslim countries. There are about 30,000 Madrasas in each country like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Most graduates from Madrasas find poorly paid jobs in Madrasas, mosques or shrines of saints, a few others in farming. Only 3 percent attain a higher level of socioeconomic development. The majority of Muslim families want Madrasas to offer technical courses and vocational training. However, the religious leaders who could approve changes are “set against the modern education.”

Such Madrasas contribute to a vicious circle of poverty. Free government schools could serve as an alternative, but, perhaps due to their low quality of instruction, nearly three-quarters of Muslim families expressed the opinion that if they had the financial means to do so, they would choose fee-based, private, nonreligious schools. Greatest problem with Madrasas is they emphasize rote learning over critical thinking.

Attitude of Muslims towards Western Education

The Muslims hated the Western education during the period of British India. The reason is they had hatred of the British in their taste and culture so that they had to keep a distance from Western education. And this led the community to doom. The Muslims were very much stubborn in their religious belief, practice and worship. The majority of the Muslims were devoted to trade and commerce rather than to seek employment under any regime. The Muslim's response towards the British can be divided into four categories:

1. One group of nobles sincerely considered friendship and alliance with the British indispensable for the continued existence of the Indian states and made it their policy to be friendly with the British.
2. Second group was highly impressed by the British and their culture that it sought to organize the affairs of State and the conditions of the society on British lines.
3. A third group was loyal neither to the state nor to the British Government and followed a policy which, in its view, best suited its own personal and selfish interests.
4. A fourth group which was totally opposed to British dominance and the British connection.

Muslims in Southern India showed positive response towards English and Western sciences, while the Muslims of Northern India, to some extent also Hindus, refused to accept Western learning. The British then onwards were highly cautious regarding Muslims. After establishing their authority, the British began to destroy the financial strength of the Muslims. As stated earlier in 1793, the British passed the land Act, which adversely influenced the economic condition of the Muslims. They changed the relationship with the landlords, especially with regard to the Muslims, and closed the door to their landlordism. In 1868, the British government announced assistance for persons traveling to Europe for educational and scientific purposes. Majority of Muslims living in northern India believed social contacts with Englishmen to be objectionable for their moral and religious integrity. When Syed Ahmad Khan was elected an honorary Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of London in 1864, he decided to go to England himself to see the ways of the British in their homeland. After an extensive seventeen month stay in England, Ahmad Khan returned to his home land on 2nd October, 1870 full of ideas and aspirations to lead his community to be on par with modern developments. While he was in England, he visited the top universities such as Oxford and Cambridge and certain private schools, including Eton and Harrow. These would serve as models for his own Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College. After his return to India, Sir Syed started to put into action his educational strategies in a scientific manner. In 1920 the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College became Aligarh Muslim University, an institution that had a decisive impact on the course of Islamic polity in India as well as on the educational history of India. The Muslim community has not recovered ever since the historic defeat of Indians in 1857 Rebellion against the British. Today they are facing hard social, educational and political conditions. Muslims in India have a poor human development status. Sachar Committee has found that Muslims are not only the victims of poverty, but have come to accept inequality and discrimination as their inevitable fate. The glaring problem is the absence of committed and authentic Muslim leadership in pre and post independent India. [3] Courtesy daily 'O' / www.newageislam.com



Indonesia: Aceh women publicly whipped 100 times each for sex work

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia: Two Indonesian women have been publicly whipped nearly 100 times each for selling sex workers' services online, an official in the country's conservative Aceh province said on Tuesday. Aceh, at the tip of Sumatra, is the only region in Muslim-majority Indonesia to impose Islamic sharia law, which allows flogging for a range of offences including prostitution, gambling, adultery, drinking alcohol, and gay sex. The punishment was handed down on Monday in Langsa city where dozens gathered to watch the pair get lashed, despite bans on crowds over coronavirus fears. Neither of the women wore disposable face masks, unlike in some other recent whippings. The two hijab-wearing suspects were arrested in March along with five sex workers, who could also face a flogging if found guilty of violating Islamic law, said Aji Asmanuddin, head of Langsa's Islamic sharia agency. "They were punished for violating sharia by advertising (sex) through the

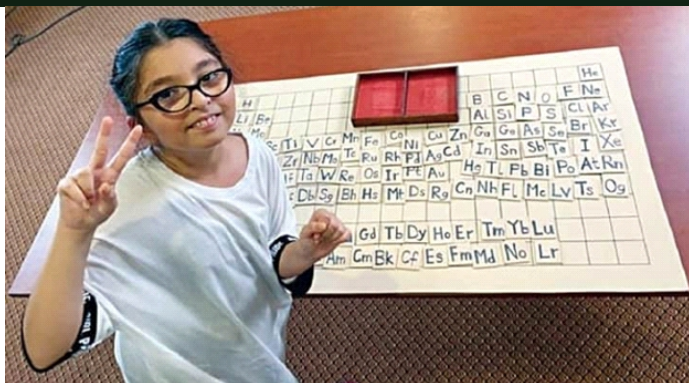


internet," Asmanuddin said. Officials were struggling to crack down on the area's booming online sex trade, he added. "This is the first (pimping) case in Langsa although we believe there are many of them out there," Asmanuddin said.

