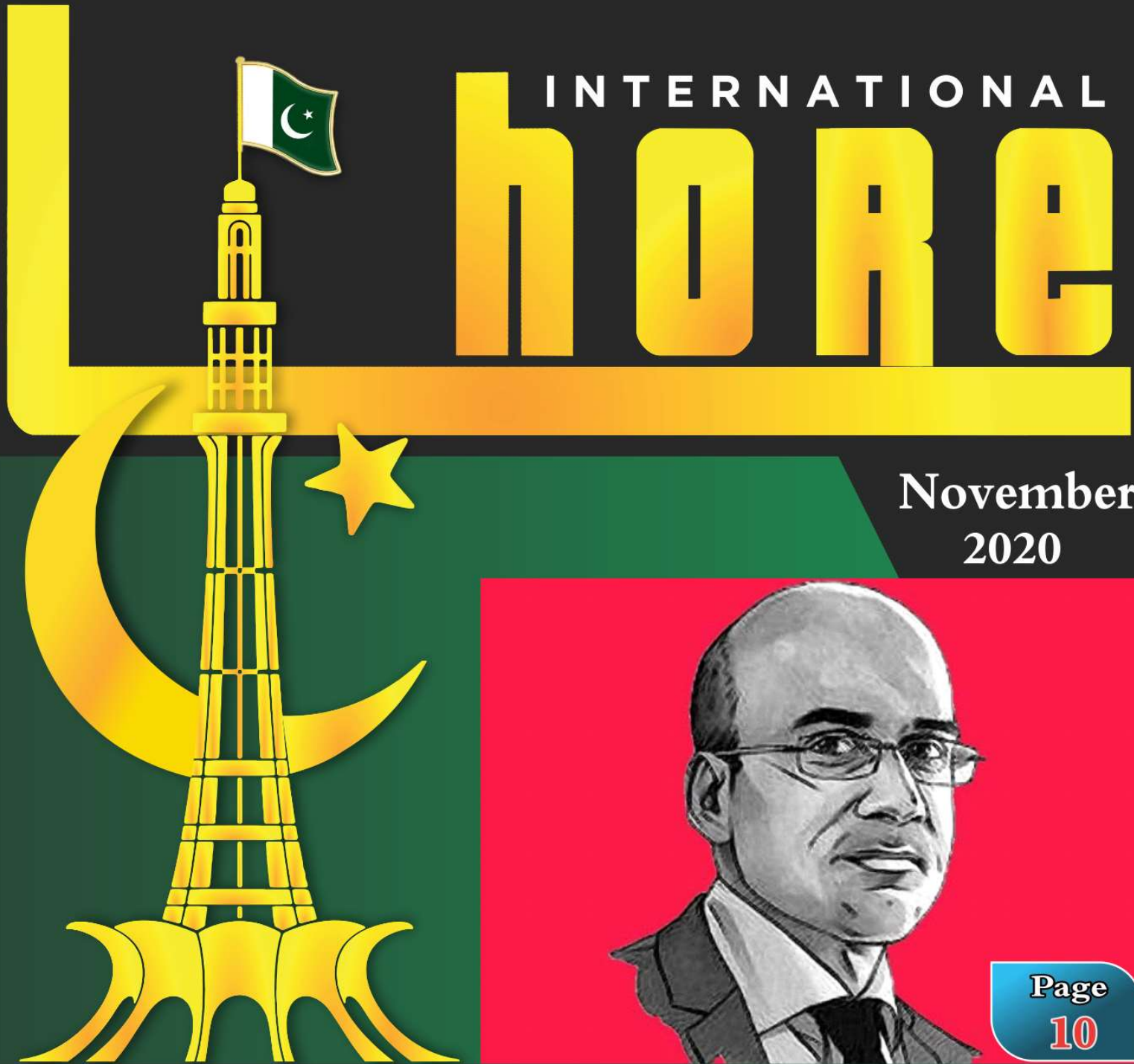


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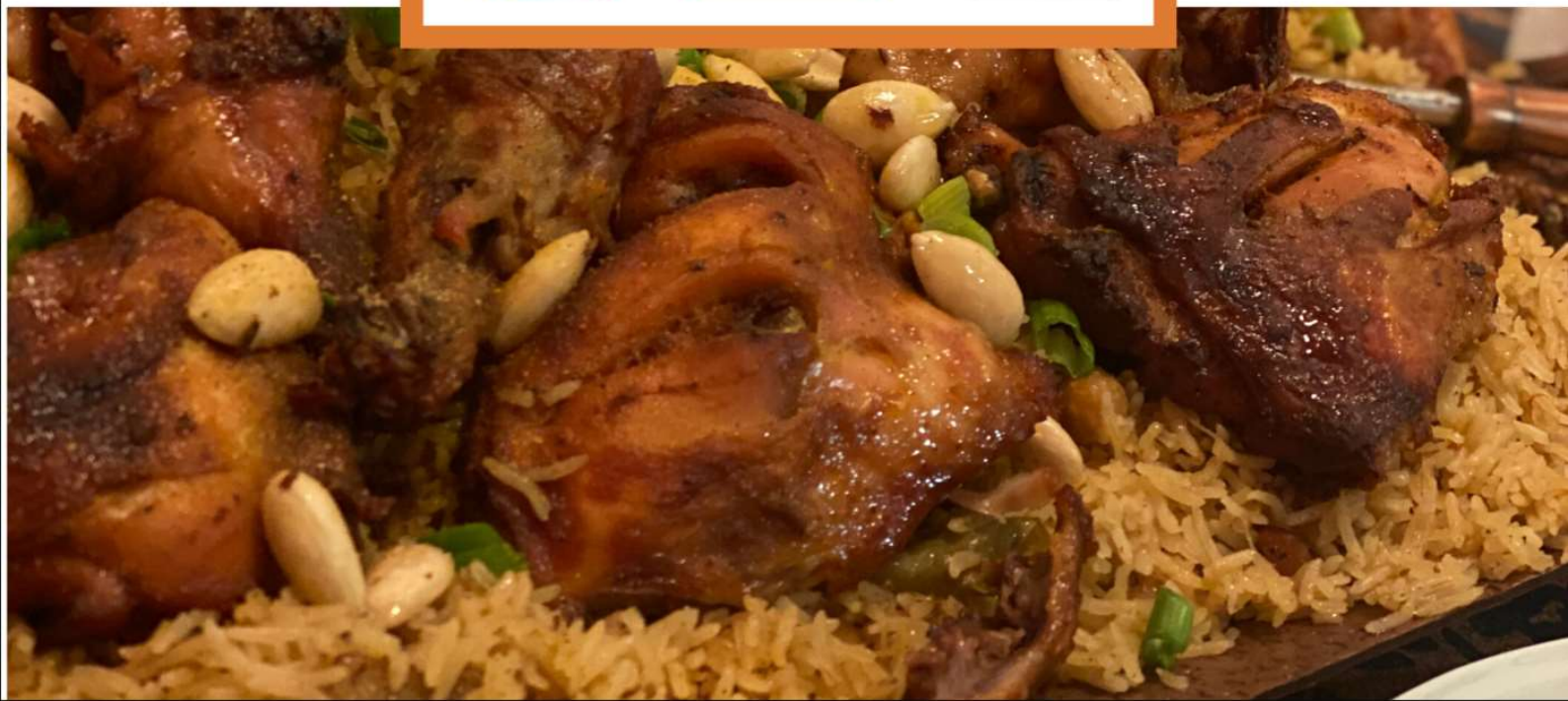




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What if He does loses but does not leave the White House?



Zakaria Virk, Editor



Questions are being raised that if President Donald Trump refuses to recognize the election results, if he loses the election on November 3rd, would he leave the White House on January 20, 2021. Will there be a peaceful transfer of power?

There are several scenarios - He could declare himself a winner when polls close, even if he is behind in the final count. It would take several days before final count is made. He could unlawfully claim the presidency. What happens even if he loses the election and refuses to leave the White House? Should the results of the election be close, Trump could declare victory prematurely and the U.S. could find itself in a constitutional crisis.

There are two months between the election in the U.S. and the inauguration of the winner on Jan. 20 - enough time for the U.S. to clarify the results. Some experts are of the opinion that "The approaching U.S. election isn't as important for any other European government as it is for the

German government. Germany believes that the world order is at stake in this election."

Some experts believe there are many indications that Trump will try to manipulate the election results or won't recognize a loss. He has called this election the most rigged election. There has been voter suppression, voter intimidation, removing of ballot boxes, installation of fake voting boxes, and poll watchers.

Should Biden win a clear majority getting more 270 votes in the Electoral College out of 538, Biden speaking with Trevor Noah said, that the military might be called on to evict Trump if it came to that—and that it would willingly comply. "I am absolutely convinced they will escort him from the White House with great dispatch," Biden said.

The potential for chaos exposes the frailties of an electoral tradition that depends on the goodwill of the two candidates. If one won't cooperate, the system seizes up. Lawrence Douglas, published a book this year called *Will He Go?* Which lays out nightmare scenarios arising from a contested election: dueling claims about who won, with Congress and the courts unable to resolve the dispute.

Rep. Adam Smith is of the view that there's a zero percent chance that he would gracefully transfer power," he told a reporter. "The best we can hope for is that he would ungracefully transfer power".

Whether Trump wins or loses let's hope that there will be a peaceful transfer of power. One of the contenders would have to accept defeat to avert a constitutional crisis.



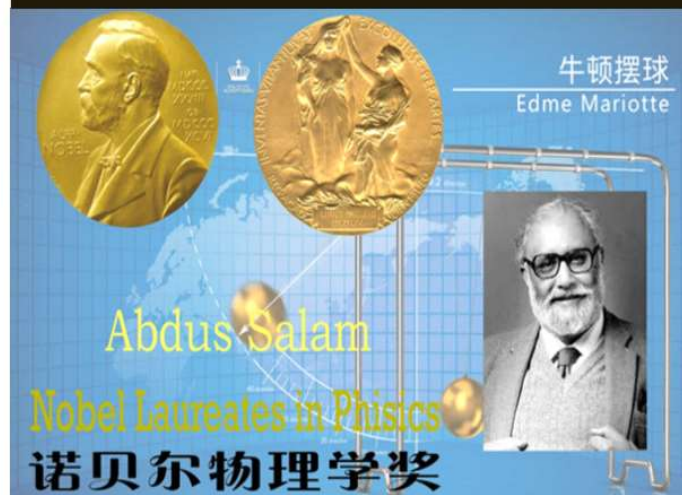
Pakistan: Defiling the picture of a hero by stupid boys



By Yasser Latif Hamdani, Advocate Lahore

Dr Abdus Salam was possibly the greatest Pakistani since 1947. Not only was he one of the greatest physicists in the world, he was also the founder of SUPARCO and PAEC. While he was much bigger than the idea of an atomic bomb, his contribution to Pakistan's nuclear program was certainly much greater than the metallurgist who takes credit for the bomb.

The metallurgist, Qadeer Khan, had about as much contribution to the bomb as a painter does for a car after coming out of the assembly line. Qadeer Khan, the self-styled Mohsin-e-Pakistan, is no Mohsin of Pakistan. Qadeer Khan is someone who sold nuclear secrets to other nations and thereby put Pakistan's deterrence policy under threat, bringing ignominy to our nuclear program. Yet he is hailed as a hero while Dr. Salam is slandered by the right wing. Stories are concocted against Dr. Salam by Khadim Rizvi types and transmitted to the populace, attributed to Sahibzada Yaqub Khan but there is no evidence of the Sahibzada ever having said anything like that during his life. It is a wild story, which is so unbelievable that one wonders what kind of idiot believes it. According to this hilarious tale, Sahibzada visited the CIA headquarters and was shown the location of Pakistan's Kahuta nuclear facility on a map. When he was coming out, he saw Dr Abdus Salam coming out of another room and laughing. First of all Dr. Salam's association was with PAEC and not the metallurgist's Kahuta facility. Secondly one wonders how stupid CIA people have to be to have Dr Salam in the next room and then have him come out at the precise time that Pakistan's foreign minister was coming out. I mean if you are going to spin a yarn at least spin one that is believable. There is a foul mouthed bigot from Chakwal and the head of the so called



Youth State Parliament of Pakistan who recently encouraged a group of stupid boys to go and blacken the portrait of Dr. Salam in Gujranwala. In reality they only blackened their faces because Pakistan needs Salam more than Salam needs Pakistan. It is a matter of great honour that Pakistan produced a Physicist who could talk back to Einstein and whose research in Electroweak Theory laid the foundations for important work in Physics. He is also the father of Pakistan's space program and under his watch Pakistan became one of the first countries in Asia to launch a satellite into orbit ahead of China and India. How many satellites has Pakistan launched since then and what has our space program achieved is a question that I leave to the reader. The bigotry against the Ahmadi community has blinded the people of Pakistan. Despite their admirable role in Pakistan's founding and their many contributions, they are abused as being traitors to Pakistan. They were declared Non-Muslim through a spurious amendment despite the fact that the founder of Pakistan, Mahomed Ali Jinnah, considered them Muslims and relied on their support. Jinnah's right hand man, Sir Zafarullah Khan, was an Ahmadi. Instead Iqbal, who had nothing

to do with Pakistan, is elevated to the status of ideological founding father of Pakistan. This is because, unlike Jinnah, Iqbal was in favour of excluding Ahmadis. This was borne out of personal animus after the Kashmir Committee where he was supported by Majlis-e-Ahrar, a bigoted fascist party.

Even Nehru had come to the defence of Ahmadis though later he would prop Majlis-e-Ahrar because of its antipathy to Jinnah. Jinnah was the only politician in the subcontinent who had the courage to unequivocally state that Ahmadis were Muslims if they professed to be Muslims; earning the undying hatred of Majlis-e-Ahrar and other religious parties on the payroll of the Congress Party.

