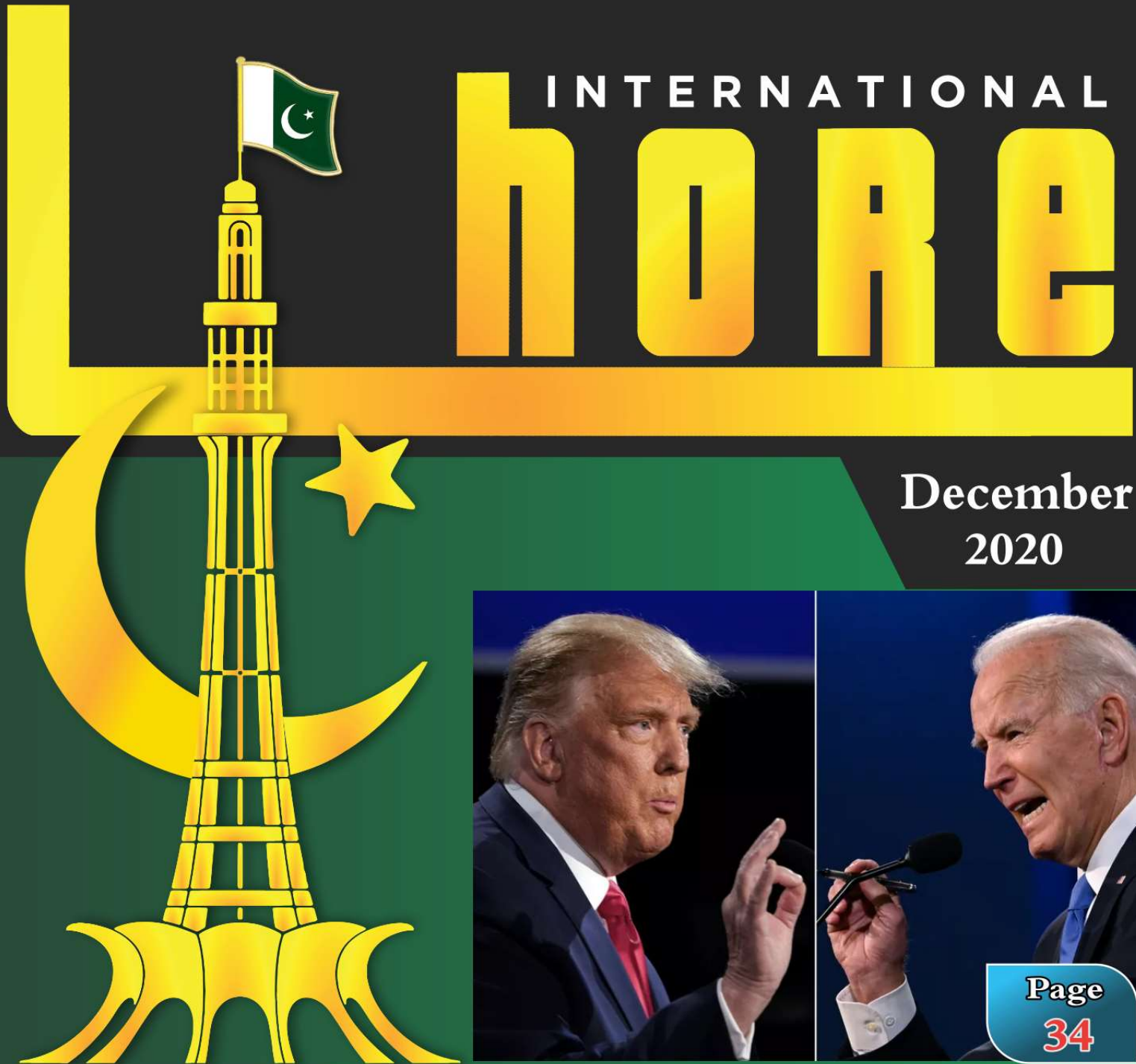


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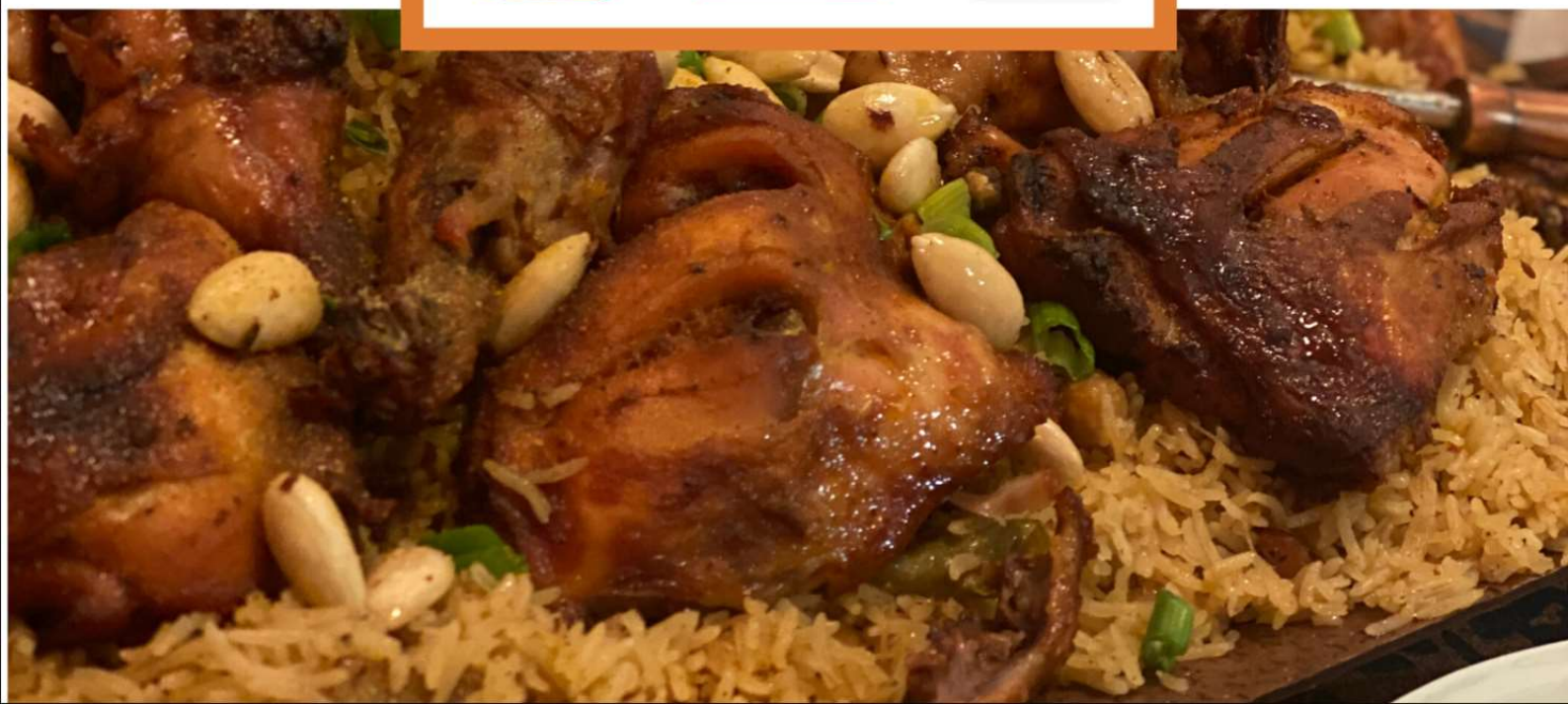




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Editorial

Citizen Trump could face prosecution after he leaves office



Zakaria Virk, Editor



Cyrus Vance is entitled to the records, and he uncovers possible crimes, Mr. Trump could face a reckoning with law enforcement — raising the startling specter of a criminal conviction, or even prison, for a former president.

This investigation of a sitting president has taken on even greater significance because Mr.

It's been more than three weeks since Mr. Trump lost the election to Mr. Biden whom he had called 'the worst candidate'. Question is being asked when he will concede. And when he does concede what damage would he have caused to USA by then. There are five stages of grief. (1). Denial and isolation; (2). Anger (3). Bargaining (4). Depression (5). Acceptance. Mr. Trump is at stage 1 of the grief.

It is said that Trump's legal woes are likely to deepen because in January he will lose the protections the U.S. legal system afforded to a sitting president. Since taking office in January 2017, President Donald Trump has been besieged by civil lawsuits and criminal investigations of his inner circle.