<https://www.nst.com.my/world/world/2020/07/612308/aceh-women-publicly-whipped-100-times-each-sex-work>



Nine-year-old Pakistani girl beats Indian professor, sets world record in chemistry



Natalia Najam, the Lahore-based science enthusiast, achieved the Guinness World Records title after arranging all elements of the periodic chart in just 2 minutes and 42 seconds on July 18, 2020, according to Gulf News. She broke the previous record by 7 seconds. After setting the record, the young girl screamed with joy as the judges gave her a resounding thumbs up. Najam accomplished the feat by breaking the record

previously held by Indian economics professor Meenakshi Agarwal who completed the same task in 2 minutes and 49 seconds. The young Pakistani girl hopes that her achievement will inspire children around the world to continue taking strides in science and pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Many Pakistanis on social media hailed her achievement calling her "Pakistan's young scientist" and an inspiration for young children especially girls to take up science subjects. Her father Hasan Najam says his daughter has not received formal schooling and has been educated at home, local media reported.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2257774/nine-year-old-pakistani-girl-beats-indian-professor-sets-world-record-in-chemistry>



FACES of Saudi Women

Lina Abdul Aziz Al-shaikh – Head of Ladies Banking

“Happiness brings success and not the other way around. Good family values have played a major role in my life, reflected in how I conduct myself today as a daughter, mother and employee, doing the best for myself and those around me. “

My siblings and I were encouraged to stay true to ourselves and always do the right thing, regardless of the outcome. I was always the responsible one and leader of the pack. My parents gave us room to grow organically, giving us leadership, responsibility, and decision-making skills, all lessons and traits I found important and which prepared me for my career path. I have worked for a leading Saudi bank for 16 years, joining while still attending King Abdul Aziz University. I started in customer services and after four years became a branch manager, a position I held for 10 years. However, I was at a standstill, so decided to pursue a master's degree in executive business administration to further my career. My daughter Nora was six years old at the time. I graduated from King Abdul Aziz University in 2017 but did not stop there. I qualified as a certified international business etiquette and cross-cultural consultant through the International Etiquette and Protocol Academy of London and returned with a lot of support from the bank.

In early 2019, I was assigned as head of the ladies banking division in addition to leading a branch banking transformation program, positions that led me to leave my hometown of Jeddah for Riyadh. Although I would no longer be surrounded by a large loving family, it was a big and exciting move for me and my daughter. We grew closer, the community was welcoming, and the Saudi capital presented many opportunities.

Riyadh was kind to us from the start. My daughter established good friendships early on in her school, my managers ensured my transition was smooth and easy and they provided me with everything I needed. Throughout my career, I have always felt that I have been given



opportunities and room to grow in an integrated community with a focus on honing personal skills. I have also learned to spot talent and to give back to the community that helped groom young ladies that have high potential in their careers.

I am an adviser and mentor by nature. I try to devote a third of my time to employee development and, when required, mentoring young cadres, and am a good listener, a trait I got from my father. In November 2019, Saudi Arabia took over the G20 presidency for 2020 and I was honored to be assigned as the deputy chair of the B20 Women in Business Action Council. In February, I was appointed as deputy chair for EMPOWER Alliance (Empowerment and Progression in Women's Economic Representation), an organization which aims to support the recruitment and advancement of women as business leaders in the private sector.

It has been a privilege working with heads or organizations and business leaders from around the globe with vast experience in different spheres of the business world. Through coordinated work, we are addressing and developing possible solutions to the challenges faced by women in business.

Going forward, I want to show my daughter and other young ladies that success is achieved by devotion and hard work, especially in the Kingdom which is an ideal place for youth and women to grow and succeed.

<https://www.facesofsaudi.com/21/06/2020/lina-abdulaziz-alshaikh-head-of-the-ladies-banking-faces-of-saudi/#.XzbUx8BKjHY>



Israel UAE deal - Not Shia, Not Sunni, Not Jewish



Javed Naqvi - DAWN.com

IS the UAE-Israel-US 'historic deal' truly the sensational event that President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu say it is?

On the face of it, there's a story of course. China has arrived in Iran and Israel has moved close to the event, leaving the US to press on with its Pivot to Asia containment of China in the Pacific. If that's an explanation, why didn't Netanyahu arrive in the UAE without the fuss, and without sacrificing his proposed annexation of the West Bank?

There's a compelling view he has used the deal to get out of a bad situation at home. There were no takers for any annexation other than some Jewish settlers. For Trump, it's a means to win back the support of disgruntled Jewish voters for the November elections. I remember meeting an Emirati soldier in 1990 who was ready to fight against fellow Arab Saddam Hussein. He said Saddam was an enemy of the Gulf countries. It was all right to befriend Israel to defeat Iraq. That was during America's Desert Shield operation from bases in Saudi Arabia. Let's complicate this simplistic picture, and consider the charges usually brought against Iran, the apparent target of the UAE-Israel deal. When Akbar Khalili filed his situational report from Tehran to his colleague watching the Iran-Iraq war at the foreign ministry in Delhi, he could not mask his fabled humor. "Iran has indeed got the missile it claims to have, which covers half the distance on its own steam and travels the rest by the grace of Allah."