The man of principle that the founder of this country was, he refused to back down from his position. In the early days of Pakistan, he could already see the direction that the country was taken causing him to wonder if he had done the right thing by founding the country. We still have time to redeem ourselves but we would have to follow Jinnah's vision, as expressed in the 11 August speech, to letter and spirit. This means we have to jettison the excess baggage of Allama Iqbal's thought and ideas.

Meanwhile we have the likes of Dr Ishtiaq Ahmed, the scion of Majlis-e-Ahrar, writing against Jinnah and the Ahmadis, misleading the country about the clear and unequivocal vision that the founder of this country had. The country has ceased to be Pakistan and has become Ahraristan where the enemies of the founding father populate both the right and left. We must change Ahraristan back to Pakistan if we are to survive as a nation state in the 21st Century.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/679290/bigotry-continues/>



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MOHIUDDIN ABBASI
Editor-in-chief

Nawaz Sharif Has Now Gone for the Pakistan Army's Jugular

By Mohammad Taqi



Supporters of Pakistan Democratic Movement, an alliance of political opposition parties, wave flags as they listen to their leaders during an anti-government protest rally in Gujranwala, on October 16, 2020. Photo: Reuters

7

Pakistan's three-time former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has indicted the incumbent Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, current director general of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (DG ISI) General Faiz Hameed Chaudhry, former DG ISI General Zaheer-ul-Islam and the former director general of the Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) General Asim Salim Bajwa, for toppling his elected government and installing their puppet Imran Khan as the prime minister, through a stolen election. That the army rigged many elections before and manipulated the political process for six decades, has never been hidden. But a former premier, let alone one with his power base in Punjab – the home of army brass and soldiery – doing so publicly is unprecedented and unheard of in Pakistan. No sitting army chief, who was not a dictator, has ever been named and shamed publicly by a mainstream politician before. And that Sharif addressed, from London via video link, an opposition rally at Gujranwala, merely ten miles from General Qamar Bajwa's hometown Ghakar Mandi, was truly momentous. The rally was held under the aegis of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), a broad coalition of the opposition political parties that had fired its first salvo just a couple of weeks ago.

Nawaz Sharif is the only prime minister in Pakistan's history, after Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who has actually sacked two sitting service chiefs. Bhutto had fired and put under house arrest,

General Gul Hassan Khan and Air Marshal Abdul Rahim Khan, on charges of what he had called their Bonapartism. In his second prime ministerial stint, Sharif got General Jehangir Karamat to step down as the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), when the latter made a public speech calling for the "creation of a military-dominated council that would play a key role in determining government policy".

And after General Pervez Musharraf engineered and humiliatingly lost the 1999 Kargil War, Sharif had dismissed him, only to be toppled by the army, which stood by its chief, in a coup d'état within hours. Sharif was tried for assorted trumped-up charges, including the hijacking of Musharraf's plane, jailed and later exiled. He never forgot that. In fact, he had learned it the hard way, even before that. Nawaz Sharif has unique insight into the army establishment's mindset and modus operandi, as he once was their chosen man. He was supported and propped up by the army against the late Benazir Bhutto and her Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in the 1980s. But he spent little time in learning not just the political ropes but also the fact that the army's worldview is simply not compatible with progress and development. The scion of a business family, Nawaz Sharif saw mega projects, highways, free trade and open borders as the key to prosperity – and political power. He understood really fast that the army's zero-sum games lead to an economic dead-end and international isolation. By 1993, he

had already proclaimed publicly that he “will not take dictation” from the powers that be. It cost him his first premiership but a lesson was learnt forever.

Sharif's main political rival

When Nawaz Sharif assumed the high office for the third time in 2013, he let the law take its course against the usurper General Musharraf for the 1999 coup. The army brass under the then COAS General Raheel Sharif wasn't amused. The sitting generals took umbrage at their former chief being tried for sedition – a first in the country's history. Sharif was warned but he shrugged it off. The junta went after him with a vengeance.

The army, via ISI, plotted for Imran Khan to mobilise the street against Sharif on the pretext of an alleged rigging in the 2013 elections. Those protests eventually lost steam, but Sharif's government was weakened to the extent that it allowed the former dictator to leave the country. Sharif was subsequently framed in graft charges and ousted from the office in an army-judiciary pincer move. There has been an undeclared martial law in the country since.

Sharif's party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) continued in government, only to be shown the door in an election widely perceived to be heisted for Imran Khan by the army. The army regained all the political ground it had lost since the ouster of General Musharraf in 2008. Later on, General Musharraf was found guilty of high treason and awarded capital punishment by a high court but remains at large.

The Pakistan army's Imran Khan Project, however, has turned out to be a disaster in the governance and economy. Despite being politically hamstrung, thanks to the army's machinations, PML-N had presided over an era of growth and economic recovery. But every economic indicator went south under the Imran-Bajwa hybrid martial law regime and every constitutional right has since been trampled upon. And therein lies the rub. Had the army's most recent experiment in controlled democracy been a success on the economic front, it might have been able to sustain it a little longer. But this venture was dead on arrival Imran Khan is quite literally the master of disaster. He had zero experience in governance despite his party running the government in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province

since 2013. A cricketer-turned-politician, Imran Khan is not only an arrogant man but also highly incompetent and shallow. His horrendously superficial understanding of the complexities involved in running an ethno-nationally diverse federation like Pakistan, is rivalled only by his patrons in the army's general headquarters. Imran Khan's 2018 electoral victory was engineered by the army through “herding” the so-called electable politicians into his party. And when that appeared insufficient, by stealing it on the polling day. The praetorian guard's past attempts at ruling through presidential system, a king's party, or overtly by imposing martial law, went on for some time, thanks largely to monetary windfall from renting out the army to the United States in the Cold War, anti-Soviet Afghan war, and the post-9/11 War on Terror. And when the US tried to make the financial aid contingent upon civilian democratic oversight, the Pakistani junta leapt firmly into the Chinese lap. But despite several dole outs, China hasn't turned out to be quite the sugar daddy the US had been for better part of Pakistan's existence. Despite the economic lifeline thrown to the Imran-Bajwa regime by the American-backed International Monetary Fund, the country's economy has remained in shambles, with a tumbling GDP, sky-high inflation and exorbitant consumer prices. The public at large is up in arms. Nawaz Sharif sensed the public sentiment – and has gone for the army's jugular. And while Sharif, in his barrage, named the generals and carefully circumvented naming the army, for all practical purposes, chief is the army and army the chief. It is not lost on Sharif that an outfit that has produced one after the other chief fond of venturing into politics, has an institutional flaw, and not merely some individuals at fault. But his tactic is right.

Pakistan's military leadership – and the country's multiple crises

General Qamar Bajwa's extension as the COAS had not gone well with several in the general staff and officers corps, who also see his overt meddling into politics and even economy as a recipe for inviting further disrepute. Some feel that by exercising the nuclear option, Sharif has burnt his boats but for all practical purposes he has torpedoed General Bajwa's armada. Politicians have nine lives, but army chiefs have one, unless they opt to rule by martial law. And a martial law

has always been imposed in Pakistan without a prior overt feud between the civilians and the army. Generals Ayub Khan and Zia-ul-Haq had imposed army rule ostensibly to resolve the civilian bickering. And while General Musharraf's putschist intentions were known within the power circles, there was little if any public talk of it. By going public with his indictment of General Bajwa, Nawaz Sharif has deprived him of stealth and surprise, which have been hallmarks of Pakistani coup d'états. While a martial law is highly unlikely in Pakistan, even if the army were to commit that blunder, it won't be able to sustain it. Domestic and international deck is now stacked against military rule. General Bajwa's options are rather limited. He won't be able to come swinging at Nawaz Sharif publicly.

He would have to rely on Imran Khan for his defense. And Imran Khan's rant a day after the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) rally, clearly shows that. I have always maintained that the Imran-Bajwa duo will sink or swim together. And this time around, barring an earth-shattering event, the double trouble is headed for ouster, sooner rather than later. What Nawaz Sharif has said now, has been said for decades by Pashtun, Baloch, Sindhi, Urdu-speaking, and indeed Punjabi leaders of Pakistan. But as he rightly pointed out, they were smeared as traitors, or worse, apostates. The army did not even spare Fatima Jinnah, sister of the country's founder, because she had challenged the junta's diktat. The army was able to get away with it because its victims came from the numerically smaller nationalities or parties. In case of the Bengali leaders, the disdain was both ethno-national and geographic. But Nawaz Sharif is none of that.

And none of the past accusations against the dissenters will stick against Nawaz Sharif. He is an austere, practising Muslim from Punjab who has a massive public support in the exact same areas that the majority of army's rank and file comes from. In addition, the PDM has Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the head of the religio-political Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI) party, as its president. This instantly deprives the army of its anti-religion, anti-Pakistan card that it has always played against its leftist, nationalist, progressive detractors. The PDM also has in its fold assorted Pashtun and Baloch nationalist parties, and the PPP, now led by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. This rainbow coalition is

all set to give army a run for its money. By taking his fight to General Bajwa's hometown, Nawaz Sharif has fired a warning shot that from here on out it would get messy, were the army to play dirty.

Sharif's political legacy

Nawaz Sharif has wisely opted to stay in London, where he had gone for medical treatment. Treatment or not, it is much better for him to stay and lead from abroad. There simply is no point in a hot-headed return, only to be thrown back in prison by the Imran-Bajwa regime. He is much more effective via telecommunication and can return when the movement and the moment is ripe. Nawaz Sharif has taken a stand that was unthinkable, especially from him, a few decades ago. He has eyes on his political legacy. The former prime minister clearly wants to go down in history as a statesman who decisively upended the army's hegemony over politics and governance in Pakistan. He also intends to pass on the party leadership baton to his daughter Maryam, who in her own right has emerged as a leader more than willing and capable of challenging the army brass for its shenanigans. The father-daughter duo seems to have made a very calculated decision to confront the junta before it is too late. Unlike some of their family and partisans, they have their hand on the voters' pulse. They read it correctly that people have had enough of the hybrid martial law and are ready for a change.

The PDM has planned a series of rallies eventually evolving into street protests. The timeline seems to be about 90 days to get General Bajwa to doff the uniform. And that would mean an instant wrap up for Imran Khan as well. But what Nawaz Sharif has said in his address has serious implications. He has warned the COAS that he has to answer for subverting a constitutionally and democratically elected government. That means another high treason charge against another army chief. Is the army brass willing to ease out its chief or is it ready for a showdown that would leave it even more bruised and battered? There is a strong possibility that the army would cut its losses and send Imran-Bajwa packing. But if it does not, the Nawaz Sharif brand has mustered enough popular support that it can force them to.

<https://thewire.in/south-asia/pakistan-nawaz-sharif-army-bajwa>



Why Pakistan does not deserve the service of Atif Mian



By Raza Habib Raja



When it comes to the Ahmadis, we as a nation have lost our collective conscience and even our sanity

In 2018, just a few weeks after the formation of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, renowned economist Atif Mian was inducted into the Economic Advisory Council (EAC), which is led by the prime minister. This was an excellent choice from every angle since Mian is a brilliant economist, a professor at the prestigious Princeton University, and is the only Pakistani to be included in the International Monetary Fund's "Top 25 Brightest Young Economists".

Given that Mian had been given an advisory position, and that too in a technical area, I did not foresee any controversy emanating from his appointment due to his religious beliefs. However, soon my presumption was shattered when some religious quarters started to question this appointment on the grounds that Mian is an Ahmadi.

PTI's then Information Minister, Fawad Chaudhry, defended Mian's appointment in a blazing press conference, and I was momentarily impressed. While I have never particularly liked Chaudhry, that day he spoke like a courageous individual and, for some fleeting moments, I began to think that perhaps the PTI government was what we really needed, and that I may have been

wrong to have opposed the 'selection' of this government. Sadly, this fantasy also did not last long since the government quickly buckled under pressure and asked Mian to resign. I was dumbfounded at this total lack of courage by Prime Minister Imran Khan and his team, particularly after that show of bravado by Chaudhry. At that point, I wrote a piece for the Express Tribune in which I pointed out that Mian did not need that job and it was Pakistan who needed him. I stated:

"At the end of the day, we are our own worst enemy. What some of us did not realise while abusing Mian was that he did not need this post – we needed him. He is a brilliant academic presently teaching at one of the most outstanding universities in the world; he did not need this appointment at all."

It appeared to me that the reason behind calling for his removal was so trivial and that the subsequent actions of the government were so cowardly that we as a society could not possibly degrade ourselves any further. But now it seems we have outdone ourselves. Recently, The Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi cancelled a Zoom lecture which featured Mian due to the "threats the university administration was facing from extremists". Let that sink in. This time Mian was not offered an advisory position or required to work for the government in any capacity. All he was supposed to do was lecture a few students on Pakistan's economic performance, and even that became the subject of controversy. The university of course mismanaged this situation. The truth of the matter is that once they made it public that Mian would be delivering a lecture, the university, unfortunately, should have been prepared for some repercussions. Nonetheless, I seriously doubt that threats from extremists alone forced the university to cancel the lecture, and suspect that perhaps even some individuals belonging to IBA

asked for a cancellation of the talk. Frankly, when it comes to discussing the rights of the Ahmadis, the distinction between extremist and 'moderate' Pakistanis blurs to such an extent that it is impossible to distinguish between the two.

Let's not forget that a few days ago some students "proudly" sprayed black paint onto Dr Abdus Salam's picture in the city of Gujranwala. By doing so, they were trying to prove their Islamic credentials. I still remember the video which shows a female Assistant Commissioner being hounded by some petty students and being forced to apologise for merely suggesting that all of us, including Ahmadis, should be united. I also recall that a few months ago there was an outrage when the government announced that Ahmadis who were "expelled" from Islam through the second amendment would be included in the minority commission. The irony was that Ahmadis were declared a minority by our own parliament, and yet decades later we were not prepared to consider them even that. The Punjab Assembly even passed a bill unanimously stating that Ahmadis should only be included in the commission if they openly accept that they are not Muslims. I still remember the deafening silence when the Ahmadi mosque was attacked in Lahore in 2010. And I remember the rebuke which Nawaz Sharif received when he condemned the incident and called Ahmadis our brothers. Additionally, there have been countless incidents where the graves of Ahmadis have been desecrated.