There is grand jury pending investigation by the Manhattan district attorney into the president's family business and its practices, as well as his taxes. The two-year inquiry has been stalled since last fall, when the president sued to block a subpoena for his tax returns and other records, a bitter dispute that for the second time is before the U.S. Supreme Court. A ruling is expected soon. But if the Supreme Court rules that district attorney

Trump's past use of his presidential power — pardoning those close to him charged with federal crimes. It is likely that he will pardon himself, his family before leaving the office. District Attorney originally probe focused on hush money payments that Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen made before the 2016 election to two women who said they had sexual encounters with Trump, which the president has denied. Some legal experts state that Mr. Trump could face federal income tax evasion charges, pointing to NY Times report that he paid \$750 in federal tax in 2016 and 2017. New York's Attorney General, Letitia James, has an active tax fraud investigation into Trump and his family company, the Trump Organization.

E. Jean Carroll sued Trump for defamation in 2019 after the president denied Carroll's allegation that he raped her in the 1990s in a New York department store and accused her of lying to drum up sales for a book. Trump also faces a lawsuit by Summer Zervos, a 2005 contestant on Trump's reality television show "The Apprentice". Come what may Biden will be sworn in on January 20, 2021 as 46th President of the United States.



How Saudi Arabia Is Pressuring Pakistan to Recognize Israel

By Kunwar Khuldun Shahid



Pakistan's government achieved a new world record this week: in gaslighting. The subject: persistent rumors that Pakistan is reconsidering its definitive rejection of any moves towards establishing relations with Israel.

Last Thursday, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan revealed, in a TV interview available freely online and widely reported in the local and international press, that in the of Gulf states' normalization of relations with Israel, the United States and another country are pressuring Islamabad to recognize Israel.

Khan declared that the source of American pressure was "Israel's deep influence in the U.S. This [influence] was, in fact, extraordinary during Trump's stint" in office.

But when the interviewer probed if a "brotherly Muslim country" had been among those pushing Pakistan on Israel, Khan told him: "Leave this, let's move on." Khan continued: "There are certain things that we cannot say, because our relations with them [the Muslim countries pressuring Pakistan] are good. We don't want to

upset them. Inshallah, let our country stand up on its feet, then ask me such questions."

Unsurprisingly, Khan's words made immediate headlines—in fact, they triggered into a full-blown media circus.

Every local publication pushed the story of Khan's revelation of the pressure being exerted for a move on Israel. Local English newspaper copy was swiftly quoted in the international press. When the leading English daily Dawn republished a report on the interview by Middle East Eye, the story reached its tipping point within Pakistan – and the great gas ---lighting began.

The Pakistani government itself tweeted the Foreign Ministry spokesman denying that Pakistan was under any U.S. pressure to recognize Israel, and calling media reports that directly quoted from the Khan interview a "fabrication."

<https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/.premium-how-saudi-arabia-is-pressuring-pakistan-to-recognize-israel-1.9315768>



Blue Plaque for Dr. Abdus Salam House in London



Physicist and Champion of Science, Abdus Salam, awarded new plaque - - Approximately 15% of London blue plaques are to scientists

London's famous blue plaques link the people of the past with the buildings of the present. Now run by English Heritage, the London blue plaques scheme was started in 1866 and is thought to be the oldest of its kind in the world. Across the capital over 950 plaques, on buildings humble and grand, honour the notable men and women who have lived or worked in them. Discover some of the people commemorated with blue plaques, or search for a plaque, below.

The call comes as English Heritage unveils a blue plaque to the Nobel Prize-winning theoretical physicist, Abdus Salam, in Putney on November 27. The Pakistani scientist's work on electroweak theory contributed to the discovery of the Higgs boson particle – the 'God particle' which gives everything mass. Salam was also active in improving the status of science in developing countries in general and Pakistan in particular.

Abdus Salam joins Charles Darwin, Rosalind Franklin and Alan Turing among the scientists with blue plaques but within the London Blue Plaques scheme, science is an underrepresented field with only around 15% of the 950 plus blue plaques across the capital dedicated to scientists. The scheme relies on nominations so if there is to be an increase in the number of blue plaques to scientists on the streets of the capital, English Heritage needs more suggestions from the public of figures who have London buildings in which they lived or worked still standing.

English Heritage Blue Plaques Panel member and Historian of Science, Rebekah Higgitt, said: "This year the importance of scientists and their work has become abundantly clear. And yet we have relatively few blue plaques to physicists, chemists, biologists and other scientific figures, reflecting



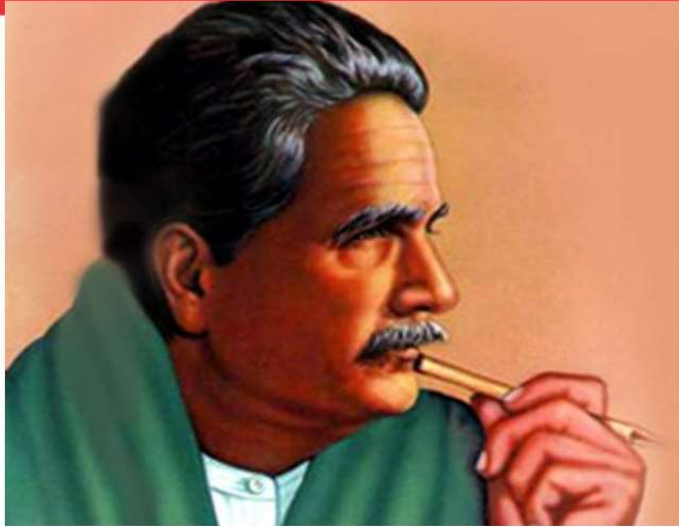
the scheme's historic bias towards celebrating the arts over the sciences. We want to see more blue plaques to such brilliant and inspiring figures as Abdus Salam but we need the public's help. Putney, which served as Salam's London base from 1957 until his death in 1996. It was his home when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1979. The red-brick Edwardian house included a study where amongst his books (including his favorite Wodehouse novels), incense stands and record player, Salam would think and write while listening to long-playing records of Koranic verses and an eclectic variety of music by composers ranging from Strauss to Gilbert and Sullivan.

Abdus Salam's son, Ahmad Salam, said: "The fact that most of the plaque is taken up with the words 'champion of science in developing countries' would have made my father very happy. For him, above all else, that was the legacy he wanted to impart. To be honoured in this way would have been truly humbling to a man who believed 'scientific thought and its creation is the common and shared heritage of mankind.' This was a belief fully supported by the ideals, freedoms and values he found here in England. He loved the intellectual freedom, the religious freedom and the respect for people of education."



Allama Iqbal in Afghanistan

The love and affection between Iqbal and the Afghans was mutual



If you had to pick one person from the Subcontinent in the 20th century who knew and loved Afghanistan more than most Afghans, it would be Hakeem-ul-Ummat Allama Mohammad Iqbal. Iqbal's poetry is filled with references to Afghans and their country. As such, Afghans are familiar with Iqbal, and in their Persian literature and poetry circles he's usually known as Iqbal-e-Lahori.

In 1933, at the invitation of the Afghan government, Allama Iqbal visited Afghanistan. Although Iqbal was accompanied on this trip by Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (who later wrote *Sair-i-Afghanistan* — سیر افغانستان — a rather interesting account of the trip), and Sir Ross Masood (Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's grandson), this writing will focus exclusively on Allama Iqbal's interactions in, and impressions of, Afghanistan through his own eyes.

Allama Iqbal entered Afghanistan via the historic Khyber Pass, and arrived in Kabul in late October 1933. Iqbal described Kabul as 'a paradise-like piece of territory, whose breeze is more pleasant than that of Shaam (Syria) and Rum (Roman Empire).' At Kabul, in addition to meeting other Afghan government officials, Iqbal met with the Afghan King Mohammad Nadir Shah. The meeting took place at the Dilkusha Palace, and as a token of respect Allama Iqbal (who was six years older than Nadir at the time) kissed the Afghan King's hand. Iqbal himself observed:

جانم از سوز کلامش در گداز
دست او بوسیدم از راه نیاز

His [Nadir's] burning speech set my soul on fire

By Arwin Rahi

I kissed his hand out of a yearning desire
Since Iqbal regarded Nadir as a pious, wise, and exceptional ruler of an independent Muslim country, kissing Nadir's hand was a sign of utmost respect on the part of Allama Iqbal. Afterward, Iqbal presented a copy of the Holy Qur'an to the Afghan King, and advised him on the benefits of observing its commands. While Iqbal was finding his meeting with Nadir Shah inspiring, the best was still to come. During the meeting, the muezzin recited the Azan for the Asr prayer. Nadir Shah led the Asr prayer as the Imam, and Iqbal offered his prayer as a Muqtadee (follower) behind Nadir Shah.