Where do the Shia-Sunni theorists disappear when Shia Iran supports a predominantly Sunni Palestine envisaging Jerusalem as its capital?

With his unusual access to Tehran's ruling fraternity

of mullahs, which included a special rapport with the pivotal Ayatollah Beheshti, Khalili wouldn't spoil it all by naming Israel as Iran's arms supplier in its bloodbath with Iraq. Tehran claimed it could target Baghdad with missiles it didn't have in its quiver. The surmise Khalili was hinting at was that the Iran-Contra deal had done the trick. Ronald Reagan arranged it as a quid pro quo for Iran's help in defeating Jimmy Carter in 1980.

There were other spin-offs. One involved Israel as conduit for US arms to Iran. And Israel used Iraq's degraded defences to bomb the Osiraq nuclear research facility in 1981. A false narrative successfully used to hide the Middle East's evolving reality is the so-called Shia-Sunni rift in its 20th-century avatar. It conjures images of the Saudis and Iranians locked in a perpetual battle — (after the Iran-Iraq war ended in a stalemate) — to underscore the supremacy of their respective Islamic orders. The falseness of the binary shows in the failed Arab League summit in 1981, on the heels of the Iranian Revolution. The then Saudi crown prince had presented the Fahd Plan that spelt out an Arab-Israel accord over Palestine by formally recognizing Israel and promising it collective security. Before this, Sunni Egypt had befriended Jewish Israel. The three countries that opposed the Fahd Plan on secular grounds were to be decimated one by one. Libya and Iraq were staunchly critical of Shia Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia equally. Both were destroyed and their leaders murdered under Western and Arab supervision. Syria too opposed the Fez initiative, and see what's become of it. Iran thus is the last main challenger standing to speak up for Palestine. Where do the Shia-Sunni theorists disappear when Shia Iran supports a predominantly Sunni Palestine envisaging Jerusalem as its capital?

The Iran narrative is not only stacked with inaccuracies, it pushes deliberate distractions too. It purposely undermines the reality that Iran sees itself more as a revolutionary entity, less as a Shia

state. It didn't stage a Shia revolution but a means to forge an inclusive upheaval against the West. One can differ with it, but that's no ground for creating false religious disputes. Some of Iran's closest allies at the height of the revolution were secular leaders of the PLO. Subsequently, mainly Sunni Hamas and a vehemently Sunni Muslim Brotherhood were embraced by Tehran. It has Sunni supporters in Southeast Asia and notionally Sunni Central Asian friends too. It played host to arch puritan Gulbuddin Hekmatyar from among the Afghan mujahideen. Above all, Iran remains a steadfast ally of Venezuela and remembers Hugo Chavez as its hero. The exaggerated (though not always concocted) Shia-Sunni prism has successfully damaged social equilibriums around the world, not excluding Pakistan, a former ally in the RCD club with Iran and Turkey. In the heyday of the Islamic Revolution, when Hashemi

Rafsanjani addressed the weekly Friday congregation at Tehran University, Kalashnikov in hand, four slogans from the milling crowd would rent the sky. Death to Saddam. Death to the USSR. Death to America. Death to Israel. The first two wishes have been fulfilled albeit for reasons that had little to do with the crowd's Orwellian chants. The other two haunt Tehran. The West hanged Saddam after the Soviet Union collapsed. The cheering victors included the UAE, Israel and the US. But why is Saudi Arabia, which bankrolled the anti-Saddam operation, keeping a low profile? Perhaps it knows, wisely, that the tide could turn in November and equations reset when a Democrat enters the White House.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1575020/not-shia-not-sunni-not-jewish>



Electric car breaks 500-mile barrier

LONDON: A Saudi-backed electric vehicle has broken through the 500-mile range barrier from a single charge as global manufacturers race to extend battery life. Lucid Motors, in which Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) is a major investor, announced independent range verification of 517 miles on a single charge for its forthcoming Lucid Air all-electric sedan. The car maker claims that the results confirm that the Lucid Air is the longest-range electric vehicle to date. So-called "range anxiety," where drivers fear being stranded without power in their cars, is a high priority for electric vehicle manufacturers in convincing people to make the switch from traditional gasoline-fueled vehicles. "Range and efficiency are widely recognized as the most relevant proof points by which EV technical prowess is measured," said Lucid Motors CEO Peter Rawlinson. "A few years ago we revealed our alpha prototypes of the Lucid Air and promised over 400 miles range; a reflection of our technology at that time. In the intervening period we have achieved a series of technological breakthroughs, culminating in an unsurpassed degree of energy efficiency."

The PIF agreed a \$1 billion investment deal with Lucid Motors two years ago to develop the car at a factory in Arizona. The plant initially will have an annual capacity of 34,000 vehicles, building toward 360,000 about seven years later. The production version of the Lucid Air will debut in an online event on Sept. 9, 2020. In addition to the vehicle's final interior and exterior designs, new details about



production specifications, available configurations, and pricing information will also be shared. Customer deliveries will begin in early 2021. Range is one of the biggest factors for consumers mulling the purchase of an electric vehicle, which is why manufacturers such as Elon Musk's Tesla are investing heavily in battery technology. China's CATL which supplies Tesla, said on Wednesday that it was also working on a new technology allowing battery cells to be integrated into a vehicle's chassis which would allow range to be extended to more than 500 miles. Sales of electric cars topped 2.1 million globally in 2019, to boost the total stock to 7.2 million electric cars, according to the Paris-based International Energy Agency. Consultancy Deloitte expects electric vehicle sales to rise from 4 million in 2020 to 21 million in 2030.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1718361/saudi-arabia>



How Islamic are the Islamic Countries?