When it comes to the Ahmadis, we as a nation have lost our collective conscience and even our sanity. We are blinded by petty hate. In fact, both the opposition and the government try to outdo each other in whipping up hate against them. It is strange that our religious beliefs are so weak that they are 'threatened' by merely four million Ahmadis in a population of more than 200 million. It is truly puzzling to try and decipher how a Zoom lecture by Mian, easily one of the finest brains Pakistan has produced in recent years, is somehow putting Islam in danger.

I have never personally met Mian, but I know several people who have. Before joining the

academia, I worked with the State Bank of Pakistan, and Mian used to frequently interact with members of the research department there. Those who have met him have nothing but praise for him. They have told me that not only is he brilliant but that he truly loves Pakistan and genuinely wants to contribute to the well-being and progress of this nation. This is incredible given the fact that he belongs to a religious community which is openly discriminated against in Pakistan.

In conclusion, I simply wish to make a personal appeal to Mian. Sir, the simple truth of the matter is that we as a nation do not deserve you. Stop caring for us. Let us rot in our misery and hate.



by Farzana Bilal

Be Carefree

**It's alright, to stop for a few seconds
To give yourself some time,
To forget about all those problems,
And for a while relax your mind.**

**It's okay to laugh for once
Ignoring the mess in your life,
To not hear all those words
Which stab you like a knife.**

**It's fine not to think about others,
And do what you really want,
To put your earphones rudely on
And not become the victim of taunt.**



Noor Jehan gets teary-eyed recalling her infatuation with Faiz in throwback interview

Mallika-e-Tarannum 'refused' to perform on stage when told she won't be allowed to sing 'Mujhse Pehli Si Mohabbat'



that poem. It garnered such praises that the audience was on their feet," she said.

Noor Jehan then recalled how a couple of days later, Faiz visited her house around 2 in the morning. "When I was informed that he was at my door, I just ran towards it," the Pride of Performance winner shared. "I didn't know how to react since it was the first time I was meeting him. Should I hug him, should I keep the distance? Faiz Sahab came forward and embraced

21st September 1926 would have been the 94th birth anniversary of Mallika-a-Tarannum, Noor Jehan. While fans and celebs alike took to social media and paid homage to the late maestro, her granddaughter, makeup mogul, Natasha Lakhani, took to Insta and shared a throwback video of Noor Jehan. In the video, the Ae Rah-e-Haq Ke Shaheedon crooner could be seen talking about her famous ghazal by Faiz Ahmed Faiz. Noor Jehan shared Mujhse Pehli Si Mohabbat was her own composition, as she was always interested in poetry.

"We organised a charity function back in 1956, 1957 and had to sell tickets worth Rs600,000," Noor Jehan shared. "When I gave the organisers the list of songs I would be performing, they said I won't be performing Mujhse Pehli Si Mohabbat. I was shocked, as I had just composed it and I really like the poem itself. I was informed by someone who had a certain influence that performing the song won't be possible. I then said that I won't perform at all. It's not like I had a monetary contract with them anyway."

The Chandni Raatain singer added that the organisers agreed to let her sing the aforementioned song. "They told the supervisors that she's a bit stubborn. That was the first time the audience heard

me. He then shared that he was only there to express his gratitude. He told me, 'You have so much star power yet you went head-on and fought to perform our poem.' Since that day, we became family friends, we would attend parties together, visit each other's houses."

During a lot of parties, Noor Jehan shared how Faiz was asked to recite the poem the two had worked on. "He would always say that this poem belongs to Noor Jehan and she's the only one who will recite it." Noor Jehan continued on how, with time, she had become extremely engrossed in her own life. "I got married to Ejaz Durrani Sahab, had kids, the career really took off as I had to record three, four songs a day. In all this, I really didn't get time to meet Faiz Sahab. But, now that he's gone, I just wish I had given all that time to him. I still cry whenever I listen to his kalaam. Sadly, we could have met, we could have spent more time together, but circumstances didn't allow so. These are a few regrets I carry with myself. Woh kehtay hain na, 'Yaad-e-Maazi azaab hai ya rab, cheen le mujhse haafiza mera.'"

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2265596/noor-jehan-gets-teary-eyed-recalling-her-infatuation-with-faiz-in-throwback-interview>



Banned TikTok says ready to talk its way back into business in Pakistan



Hareem Shah - social media celerity

The short video-sharing app, TikTok, has approached the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and expressed willingness on further negotiations to comply with instructions for development of an effective mechanism for proactive moderation of unlawful online content. This was confirmed by PTA spokesperson Khurram Mehran while talking to local media yesterday. Keeping in view the complaints, and the nature of the content being consistently posted on TikTok, the PTA said it issued a final notice to the application, and gave considerable time to respond and comply with the authority's instructions for development of effective mechanism for proactive moderation of unlawful online content.

Meanwhile, social media celebrity Hareem Shah slammed the restriction and called it a move to divert the public's attention from real issues, such as wheat flour crisis.

"As you all know that TikTok has been banned and the reason that has been given for it is indecent content. I think that's not a solid reason. It's an entertainment app.

If there's criminal content on it then the administrators [those who run it] of the app block it themselves," the popular TikToker said. ooo

"Instead of banning it, they [the government] should identify those who are involved in criminal or vulgar acts so that they could be punished and vulgarity is eliminated. In the US, they banned the app by giving a solid reason, which was their national security," Shah said.

If there is a national security issue in Pakistan, then it's right. But vulgarity is not a reason. I will give you an example: when your fingernails grow big you cut your nails, not the entire hand," she maintained.

Shah received a volley of questions from journalists and answered all of them with poise and understanding at a press conference held at the Karachi Press Club to elicit her opinion on the government's ban on TikTok app.

"There are different institutions such as the Censor Board in Pakistan who can do this job well. You will find people with a positive attitude to life as well as those with a negative vibe everywhere.

"If you look at it, then there is material on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, too, which is not good for the country's reputation. India and the US had issues with China so they banned the app. If you are out to put an end to vulgarity you need to enforce the Islamic system in the country," Shah pointed out.

In reply to a question, she said, "TikTok brought out talents of people; how could one snatch that from them?"

Answering a question, she said vulgarity committed by man or woman, either way, was condemnable. (But) women compared to men have become the focus of attention more if something bad happens.

<https://www.gulf-times.com/story/675138/Banned-TikTok-says-ready-to-talk-its-way-back-into-business>



£1.5 Billion: British Heritage Sites Including Cathedrals, Steam Railways Receive Coronavirus Handouts

The British taxpayer is subsidising national heritage sites and organisations to the tune of one and a half billion pounds, as the sector struggles to survive without visitor revenue thanks to the government's coronavirus shutdown.

455 organisations including museums, heritage bodies, ancient churches, and steam railways are among those given a cash boost on Friday as they shared a £1.5 billion pot of cash. The cash, hailed as an “essential lifeline” in a BBC report on the handouts, was limited to £1 million per award, but the next tranche will allow the very largest organisations up to £3 million to help keep on top of essential maintenance of historic buildings and sites. The largest payments in this round typically went to organisations with very large buildings to maintain. The most generous was £999,200, very nearly the maximum possible amount, to Canterbury Cathedral. The 11th-century building is the mother church of the worldwide Anglican communion and normally receives one million visitors a year. By their own account, approximately one-third of the annual running costs of the ancient cathedral a year are met by visitors, and keeping the building open costs some £18,000 a day.

Also featuring prominently in the list of recipients are 33 steam railway-related heritage organisations. The legacy of Britain's industrial revolution, dozens of former passenger and goods railways



were bought from the government in the 20th century to become local museums when the nationalised railway body decided they had become surplus to requirements.

Several steam railways enjoyed large lifeline payouts, including £727,200 for the Bluebell Railway, £600,000 for the Mid Hants Railway, £906,000 for the Severn Valley Railway, and £865,000 for the West Somerset Railway.

The Severn Valley Railway — which took the largest of those handouts — in normal times carries some quarter of a million passengers a year over 15 miles of Worcestershire and Shropshire countryside. It would normally turn over some £8 million a year. While great churches and railways may represent the most famous heritage assets to get a helping hand from the British taxpayer during the government-mandated lockdown, some smaller awards went to obscure but nevertheless important sites. Among them were a comparatively modest £29,000 payment to the Crossness Engines Trust, who look after the former sewage pumping station at Crossness, which once served London.

While a less than glamorous sounding location, the buildings contain the vast Victorian beam engines surrounded in a high Gothic-revival decorated style, making the so-called “Cathedral on the Marsh” perhaps the most beautiful sewage plant in the world.

<https://www.breitbart.com/europe/2020/10/09/1-5-billion-british-heritage-sites-including-cathedrals-steam-railways-receive-coronavirus->



Crossness Pumping Station, Belvedere, Kent / geograph.org Image



History of US presidents' health is littered with lies

NEW YORK: How healthy is Donald Trump, really? Contradictory and incomplete information from officials since the president contracted coronavirus confirms that the health of the White House incumbent is a well-kept secret.

Analysts also say Trump has displayed a savvy use of digital tools to try to steer coverage of the first major presidential health crisis of the social media age. Since the announcement of Trump's positive test, his personal doctor Sean Conley has been accused of giving fragmented and confusing information that conflicted with what Chief of Staff Mark Meadows was saying. Analysts also say Trump has displayed a savvy use of digital tools to try to steer coverage of the first major presidential health crisis of the social media age. According to Matthew Algeo, the author of several books about the recurring lies of US leaders, presidents are not compelled to be forthcoming about their health, so it's no surprise if they are not.

"We just basically are operating on the honor system when it comes to our president's health," he said. With Trump's reelection bid less than a month away, now is not the time to look less than fully fit, analysts say. "Presidents hate to look weak, all politicians hate to look weak. They'll do anything to avoid that," said Algeo.

Rose McDermott, a specialist in the health of American presidents at Brown University, says the fact that a president's doctor is generally also a serviceman -- in Conley's case, a Navy officer -- is "structurally" a conflict of interest.

"He's both the president's doctor, and the president is also his commander in chief," she said. "This means that if the president doesn't like what he says about him, he can fire him... and he can do things like take away his pension." The history of US presidents is littered with lies about their health. Woodrow Wilson suffered a severe stroke during his presidency in the fall of 1919 that partially paralyzed him, but no one spoke of it until February 1920. Dwight Eisenhower downplayed the severity of a heart attack he suffered in 1955, while John F. Kennedy



never spoke of his life-threatening Addison's disease. Kennedy's assassination in 1963 led to the adoption four years later of the 25th Amendment to the US Constitution, which clarified that the vice president takes over if the president dies or is incapacitated. However, apart from a clear and serious injury -- such as when Ronald Reagan was shot and wounded in 1981 and his powers temporarily transferred to then-vice president George Bush --- the circumstances in which Congress can declare a president incapable of performing his duties are not clearly defined, Algeo says. The increased media glare and widespread use of social media has not fostered transparency, analysts argue, even if presidents can no longer hide from the public for four months like Wilson did. Especially since the current incumbent is a reality TV star turned frantic tweeter who knows how to be the center of attention, according to Emerson Brooking of the Atlantic Council think-tank. Trump has kept the media on their toes since Friday, drip-feeding carefully conceived impactf..

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https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/us-presidents-health-through-the-years-secrets-lies-tweets/articleshow/78529741.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst



France's 'crisis' with Islam: A legacy of 200 years of colonial brutality



French soldiers check the identity of Muslims at a checkpoint on 12 December 1960 in Algeria a few days before the UN statement acknowledging the right to the self-determination for Algerians (AFP)

France is in crisis. Macron is not the first French ruler who wanted to 'liberate' Islam. This is an old French 'secular' tradition Official and unofficial Christian French radical extremism, legitimising itself under the umbrella of what the French ostentatiously call *laïcité*, continues to increase its attacks on French and non-French Muslims

The Collectif contre l'islamophobie en France (CCIF) listed 1,043 Islamophobic incidents that occurred in 2019 (a 77 percent increase since 2017) - 68 physical attacks (6.5 percent), 618 incidents of discrimination (59.3 percent), 210 incidents of hate speech and incitement to racial hatred (20.1 percent), 93 incidents of defamation (8.9 percent), 22 incidents of vandalism of Muslim sacred places (2.1 percent), and 32 incidents of discrimination linked to the fight against terrorism (3.1 percent).

French Christian and so-called "secular" hatred of Muslims is part of everyday speech by the French government, the pundits, and the media.

In fact, the normalisation of hate speech against Muslims not only legitimises the institutionalised discrimination to which French Muslims are subjected, but also incites violence against them inside and outside France, including the shootings at the mosque of Brest and the targeting of its popular imam Rachid Eljay in June 2019 and the attack on the mosque of Bayonne in October 2019 that wounded four. Outside France, the terrorist

By Joseph Massad

who committed the 2019 massacre at the Christchurch mosques in New Zealand, killing 51 Muslim worshippers and wounding 49, cited the murderous theories of the Islamophobic French thinker Renaud Camus as influencing his actions.

In October 2019, French President Emmanuel Macron (whose first name is the name which the angel Gabriel gave to Jesus in the Gospels, meaning "God is with us") and his then Interior Minister Christophe Castaner (also named after Christ himself) connected terrorism in France to any signs of French Muslims' faith and culture, including having a beard, praying five times a day, eating halal food, etc. It is purely coincidental that the president and his interior minister are named after Jesus Christ, which should not implicate all those named after Jesus with having a crisis with "Islam", but rather only some of them who express anti-Muslim "secular" hatred.