Iqbal had long wished to offer prayers behind the ruler of an independent Muslim country. At Kabul, Iqbal's wish was fulfilled. As regards the quality of the prayer, Iqbal stated:

رازهایی آن قیام و آن سجود
جز بیزم محرمان نتوان کشود!

The secrets of the qiyam and sujud
Could only be disclosed to confidants

Furthermore, in Kabul Iqbal visited the tomb of the founder of the Mughal Empire Zaheer-ud-Din Mohammad Babur, located at Bagh-e-Babur, where he had been buried according to his will. In 1904-05 Iqbal had remarked:

سارے جہاں سے اچھا ہندوستان ہمارا
ہم بلبلیں ہیں اس کی، یہ گلستان ہمارا

Our Hindustan is better than the entire world
We are its nightingales, and it is our garden

The above is the mat'la (opening verse) of one of Iqbal's earlier ghazals which would become known as *Tarana-e-Hindi*. In the three decades between 1904 and 1933, however, Iqbal had undergone a revolutionary change in his outlook on life and religion. Thus at Babur's tomb, Iqbal thought differently, and expressed the following:

خوشا نصیب کہ خاک تو آرمد اینجا
کہ این زمین ز طلسم فرنگ آزاد است
ہزار مرتبہ کابل نکوتر ز دلی است
کہ آن عجزہ عروس ہزار داماد است

You (Babur) are lucky that your clay is rested here
Because this land (Kabul) is free of European spell
Kabul is better than Delhi a thousand times

As the latter is the wife of a thousand grooms
From Kabul, Allama Iqbal proceeded to Ghazni —
the summer capital of the Ghaznavid Empire. At
Ghazni, Iqbal visited the tombs of Hakeem Sanayee
Ghaznavi (a fellow Persian poet) and Sultan
Mahmud Ghaznavi. At Ghazni's old city, Iqbal felt
sorry for the former capital of the Ghaznavid Empire
that now lay in ruin. This prompted Iqbal to compose
a long, passionate poem about the current status of
the Muslim Ummah, whom he thought had deviated
from the righteous path. Next, Iqbal visited
Kandahar — the former capital of the Durrani
Empire — before returning to India through the
Chaman border crossing. Iqbal described Kandahar,
like Kabul, a 'paradise-like' place:

قندهار آن کشور مینو سواد
اهل دل را خاکِ او خاکِ مراد

Kandahar is such a paradise-like place that
For the people of the (loving) heart, its soil is (like)
the soil of shrines

As is the case with most Muslim visitors to Kandahar,
Iqbal paid a visit to the Kharqa-e-Mubarak (خَرَقَةُ
مُبَارَك), the cloak of the Prophet Mohammad
(PBUH). The Prophet's (PBUH) cloak is housed in a
one-story building across from the Kandahar
Governor's Office —formerly Arg-e-Shahi, Royal
Citadel, from which Ahmad Shah Durrani ruled his
domain. Given Iqbal's devotion to Islam and the
beloved prophet (PBUH), it must have been an
emotional moment for him.

آمد از پیراهن او بوی او
داد مارا نعره الله هو

His (the Prophet's) fragrance came from his cloak
Which led us to chant Allah Hoo

A visit to Ahmad Shah Durrani's tomb, which is
located in the same complex as the Prophet's
(PBUH) cloak, was also on Iqbal's itinerary. At
Ahmad Shah Durrani's tomb, Iqbal praised the
conqueror's courage, piety, and statesmanship.

از دل و دستِ گهریزی که داشت
سلطنتها برد و بیپروا گذاشت
نکتهسج و عارف و شمشیرزن
روح پاکش با من آمد در سخن

Due to his generous heart and hands

He abandoned fearlessly the kingships that he had won

He was punctilious, mystic, and swordsman

His virtuous spirit sparked up a conversation with me
From Kandahar, Iqbal returned to India in early
November. Nearly a week after the conclusion of
Iqbal's Afghanistan trip, on November 8 (a day
before Iqbal's 56th birthday), Nadir Shah was
assassinated, while handing out prizes, by a student
in Kabul. The same day, Nadir's son Mohammad
Zahir was crowned as king by the Afghan Royal
Family. The love and affection between Iqbal and
the Afghans was mutual. When Iqbal became sick in
1934, and he was prescribed melons and pistachios,
the Afghan government under Zahir Shah made sure
that these items were delivered to Iqbal from
Afghanistan. After Iqbal passed away, the Afghan
government provided precious lapis lazuli from
Afghanistan for Iqbal's tomb.

Both sides of the headstone that the Afghan
government gifted to Iqbal's tomb have interesting
inscriptions on them. The side facing his resting
place, in addition to the Arabic inscription (إن من
الشعر لحكمة وإن من البيان لسهو) 'Some poetry has
wisdom and some prose has magic,' which some have
ascribed to the Prophet (PBUH), has one of Iqbal's
touching Persian poems from his Payam-e-Mashraq.

نه افغانیم و نه ترک و تاتاریم
چمن زادیم و از یک شاخساریم
تمیز رنگ و بو بر ما حرام است
که ما پرورده یک نو بهاریم

We are neither Afghans, nor Turks or Tatars
We are from the same garden and the same branch
Discrimination based on color is prohibited
amongst us

As all of us have been cultured by the same spring
On the other side of the headstone, at the top, it says
(هو الغفور الرحيم), He (Allah) is Forgiving and the Most
Merciful, followed by a seven-line Persian
inscription. The inscription describes 'Doctor Iqbal'
as 'the poet and philosopher of the East,' who
clarified the path' and 'spirit of Islam to all; therefore
he was received by His Majesty Nadir Shah-e-Ghazi
and the Afghan nation.' Toward the end, the
inscription mentions that Allama Iqbal was born in
the year 1294 (of the Islamic Lunar Calendar), and
passed away in the year 1357.

<https://tribune.com.pk/article/97216/iqbal-in-afghanistan>



Sialkot International Airport lauded for self-help

SIALKOT: Governor, State Bank of Pakistan Dr. Reza Baqir has said that the people of Sialkot deserve congratulations for creating positive image of Pakistan by building an international standard airport on self-help basis by the business community of Sialkot.

He expressed these views while addressing a function held in his honor after visiting Sialkot International Airport. Chairman

SIAL Mian Naeem Javed presided over the function. Deputy Governor State Bank of Pakistan Miss Sima Kamil, Vice Chairman Chaudhry Muhammad Afzal Shaheen, Managing Director Muhammad Ashraf Khan, Director Exchange Policy Department Arshad Mehmood Bhatti, Regional Head Central Javed Ahmed Bhatti, Chief Manager Sialkot Ansar Iftikhar Butt, Joint Director Protocol Muhammad Aqeel Ashraf Rana, Deputy Chief Manager Sialkot Imtiaz Ali, Assistant Chief Manager Sialkot Sohaib Khalil, Security Officer Col (R) Riasat Ali, Former Chairman SIAL Naeem Akhtar, Sheikh Muhammad Yaqoob, Engineer Khawar Anwar Khawaja, Chief Financial Officer Bashir Ahmed, Manager Airport Handling Services Muhammad Tariq, Manager Business Development Amir Yaqub, Public Relations Manager Abdul Shakoor Mirza and Assistant Manager Customer Services Adnan Hameed Khalil and other officials were present on the occasion.

Chief Guest Dr. Reza Baqir said that what he had heard about Sialkot Airport is now a matter of great pleasure and satisfaction to see for itself the quality of the airport. He added if the business community can make the airport so beautiful, they can establish a bank for small and medium businesses. He said that the bank could also set up its own bank for the development of which could be a more exemplary example of Pakistan. He also promised to set up a booth of National Bank of Pakistan at



Mirza Abdul Shakoor, public relations manager, Sialkot Int. Airport

Sialkot Airport and remove the requirement of signing of all directors for opening SIAL account in any bank. Deputy Governor, State Bank of Pakistan Miss Sima Kamil shared her views. Expressing that the success of SIAL is a shining example for all of us. We pay tribute to the business community of Sialkot for this achievement. Chairman Sialkot International Airport Limited Mian Naeem Javed thanked Governor SBP and his team for the visit of SIAL. He said that the name that SIAL has earned all over the world needs to be publicized at the official level. On this occasion, Mian Naeem Javed mentioned in detail the problems faced by SIAL and requested him, mention the achievements of Sialkot Airport in the country and abroad where he get the opportunity, which will inspire the business community of Sialkot. Mian Naeem Javed also demanded the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan to help to get tax exemption for three years to offset the financial loss caused by COVID-19 to SIAL. And to give Sialkot the status of an export zone. Former Chairman Engineer Khawar Anwar Khawaja congratulated the Governor and his team on the increase in the country's reserves by the SBP and prayed for their further success. Gifts were also distributed among the Governor and Deputy Governor on the occasion. Earlier, the Governor along with his delegation visited the airport and lauded its quality.