By Prof. Hussain Askari - George Washington University



The study showed that most of the countries that apply *Islamic Principles* in their daily lives are not ones that are traditionally Muslim.

New Zealand ranked 1st,

Luxembourg 2nd,

Ireland 3rd,

Iceland 4th,

Finland 5th,

Denmark 6th

Canada 7th.

Malaysia 38th,

Kuwait 48th,

Bahrain 64th

and the surprise

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ranked 131st.

The study, published in the *Global Economy Journal* might be shocking to most of us but when we look around us and see the reality of the situation, we find that the results of the study are accurate and true.

As Muslims we seem to care only about performing religious Obligations/Rituals/Sunnah (prayer, fasting, niqab, beards, etc), reading the Qur'an and the Hadiths, but we don't practice what we espouse. We listen to religious lessons and sermons more than the other people on the face of the earth, but we are still not the best of Nations. In the last

60 years, we have listened to 3,000 Friday sermons. A Chinese merchant once said: "Muslim merchants come to me and ask me to put fake international labels and brands on their goods. When I invite them to eat, they refuse because the food is not Halal. So it is Halal for them to sell fake goods?"

A Japanese Muslim said: "I traveled to the West and saw Islam in practice applied in the daily life of non-Muslims. I traveled to the East, I saw Islam but did not see any Muslims. I thank Allah I knew Islam before I knew how Muslims act."

Religion should not be reduced to Prayer and Fasting. It is a way of life and it is about how we treat others. Performing a religious obligation is up to you and it is something between you and Allah.

However, good ethics is something between you and other people. In other words, if we do not put Islamic ethics into action and practice, corruption will become rampant and disgrace will be our future. We should not judge a person based on how

he performs religious obligations for he might be a hypocrite. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Verily, the bankrupt of my nation are those who come on the Day of Resurrection with prayers, fasting and charity, but also with insults, slander, consuming wealth, shedding and beating others."

I believe *Islam* (external aspect of faith) is incomplete without *Imaan* (internal aspect of faith) and *Ihsaan* (social aspect of faith). Ponder, understand and realize this.

Lord Bernard Shaw is reported to have said: Islam is the best religion and Muslims are the worst followers.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ireland/10888707/Ireland-leads-the-world-in-Islamic-values-as-Muslim-states-lag.html>



Young Female Afghan Mountaineer Makes History

On August 6th, 2020 history was created in mountaineering in Afghanistan when an 18-year-old Afghan girl Fatima Sultani climbed the peak of highest mountain NAWSHAKH located in the Northern Badakhshan province of Afghanistan. NAWSHAKH is also the second-highest peak in the Hindukush range standing at a height of 7492 meters above sea level. The climbing team, comprised of three Afghan females and 6 males from different parts of the country, started to venture on 18 July and after three weeks, on August 6, they could reach the peak. Fatima is one of the team members of the Hikeventures-Afghanistan group which supports mountaineering in Afghanistan with resources gathered by the members on a personal pursuit.



Fatima Sultani 18 year old mountaineer

This mountain peak had previously been reached and many foreigners have also navigated through this mountainous area.

[//www.khaama.com/young-female-afghan-mountaineer-makes-history-9879786/](http://www.khaama.com/young-female-afghan-mountaineer-makes-history-9879786/)

Pakistani women complete training on exporting products



Islamabad: More than 100 Pakistani women recently completed a virtual training on how to export their products and explore new international markets as part of a collaborative program conducted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and several Pakistan Women Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Under this first phase of the program, 115 women from various business and industry sectors completed five online training sessions on “Export Processes and Documentation.”

Participants increased their understanding of formal export procedures, the role of key