'Liberating' Islam

Last week, Macron declared that "Islam is a religion that is in crisis all over the world today, we are not just seeing this in our country". He added that he is seeking to "liberate" Islam in France from foreign influences by improving oversight of mosque financing.

But Macron is not the first French ruler who wanted to "liberate" Islam. This is an old French "secular" tradition. When Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt and Palestine in 1798, his clever plan was to lie to the Egyptians by announcing that he and his army were "faithful Muslims" and that they came to liberate Muslims and Islam from the tyranny of the Mamluks. His deception did not work and the Egyptians rose against him as did the Palestinians. He returned in defeat to France after his army committed untold atrocities in Egypt and Palestine. Napoleon and France's crisis with Islam two centuries ago was that they were defeated in the Palestinian city of Acre. Three decades later, when France invaded Algeria, the French no longer needed to lie to Muslims to conquer them, rob them, and destroy their places of worship. The official *casus belli* that King Charles X used to

justify the invasion of Algeria in 1830 was France's refusal to pay its debt for grain that Algerian merchants had supplied Napoleon's French army during the Italian Campaign under the First Republic. In view of the fact that the Algerian merchants were from the Livorno Jewish banking families of Bacri and Busnac, the public debate at the time in France had an "antisemitic tenor".

Ironically, this is the same King Charles who in 1825 forced the liberated slaves of Haiti, whose revolution overthrew French colonialism and slavery, to pay millions in indemnity for the property losses of their former white French masters who had enslaved them in exchange for France's diplomatic recognition and lifting its punishing blockade of Haiti. In 1827, Hussein Dey, ruler of Ottoman Algiers, demanded payment of the debt from the French consul, Pierre Deval, who insolently refused. Incensed by the consul's affront, the Dey struck him with a fly whisk (what the French refer to as the coup d'éventail incident) - and called him "a wicked, faithless, idol-worshipping rascal".

Invading Algeria.

The invasion was launched in mid-June 1830 and Algiers fell on 5 July. The financially struggling France robbed Algiers' treasury clean, stealing upwards of 43 million Francs in gold and silver, aside from the sums that disappeared and those that were spent on the French occupation army. Perhaps poor West African countries that continue to be indebted to France today should prove how assimilated they are into Frenchness by invading France to rob its treasury. The immediate goals of the invasion, as Charles enumerated them to the French national assembly on 2 March, were to avenge the French for the Algerian insult, "end piracy and reclaim Algeria for Christianity".

In line with France's Christian commitments, the conquering French army took over mosques and converted them into churches and cathedrals at gunpoint, including the largest Ottoman Ketchaoua mosque in Algiers, built in 1612, which was converted into the Cathedral of St Philippe in December 1832. That same year the French wiped out the entire tribe of the Ouffias, sparing no woman or child, and seizing all their possessions. Not unlike contemporary white French Christian supremacist intellectuals' utter hatred and racism towards Muslims, in the early

1840s, France's celebrated thinker Alexis de Toqueville declared in this regard that "it is possible and necessary that there be two sets of laws in Africa, because we are faced with two clearly separate societies. When one is dealing with Europeans [colonial-settlers in Africa], absolutely nothing prevents us from treating them as if they were alone; the laws enacted for them must be applied exclusively to them."

He objected to the faint of heart who opposed French barbarism and their use of blitzkriegs (which they called "razzias") against the Algerian population. "I have often heard men whom I respect, but with whom I do not agree, find it wrong that we burn harvests, that we empty silos, and finally that we seize unarmed men, women, and children. These, in my view, are regrettable necessities, but ones to which any people who want to wage war on the Arabs are obliged to submit. And, if I should speak my mind, these acts revolt me no more nor even as much as several others that the law of war obviously authorises and which take place in all the wars of Europe."

French barbarism

In 1871, Algerian Muslims revolted again against French rule, with 150,000 people joining the forces of a local Kabyle leader, Al-Muqrani. The French genocidal machine responded by killing hundreds of thousands, which, combined with the French-caused famine deaths in the late 1860s, resulted in the death of one million Algerians (about a third of the population). The French razed dozens of towns and villages to the ground while eliminating the entire elite of Algerian society. But even that did not resolve France's "crisis" with Islam. In 1901, the French concern about their "crisis" with Islam increased. This was especially so as France, which "is and will become increasingly and without a doubt a great Muslim power", given its acquisition of new colonies with large Muslim populations, needed to know what Islam would be like in the 20th century. This became such a grave concern that a colonial "quest" for knowledge was issued. The editor of the important French colonial journal *Questions diplomatiques et coloniales*, Edmond Fazy, set out to investigate the question of "the Future of Islam" by the year 2000.

Future of Islam

Not unlike many Islamophobic French Christians

today, Fazy worried about the increasing and underreported number of Muslims worldwide (he cited the figure of 300 million, constituting a fifth of the world's population) and the propagation of their "simple" religion to Africa.

Many of the contributors to his journal saw fit to manipulate Islamic theology and transform Muslim ulamas to produce not only a modern Islam that European modernity would tolerate, but also one that, they hoped, would weaken the Ottoman Empire.

The most practical advice, however, came from the French school of Arabists, staffed by the French colonial settlers (pieds noirs) in North Africa. One of them, Edmond Doutte, of the *ecole algerienne*, a specialist in religion and Islam, spoke of his encounter with Muslim fanaticism and intolerance.

Traditionally educated Muslims seem to have "moved away from us" in contrast with the native workers, who fraternise with the colons and learn "our habits". Rather than repress "the exaggerated religious manifestations" of extant Islam, the task before Europeans was more productive.

"We could, on the contrary, favour the birth of a new Islam more inclined towards compromise and tolerance of Europe; to encourage the young generation of ulama who are working in that direction, and to increase the number of mosques, madrasas, and Muslim universities, ensuring that we staff them with adherents of the new theories."

Doutte's comments ring so familiar because they could easily be uttered by any contemporary French - or other western - politician or pundit today.

As for M William Marçais, the director of the Tlemcen madrasa founded by the French to train Algerian Muslim judges on "rationalist" grounds, he was partial towards the "new" and "modern" Islam that the French were fashioning and in which he was a participant, an Islam that "was closely tied to France's destiny."

Payback time

The project of transforming Islam into something European Christianity and French laicite can tolerate continues afoot in 2020, but with unsatisfactory results as far as Macron is concerned, especially as France's funding of



jihadist groups in Syria has not so far brought about the French-sought after Islam.

The ongoing institutionalised discrimination by the French state against its Muslim citizens shows no signs of abatement under Macron. France continues to be submerged in a dominant discourse of chauvinism and hate today that is not dissimilar to the one that always dominated French culture even before the French Revolution.

It is true that the widespread white Christian supremacist and fascist culture of hate across Europe and the United States today, reminiscent of the European culture of hate in the 1930s, is not exclusive to France, but the French (not unlike the Israelis) excel at expressing it with minimal euphemisms.

The crisis that France continues to face with Muslims is the crisis of French chauvinism, and the refusal of the white supremacist Christian and laic French to recognise that their country is a third-rate neocolonial power with a dominant retrograde culture that insists on holding on to underserved past glories, when they need to repent their genocidal sins that extend from the Caribbean to South East Asia, to Africa, and that killed millions of people since the late 18th century.

What the French need to do is to pay back the debts they owe to all those whom they robbed and killed around the world since then. Only that will end France's crisis with "Islam" and with itself.

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/france-islam-crisis-macron-secular>



Trump is Killing the Economy out of spite

Last year Donald Trump called Nancy Pelosi, the House speaker, a “nasty, vindictive, horrible person.” Actually, she isn’t — but he is.

Trump’s vindictiveness has become a major worry as the election approaches. He has already signaled that he won’t accept the result if he loses, which seems increasingly likely though not certain. Nobody knows what chaos, possibly including violence, he may unleash if the election doesn’t go his way.

Even aside from that concern, however, a defeated Trump would still be president for two and a half months. Would he spend that time acting destructively, in effect taking revenge on America for rejecting him?

Well, we got a preview of what a lame-duck Trump presidency might look like Tuesday. Trump hasn’t even lost yet, but he abruptly cut off talks on an economic relief package millions of Americans desperately need (although as of Thursday he seemed to be backtracking). And his motivation seems to have been sheer spite.

Why do we need economic relief? Despite several months of large employment gains, America has only partly recovered from horrific job losses in the early months of the pandemic — and the pace of recovery has slowed to a relative crawl. All indications are that the economy will remain weak for many months, maybe even years. Providing the kind of relief it offered in the first few months of the crisis: generous aid to the unemployed and loans that help keep small businesses afloat. Otherwise we’ll soon be seeing millions of families unable to pay their rent, hundreds of thousands of businesses going under. In addition, state and local governments — which, unlike the federal government, are generally required to balance their budgets — are in desperate fiscal straits, because the pandemic slump has drastically reduced their revenues. They need a lot of aid, soon, or they will be forced into deep cuts in employment and services. We’ve already lost around 900,000 jobs in state and local

By Paul Krugman, Nobel Prize winner



education. So there’s an overwhelming humanitarian case for major spending on relief: Unless the federal government steps in, there will be huge unnecessary suffering. There’s also a macroeconomic case: If families are forced to slash consumption, if businesses are forced to close and if state and local governments are forced into extreme spending cuts, the economy’s growth will slow and we might even slide back into recession. I know, I know, the usual suspects will say that the calls for economic relief are just more big-government liberalism. But warnings about the dangers of failing to provide more relief aren’t just coming from progressive Democrats; they’re coming from Wall Street analysts and Jerome Powell, the chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Yet negotiations over relief have been stalled for months, even as special aid to the unemployed and small businesses has expired. The main stumbling block, I’d argue, has been the adamant refusal of Senate Republicans to consider aid to state and local governments; Democrats would probably have agreed to a deal that included significant aid, even though it would have helped Trump politically. But Republicans have insisted — falsely — that this is all about rescuing badly run blue states. And Trump echoed that falsehood as he pulled the plug on Tuesday, claiming that Pelosi’s proposals are nothing but a bailout of “high crime, poorly run, Democrat States.” (Not that facts matter, but Democratic states actually

have lower crime rates, on average, than Republican states.)

The question is, why did Trump choose to reject even the possibility of a deal less than a month before Election Day? True, it's too late for legislation to make much difference to the state of the economy on Nov. 3, although a deal might have averted some corporate layoffs. But it would surely be in Trump's political interest to at least look as if he's trying to help Americans in distress. Why would Trump choose this, of all moments, to torpedo economic policy?

As far as I can tell, nobody has offered a plausible political motive, any way in which refusing even to try rescuing the economy helps Trump's prospects. What this looks like, instead, is vindictiveness.

I don't know whether Trump expects to lose the election. But he's already acting like a deeply embittered man, lashing out at people he feels have treated him unfairly, which is basically everyone. And as usual he reserves special rage for smart, tough women; on Thursday he called Kamala Harris a "monster."

Yet getting a relief deal would have required accepting a compromise with that "nasty" woman Nancy Pelosi. And it seems that he would rather let the economy burn.

The thing is, if he's behaving like this now, when he still has some chance of winning, how will he act if he loses?

The most immediate concern is that he won't accept the election results. But we should also be worried about what will follow if he is forced to accept the will of the people, but is still running the country. Trump has always been vindictive; what will he do if and when he has nothing left but spite? Paul Krugman has been an Opinion columnist since 2000 and is also a Distinguished Professor at the City University of New York Graduate Center. He won the 2008 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his work on international trade and economic geography.

[@PaulKrugman](#)



by Farzana Bilal

It's Not Yet Here

She's a bud

Waiting for her season to blossom,

To transform into a flower,

Beautiful and awesome,

She will spread her fragrance in air.

Let her time come, it's not yet here.

She's an unnoticed star,

In that vast sky.

The little one,

Who shines daily,

Trying her best

To become the brightest.

She'll be noticed, she'll glare

Let her time come, it's not yet here.



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McMaster, former US National Security Advisor discusses Putin's unscrupulous behavior, trench warfare in the White House.



DER SPIEGEL: Who is the greatest threat to the free world at the moment? Russia, China -- or Donald Trump?

McMaster: It is certainly the revisionist authoritarian regimes of Russia and China. But maybe even a bigger threat may be the loss of confidence in democratic institutions and processes. This problem existed before Trump. He reflects more than amplifies divisions in our society. Our loss of confidence is due in part to unchecked globalization that left many American workers without jobs. Many felt abandoned by the political establishment. Then came the financial crisis that made a bad situation worse. The financial crisis also encouraged China to take advantage of the perceived weakness of our free market economic system and act even more aggressively on the world stage.

DER SPIEGEL: Many of the U.S.' partners view the man in the White House and not China and Russia as the main threat. According to a poll published just a few months ago, Germans trust Vladimir Putin and Chinese ruler Xi Jinping significantly more than they do Trump. How do you explain this rather sobering finding?

McMaster: I think it expresses a remarkable level of self-loathing and moral equivalency that is the bane of the West these days. We all live in democratic countries. We enjoy the rule of law, a free press and a market economy that rewards initiative -- and at the same time, we fail to recognize how much autocratic countries stifle human freedom.

DER SPIEGEL: You had no illusions about the president's character when you took up your post in the White House. Why did you choose to serve this man anyway?

McMaster: I saw it as my duty to serve any elected president. Since joining the military, my role model has been General George Marshall. He was the architect of the American victory in World War II and then planned the reconstruction of Europe. Marshall never took part in an election in his life. I did the same thing. I am not a supporter of a party; I do not want to be drawn into political trench warfare. But in Iraq and Afghanistan, as a soldier, I had to implement strategies that made little sense to me. They were based on some fantasy in Washington, but not the reality of the war on the ground. So, I wanted to take the opportunity to correct the strategic deficits that we have already talked about. I wanted the president to be able to base his decisions on the best possible analysis and expertise. But of course, I also had an inkling that it would be challenging to serve in the toxic partisan environment.