Bill Gates acknowledges Pakistan's efforts in managing pandemic



Bill Gates, American business magnate, philanthropist and Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, on Thursday acknowledged Pakistan's efforts in managing the Covid-19 pandemic despite the current rise in cases.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa and Bill Gates, during a telephonic conversation, spoke about Pakistan's coronavirus response and resumption of polio vaccination campaigns amid pandemic, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The military's media wing said that Bill Gates conveyed his appreciation for Pakistan Army for supporting national polio drive and ensuring proper reach and coverage of polio campaigns this year, particularly through involvement of community leaders and influencers.

General Qamar said that it was a national cause and national effort. "We will call it a success when no child is affected in Pakistan. Credit goes to the grassroots workers including the mobile teams, Law Enforcement Agencies and health representatives."

Both also discussed the safe start and efforts needed to effectively conduct polio campaigns in Covid environment.

Bill Gates acknowledged Pakistan's efforts in

managing the pandemic despite the current rise in coronavirus cases and efforts to safely conduct polio immunisation campaigns and essential immunisations that have continued amid the pandemic.

They also pledged to continue working together to make further progress in ending polio in Pakistan and improving the health of all children.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2272091/bill-gates-acknowledges-pakistans-efforts-in-managing-pandemic>



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Biden's ability to reach out to those in distress and comfort them sets him apart



Empathy (the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person) is the one quality a President Biden will have and which President Trump was often accused of lacking not just by political opponents but by members of his own family, like his niece Mary Trump who even wrote a book titled, "Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man".

Suffering is something Biden has been no stranger to. At the age of 30, he was one of the youngest US Senators after being elected from Delaware in November 1972, the year the Republican president Nixon was reelected. Despite trailing his highly experienced Republican opponent J Caleb Boggs by 30 percentage points, Biden managed to win by a narrow margin of just over 3,000 votes. A month later, In December, 1972, Biden and his sister Valerie (who had managed his successful campaign) went to Washington to recruit staffers for his senatorial office while his wife Neilia stayed back home with the three children, the one-year-old Naomi, four-year-old Beau, and the two-year-old Hunter. On the evening of December 18, 1972, Neilia was driving with the children in her car for Christmas shopping when the vehicle was hit by a truck. Neilia and Naomi died in the accident and the two little boys were admitted to hospital with multiple fractures. Biden and his sister Valerie rushed back to Delaware. At that stage Biden was wondering whether he should resign as US Senator. As he saw

it, the country could always get another US Senator but the little boys needed their father. It was then that his senior colleagues in the US Senate, not just the Democrats like Mike Mansfield but the Republicans, asked him to serve for at least a few months and then decide. The then US Senate Majority Leader Mansfield told Biden that his position as US Senator was something Neilia had been so keen on and had worked so hard for during the campaign. At that time the US Senate and American politics was far less polarized than it is today. Biden's senior Republican colleagues in the US Senate assured him that they would not take advantage of his absence during voting on any crucial bill if there was a sudden emergency and he had to rush back home to be with his two little boys who had still not recovered from the dreadful accident. Which is why Biden has always been grateful to his colleagues in the US Senate (both Democrats and Republicans) even if some of them were from the Deep South and had been criticized for being pro-segregationist in the 1960s?

The Catholic Biden, who keeps counting the beads on his rosary, has always been very religious. According to his colleagues who were interviewed for a CNN programme called "The Road to the White House," in the first few months after the accident, the young US Senator would keep wondering why he had been punished like this. Even when the US Senate was in session, he would take the train back every evening to be with his little boys at home in Delaware. The daily journey to Washington and back would take a total of three hours and the Senator from Delaware took the train so regularly that he was known as Amtrak Biden. There were times, as Biden admitted in an interview with CNN, that he was so depressed that he would wonder whether he should end it all by jumping out of the train. And then he would remember the two little boys waiting for him at home. The railway journeys became such an integral part of his life that he even announced his first presidential bid in 1988 from the railway station.

By then he had met an English teacher called Jill and married her on June 17, 1977, and they had a daughter named Ashley. Jill has continued teaching English in Northern Virginia Community College till this day and plans to do so even after Biden is sworn in as the 46th president of the USA. When her husband was Obama's vice-president, the secret service personnel in her detail would keep an eye on her while dressing up as students and attending her class. For the classes she took as the vice-president's wife from January 2009 to January 2017, she was simply described as "staff". Jill Biden has four degrees and a doctorate which she got under her maiden name Jacobs.

By the second decade of the 21st century, Biden had become Barack Obama's vice-president. Biden was very proud of his elder son Beau who had been elected as the Attorney General of Delaware. Even during his tenure as AG, Beau had served for a year with the US Army in Iraq and had been awarded the Bronze Medal for valour. On his return, Beau continued serving as Delaware's AG and was considering contesting for the position of governor of the state. Beau had made it clear that he would make his way in politics on his own and without any help from his dad. It was then that tragedy struck again. Beau was diagnosed and treated for brain cancer. For some months, it seemed as if the cancer had gone into remission. Then the cancer returned and Beau died in hospital on May 3, 2015. In an interview with CNN, Biden remembers a final conversation with Beau in hospital. "He looked into my eyes and kept saying, 'Promise me Dad that you will be okay',".

Beau wanted his father to contest for the presidency. After Beau's death, Biden was too shattered and by then Hillary Clinton had already staked her position for the 2016 presidential nomination. When Trump won, Biden returned home with Jill and his memories. And then Charlottesville happened. After white supremacists clashed with protesters who wanted the statue of the Confederate Army general Robert Lee removed and a young woman protester was killed on August 12, 2017, when a car was deliberately driven into the crowd, Biden was shocked. It was not just the sight of white

supremacists shouting slogans like "Jews will not replace us" but the response of President Trump who went on live television to say "There are fine people on both sides.?" It was at that moment, Biden says, that he decided to contest for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination in the hope that he could bring people together and fulfill Beau's wish. Biden's forte is working in a spirit of bipartisanship with people across the aisle. "They (the Republicans) are our opponents, not our enemies," he keeps saying. When the Democrats lost control of Congress during the Obama Administration, the then vice-president Biden managed to get key bills passed because of his excellent relationship with Republican Senators like John McCain and Mitch McConnell, now the US Senate Majority leader. At the Vietnam war hero McCain's funeral on August 30, 2018, Biden said, "My name is Joe Biden. I am a Democrat. And I loved John McCain." This was in stark contrast to what President Trump had said when McCain was suffering from the brain tumour which would take his life. Trump maintained that he did not consider McCain a war hero because he had not been killed but captured. It did not seem to matter to Trump (who had avoided being drafted to serve in the Vietnam war because of a family doctor certifying that he had bone spurs in the ankle) that McCain, despite being brutally tortured as a POW in Hanoi, had refused to be returned to the USA ahead of his turn when the enemy offered to do so once they learnt that their prisoner was the son of a US Admiral. It is not surprising that the Republican Senator McCain's widow Cindy endorsed Biden and not the Republican Trump during the 2020 race to the White House.

As Biden stated during his farewell speech in the US Senate, "Every good thing I have seen happen here, every bold step taken in the 36-plus years I have been here, came not from the application by interest groups but through the mutation of personal relationships."

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/and-wordsisallihave/bidens-ability-to-reach-out-to-those-in-distress-and-comfort-them-sets-him-apart/>



A Canadian Preacher Who Doesn't Believe in God

TORONTO — The Rev. Gretta Vosper hadn't noticed the giant industrial metal cross rising in front of her church for years, hidden as it was by a bushy tree. But then someone complained about it. Since Ms. Vosper does not believe Jesus was the son of God, the complainer wrote in an email, she should take the cross down. "The next day, a storm took the tree out," she said, peering up at the cross with a benign smile. Some Christians might call that an act of God. But Ms. Vosper does not believe in God either. Instead, the parable says more about her determination. Despite being an outspoken atheist, Ms. Vosper has steadfastly maintained her place in the United Church of Canada, which with two million followers across the country is Canada's pre-eminent Protestant church. "This is my church," said Ms. Vosper, 60. "The United Church made me who I am."