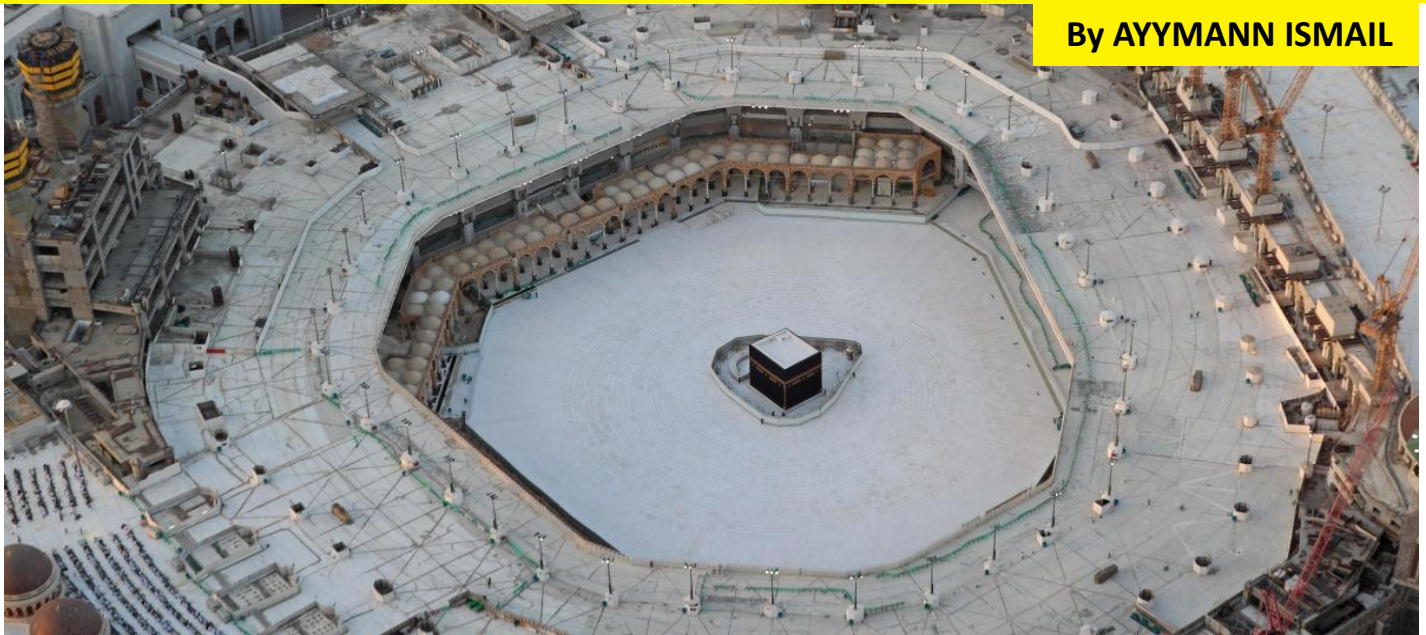
stakeholders, export documentation, and international standards. In the second phase, businesses exhibiting strong export potential will receive logistics support to participate in international trade exhibitions, technical assistance to improve export potential and international market access, and mentoring from industry experts. “Owning your own business is a brave and noble endeavor, and for a woman, it can be even more challenging, especially during this devastating pandemic,” stated USAID/Pakistan Mission Director Julie Koenen. “We are confident that these virtual training sessions will provide these strong women entrepreneurs with the tools and resources necessary to open new markets internationally to sell their products and provide for their families.” Many of the participants praised the training, saying that it is helping them adapt their business models to meet international market standards and practices.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/701192-women-entrepreneurs-complete-training-on-exporting-their-products>



It's Time to Make the Hajj smaller

By AYYMANN ISMAIL



I've never been on the pilgrimage to Mecca that all Muslims who are able to must make at least once in their lives, but growing up I learned the rituals expecting to one day make the trip. At a young age, we practiced. The Islamic school I attended set up a mock Kaaba, the black cube at the center of the Grand Mosque, in our gymnasium. The students dressed in the all-white ihram, the customary, equalizing plain clothing worn by pilgrims, and studied the special prayers we'd all hoped to one day repeat around the real thing. I didn't doubt for one minute that I'd eventually be able to make it.

This year, because of the coronavirus pandemic, the government of Saudi Arabia has limited the hajj, to about 1,000 residents of the kingdom, a far cry from the more than 2 millions who usually attend from around the world. The decision was met with grief around the world. Many hopeful pilgrims have saved for years to be able to book their trips months and even years in advance, and could never have predicted that a pandemic would have prevented them from going. While this is a disappointment for Muslims everywhere, it's worth keeping in mind that it's only in recent years that the hajj has been accessible to so many. The expectation that every Muslim can and should make the trip, which I grew up with, is a new development in the Muslim world, and one that comes at great expense. Before the advent of motor vehicles and commercial airline travel, pilgrims traveled by boat, on foot, or, by camel. If they

weren't killed by disease or bandits, they would get the chance to complete one of the obligatory pillars of their faith. And then they would have to survive the journey home. In some cases, the journey would take years. Then, in the late 19th century, the steamboat revolutionized intercontinental travel, and the number of pilgrims skyrocketed. Between 1868 and 1892, the numbers more than doubled. Once airlines began offering routes to Saudi Arabia in 1937, the numbers shot up again. In 1941, only about 24,000 pilgrims made it. By 2012, it was over 3 million. Both my parents went in their 50s from the U.S., a journey that might not have been possible before airplanes. But while technology has allowed millions more the opportunity to follow in the Prophet Mohammed's footsteps and complete one of the central rites of their faith, the hajj's modern accessibility comes with a big price. "This is something infectious disease experts talk about pretty much every year," says Zahra Jamal, associate director of Rice University's Boniuk Institute for Religious Tolerance. She says that although the decision to severely limit the hajj this year over COVID-19 concerns is the correct one, gathering in the millions makes the spread of disease a major concern even in years without a pandemic: "Basically, you're body to body, right? And not everybody has a great immune system for exposure to, for example, malaria."