DER SPIEGEL: Did you know that your term in your position was coming to an end when the right-wing website Breitbart started a campaign against you and the hashtag #fireMcMaster began circulating online?

McMaster: It was meant to make my job impossible. Behind this are people who weren't interested in serving the president, but had their own agenda. I chose to ignore it and focus on my job.

DER SPIEGEL: You're talking about Steve Bannon, who was then Trump's chief strategist, right?

McMaster: It was a number of people who saw the effectiveness of our process as an impediment to their narrow agenda.



Former Trump administration officials Rex Tillerson, John Bolton and Steve Bannon: "The only man elected in the White House is the president."

DER SPIEGEL: Bannon and others wanted the president to follow an isolationist course. Your successor was John Bolton, the fiercest hawk in the Republican foreign policy camp.

McMaster: There may be an element of poetic justice in that contradiction.

DER SPIEGEL: In your book, you primarily describe Russia as a threat to the free world. What is dangerous about Putin?

McMaster: Putin doesn't feel bound by our moral standards. For example, there is irrefutable evidence that the Russians shot down a passenger plane over Ukraine in 2014. Putin tried to kill former Russian intelligence officer Sergei Skripal with a nerve agent, endangering the lives of thousands of British citizens. Most recently, he tried to poison the regime critic Alexei Navalny. Putin denies all of this. He believes the West is weak and he can get away with murder, sometimes literally.

DER SPIEGEL: Many Germans remember another Putin who gave a speech in fluent German in the German federal parliament at the end of September 2001 -- a few days after the attack on the World Trade Center -- and who campaigned for peaceful coexistence between the U.S., Russia and Europe. Was it a mistake to turn down Putin's outstretched hand?

McMaster: In the 1990s, the U.S. and the Europeans paid billions to Russia to help the country transform itself into a market economy. That failed because a criminal patronage network spread across Russia, which first brought down Boris Yeltsin and then promoted Putin's rise. In a speech in 2000, Putin himself declared that he wanted to restore his country to its old national greatness. We should not make the mistake of holding ourselves responsible for the most egregious acts of our enemies. This is what I call strategic narcissism in my book.

"I think the likelihood of (us leaving NATO) is very slim. We are not a monarchy. In such a decision, Congress would also have a say."

DER SPIEGEL: Many Russians say that after the end of the Cold War, the West paid too little attention to the country's strategic sensitivities. George W. Bush wanted Georgia to join NATO in 2008. Barack Obama called Russia a "regional power."

McMaster: (laughs bitterly) Ok, all right. We offended Putin, and that is why he is now allowed to run a campaign to undermine our democracies? I

suppose it also explains why Putin is allowed to oppress his own people and bend the Russian constitution so he can remain czar until 2036? That really makes no sense to me. As for the enlargement of NATO and the EU, should we really have said "no" to nations that have regained their freedom: "We are very sorry, but you are not allowed to join the EU because Russia does not want you to"?

DER SPIEGEL: No. But the U.S. didn't care about Cuba's sovereignty both when it supported the attempted coup in the Bay of Pigs in 1961 and imposed a sea blockade on the island during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.

McMaster: The sovereignty of a country that doesn't give a damn about human rights? I'm sorry, but I just don't buy that moral equivalency.

DER SPIEGEL: There is a consensus across party lines in Washington that the German government should stop the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project with Russia. Do you agree?

McMaster: Of course. Why do our German allies want to give Putin, of all people, influence over their economy and energy supply? Nord Stream 2 is based on a corrupt deal made by a former German chancellor who sits on the board of directors of a Russian state-owned company. The U.S. helped build a postwar order that has given Europe, and especially Germany, enormous advantages. It is sad for me to see that our German friends have not done more to counter the Russian czar who is aggressively undermining our democracies and our alliance.

DER SPIEGEL: Trump's challenger Joe Biden is promising to regain the trust of the country's partners if he wins the election. Is that even possible? With Richard Grenell, the Germans experienced a U.S. ambassador, who helped ensure that almost 12,000 American soldiers are withdrawn from Germany.

McMaster: The troop withdrawal is a mistake, there is no question about that. On the other hand, we have seen these fluctuations in U.S.-German relations several times. The Germans oscillate back and forth between the rejection of an American troop presence and the paranoia that we Americans are leaving them in the lurch. That was already the case during the Cold War. But know who will bring us back together? Vladimir Putin. I think he can be relied on because in the end everyone will understand how determined he is to divide us.

<https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/former-national-security-adviser-h-r-mcmaster> ❀❀❀

New Report: The Islamic Movement in Britain

This report is focused on a network of Muslim organizations and individuals that it refers to as the “Islamic Movement” in Britain. This name is sometimes used by protagonists comprising the network in reference to the collective, organized effort to “revive” and expand Islam’s role in social and political life, in the West, the former Islamic empire, and the world at large. Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, the Egyptian-born theologian and host of the Al Jazeera TV programmed, “Shari’a and Life”, for example, explicitly refers to the “Islamic Movement” as such. The main purpose of this report is to describe this network in Britain.

Chapter 1 introduces the Islamic Movement in Britain, its origins in two strands of Islamic activism abroad, and its gradual transformation into a movement that transcends ethnic and linguistic boundaries. Chapter 2 describes the worldview, values, and motivations of the Islamic Movement in Britain. It observes several important shared features of the organizations comprising the Movement, including a proactive tendency to engage in social and political affairs, and the effort to represent social and political normative values through Islamic concepts and beliefs. Some analysts have described these organizations as non-violent Islamists, distinguishing them from violent jihadists, such as Al-Qaeda. But, as this report demonstrates, jihad is just as important to the Islamic Movement as it is to violent jihadists, with the important caveat that, for the former, jihad takes the form of education, advocacy, lobbying and other non-violent approaches to achieving their goals. A factor complicating this picture is the support they express for the Palestinian “resistance” in Israel, which they tend to see as a “defensive jihad”.

Chapter 3 describes some of the organizational connections of the groups comprising the Islamic Movement in Britain. It is impossible to provide a complete picture of these complicated and evolving relationships, so several key nodes will serve as a point of departure to map out some of them. These nodes include the Muslim Council of Britain and a lesser known group, the Coordination Committee of Islamic Organizations. Organizational interconnections may also be mapped out to some extent by regarding some of the key international dimensions of the Islamic Movement in Britain. Connections between organizations in Britain and Europe, some with generous funding from Qatar, may be drawn, helping to provide a fuller picture of the network. The final

chapter highlights the major campaign areas that the Islamic Movement in Britain has dedicated its energies to in recent years. These include Palestine; the British government’s counter-radicalization program, Prevent; and Islamophobia; as well as Muslim political participation and education.

In some of these areas, Islamic Movement groups have courted controversy. Some Islamic Movement organizations, for example, have attracted scrutiny for their alleged connections to extremist speakers or terrorist groups, including Hamas or groups linked to it. Perhaps some critical observers would say that some of these British-based organizations have not attracted enough scrutiny for such links. In recent years, for example, some analysts have criticized the

Charity Commission for being “soft” on a number of charities with alleged links to proscribed groups. But, even so, noting these allegations does not imply that all staff in these organizations support terrorism. Neither does it imply that all Islamic Movement organizations support terrorism. The Islamic

Movement in Britain is not a network of terrorist groups. It is a network of activist, advocacy, and community organizations that broadly share a religiopolitical outlook. Nonetheless, some of the organizations and individuals comprising the Islamic Movement have attracted some interesting and important allegations. These should be contended with, not shied away from, if we are to better understand these organizations and the network that they form. Writing about these controversial and mostly contested connections is a delicate matter, but it is important to do so, not to tarnish any reputation, but, to obtain the most comprehensive picture of this network as possible, which is the main purpose of this report.

This report seeks to provide a picture of the overall network of the Islamic Movement in Britain, since although there have been some reports regarding specific groups, there are few that seek to map out the network as a whole – ideologically, organizationally, and in terms of the work they are engaged in. It admittedly falls short of being comprehensive, since the network is evolving and no doubt many connections exist beyond what can be viewed in publicly sourceable material. Nonetheless, it is hoped that what follows is an important step towards understanding the network of the Islamic Movement in Britain. <https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ICSR-Report-The-Islamic-Movement-in-Britain.pdf>



Indian-Origin Sikh Councillor Suspended From U.K. Conservative Party after Saying 'Do Not Like Muslims'

London: An Indian-origin Sikh councillor has been suspended from the Conservative Party, an investigation initiated after an employment tribunal found that he had said "I do not like Muslims", "Muslims are violent", and "Pakistani men are grooming our girls" to a Muslim colleague. A petition calling for the expulsion of Councillor Kamaljit Chana, who represents Pinner South borough on Harrow Council, from the council and the Conservative Party "for his offensive Islamophobic comments" has so far garnered over 6,000 signatures. On October 2, Harrow Conservatives announced it has suspended Chana for six months from the party whilst an investigation is being carried out, though he remains a councillor. Chana, a married chartered engineer with two children and of East African Indian Sikh heritage, has been a councillor for 10 years and is the school governor at his local primary school. Bristol employment tribunal heard that Chana joined Dyson in January 2017 as a senior technical project manager and was working on its new electric vehicle project.

A few weeks later, in a one-to-one meeting with an Iranian senior engineer (39) from Wiltshire, Chana asked where she was from and she told him that she was from Iran. The judgment of the tribunal states: "The claimant's case is that he asked if she was a Muslim and she replied that she came from a Muslim family. After telling her of his own background, he asked if she was Sunni or Shia, and then said that he did not like Muslims. He said they are violent, talked about terrorist attacks, and repeated that he did not like Muslims and they are violent. The claimant said he should not generalise as violence happens in all religions. Mr Chana talked about 9/11 and said his family did not take flights anymore because they were scared... He went on to say Pakistani men are grooming our girls."

Chana, who no longer works for Dyson, however, denies the allegations. The judgment said: "Mr Chana's account is that during the meeting he asked the claimant where she was from... I had



Geeta Sidhu-Robb, who has roots in Punjab, has apologised for anti-semitic remarks made during the 1997 general elections

never met someone from Iran before, so I commented that that was interesting and Iran seemed to be in the news a lot. I am interested in politics, so I told her that I didn't understand Iranian politics or the difference between Shia and Sunni people which always seemed to come up in the news."

But employment judge P Cadney found Alipourbabaie's evidence more "compelling and persuasive". He also found that Chana excluded her from meetings and work emails and expressed unjustified critical views about her to another, a Dyson vice-president, while she was being considered for promotion.

Alipourbabaie, who worked for Dyson at its bases in Malmesbury and Hullavington, Wiltshire, resigned from Dyson in June 2018. Her claim of constructive unfair dismissal was also upheld.

Harrow Conservatives said: "After reviewing the employment tribunal judgment, the Conservative Group on Harrow Council has voted to suspend Cllr Kam Chana for the maximum period allowed under our rules, which is six months. This will allow the Conservative Party nationally to investigate further and if appropriate to take further action. We don't have the power to suspend or remove someone from being a councillor."

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/sikh-councillor-suspended-from-conservative-party-after-saying-do-not-like-muslims/articleshow/78597195.cms>



Indian Police Accuse Popular TV Station of Ratings Fraud

By Shalini Venugopal Bhagat

NEW DELHI — Ever since it hit the airwaves three years ago, Republic TV has been one of India's most-watched, most-talked-about and most-contentious television news channels.

Its lead anchor, Arnab Goswami, has made a name for himself shouting down opponents, embracing right-wing causes and aggressively backing up Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his right-leaning administration.

In turn, Republic TV's ratings have soared.

But this week, police officials in Mumbai accused Republic TV and two smaller channels of rigging the ratings system by paying poor people the equivalent of a few dollars a month to tune into the station and leave their televisions on. In some cases, police officials said, people being bribed to watch the English-language channel did not speak English and were annoyed to tie up their television sets with programming that they couldn't even understand.

Those viewership levels are not just a source of pride: They are also a major factor in a station's ad revenue, therefore fueling its continuing ability to shape the public discourse.

Republic TV's dominance has emerged at a time when many Indian journalists say that their freedoms have been eroded under Mr. Modi's government and that he has tried to manipulate the country's news media, especially the airwaves, like no other prime minister in decades. Mr. Goswami, a co-founder of the channel, has strongly denied the accusations of bribery, saying that he was being targeted because of recent coverage that was critical of the Mumbai police. He seems to thrive on confrontation and has used this moment to rally his millions of viewers.

"Come to my house, come to my office, if you have the guts," he taunted the police on Thursday night. "Come and arrest me!" He called Mumbai's police chief, Param Bir Singh, "a spineless man" and "a pliable tool."

The news that Republic TV had fallen under investigation struck like an earthquake among the country's media elite. Mr. Goswami is one of India's best-known darlings on the political right,



Television screens in a showroom in Mumbai. Many Indian journalists say their freedoms have been eroded under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.

and throughout Friday, other news channels ran wall-to-wall coverage of the investigation.

A free press has played a crucial role in protecting India's democracy since the country's independence from Britain in 1947. But under Mr. Modi, liberal media outlets have been repeatedly targeted by senior government officials, who have berated editors, cut off advertising and ordered tax investigations.

At the same time, right-leaning media organizations like Republic TV, which some refer to as the Fox News of India, are often given preferential treatment. In Mumbai, the tables are somewhat turned. The state government is controlled not by Mr. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party but by an alliance of parties, including the Indian National Congress, that are rivals to Mr. Modi. So even though Mr. Goswami is a friend to the central government, in Mumbai he plays the role of the opposition, hammering state officials and wearing down interviewees in a barrage of loud invective. He recently unleashed a tirade against the Mumbai police, accusing them of bungling an investigation into the death of Sushant Singh Rajput, a popular actor who died in June, apparently by suicide. Media commentators said that it was difficult to determine exactly what was behind the bribery accusations, and that the ratings system had been flawed for years.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/09/world/asia/india-republic-tv-ratings.html>



Sweden: Malmö once a safe haven for Jews but today only 200 remain: reporter tells UN



By Paulina Neuding Swedish



Jewish institutions and Jews are being attacked and harassed in Sweden, according to Swedish writer Paulina Neuding. At the end of September, she spoke at a conference of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, where she described the current coexistence issues facing the Jewish community in the Swedish city of Malmö after migrants who came to the Scandinavian country en masse in 2015, according to Czech news outlet Echo24.