In a country where thinning congregations have led to many church sanctuaries being converted into condominiums, Ms. Vosper's outspoken views have stirred an existential passion. She has made headlines and received death threats, one taped to the church's front door that said, "Suffer the witch not to live."

The thrice-married reverend has also driven a deep rift into a progressive church considered as Canadian as maple syrup. In 2015, a public letter she wrote sparked so much ire, the local jurisdiction of the church launched a review committee to examine her beliefs. After a much-publicized hearing, which she called a "heresy trial," the local panel ruled her "unsuitable" for ministry since she "does not believe in God, Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit." She was on the verge of being defrocked. But, just as the national church's final review of her case began last November, the local jurisdiction settled with Ms. Vosper and agreed she could continue to minister her congregation in Toronto's gritty east end.

"This doesn't alter in any way the belief of The United Church of Canada in God," the church announced, to the confusion of many. Since the terms of the settlement are confidential, congregants were left to divine for themselves what these two seemingly contradictory positions meant. "So, everyone has to be included, including an atheist minister? It's nonsense," said Bruce Sanguin, who led Ms. Vosper's congregation before moving to Canada's west coast. "Does the

By Catherine Porter



United Church stand for anything? Is it just the New Democratic Party — a socialist party — at prayer?"

Ms. Vosper has felt she belongs in the church since she was a child, growing up in a rambling house in the university town of Kingston, Ontario, with a view of one of its stony steeples from her bedroom window. The family would all bundle up and go there on Sundays, and both her parents — an engineer and a nurse — were active members.

Although as a child, she claimed Jesus had taught her to skate, she never considered herself a devotee. Instead, she says she has always understood God obliquely, as love. After graduating from college with an arts degree and in search of adventure, Ms. Vosper moved to the far north of Canada, where she was married and had a daughter. After her marriage broke down, she returned to Kingston as a single mother and enrolled in divinity school. "I wanted to learn how to make the world a better place through it," said Ms. Vosper, who is sprightly, with short salt-and-pepper hair, chunky glasses and a penchant for bubbling over with language. By then, the United Church of Canada was propelled more by social justice than theology, according to Kevin Flatt, author of "After Evangelicalism: The 60s and the United Church." The first church to ordain transgender ministers, its leadership supported abortion and same-sex union before either became legal in Canada.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/01/world/canada/gretta-vosper-reverend-atheism.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>



Pakistan: Mullahs have exploited ignorance

By Irfan Husain

IT must have been around 1980 when my son Shakir visited me in Paris with his mother. I was doing a course in public finance on a French government scholarship for civil servants, and he was all of five. After a morning of sightseeing with Shakir dangling on my shoulders, he announced that he was hungry. I set him down outside an outdoor café at the edge of the Centre Pompidou and asked what he wanted. Looking around, he pointed at a ham sandwich: "That", he said in a tone that brooked no argument. Gently, his mother explained that the meat in the sandwich was forbidden to Muslims. "What?" he exclaimed with horror and incomprehension. "You mean there are different gods here and back in Pakistan?"

This is a question I still haven't been able to answer over the last four decades. And now, the conundrum has returned to trouble me again. In media reports published in Dawn and all across the world, the UAE has relaxed many of the social constraints that prevented its Muslim population from falling prey to un-Islamic temptations. Saudi Arabia, too, is on the same path, with its de facto ruler, the heir apparent Prince Mohammed bin Salman, permitting women to drive, opening cinemas and permitting the two genders to work together. As my old friend Moni Mohsin would have said in her *Diary of a Social Butterfly*, "What cheeks!"

But the UAE has gone even further by allowing unmarried couples to cohabit, letting Muslims drink, and taking so-called honour killing off the menu.

Mullahs have exploited our ignorance

Apparently, these changes have all been made in order to increase tourism and foreign investment.

So where does this leave Pakistan? Don't we want to see our tourism and foreign investment grow? Or, as Shakir asked, do we have different gods? As we have seen during Imran Khan's tenure thus far, neither tourists nor foreign investors have exactly broken down the door to come to Pakistan. It is clear that we march to the beat of a different drummer. For us, the world can go to hell in a hand-basket as long as our mediaeval practices don't change. We can consume as much dope as we want, beat our wives, starve our children, rob and kill as long as we observe our ignorant grasp of Islamic laws. Never mind that in Islam women are protected; and as far as I know, there's no ban on cinemas, music or sports. Mullahs have exploited our ignorance of Arabic to block all fun-

loving activities. Finally, Arab rulers have decided that enough is enough, and it's time to move on.

It's clear that the leaders of the UAE and Saudi Arabia have been influenced by Trump and his son, as well as the prospects of enhanced trade and tourism exchanges with Israel. Israeli tourists are generally well off, and the country's high-tech industries can transform economies. And of course, their arms technology is well known. But these two countries aren't the only ones to jump off the extremist bandwagon. Turkey has been a secular state for a century. In Morocco, Tunis, Egypt, Malaysia and Indonesia, you could get a drink without a fuss for decades. You still can. Pakistan and Afghanistan remain the outliers. After Bhutto imposed prohibition in 1977 to counter the right-wing alliance, he regretted his decision in his brief death cell account *If I Am Assassinated*. Afghanistan was a happy destination for hippies until the coup in the mid-1970s and the following civil war that is still being fought. So what drives these tribal practices? Obviously, tribalism has long dominated European, African and Asian societies, and their rules — evolved over the millennia — have come to play a major role in determining the direction of society and the economy. But with time, technology and the shifts in power from rural to urban centres have changed the status quo. Feudalism has given way to corporate clout. In backward countries like Pakistan, feudalism still rules the roost.

And yet, survey after survey shows us that Pakistanis, young and old, hold deep religious beliefs. But that's not the point. Millions of Muslims around the world are extremely religious, but that doesn't stop them from having a drink at weddings. Now, I'm not advocating drinking at all. I'm just suggesting that people should be free to choose. This is what the UAE has just done. There are many among the clergy who love to impose their will on the rest of us, and this is what I oppose. By the same token, women must be allowed the freedom to choose their life partners, and not be subjected to their parents' will in the matter. Marriage ought to be a happy occasion, and not a time for fear and violence. Occasionally, marriages don't work out, and that's just too bad. Why should parents take on the responsibility for divorce?

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1590288>



Lord Nazir retires from House of Lords days before expulsion for sexual misconduct

LONDON: A day after British Pakistani Lord Nazir Ahmed 63 tweeted that he has stepped down from his role in the UK House of Lords after 20 years of service; a report published by the Upper House revealed that a conduct committee recommended he be expelled after an inquiry into sexual misconduct. The decision marks the first time a peer has ever been recommended for expulsion. "Lord Ahmed breached the Code of Conduct by failing to act on his personal honour in the discharge of his parliamentary activities by agreeing to use his position as a member of the House to help a member of the public but then; sexually assaulting the complainant, lying to the complainant about his intentions to help her with a complaint to the Metropolitan Police regarding exploitation by a faith healer, exploiting the complainant emotionally and sexually despite knowing she was vulnerable," read the preamble to the report published on Tuesday. House of Lords inquiry recommends his expulsion for misconduct and dishonesty. The report added: "...the Commissioner found that Lord Ahmed knew that he was dealing with a vulnerable person, who was undergoing treatment for anxiety and depression and who had already made clear that she did not want a sexual relationship. He nonetheless misleadingly induced her to visit him at his house under the pretext of offering to assist her as a member of the House of Lords..."

UK media reports suggest 43-year-old Tahira Zaman approached Lord Nazir three years ago in the hope that he would help her in getting the police to investigate a Muslim healer who she thought was a danger to women. Ms Zaman told BBC that Lord Nazir repeatedly asked her for dinner and she finally agreed. Weeks after she contacted him about the case, he asked her to come to his east London home. The two had a consensual sexual relationship. However, she said: "I was looking for help and he took advantage of me. He abused his power."

By Atika Rehman, DAWN



Tahira Zaman complained about Lord Ahmed's behaviour to the Lords' Commissioner for Standards

Lord Nazir hails from Azad Kashmir and was made a life peer on the recommendation of Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1998. Currently living in Rotherham, he sat in the House until he retired this week. Many of his political activities relate to advocating for the Muslim community both in the UK and abroad. In his Twitter bio, he describes himself as "a campaigner for Kashmiris" and the "first Muslim member appointed to the House for life". He resigned from the Labour party in 2013.

He came to Pakistan to meet Prime Minister Imran Khan after his victory in the 2018 general elections. The two discussed how to improve Pakistan's relations globally. In the inquiry report, the head of the committee found "that, while Lord Ahmed was taking no steps to help Ms Zaman for the majority of their interactions, he allowed and encouraged her to believe that he was".