Haj hajj has been curtailed, and in some cases

entirely canceled, in the past, notes Jamal. The black plague, drought, famine, cholera, MERS, and Ebola have all prompted intervention by hajj officials. But she says there hasn't been a disruption this major in modern times. "Because no pandemic occurred in the world for over a hundred years, so none of us have any human memory of it, so this is freaking people out," she said. "With all of the changes to life that came with it, here's something that's really special and important that now also has to change."

I'm one of those Muslims who was shocked. I'd never seen Mecca emptied before. I didn't even realize the tile in the Grand Mosque was white, because it had been filled with people in every photo I'd ever seen. Disease isn't the only concern. A site whose earliest foundations date back to the seventh century simply isn't equipped for modern crowds. In 1990, 1,426 pilgrims were trampled to death in a stampede.* Just five years ago, another 2,236 were trampled in a narrow tunnel. To further limit the number of pilgrims wouldn't be unheard of. Officials have already put in place several restrictions on who can enter the holy city during the hajj period. A specific pilgrimage visa is required, and each country is allotted a limited amount per year. Officials are already under pressure by some to make their application processes more transparent, given that, in some cases, it can take up to 10 years for one's hajj visa to be approved. The hajj is big business for Saudi Arabia, bringing in about \$12 billion a year and providing an incentive to only make it larger. Hajj officials continue to work on the Grand Mosque, adding more hotel rooms and expanding tunnels to accommodate more people, but in some cases, renovations come at the expense of important historical sites that have been preserved for generations. Several holy sites have completely destroyed. The house of Mohammed's first wife, Khadijah, was recently replaced with a block of 1,400 public toilets. It's not unreasonable for the purveyors of the hajj to want to accommodate pilgrims, but as a Muslim who hasn't gone yet, I wonder what will be left of Islam's holiest site for me to see when I do try to make the trip. If numbers continue to go up as the global Muslim population rises, will it ever be safe from disease or uncontrollable crowds?

The coronavirus shutdowns have been an

opportunity to people and institutions everywhere to reflect on their priorities. Now would be a good time for Hajj officials to do the same. Jamal and I spoke about the spiritual importance of the hajj for Muslims. "For folks who are actually going on the hajj this year, they may not actually feel like they've done a proper Hajj because of all the new safety restrictions," she said. For instance, instead of helping yourself to the Zamzam water well—which Muslims believe miraculously sprung up to quench the thirst of the wife and son of Abraham when they were stranded in the desert—officials will be distributing the water in sanitized bottles. "Hajj is a manifestation of an inner spiritual journey. And that journey is about communal transformation, going through all of the different rituals. It's really about obliterating the ego, forgetting the self, and remembering God, and then sharing that bounty with the rest of creation," she said, "If you can't physically go on the hajj because they've limited the numbers post-pandemic, for example, that's OK because God is merciful."

The Saudi royal family has saved lives by limiting entry to only domestic worshippers this year. Had they resisted the science and allowed millions to gather in close proximity and then return to their home countries, it would have been a global disaster. This raises the question of whether they should save more lives by limiting capacity in normal years. It seems entirely reasonable to limit the size moving forward, showing the same amount of restraint and caution they've shown this year in the face of a pandemic. I'm not sure what a reasonable yearly number of pilgrims would be, but I know that regular stampedes from overcrowding show that the current number is too high. I realize that as a Muslim myself who has not been on the hajj, I'm arguing to make the journey even less likely to accomplish in my lifetime. There are close to 2 billion Muslims worldwide. Even at current capacity levels, it would take more than 500 years for every Muslim to go on the hajj. So, it's already not a reasonable expectation that every Muslim have the opportunity to go. But it will save lives, and Mecca's historic sites. It's worth coming to terms with the fact that many of us will die before ever setting sights on the holy Kaaba in person—and it's probably better if we don't ever see it.

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/07/hajj-covid-coronavirus-mecca-crowds.html> ❀❀❀

'Highest temperature on Earth' as Death Valley, US hits 54.4C/130F

BBC.COM



The potentially record-breaking temperature was recorded in Death Valley, California

What could be the highest temperature ever reliably recorded on Earth - 130F (54.4C) - may have been reached in Death Valley National Park, California.

The recording is being verified by the US National Weather Service.

It comes amid a heatwave on the US's west coast, where temperatures are forecast to rise further this week. The scorching conditions have led to two days of blackouts in California, after a power plant malfunctioned on Saturday.

What were the previous records?

Sunday's reading was recorded in Furnace Creek in Death Valley. Before this, the highest temperature reliably recorded on Earth was 129.2F (54C) - also in Death Valley in 1913.

A higher reading of 134F, or 56.6C a century earlier, also in Death Valley, is disputed. It is believed by some modern weather experts to have been erroneous, along with several other searing temperatures recorded that summer.

According to a 2016 analysis from weather historian

Christopher Burt, other temperatures in the region recorded in 1913 do not corroborate the Death Valley reading.

Another record temperature for the planet - 131F, or 55C - was recorded in Tunisia in 1931, but Mr Burt said this reading, as well as others recorded in Africa during the colonial era, had "serious credibility issues".

What about the heatwave?

The current heatwave stretches from Arizona in the south-west, up the coast to Washington state in the north-west.

It is expected to hit its peak on Monday and Tuesday, before temperatures start to drop later in the week. However, the sweltering heat will continue for at least another 10 days.