Neuding believes the Swedish government is blind to the issue. "I live in Malmö. It was once a safe haven for Jews, but today only 200 remain and are being harassed," said Paulina Neuding at the UN. According to the writer, Jews in Malmö face recurrent attacks. The city, which is over a third Muslim, is known for its anti-Semitism, with most of them concentrated in the area of Rosengård, which features 70 percent unemployment rates. In 2015, 137 anti-Semitic incidents were reported in the city, including an attack on a rabbi, leading the Jewish population to shrink by 50 percent from its 2005 levels.

In a test of the city's anti-Semitism, an hour-long documentary on Swedish television showcased a Swedish journalist putting on a kippa and sitting outside a café in Rosengård. He was referred to as a "Jewish Satan" and people threw eggs at him from their apartments, which was all captured on camera. In 2020, chants in Arabic about killing Jews were chanted at a protest in Malmö. "Anti-

Semitism is rampant among left-wing and right-wing extremists. In Malmö, anti-Semitism currently occurs mainly in migrant communities. That is something the Swedish government does not know how to deal with. Let's call things by their real names: Tolerance of the intolerable. Jewish institutions are under attack. Children in Jewish kindergartens have to play behind bulletproof windows," Neuding pointed out.

One of the most notable attacks on Jews in recent years involved a firebombing of a synagogue in Gothenburg. Of the three individuals convicted of the attack, one was a Palestinian migrant whose asylum application was subsequently rejected, while the other two, a Palestinian and a Syrian, both had Swedish residency permits. According to Neuding, Jews are afraid of harassment, but the problem does not concern only Jews. "Five years ago, a couple of journalists tried to cover a neighborhood where many migrants live. But the inhabitants drove them out. The Swedish government promised improvement of the situation, but nothing has changed," said Neuding. Sweden played a significant role during the migration crisis more than five years ago. At that time, millions of migrants from the Middle East fled en masse to Europe. Sweden was the most popular destination after Germany. Now, after five years, some neighborhoods in Swedish cities are practically uninhabitable for Swedes.

Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, who once said "Europe does not build walls" in protest against anti-migration sentiment, admitted last week that migration poses a threat to the country. "If migration levels are so strong that integration is no longer successful, we risk further problems," said Löfven on the topic of accepting refugees. <https://rmx.news/article/article/jews-in-malmo-are-fearful-of-migrants-says-swedish-writer-at-the-un>



Denmark Government wants jail time for Sharia imams

Islamic leaders who propagate the controversial contracts in Muslim marriages could face up to three years behind bars

Late last month, an imam in Odense hit the front pages after being reported to the police for producing a Sharia Law divorce contract dictating that a woman would lose her parental rights if she didn't fulfill a list of unreasonable requirements.

Now, the government is aiming to crack down on the practice by seeking prison time for up to three years for imams who formulate such documents.

More specifically, the government intends to propose a law that would expand the punishment for psychological violence so that it also includes negative social control, Sharia divorce contracts and other practices used to deter citizens from getting divorced.

"When we see imams getting involved in divorce cases in such a negative way, we need to take this more seriously. And I think a change of the law can help do that," Mattias tesfaye, the immigration minister, told Berlingske newspaper.

"Because we cannot give imams a pass to meddle in divorces in a way that casts aside Danish law."

The law will also include a framework that punishes family members who take part in the negative social control. The instance concerning the imam in Odense involved a Sharia Law divorce contract that stipulated that the woman would lose her parental rights if she remarried, moved more than 130 km away from her ex-husband and failed to pay him 75,000 kroner to be divorced.

However, Halima El Abassi, a spokesperson for the Council of Ethnic Minorities (REM), contended that the solution to the problem is not stiffer punishment.



El Abassi believes that the move will only serve to push women, families and imams further into the darkness and only amplify the idea that politicians want to punish Muslims only.

"Instead, society should offer an alternative to the contracts as women often have no other way out," she told Berlingske.

Despite El Abassi's misgivings, several parties, including Enhedslisten and Venstre, are prepared to support the new law proposal.

Copenhagen Municipality has informed the Islamic organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir that it is no longer welcome to use state-funded rooms and locations for its dealings.

The news comes just days after the government altered the public information law in a bid to cripple associations and groups that aim to undermine democracy in Denmark.

<http://cphpost.dk/?p=119099>



Two Women Scientists win Nobel Chemistry Prize 2020 for gene editing tool



STOCKHOLM - Two scientists won the Nobel Prize in chemistry Wednesday for developing a way of editing genes likened to “molecular scissors” that offer the promise of one day curing inherited diseases. Working on opposite sides of the Atlantic, Frenchwoman Emmanuelle Charpentier and American Jennifer A. Doudna came up with a method known as CRISPR-cas9 that can be used to change the DNA of animals, plants and microorganisms. It was the first time two women have won the chemistry Nobel together — adding to the small number of female laureates in the sciences, where women have long received less recognition for their work than men. The scientists’ work allows for laser-sharp snips in the long strings of DNA that make up the “code of life,” allowing researchers to precisely edit specific genes to remove errors that lead to disease.

“There is enormous power in this genetic tool, which affects us all,” said Claes Gustafsson, chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry. “It has not only revolutionized basic science, but also resulted in innovative crops and will lead to groundbreaking new medical treatments.”

Gustafsson said that, as a result, any genome can now be edited “to fix genetic damage.”

Dr. Francis Collins, who led the drive to map the human genome, said the technology “has changed everything” about how to approach diseases with a genetic cause, such as sickle cell disease.

“You can draw a direct line from the success of the human genome project to the power of CRISPR-cas to make changes in the instruction book,” said Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health that helped fund Doudna’s work.

But many also cautioned that the technology must be used carefully and that it raises serious ethical

questions. Much of the world became more aware of CRISPR in 2018, when Chinese scientist He Jiankui revealed he had helped make the world’s first gene-edited babies, to try to engineer resistance to future infection with the AIDS virus. His work was denounced as unsafe human experimentation because of the risk of causing unintended changes that could pass to future generations, and he’s currently imprisoned in China. In September, an international panel of experts issued a report saying it’s still too soon to try to make genetically edited babies because the science isn’t advanced enough to ensure safety, but they mapped a pathway for countries that want to consider it.

“Being able to selectively edit genes means that you are playing God in a way,” said American Chemistry Society President Luis Echegoyen, a chemistry professor at the University of Texas El Paso. Charpentier, 51, spoke of the shock of winning.

“Strangely enough I was told a number of times (that I’d win), but when it happens you’re very surprised and you feel that it’s not real,” she told reporters by phone from Berlin after the award was announced in Stockholm by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. “But obviously it’s real, so I have to get used to it now.”

When asked about the significance of two women winning, Charpentier said that while she considers herself first and foremost a scientist, she hoped it would encourage others.

“I wish that this will provide a positive message to young girls who would like to follow the path of science,” said Charpentier, who is currently the director of the Max Planck Unit for the Science of Pathogens in Berlin. Doudna told The Associated Press of her own surprise — including that she learned she’d won from a reporter. “I literally just found out, I’m in shock,” she said. “I was sound asleep.”

“My greatest hope is that it’s used for good, to uncover new mysteries in biology and to benefit humankind,” said Doudna, who is affiliated with the University of California, Berkeley and is paid by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also supports AP’s Health and Science Department.

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The breakthrough research done by Charpentier and Doudna was published in 2012, making the discovery very recent compared to many Nobel wins that are often only honoured after decades have passed. Speaking to reporters later at her lab, Charpentier said: "This discovery is only eight years ago. And it has boomed extremely. Everyone is using now the CRISPR-cas9."

Pernilla Wittung-Stafshede, a member of the Nobel Committee, noted that the method had

"already benefited humankind greatly."

The Broad Institute at Harvard and MIT have been in a long court fight over patents on CRISPR technology, and many other scientists did important work on it, but Doudna and Charpentier have been most consistently honoured with prizes for turning it into an easily usable tool. <https://www.thestar.com/news/world/europe/2020/10/07/panel-to-announce-2020-nobel-prize-for-chemistry.html>



Africa: Five reasons why Covid-19 has been less deadly than elsewhere

Many African countries have been praised for waging an effective campaign to combat the spread of coronavirus despite their reputation for having fragile state health systems.

The continent, which has a population of more than one billion, has had about 1.5 million cases, according to data compiled by the John Hopkins University. These figures are far lower than those in Europe, Asia or the Americas, with reported cases continuing to decline. Africa has recorded about 37,000 deaths, compared with roughly 580,000 in the Americas, 230,000 in Europe, and 205,000 in Asia.

"The case-fatality ratio (CFR) for Covid-19 in Africa is lower than the global CFR, suggesting the outcomes have been less severe among African populations," noted a recent continental study by Partnership for Evidence-based Response to Covid-19 (PERC), which brings together a number of private and public organisations. Low testing rates continue to undermine the continental response however, there is no indication that a large number of Covid-19 deaths have been missed, said Dr John Nkengasong, the head of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).

So what are some of the reasons for Africa's relatively low death rate?

1: Quick action

The first case on the continent was confirmed in Egypt on 14 February. There were fears that the



new virus could quickly overwhelm largely fragile health systems on the continent.

So, right from the beginning, most African governments took drastic measures to try and slow the spread of the virus. Public health measures - including avoiding handshakes, frequent hand-washing, social distancing and wearing of face masks - were swiftly introduced. Some countries - like Lesotho - acted even before a single case was reported.

It declared an emergency and closed schools on 18 March, and went into a three-week lockdown about 10 days later in unison with many other southern Africa states. But only days after the lockdown was lifted - in early May - did Lesotho find its first confirmed cases. In a population of more than 2 million, it has so far recorded about 1,700 cases and 40 deaths.

2: Public support

In a survey conducted in 18 countries in August by

PERC, public support for safety measures was high - 85% of respondents said they wore masks in the previous week. "With strict public health and social measures implemented, African Union member states were able to contain the virus between March and May," the report said. It added that "minor loosening [of restrictions] in June and July coincided with an increase in the reported cases across the continent".

Since then, there has been a notable drop in the number of confirmed cases and deaths in about half of the continent, possibly linked to the end of the southern hemisphere winter. The implementation of the restrictions came at a huge cost. Livelihoods were lost on a large scale. South Africa - which had one of the most stringent lockdowns in the world - lost 2.2 million jobs during the first half of the year. More and more countries have been forced to re-open their economies even though the number of cases is much higher than when they ordered the shutdowns. According to the PERC report, public opinion about re-opening the economy was mixed - six in 10 respondents said economies needed to re-open, and believed that the risk of getting Covid-19 was minimal if social distancing rules were followed. However, seven in 10 said that thinking about resuming normal activities made them feel anxious.

"The data suggests that people across the AU see Covid-19 as a serious threat, but for many, the economic and social burdens outweigh their personal risk perception of catching the virus," concluded the report. How Senegal has managed to keep coronavirus at bay.

3: Young population - and few old-age homes

The age of the population in most African countries is also likely to have played a role in containing the spread of Covid-19.

Globally, most of those who have died have been aged over 80, while Africa is home to the world's youngest population with a median age of 19 years, according to UN data.

"The pandemic has largely been in younger age groups... about 91% of Covid-19 infection in sub-Saharan Africa are among people below 60 years

and over 80% are asymptomatic," said the World Health Organization (WHO).

"We have [in Africa] about 3% of the population aged over 65 years," said Dr Matshidiso Moeti, the WHO Africa head. In comparison, Europe, North America and wealthier Asian countries have the oldest inhabitants.

"One of the big drivers in Western countries is that the elderly people were living in specialized homes and these became places where the transmission was very intense," Dr Moeti added.

These homes are rare in most African countries, where older people are more likely to be living in rural areas. It is the norm in many African countries for people to return to their rural homes when they retire from employment in urban areas. The population density in rural areas is lower and therefore maintaining social distance much easier.

Furthermore, an underdeveloped transport system within and between countries appears to have been a blessing in disguise. It means that Africans do not travel as much as people do in more developed economies, minimising contact.

4: Favourable climate

A study conducted by researchers in the University of Maryland in the US found a correlation between temperature, humidity and latitude, and the spread of Covid-19.

"We looked at the early spread [of the virus] in 50 cities around the world. The virus had an easier time spreading in lower temperatures and humidity," said Mohammad Sajadi, the lead researcher. "Not that it doesn't spread in other conditions - it just spreads better when temperature and humidity drop." African countries away from the tropics have been worse off.

5. Good community health systems

The Covid-19 pandemic came at a time when the Democratic Republic of Congo was dealing with its biggest outbreak of Ebola yet. Neighbouring states were on high alert, and the health screening of travellers for Ebola was extended to include Covid-19. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54418613>



Coal miner's daughter tops in Afghan university entrance exam

KABUL: The daughter of an Afghan coal miner has come top in the country's university entrance exam and set her sights on becoming a doctor.



Shamsia Alizada, 18, came first out of more than 170,000 students, the education ministry said, prompting congratulations from former President Hamid Karzai and foreign envoys including the US Charge D'affaires.

The celebration come at a particularly sensitive time in Afghanistan as the government holds peace talks with the Taliban militant group which barred girls from schools when it ruled between 1997 and 2001.

But Alizada said she would not let politics get in the way of her studies. "I have some fears about the Taliban's comeback ... but I don't want to lose my hope, because my dreams are bigger than my fear."