The commissioner added: "[On] important issues Lord Ahmed persistently gave deliberately inaccurate and misleading accounts to conceal his behaviour towards Ms Zaman ... I consider that in conducting himself in this manner he has failed genuinely to cooperate with my investigation. He has failed to act on his personal honour, as evidenced."

Although Lord Nazir admitted to having a brief relationship with the complainant, "he did not accept that any of the potential breaches of the Code of Conduct had taken place", the report

said. In a statement last year, he told BBC: “I completely deny the allegation that I have exploited my position to pursue an inappropriate relationship with any member of the public (vulnerable or otherwise) or that I have acted inappropriately in the presence of women either in my personal or professional capacity.”

Child abuse trial pending

In a separate case, the former Labour peer Lord Nazir and two of his brothers in 2019 were charged with historical sexual offences against minors. He has pleaded not guilty to all counts. Lord Nazir was charged with serious sexual assault against a boy under the age of 11 and the indecent assault of the same boy; two counts of attempting to rape a girl who was under the age of 16. All charges relate to

dates between 1971 and 1974. His brother Mohamed Farouq was charged with four counts of indecent assault against a boy. One of these counts relates to when the boy was under eight, in the late 1960s. His other brother Mohammed Tariq was charged with two counts of indecent assault against a boy under 11. The trial was set to commence in January this year but has been postponed to resume in January 2021 because of Covid-19 restrictions on jury trials.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1590926/uk-committee-publishes-scathing-report-on-lord-nazir>

The Lords Conduct Committee report is available at this link <https://order-order.com/2020/11/17/conduct-committee-recommend-first-ever-expulsion-of-a-peer/> ❀❀❀

Portugal President Swims to Save Two Women From Drowning After Their Kayak Overturms

Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa is being hailed as a hero after he rescued two women from drowning after their kayak capsized. The president was at a beach in Portugal's Algarve region when the two women in the water were swept by a current at the Praia do Alvor beach in August 2020.

Seeing them in distress, the 71-year-old president swam towards the women and their capsized kayak and rescued them. Meanwhile, another man who was already there, also tried to help turn the kayak over while a person on a jet ski also approached to offer help. The president of Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, who is 71-year-old, saves two women from drowning in the Algarve while he was interviewed.

“They were dragged away from another beach to this beach, the boat turned over and they swallowed a lot of water and they couldn't turn the boat up, nor swim, nor get back onto the boat, the current was very strong. So, it was possible to push them and help them get away from the current,” he told reporters on the beach. After the rescue, the



President said he hoped the women would be more careful the next time they entered the water.

After the rescue, the President said he hoped the women would be more careful the next time they entered the water.

<https://www.india.com/viral/watch-71-year-old-portugal-president-swims-to-save-two-women-from-drowning-after-their-kayak-overturms-4115844/> ❀❀❀

Europe's Muslims are European. Stop outsourcing their plight to foreign leaders

By Shada Islam



Terror attacks in France and Austria have put Europe's 25 million Muslims back in the spotlight. The unwanted attention is familiar. Discussing Muslims as a security risk invariably reaches fever pitch after an Islamist-inspired terrorist act. This time the attackers came from Chechnya, Tunisia and one had roots in North Macedonia. But never mind: anxiety over the Muslim "enemy within" goes deep.

Anxious debates on the place of Islam in Europe and claims that European Muslims are footsoldiers in an existential confrontation between Europe and Islam and represent an impossible-to-integrate "other" have dogged Muslims across the continent for decades.

There is a dangerous new shrillness to the conversation this time, however.

The rhetoric over the alleged "Islamisation" of Europe is fired up by xenophobic and populist parties including such figures as Hungary's Viktor Orbán, but it has been embraced by too many mainstream European politicians.

EU home affairs ministers are this week discussing measures to block online Islamist propaganda, provide imams with training in "European" values and pay more attention to the integration of Muslims. And given the fears of increased Islamist – related terrorism, some of these steps are justified. But governments must ensure such actions do not fuel an increase in violence, discrimination and hate against their own Muslim citizens.

Amnesty International has warned French authorities not to contribute to a "portrayal of all Muslims as suspects" and to stop "stereotypical, stigmatizing and discriminatory comments targeting Muslims and refugees", although the French president, Emmanuel Macron, denies allegations of fostering racism against Muslims.

The reality is that the relationship between European governments and their Muslim citizens is in dire need of a reset. The climate of mutual suspicion is both a rebuke to the values of inclusion and tolerance that the EU claims to uphold and it lends support to the extremist claim that there can be no coexistence between Islam and the west. Crafting a new social contract into a constructive conversation requires the transformation of outdated thinking and the acknowledgement of past errors and misperceptions.

As an important first step, the myth of European Muslims as eternal outsiders, with a culture and customs that make them forever "untrue" Europeans, must be challenged.

This is Europe: stay close with the Guardian's email updates

This means not conflating the actions of a tiny minority of Islamist extremists with the beliefs and conduct of the majority, which abhors such views. It means accepting not only Islam's historical role and influence in Europe, as Macron has done, but also recognising, as Angela Merkel did in 2018, that Islam is a part of modern Europe.

Crucially, it demands an end to the outsourcing of Europe-Muslim relations to foreign leaders. The war of words between EU leaders and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey, and even Macron's interview with the Arab news channel Al Jazeera in which he explained his respect for Islam as well as his plans to appoint an envoy for the Muslim world, are beside the point.

Worse, they are counterproductive. EU leaders talking to their foreign counterparts over the heads of their own Muslim citizens is insulting and meaningless. All it does is reinforce perceptions of European Muslims as exotic, alien and forever non-citizens.

Neither Erdoğan nor Pakistan's Imran Khan have any real interest in improving lives of European Muslims. Nor do they share their concerns, priorities and values. Truth be told many European Muslims fled these very countries to find shelter here. The last thing they need is counsel from foreign powers. Anti-Muslim racism and hate must be tackled head on. Discrimination against so-called "third generation migrants", mainly young men, often results in marginalisation and disaffection, which in turn can lead to radicalization. European Muslim women who wear the headscarf should not have to fight the perception that they are victims in need of help or a public menace. The lived reality of many Muslims points in another direction. The large majority of Europeans who follow Islam live fulfilling and productive lives as law-abiding and taxpaying European citizens. Many are in politics (although not at EU level). Across Europe, Muslim entrepreneurs are revitalising impoverished urban neighborhoods, creating jobs and prompting innovation in business. They excel in medicine, sports, art and culture. Their stories need to be told. As the Open Society Institute has noted, European Muslims and non-Muslims share the same concerns, needs and experiences including "better quality of education, improved housing, cleaner streets and [the tackling of] antisocial behaviour and crime".

"There is no evidence supporting the common contention that Muslims are living in a separate, parallel society," according to Germany's Bertelsmann Foundation.

Finally, it's important to shift the focus from religion to Europe's broader equality agenda as articulated in the EU's anti-racism action plan, adopted in September following the Black Lives Matter protests. An overwhelming majority of Muslims in France and Germany describe themselves as loyal to their country and see no contradiction between French/German and Muslim values. "There is no evidence supporting the common contention that Muslims are living in a separate, parallel society," says the Bertelsmann Foundation. The ambitious blueprint recognises

the deep roots of structural racism across Europe and that anti-Muslim hatred is a form of racism. It should be systematically used to tackle the marginalisation of European Muslims. Empowering national equality bodies in EU states to include anti-Muslim hatred in their anti-racism work is one important step. Changing police culture and conduct another. The good news is that even as some national politicians step up their anti-Muslim rhetoric, local politicians have adopted a different, more inclusive approach. Additionally, Covid-19 has highlighted the strong presence of Muslims in frontline services across the continent.

Anti-Muslim hatred and prejudice can be seen as a Muslim problem. In truth, it is much more than that. It is a stain on European values, Europe's internal cohesion and its global reputation. In addition, rebuilding the post-pandemic European economy demands all hands on deck and the contribution of all citizens. In the end it is very simple: Europe's Muslims are not going anywhere. They are here to stay because Europe is home.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2020/nov/13/europes-muslims-are-european-stop-outsourcing-their-plight-to-foreign-leaders>



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Joe Biden now faces the tough job of undoing the ongoing damage of Donald Trump's toxicity

President Joseph R. Biden Jr. President-elect-Joe.