As temperatures soared in California, a large "firenado" was observed on Saturday in Lassen County.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53788018>



Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy nominated at the Emmy Awards For 'Freedom Fighters'

Oscar-winning documentary filmmaker, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy has been nominated at the esteemed 41st Annual News and Documentary Emmy Awards for 'Best Feature Story in a News Magazine'.

Sharmeen's Freedom Fighters made it to the list alongside Nadia for 60 Minutes by CBS and The Dropout by ABC News among others. "Freedom Fighters is dedicated to Pakistan's brave female fighters who are not afraid of facing adversity and are entrenched on the frontlines, to create a better tomorrow for their neighbors, community, and country," shared Sharmeen as she took to Facebook to share the feat.

Produced by Sharmeen's banner, SOC Films for Center for Investigative Journalism, Freedom Fighters is just one part of a documentary series that features four other female filmmakers who tell stories of women taking control, taking power and taking chances.

"The short documentary film (33 minutes) interweaves the stories of three brave women – a former child bride, a police officer, and a labor crusader – who are speaking out against inequality and pushing for equal rights. It features a mix of verité sequences and animation as it follows these crusaders on a mission to create a more just country for their fellow citizens," explained Sharmeen's post.

Sharmeen's co-director for Freedom Fighters, Maheen Sadiq shared that the short is a "testament to the strength, perseverance, and



determination of a woman," and further said, "We can all take inspiration from these powerful women who have braved their past and are now standing up for change, shaping not just their own futures, but the futures of generations to come."

This isn't the first feather in the cap for the documentary, though. It was awarded the best documentary short award at Tallgrass Film Festival earlier and has been featured in a number of film festivals around the globe.

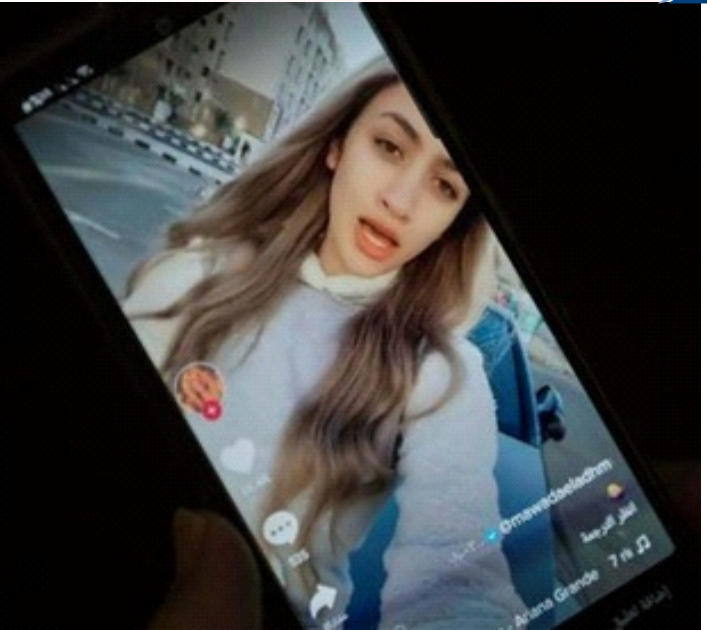
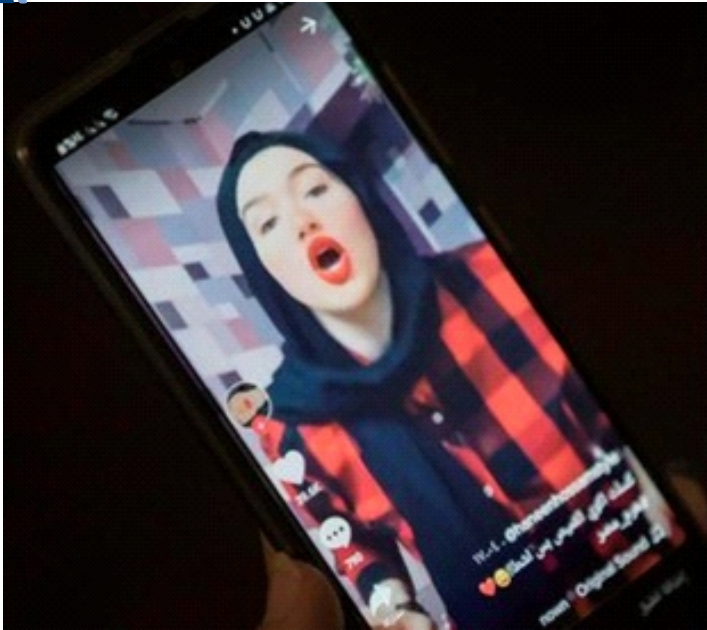
The nominations were announced by The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS) on Saturday and the winners are expected to be announced on September 21 in an online ceremony at the Emmy Awards website.

Have something to add to the story? Share it in the comments below

<http://thelightnewspaper.co.uk/sharmeen-obaid-chinoy-nominated-at-the-emmy-awards/>



Egypt—six TikTok influencers jailed for two years



CAIRO: Social media has become a new and dangerous battleground for women's rights in Egypt after young TikTok influencers were jailed while a resurgent #MeToo movement decried male sexual violence. In July 2020 a court sentenced five female social media influencers, Haneen Hossam, Mowada Al-Adham and three others, to two years in jail each on charges of violating public morals over content posted to video-sharing app TikTok.