She said her father, who works in a mine in the north, had moved the family to Kabul to make sure she got an education.

"It is my sense of responsibility towards my family that brought me to this position. It is my dream now to study medicine and serve my people," she

told Reuters by phone from her home.

The Taliban say they have changed and will let girls be educated, though many fear that women's rights will deteriorate if the group regains influence.

Around 2.2 million girls are still out of school and fewer than 30% of women in Afghanistan are literate, according to UN agencies.

"Your brilliance and grit are undeniable, just as your accomplishments underscore how much progress Afghanistan has made over two decades," US Charge D'affaires Ross Wilson said on Twitter.

Former president Karzai said the success of Alizada and other young people in the exam was a sign of "hope for a bright future in Afghanistan".

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2265668/coal-miners-daughter-comes-top-in-afghan-university-entrance-exam>



What are China's new laws for Hajj in Mecca

By Vikash Aiyappa



There are 20 million Muslims in China, mostly Uyghurs - an ethnic group of Turkic origin - and Hui Muslims, who are of Chinese ethnic origin. Both Uyghurs and Hui Muslims have a population of about 10 million each, according to an official white paper. About 10,000 Chinese Muslims perform Haj every year. The new regulation issued for Haj pilgrimage has a total of 42 articles, including one that stipulates that Chinese Muslims' pilgrimage should be organised in accordance with laws, and the Chinese Islamic Association is the only organization

that is authorized to arrange for Chinese Muslims to go to Mecca in Saudi Arabia to perform Haj. No other organization or individual should organize the trips, and Chinese citizens should meet basic requirements when applying for the Haj, the regulation, which would be implemented from December 1, stipulates, state-run Global Times reported. People who go overseas to perform Haj should abide by China's and the destination country's laws and regulations, and oppose religious extremism, according to the regulations. The related government departments are requested to fulfill their responsibilities and ban illegal Haj activities, the report said. The Haj is one of the five pillars of Islam which every Muslim is required to complete at least once in their lifetime if they are healthy enough and have the means to do so. China since last year faced severe international criticism, including from the UN and western countries, over allegations that it is holding over a million people, mostly ethnic Uyghurs, in internment camps in Muslim-majority Xinjiang province in a bid to wean them away from religious extremism.

<https://www.oneindia.com/international/what-are-china-s-new-laws-for-muslims-visiting-haj-3163147.html> ❀❀❀

Actor-Politician Nusrat Jahan Receives Death Threats on Social Media after Posing As Goddess Durga

Actor-politician Nusrat Jahan Ruhi yet again found herself receiving threats on social media. This time for posing as the Hindu Goddess Durga. Jahan is reportedly receiving death threats for dressing up as the Goddess. She is currently visiting London for work. Jahan took to her Instagram on the occasion of Mahalaya (September 17, 2020) and posted the image of herself dressed as Goddess Durga.

She also posted videos from the photo-shoot, following which; she started receiving a lot of hate texts and abuse online. Many users have sent her abusive threats in the post where she is seen posing as Durga. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP, Jahan is a Muslim born and is married to Nikhil Jain, a Hindu man. Hours after posting the picture on Instagram, she was also reminded of the need for "modesty". An Instagram user told her to follow "Islamic values". Another user demanded her to change her surname. This is not the first time that MP Jahan has received threats online. Last year, the photographs of the actress, attending Durga Puja with her husband had gone viral and she was targeted. "She has been offering puja to Hindu Gods despite the fact that Islam orders its followers to pray only to 'Allah'. What she has done is 'haram'" a cleric had said on camera. Jahan spoke about online abuse targeted at women and said, "Just because it is



virtual, doesn't mean it is not real. There has been a widespread increase in the spread of negativity. Online abuse towards women is on the rise," TOI reported. She further added, "Women will be judged on just about anything – cooking, wearing certain kinds of clothes, opinions, and for any generic activity. People giving rape and death threats online are ones with a sick mentality. All they have is a fake name or ID as cover and a lot of time to carry out such activities. I am concerned about this growing negativity in the online space but I do not pay much heed to such things. In real-life, I have dealt with stalkers and crazy fans so I know how to deal with all such people.

My mantra is to ignore the negativity."

<https://www.shethepeople.tv/news/mp-nusrat-jahan-durga-receives-death-threats-after-posing-as-goddess/> ❀❀❀

Book Review: Ten Lessons for Post Pandemic world

By Dr. Fareed Zakaria, CNN Host



Wisely, he stays away from the daily battles over masks and lockdowns. Nor is doom-mongering his business. Instead “Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World” employs a wide lens, drawing on governance, economics and culture. Call it “applied history.” What insights does it offer during a catastrophe that evokes the Spanish flu after World War I, which claimed 50 million — some reckon 100 million — lives?

That story comes with a word of caution about historical analogies. Zakaria ascribes “seismic effects” to such cataclysms. Ancient Athens, a proud democracy, never recovered from the plague. The late-medieval Black Death all but wiped out Europe with a toll between 75 million and 200 million. Yet note that it was estimated to have run for 100 years. The Spanish flu trickled away after two. As mortality soared in the United States, the economy dropped by only 3.5 percent. It took until the 1930s before we could actually see a virus under the electron microscope. Today, SARS-CoV-2 was sequenced almost instantaneously. The past, then, is like the Sphinx with her ambiguous advice. Not only has science learned a few things. So have governments, which went for penny-pinching and deflation after the Crash of 1929, but now pour out trillions.

Having laid out a “gloomy compendium of threats,” Zakaria rightly celebrates “our resilient world.” States actually “gain strength through

any clear pattern. At least until recently Germany, Denmark and Austria performed best, Belgium, Sweden and the United Kingdom worst. Taiwan and South Korea quickly contained the virus without totalitarian tactics. The United States is so-so, near the bottom of the Top 10 in deaths per million. So, what are the lessons?

What matters is not the ideological coloration of government or its size, but its quality, Zakaria says. He argues for “a competent, well-functioning, trusted state.” Sweden is all that, but also high up on the League Table of Death. The United States has proved neither competent nor cohesive. It is an archipelago of some 2,600 federal, state and local authorities charged with health policy. Yet federal Germany, with its ancient history of decentralization, is also a hodgepodge and still shines forth. The ur-model of the strong state is France. In terms of deaths per million, it ranks far above confederate Switzerland, with its 26 cantons jealously holding off Berne.

So, what is good governance? An efficient bureaucracy like Prussia’s, infused with the spirit of freedom rooted in the American Creed? Beyond your small-town D.M.V., the United States seems to enjoy neither. Social Security is superb, Veterans Affairs a disaster. Meanwhile, officialdom has grown exponentially in a supposedly “anti-statist” country. America, Zakaria says, must learn “not big or small, but good government.” Amen to that —

though not forgetting Churchill's quip that the United States will eventually do the right thing after exhausting all the alternatives.

Zakaria lays out the road from the pandemic to the transcendence of America the Dysfunctional. The to-do list is long. Upward mobility is down, inequality is up. The universities of the United States lead the global pack, but a B.A. at one of those top schools comes with a price tag upward of a quarter-million dollars. The country boasts the best medical establishment, but health care for the masses might just as well dwell on the moon.

We should adopt the best practices of northern Europe, Zakaria counsels. Like Sweden long ago, Denmark is the new Promised Land, even when compared with the rest of Europe. Striking a wondrous balance between efficiency, market economics and equality, those great Danes embody an inspiring model; alas, it is hard to transfer. A small and homogeneous country on the edge of world politics, Denmark is the very opposite of the United States. Maybe its people should occupy America for a couple of generations to reform 330 million über-diverse citizens.

The world's troubles are not just Made in U.S.A., Zakaria rightly notes. They are rooted in ultra-modernity: globalization, automation, alienation, mass migration, the lure and decay of the world's sprawling metropolises. These are the stuff of misery — and the fare of cultural critics since the dawn of the industrial age.

With his lively language and to-the-point examples, Zakaria tells the story well, while resisting boilerplate as served up by the left and the right. Nor does he spare his own liberal class, the "meritocracy" of the best educated and better off, which he fingers ever so gently as deepening the divide between urban and rural, elites and "deplorables." He might have said a bit more about the uses and abuses of cultural hegemony that have driven hoi polloi into the arms of Donald Trump and triggered defections from the democratic left in Europe. The book's central message comes in the last paragraph: "This ugly pandemic has ... opened up a path to a new world." Which one?

The gist of Zakaria's program is revealed by a recent editorial in *The Financial Times*, which he quotes approvingly. That newspaper was once a

cheerleader of global capitalism. Now it argues that "many rich societies" do not honor "a social contract that benefits everyone." So, the neoliberalism of decades past must yield to "radical reforms." Governments "will have to accept a more active role in the economy. They must see public services as investments. ... Redistribution will again be on the agenda; the privileges of the ... wealthy in question." Now is the time for "basic income and wealth taxes."

Not bad for a supposedly capitalist mouthpiece. Yet this should not come as a surprise. Both *The Financial Times* and Zakaria's book urge a revolution already upon us, and probably represent today's zeitgeist and reality. Free-market economics à la Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher have had a nice run since the 1980s. These days, Covid-19 is merely accelerating the mental turn engendered by the 2008 financial crisis. We are all social democrats now.

Government in the West is back with industrial policy and trillions in cash. It is not a radical, but a consensual project. Taxation, a tool of redistribution, will rise along with border walls.

For the more perfect welfare state can flourish only in a well-fenced world that brakes the influx of competing people and products. If that mends the miserable American health, transportation and public education system without cutting into the country's dynamism, then more power to the spendthrift. Still, "writing checks," Zakaria warns, sometimes "goes badly." Especially if it feeds consumption, not investment. Or favors giga-corporations. After half a lifetime of retraction from the economy, big government is back — and looks as if it will stay. But beware of what you wish for.

Meanwhile, read "Ten Lessons." It is an intelligent, learned and judicious guide for a world already in the making. May we all be as smart as the Danes. They have marvelously combined welfarism and individual responsibility. But they have not invented the PC, MRT, iPhone or Tesla, not to speak of Post-its and the microwave popcorn bag.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/06/books/review/ten-lessons-for-a-post-pandemic-world-fareed-zakaria.html>



In the early years of the new millennium, Pakistan's leaders were keen to promote the Barelvi movement as the embodiment of traditional, peaceful, Pakistani Islam. In recent years, however, certain Barelvi elements have become radicalised. Now, the violence is spreading beyond Pakistan's borders



Radicalisation among Barelvis in Pakistan

Brightly coloured shrines and the magnificent grave sites of Sufis (called Dargah or Mazar in Urdu) are a common sight in Pakistani towns and villages. On certain days of the year, Urs, ceremonies to honour the saints, are performed at the tombs. Qawwali (a particular kind of Sufi singing on the subcontinent), ecstatic dancing (dhamal), public kitchens (langar), smoking candles and rites that are in many respects reminiscent of Hindu traditions, come together to create a colourful, festival atmosphere.

Peasant farmers and superstitious city-dwellers alike make donations and sacrifices at the shrines in the hope that the saints will intercede for them in their endeavours. The various followers of this "people's Islam" are grouped together under the name Barelvis, after the Indian scholar Ahmad Raza Khan Barelvi, who died in 1921. They compete with the puritanical Deobandis and Ahl-e Hadith for the right to call themselves "true Sunnis".

Counter-narrative to extremist ideologies

Their opponents often accuse the Barelvis of shirk (polytheism) on the grounds that they revere saints. Their shrines have repeatedly been the targets of terrorist attacks by radical groups such as the Taliban. After 9/11, Pakistan's leader at the

time, Pervez Musharraf, began to promote the Barelvis as a counter-narrative to the extremist ideologies of al-Qaida and the Taliban. Since then, Barelvis have been portrayed in Pakistani films and soaps as the embodiment of traditional, peaceful, Pakistani Islam: the more tolerant side of the religion, diametrically opposed to the radical groups of the Taliban, Sipah Sahaba or Lashkar-e Jhangvi. The portrayal is an attempt to reinforce Pakistan's soft image to the outside world. In the 1980s, by contrast, Zia ul Haq's military dictatorship had promoted the Ahl-e Hadith and Deobandi schools of thought at the cost of the Barelvis, although the latter represent the majority in Pakistan.

But it would be an over-simplification to represent the major Sunni schools of thought as a straight dichotomy. The reason for this is that, over the last few years, radicalisation within the Barelvi movement has been on the rise.

Khadim Hussein Rizvi's rabble-rousing speeches

The trend is personified by the preacher Khadim Hussein Rizvi, who has become notorious for his rabble-rousing speeches and vulgar rhetoric. Until a few years ago, Rizvi was not widely known. An employee of the religious authority in Punjab, he preached unchecked in a Lahore mosque. He only



After 9/11, Pakistan's leader Pervez Musharraf "began to promote the Barelvis as a counter-narrative to the extremist ideologies of al-Qaida and the Taliban. Since then, Barelvis have been portrayed in Pakistani films and soaps as the embodiment of traditional, peaceful, Pakistani Islam,

became known to a wider audience after the assassination of Salman Taseer, the governor of Punjab, in 2011. Taseer, who was known as a liberal, was shot dead by his own bodyguard – a Barelvi – for his criticism of the blasphemy laws. The murderer claimed to have been protecting the honour of the Prophet. Rizvi not only condoned the killing, but called for the murderer's immediate release, saying that death is the only permissible punishment for any insult to the Prophet. Before the year was out, Rizvi founded the Barelvi political party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) with the aim of further tightening the blasphemy laws.

The cleric first came to national prominence in 2017 in the course of a debate about an apparent loosening of the "finality clause" in Pakistani electoral law, or to be more precise in the phrasing on the candidates' form, where the wording had been changed from "I solemnly swear" to "I believe".