After biding his time for more than three decades, twice rejected by his own party as Democratic nominee, bestirred from semi-retirement, the 77-year-old former senator and former vice-president has surmounted the heights of the Oval Office. No. 46, presumptively. A sane and measured president after the hysterical derangement of his conspiracy-cocooned predecessor. America will have a new commander-in-chief, grandfather-in-chief, healer-in-chief, reconciler-in-chief. All the roles Biden must embrace in these end days of Donald Trump darkness. The mad sitting president in the attic, still dropping bomblets of defiance and laying down fire for a scorched-earth litigious resistance.

Finally, on Day 5 of this interminable United States election, the crucial tumbler locked into place — Pennsylvania, with its 20 Electoral College votes — unlocking the White House. And no scale-proof fence can prevent Biden from occupying it. Just before the penny dropped, at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Biden's sister Valerie Biden Owens, told reporters: "It's a wonderful thing for us but it's a better thing for America." Shortly thereafter, the president-elect issued a statement. "I am honored and humbled by the trust the American people and in Vice-president Harris."

Kamala Harris, first biracial woman to become veep of the U.S. Married — which would make him Second Dude? — to a Jew. "In the face of unprecedented obstacles, a record number of Americans voted," Biden's statement continued. "Proving once again that democracy beats deep in the heart of America. "With the campaign over, it's time to put the anger and the harsh rhetoric behind us and come together as a nation. "We are the United States of America. And there's nothing we can't do, if we do it together." A unifying message, which, predictably, went right over Trump's head.

The sitting president was on the golf course when the long-awaited news broke. He too issued a statement, typically toxic. "We all know Joe Biden is rushing to falsely pose as the winner, and why his media allies are trying so hard to help him. They

By Rosie DiManno Toronto

don't want the truth to be exposed." It is Trump who has exposed himself for the zillionth time as a man of no decency, no morals and definitely no grace in defeat. He has always lived in an alternate reality world, a super-spreader of fake news. The sitting president's puppet and personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani — oh, how far he's fallen since he was anointed Mayor of America during the 9/11 crisis — said in Philadelphia of Trump: "Obviously he's not going to concede."

Nevada fell into the Biden column as well, an outlier state for the Democrats where the party had built a potent political machine over the past decade. Arizona did the same. Knotted Georgia will undergo a recount and senatorial runoff, which could decide the composition of the Senate and whether Republicans will retain control.

But Pennsylvania was the big prize, when CNN at last called it Saturday, first among the networks to do so. Fitting too that the tale of the tape was stretched across Philadelphia, crucible of American democracy. Along with Wisconsin and Michigan, Biden had resurrected the Blue Wall that had been knocked down by Trump's wrecking ball four years ago against Hillary Clinton. The drip-drip-drip of county returns had accumulated over the previous four days, while a country on the razor's edge was a-roil with anxiety.

However exasperatingly, with some ugly episodes of intimidation outside counting offices across the country, the system worked. Democracy, which the autocratic Trump had turned on its head, worked. Even as Trump's legal functionaries churned out more lawsuits. Even as Trump spokesfolks continued to avow that the "election is not over," as Matt Morgan, lawyer for the Trump camp, had warned on Friday: "The false projection of Joe Biden as the winner is based on results in four states that are far from final."

<https://www.thestar.com/news/world/opinion/2020/11/07/joe-biden-faces-a-tough-job-of-undoing-the-still-ongoing-damage-of-toxic-donald-trump.html>



Life and Times of Indian American

Author Dr. Fareed Zakaria



Fareed Zakaria with his wife Paula

Zakaria, has always seen himself as a world citizen. In fact he has time and again expressed discomfort at being America's go-to Muslim commentator. He has resisted being defined by any religious identity. In an interview to a leading daily, he said, "I do know a lot about the world of Islam in an instinctive way that you can't get through book learning. I occasionally find myself reluctant to be pulled into a world that's not mine, in the sense that I'm not a religious guy."

Fareed Zakaria is a man with many feathers on his cap. From hosting his own flagship show on CNN to writing for Washington Post, to acting as the contributing editor for The Atlantic and becoming New York Times bestselling author, Fareed Rafiq Zakaria is surely a powerhouse of journalistic experience. He is rightly referred to as the most influential foreign policy adviser of his generation.

This Indian-American journalist was raised in a Konkani Muslim family in India. Fareed and his brother attended a British Anglican school. It was here that Zakaria got sensitized to the differences that existed between the Islamic and Western worlds. After completing high school, Zakaria went on to make his mark internationally. He graduated from Yale University where he was the president of the Political Union and editor-in-chief of the Yale Political Monthly. Soon after, he gained a Ph.D. from the esteemed Harvard University. He went on to receive honorary degrees from numerous universities including Johns Hopkins, Brown, the University of Miami, and Oberlin College.

Not one to become a poster boy for the nation he was born in or the religion he was born into,

In an interview, Fareed talks about how there was one great man in his life who made him visualise the possibility of the world, when he was growing up. He confesses that this inspirational figure was responsible for breaking his isolation to a large extent. He reveals that his mother's one time boss, Khuswant Singh, one of India's most celebrated novelists and journalist, instilled the love of English language in young Fareed's mind. When he was a child, Singh would make Fareed recite poetry and repeat after him in a fun way so that he recognised the power of the word.

He attributes his love for the English language to Khushwant Singh. Singh even taught Fareed how to play tennis and to swim. Singh was a great naturalist who would be able to recognise every bird based on their calls- and this fascinated Fareed. Kushwant Singh was the one who gave Zakaria the belief that what you do for a living and what you love can be the same thing. This is a mantra Fareed follows even today.

Transitioning from his educational triumph to a fruitful career in journalism, Dr. Zakaria served as editor-at-large for TIME from 2010-2014. Before that, he spent over ten years managing all of Newsweek's international editions. While his

columns have received many awards, including a National Magazine Award, his October 2001 Newsweek cover story, "Why They Hate Us," is decorated till date. Before joining Newsweek, Fareed was the managing editor of Foreign Affairs.

His experience also includes serving as a news analyst for ABC's political affairs program 'This Week with George Stephanopoulos', and as the host of Foreign Exchange with Fareed Zakaria on PBS. 2008 was a big year for Dr. Zakaria as he hosted his own show 'Fareed Zakaria GPS', which airs Sundays worldwide on CNN.

His in-depth interviews with heads of government including Barack Obama, Narendra Modi, King Abdullah II, and David Cameron, and countless other academicians, business leaders, politicians and journalists, have been broadcasted in more than 300 million homes across the globe, breaking down the world's toughest problems. Within its first year, GPS garnered an Emmy nomination for an interview with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. In October 2010,

Zakaria hosted his first-ever primetime, Fareed Zakaria GPS special on CNN, "Restoring the American Dream", featuring exclusive interviews with four global CEOs and offering rare insights to the international economic crisis. TIME featured his article, "How to Restore the American Dream," as its cover story. The show won the prestigious Peabody Award in 2011.

Zakaria has won numerous awards and has been named in various honorable lists, including Foreign Policy magazine's list of "Top 100 Global Thinkers" and Newsweek magazine's "Power 50" list of the most influential political figures of 2010. In 1999, Esquire magazine named Zakaria as "One of the 21 Most Important People of the 21st Century."

"The crucial challenge is to learn how to read critically, analyse data, and formulate ideas—and most of all to enjoy the intellectual adventure enough to be able to do them easily and often," says Fareed Zakaria in his book 'Defence of a Liberal Education'. Having worked with all the bigshots of the industry, Dr. Zakaria has also

written five books, out of which three of them turned into international bestsellers. Being an inspiration for many aspiring journalists, Fareed currently writes an internationally syndicated weekly column on foreign affairs for the Washington Post. He also has been a contributing editor at The Atlantic since 2014. Presently, Zakaria resides in New York City with his wife, Paula Throckmorton Zakaria, son Omar, and daughters Lila and Sofia. He says that reading blogs, magazines, and newspapers is one habit that keeps him intellectually engrossed. To gain a better perspective on things, he also reads a lot of books and travels extensively. "I'm deeply curious. Growing up, my brother always did better than me on tests. But I've always been curious about almost everything. I love to learn" says Zakaria in one of his interviews to a leading publication.

Thanks to his worldly exposure as well as being religiously raised in a liberal and diverse household, Zakaria self-describes himself as a true secular citizen of the world. While growing up, Fareed celebrated Hindu, Muslim and Christian holidays and regardless of being widely tagged as one of America's most trusted middle men between the Muslim world and the West, he's not a religious person, "I am an American, not by accident of birth but by choice. I voted with my feet and became an American because I love this country and think it is exceptional." Fareed explains about his secular outlook in his article, 'Are America's Best Days Behind Us'.