This combination of pictures shows a woman watching videos of video of (L to R) Egyptian influencers Haneen Hossam and Mowada Al-Adham, who were sentenced to two years in prison on charges of violation public morals, on the video-sharing app TikTok in Egypt's capital Cairo. (FILE/AFP/Khaled Desouki)

International digital rights group Access Now described them as "all women, all young, all exercising their right to freedom of expression online." Just two days later, a court sentenced another young social media influencer, Manar Samy, to three years in prison over TikTok videos, deeming the clips in which she dances and lip-syncs to popular songs to be "inciting debauchery."

Many in the deeply conservative country have cheered on the arrests, as traditional social values clash with online content seen as racy and sexually suggestive. "The Egyptian government is on a campaign to arrest and prosecute women influencers on... TikTok for violating 'the values of

the Egyptian family' and 'inciting debauchery and immorality,'" Access Now said in a statement. The Egyptian authorities "not only want to control what citizens say, but also how they should dress, talk, and behave online," said Marwa Fatafta, the group's Middle East and North Africa policy manager. Egypt has in recent years enforced strict Internet controls as it walks a tight line between balancing the Islamic law that shapes its governance and adapting to a rapidly shifting society with a penchant for social media content. Stringent laws were approved in 2018 allowing authorities to block websites seen as a threat to national security and to monitor personal social media accounts with over 5,000 followers. "In the past, the Egyptian regime tightened its stronghold on the Internet... Now, the online repression extends to non-political activity too," said Fatafta. The six jailed women combined have millions of followers. Hossam was arrested after posting a clip saying that girls could make money by working with her, a message that was interpreted as a call for prostitution, while Adham had posted satirical videos on TikTok and Instagram. Aside from being a virtual battleground of competing interpretations of morality, social media has also empowered young Egyptian women to speak up about sexual assault, sometimes with negative consequences. In May, a shocking video came to light of a young woman sobbing, her face battered and bruised. Menna Abdel-Aziz, 17, posted an Instagram video

in which she said she had been gang raped by a group of young men. The authorities' response was swift: the six alleged attackers were arrested — but so was Abdel-Aziz. All were charged with “promoting debauchery.” “She committed crimes, she admitted to some of them,” the prosecutor-general said in a statement. “She deserves to be punished.”

Since Abdel-Aziz's case surfaced, a revived #MeToo movement among Egyptian women, mostly from affluent backgrounds, has sprung into action. A gang rape allegation made in late July stemming from a prominent social media account has been one trigger. Another was young women posting testimonials about sexual misconduct that led to the arrest earlier in the month of Ahmed Bassam Zaki, 22, a former student of some of Egypt's most elite schools and universities. But

the movement faces an uphill battle. Rights groups say the government of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has been curtailing freedoms since he took office in 2014. Comedians, academics, bloggers, journalists, political dissidents, lawyers and activists are among those who have been jailed in recent years, and a music video director has died in custody. Imprisoning social media influencers, the latest group to be targeted, “has nothing to do with protecting social values. It's about Internet policing and control,” Access Now's Fatafta said. “With the massive increase in content creators and influencers on TikTok in Egypt, there is a high risk that more prosecutions targeting this community are yet to come,” the organization added.

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1713556/media>



India wants use of loudspeakers for azaan banned at mosques in Gujrat

AHMEDABAD: A Gandhinagar-based doctor has filed a PIL in the Gujrat high court seeking a ban on use of loudspeakers for the azaan (call to prayer) at mosques across Gujrat contending that it creates noise pollution and violates the fundamental rights of citizens. Dharmendra Prajapati, a resident of Sector 5C in Gandhinagar, complained that even though not many persons turn up to pray at the mosque in his neighbourhood, the muezzin uses a loudspeaker five times a day to recite the azaan. This causes great inconvenience and disturbance to the people living nearby. He contended that people have a right to peace and tranquility. Basing the arguments on the Allahabad high court's order with regard to denial of permission recite the azaan on loudspeakers against the local authorities' decision during the lockdown, the petitioner stated that he complained about this to the local authority but to no effect. The PIL contends that the sound from the loudspeaker is very loud and is unbearable. Such noise pollution “causes severe mental illness, physical problems to aged persons and small children and it also affects the work efficiency of the public at large. In short, it is not good for health”.

Citing legal provisions, the PIL claims that use of loudspeaker without permission from local authorities violates the law. “There is no valid



written permission obtained by the persons of Muslim community while using loudspeaker while offering prayers,” the PIL reads. It also cited an order by the Supreme Court to assert that no religion prescribes that prayers should not be performed by disturbing the peace of others nor does it preach that they should be through voice amplifiers or beating of drums. The petitioner further claimed that use of loudspeakers is not an integral part of Islam because in the olden days when the technology did not exist, the azaan was recited and namaz used to be offered regularly in mosques. Muslims cannot explain why namaz cannot take place without the azaan through a loudspeaker.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/pil-wants-use-of-loudspeakers-for-azaan-banned-at-mosques/articleshow/77229060.cms>





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