The TLP saw this as a concession to the Ahmadi minority. Rizvi reacted by leading his incensed followers on a protest march to Islamabad and blocking one of the capital's most important crossroads for weeks with a sit-in (dharna). He made inflammatory speeches calling for the justice minister to resign and all the "instigators" of the change in wording to be punished. He and his followers were prepared to go to extremes, he said, for the belief in the finality of the Prophet (Khatm-e Nubuwwat) and his honour.

The media blackout on Rizvi's protest imposed by the government did nothing to stop millions of Pakistanis consuming the mullah's messages via

social media. Ultimately, the justice minister was forced to step down and all TLP members who had been arrested were released without charge. A video that was subsequently released showing a general handing out money to the men who had been released fed the rumours that the army had mobilised Rizvi's movement in order to put pressure on Prime Minister Sharif. The suspicion may not have been all that far off the mark.

After Pakistan's supreme court acquitted the Christian woman Asia Bibi of blasphemy, TLP followers began rioting across the country once again. Barelvi scholars made public calls for Asia to be executed, and the chief justice along with her.

Attacks by violent Barelvi mobs and individuals have now become an everyday occurrence in Pakistan. Again and again, intellectuals, bloggers and liberal activists are accused of blasphemy and persecuted by TLP followers.

The murder of the college lecturer Khalid Hameed in early 2019 came as a particular shock. In this case, a student brutally killed his own teacher in his office for supposedly committing blasphemy, stabbing him multiple times. Afterwards, the murderer said he had been inspired by Khadim Hussain Rizvi. Radicalisation tendencies have long since reached the Barelvi diaspora in Europe. Indeed similar incidents are on the rise there too.

In 2016, a radicalised Barelvi killed the shopkeeper Asad Shah in Scotland for supposedly disrespecting Islam. And in 2019, the Barelvi Dawat-e Islami movement held a Day of the Prophet in the German city of Offenbach at which Barelvi scholars publicly celebrated Salman Taseer's assassin and openly threatened all blasphemers with death.

Zaheer Hassan Mahmood, who stabbed and seriously injured two people in Paris in September 2020, is also a member of the Barelvi Dawat-e Islami movement, and a follower of Khadim Hussein Rizvi. In a video claiming responsibility for the attack, he said he wanted to avenge insults to the Prophet. In Pakistan, TLP followers consider him a hero.

<https://en.qantara.de/content/radicalisation-among-barelvis-in-pakistan-the-spread-of-violent-fanaticism>



Establishing Patriarchal Control Over Women in Pakistan



By Imaan Zainab Mazari

For several decades now, Pakistani society has operated under the doctrine of control vis-a-vis women. As a result, the human dignity of Pakistani women and the scope of protection given to their rights are contingent upon the recognition and mercy of men. It is men who have been granted the ultimate authority to determine the status and fates of women in Pakistan, and there is no real understanding or acknowledgment of this, let alone any prospect of moving forward by breaking down these structures. Suppose the woman on the motorway who was gang-raped on September 22 this year had been a single woman, with no children, travelling alone at night. Would the collective outrage have been the same? The answer to that is a resounding 'no'. The reaction that came from the CCPO Lahore would have been the collective societal reaction had a single woman been gang-raped while travelling alone.

That woman would have been 'unworthy' of protection, viewed as a woman with questionable character for stepping out of her home alone at night. Therefore, even after reports of the Motorway gang-rape incident and the abduction and rape of a young woman from Clifton in Karachi, our male leadership is focused on castration, public hangings and greater moral policing as solutions to violence against women.

What we see in Pakistan is a general refusal at the state and societal level to acknowledge the role of authority and power in establishing patriarchal control over women. We see this in responses to sexual violence against women – through calls for moral policing and implementation of violent penalties, instead of recognition of the flawed basic structure of this society that seeks to invisibilize, oppress and control women. Muhammed Asadi's research paper, titled 'Militarization and Gender: pathways to a Violence-Based Patriarchy', is an interesting read, which, when viewed within the context of Pakistan, provides explanations of how patriarchy has been embedded in the fundamental structures of our society. Asadi explores (and tests) "the relationship between the level of militarization of a society as reflected by the dominance of the military in the state's expenditure priorities and the level of gender-based stratification that exists in that particular society". Asadi also says: "The image of the citizen soldier, who is always a man, translates into other facets of public administration as well. Citizenship is structured in a hierarchical fashion based on sacrifice to the nation with sacrifice being measured in terms of actual combat roles that then get linked to men because they monopolize such roles in the military". In this regard, it is pertinent for us to understand how the militarization of our society laid the foundations for misogyny and exclusion of women from public discourse. In 'The politics of misogyny:

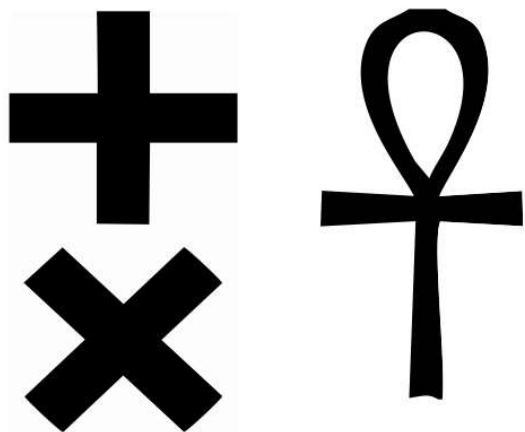
General Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization of Pakistan's legal system', Shireen Khan Burki explains how the Zia regime's "identity politics" and "Islamic morality" resulted in women becoming "the target of the religious clerics who began a campaign to get females out of the public sphere in the name of Islam". We have not moved forward from that: we need only go back to March this year, when extremists attacked the Women's Day March in the federal capital. Even the murals women in Islamabad had painted, prior to the march, were defaced by extremists from Lal Masjid. A woman being in the public space is a deviation from the patriarchal rules underpinning this society and therefore, for the men in this society, it is essential to restore patriarchal control and get women off the streets, off television sets and out of the assemblies. This control is exercised within the corridors of power as well, where when women are finally able to break through and enter the mainstream, their own colleagues become obstacles to their right to expression and participation.

This is also seen in the deeper political structures and political decision-making, where political parties nominate women for tickets in areas where the political party is expected to lose. What results is critique of women who come in on reserved seats, who quite frankly, have a bad deal as it is. First, male politicians control and determine who will be nominated on reserved seats, after excluding women from winning constituencies, and then, women on reserved seats have a sword hanging over their heads if they have strong voices because there is a very real threat that they will be removed by the male leadership. It is still men who control and determine access to political spaces. A 2005 research paper by Aysan Sev'er, titled 'In the Name of Fathers: Honour Killings and Some Examples from South-eastern Turkey', explained this quite succinctly: "Patriarchy subsumes power differences that systematically occur at the social, legal and cultural levels and bestow authority on men... Male authority is so ingrained, unquestionable and effective that it permeates all other social realities and institutions... Male domination gets so infused into values, norms and behaviour and the socio-religious outlook that one can rarely defy that power".

While discussing Walby's theory of patriarchy, Sev'er writes: "What is important is the relentless control of women's behaviour and sexuality where violence is a condoned tool of control... women's worth is equated with marriage and motherhood". This was reflected inter alia in a statement on the floor of the house by Khawaja Asif, who asked a female MNA



The Noble Quran Exhorts Muslims to Embrace People of All Other Religions as Brothers in Humanity



Greek cross all arms of equal length

The way you look at others must embrace all human beings as a token of love for their Creator, Allah Almighty. This is as simple as a blink of an eye. You just need to accept them as brothers in humanity. Once you consolidate this human relationship, your differences, whatsoever, in religions, races, regions, castes, thoughts and actions will keep your minds under control and not let you take the side of devils versus humans—the side that results into [Fasad fil Arz] disorder in the land and killing [Qatl], thereby a gross violation of the Quranic commands, “do not cause disorder (Fasad also translated as corruption) in the land” (2:11) and “Whosoever killed a person ... it shall be as if he had killed all mankind” (5:32).

Avoiding disorder in the land is an act commanded by Allah Almighty and must be an easy task for the righteous believers who primarily intend to seek nothing but the divine pleasure. For some, however, this task might be difficult when facing the challenges of mutual differences among human beings in creeds, religions, thoughts and actions. But not an impossible or undone task, as there have been the righteous people who avoided causing disorder in the land simply by accepting others as brothers in humanity, in spite of their mutual differences of severe nature.

This denotes that their view of human relationship of brotherhood, as a dominant player, kept differences under control. Let me repeat that if one tightly holds the rope of brotherhood in

By Ghulam Ghaus Siddiqui

humanity, one cannot be defeated by natural differences resulting into conflicts.

You cannot forcibly eliminate differences of human minds in religions. Allah Almighty Who has created their minds grants them freedom to select a path between right and wrong, as the Quran says, “There is no compulsion in [matters] of the Religion” (2:256). Instead of forcing others to embrace your religion and thereby turning them into brothers in religion, you must adopt the practice of accepting them as brothers in humanity. In a society where people of different religions exist together and your religious differences disturb your peaceful interaction with them, you must develop the idea of accepting them as brothers in humanity. Moving forward you must develop the habit of gentleness while interacting with them as the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said, “God loves gentleness in everything and there is nothing done with gentleness except it beautifies it and nothing excludes gentleness except it disgraces it”.

Embracing people of other religions as brothers in humanity, it would be natural for you to deal with them with mercy, love and gentleness irrespective of their race, religion, caste and culture. This is how you can know one another, as God Almighty says in the Quran, “O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted. [Qur'an 49:13].

So God Almighty created us to know one another, not to hate and persecute one another. Here we should not forget that the most righteous of the people are the most noble in the sight of Allah and that one of the characteristics of the righteous people is that they accept people of different religions as brothers in humanity.

Newageislam.com



The 22-Year-Old Force Behind Egypt's Growing #MeToo Movement



By Declan Walsh, NYTimes

In a moment of rage, Nadeen Ashraf created an Instagram page naming a man accused of being a sexual harasser. Within a week, it had 70,000 followers.

CAIRO — Nadeen Ashraf had a burning secret. Earlier this summer, an anonymous Instagram page that named and shamed a man accused of being a notorious sexual harasser at Egypt's most prestigious university was causing a sensation among her friends. Unknown to them, she was running it. The experiment started, in a flash of fury, in the dead of night. On July 1 Ms. Ashraf, a 22-year-old philosophy major, was up late to cram for an exam the next morning when she became preoccupied with the fate of a Facebook post that had mysteriously disappeared. Days earlier, a fellow student at the American University in Cairo had posted a warning on Facebook about a man she said was a sexual predator — a brash, manipulative young man from a rich family said to be harassing and blackmailing women on campus. Now, Ms. Ashraf realized as she stared at her laptop, the post had been deleted without explanation. Enraged, she set aside her textbooks and created an Instagram page under a pseudonym — @assaultpolice — that identified the man, Ahmed Bassam Zaki, alongside his photo and a list of accusations of misdeeds against women.

"This guy had been getting away with stuff since the 10th grade," she said. "Every time a woman opened her mouth, someone taped it shut. I wanted to stop that."

After creating the page, Ms. Ashraf flopped into bed at 6 a.m. and slept through her exam. But when she awoke, she found hundreds of notifications from people who applauded her post, and about 30 messages from women who confided that they, too, had been assaulted by Mr. Zaki. Some said they had been raped.

An Egyptian #MeToo moment was born. Within a week, Mr. Zaki had been arrested, the @assaultpolice account had amassed 70,000 followers and the page had prompted an outpouring of testimonies from other Egyptian women fed up with being humiliated and violated. Sexual assault is endemic in Egypt — a United Nations study in 2013 found that 99 percent of women had experienced harassment or violence — but reporting it is notoriously difficult. Police officials are reluctant to register assault cases. Powerful institutions

prefer to sweep accusations under the carpet. Even the families of victims, wary of scandal or feeling a misplaced sense of shame, tend to hush it up. Ms. Ashraf's bold page offered a new way.

"It was so wonderful," she recalled, sitting in her family home. "A lot of the girls who got in touch said 'I can't believe I'm finally being heard.' Even though it was a dark time, here they were speaking out. There was a sense of empowerment, of relief."

On Sept. 1, the authorities charged Mr. Zaki, 21, with three counts of sexual assault against underage women, as well as multiple counts of blackmail and harassment. He remains in detention, awaiting trial. But then a second high-profile case came to light, also through Ms. Ashraf's Instagram page, that complicated matters. It promised to be even more sensational — an account of a gang rape by five young men in a five-star hotel overlooking the Nile. In recent weeks, however, the case has become clouded in a murk of counter-accusations and leaked images that threatens to overshadow the progress Ms. Ashraf has made — and possibly even reverse it.

"It's very worrisome," she said.

Ms. Ashraf, 22, is not an archetypal Egyptian rebel. She comes from an apolitical family that lives in a gated community in eastern Cairo — a place of manicured lawns and hushed streets lined with luxury vehicles where support for Egypt's authoritarian leader, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, runs relatively high.

Her father owns a software company, her mother is a nutritionist, and her family stayed in the suburbs during the 2011 uprising that toppled Egypt's longtime ruler, Hosni Mubarak, and the 2013 protests that ushered in a military takeover and Mr. el-Sisi's rule.

When the #MeToo movement erupted in the United States in 2017, driven by accusations against the disgraced film producer Harvey Weinstein, she didn't pay much attention — even if she did have her own experience of assault. When she was 11 years old, a delivery man carrying laundry approached her as she walked down the street and slapped her bottom. "I had no idea why he was doing this," she said. "It took me years to realize it was sexual."

Public outrage over sexual assault has been growing in Egypt for about a decade, driven by high-profile attacks and, last year, harassment accusations against a famous soccer player. Even so, men continue to assault with impunity. Working-class women run a gantlet of harassment in crowded public buses, Ms. Ashraf said. Among the rich, although dating is tolerated, young men exploit their family connections to misbehave with license, she said, and many parents reflexively blame their daughters when things go wrong.





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