A Harvard-educated, politically conservative Muslim, offering the world a rare perspective on East-West relations, while forever breaking cultural barriers. Fareed has helped people from all walks of life by playing an active role in the media while being true to his roots. His roller-coaster journey can be treated as an aspirational guide for the youth trying to make a change on a global level while keeping their feet firmly grounded in reality.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/spotlight/life-and-times-of-fareed-zakaria/articleshow/59485269.cms>



UAE relaxes Islamic personal laws to 'boost tolerance' Unmarried couples can cohabitate

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates announced on Saturday a major overhaul of the country's Islamic personal laws, allowing unmarried couples to cohabitate, loosening alcohol restrictions and criminalizing honor killings.

The broadening of personal freedoms reflects the changing profile of a country that has sought to bill itself as a westernized destination for tourists, fortune-seekers and businesses despite its Islamic legal code that has previously triggered court cases against foreigners and outrage in their home countries.

"The reforms aim to boost the country's economic and social standing and consolidate the UAE's principles of tolerance," state-run WAM news agency reported, which offered only minimal details in the surprise weekend announcement.

The government decrees behind the changes were outlined extensively in state-linked newspaper The National, which did not cite its source. The move follows a historic US-brokered deal to normalise relations between the UAE and Israel, which is expected to bring an influx of Israeli tourists and investment. It also comes as skyscraper-studded Dubai gets ready to host the World Expo. The high-stakes event, expected to bring a flurry of commercial activity and some 25 million visitors to the country, was initially scheduled for October, but was pushed back a year because of the coronavirus pandemic. The changes, which The National said would take immediate effect, also reflect the efforts of the Emirates rulers to keep pace with a rapidly changing society at home.

"I could not be happier for these new laws that are progressive and proactive," said Emirati filmmaker Abdallah Al Kaabi, whose art has tackled taboo topics like homosexual love and gender identity.



"The present year has been tough and transformative for the UAE," he added. Changes include scrapping penalties for alcohol consumption, sales and possession for those 21 and over. Although liquor and beer are widely available in bars and clubs in the UAE's luxuriant coastal cities, individuals previously needed a government-issued licence to purchase, transport or have alcohol in their homes. The new rule would apparently allow Muslims who have been barred from obtaining licences to drink alcoholic beverages freely.

Another amendment allows for cohabitation of unmarried couples, which has long been a crime in the UAE. Authorities, especially in the more freewheeling financial hub of Dubai, often looked the other way when it came to foreigners, but the threat of punishment still lingered. Attempted suicide, forbidden in Islamic law, would also be decriminalised, The National reported. In a move to better protect women's rights, the government said it also decided to get rid of laws defending honour crimes, a widely criticised tribal custom in which a male relative may evade prosecution for assaulting a woman seen as dishonouring a family. The punishment for a crime committed to eradicate a woman's shame, for promiscuity or disobeying religious and cultural strictures, will now be the same for any other kind of assault.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1589223/uae-relaxes-islamic-laws-to-boost-tolerance> ❀❀❀

A portrait of tolerance

By F. Mubaraka Hamid, Birmingham, UK



When you experience transgression or are wronged, it is a normal human response to react. How you react varies from person to person, and from religion to religion. Christianity teaches us to turn the other cheek. Judaism teaches revenge in the form of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Both of these reactions are extremes, and not practical in all settings. It is no surprise therefore, that even the followers of these religions do not act upon these teachings.

The teachings of Islam are balanced, rational and practical. They look at the greater good and promotion of peace and harmony in society. 'Islam' is the path of those who are obedient to Allah and who establish peace with Him and His creatures. Islam looks after the rights of all human beings, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. It is a religion of TOLERANCE. When a few senseless people use the name of religion to commit evil deeds, they do not represent that religion. If you look at the history of the world, such people have been present in all major religions.

Allah says in the Holy Quran, chapter 3:135, 'that Allah loves those who suppress anger and pardon man.' And then in chapter 42:41 'and the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso forgives, and his act brings reformation, his reward is with Allah.' What great practical advice. Islam permits punishment

proportional to the wrong, but promotes forgiveness leading to reformation. In some cases, especially in repeat offenders, punishment may be required for the protection and greater good of the society. It is a teaching full of wisdom and takes care of all possible scenarios.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad(saw) practiced what he preached – he always promoted tolerance and forgiveness, and even when faced with extreme foul behaviour and aggression, always exhibited forbearance. Despite his supreme status, both as the king of all prophets and as the ruler of Arabia, he always humble and tolerant. He only became angry at times when the foul language and aggression was directed towards his creator, Allah the Almighty. During the period of grief after the death of his beloved wife Hadhrat Khadija(ra), he was walking through the streets of Mecca when a wicked Quraish man threw mud on his head. He did not say a word, but quietly went home to his daughter Hadhrat Fatima(ra), who wept while she washed his hair.

A lady used to throw rubbish in the Prophet's(saw) path as he walked to the mosque, but he never said a bad word to her. When for a few days no rubbish was thrown, he inquired and was told that the lady was ill. He went to check on her and offered his help with her treatment. Such tolerance and kindness was unique to the Prophet(saw) of Islam.

In the fifth year after migration to Medina, when the Prophet(saw) was a very respected ruler with thousands of followers who loved him, the hypocrite Ibn Ubbayy was publicly rude to him. He said that the mighty and noble will expel the mean and humble (meaning the Prophet(saw) and the immigrants) from Medina. The Prophet's(saw) companions were offended and angry and wanted to kill Ibn Ubbayy. But the Prophet(saw) stopped them and did not say anything back to him. In fact, he forgave him. This was a great lesson in tolerance for his companions.

Once, a delegation of Christians came to meet the Holy Prophet(saw) . After some time, the Christians became restless. The Holy Prophet(saw) enquired if something was wrong. In response, the Christians informed him that it was time for their worship, but they did not have an appropriate place to perform their prayers. Upon this, the Prophet of Islam(saw) invited the Christians to worship in his own mosque in Madinah, according to their traditions and ways. This shows that the Prophet of Islam(saw) was very considerate, tolerated and respected other religions and their forms of worship.

It was this kind, humble and tolerant nature of the Holy Prophet(saw) that enabled him to conquer the hearts of the whole of Arabia. He was, and is, without doubt, the most loved human being. Even today, there are millions of Muslims who are ready to sacrifice their lives to protect the name of their beloved Prophet(saw).

Western nations should stop projecting the Prophet of Islam(saw) as a man who loved violence. This is not true, and these lies make Muslims very distressed. Freedom of speech does not mean that you are allowed to blatantly drift from the truth. The Prophet of Islam(saw) used to preach that foul language should not be used for any deity or founder of any religion, in order to safeguard the feelings and emotions of their followers – perhaps the so-called modern nations should take heed and follow this simple advice. In this way, instead of hatred and discontent, love and harmony will manifest between people of different backgrounds and beliefs.



Important Notice

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As our readers are well aware of the fact for publishing such magazines, the support of a organization or advertisements is needed. But unfortunately, we don't have any of these.

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May Allah be with you – Amen

MOHIUDDIN ABBASI
 Editor-in-chief

May 12, 613 AD: A small excerpt of the First Prayer of the Day

By Gina Ahmad Canada



It seems as though this morning will be sunny like the past three days. Looking at the sun rising over the horizon there is not a cloud in sight. It's been 20 minutes since Fajr prayer has ended. I had woken up earlier today than I expected and chosen to offer Tahajjud and walk to the mosque for Fajr. I was more excited seen as I had finally gotten my new Khumrah made from the biggest leaves from the palm tree on the hill near the market. The intertwined green strands create a strong mat, the sleekness of the leaf creates a smooth surface. I had done Wudu before leaving my hut, so I knew I was clean for my prayer. The new Khumrah was not dirty so that was not a problem either. This time I'll make an extra effort to keep Khumrah clean.

The above excerpt is my imagination of the past the first uses of the Islamic prayer rug. Fajr is the dawn prayer and is offered around 20 to 30 minutes before the sun is starting to rise. Wudu is ablution, which is done before prayers as a way to get clean. Now on to more serious issues, the modern "janamaz" is a cloth rug or sorts that at first glance resembles a Persian rug. At the time of the excerpt, prayer rugs were made out of palm tree leaves that were intertwined to create a mat. These mats at the start were called "Khumrah" like in the excerpt above. Prayer mats were made out of plants at the very start of Islam and lasted a couple of years until cloth rugs were started to be made. Islam was founded in 610 AD after The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be Upon Him) received a revelation from God. After that, it was prescribed by God to pray to the One True God, which is where the need for a clean surface started. When praying a human need to be perfectly clean and the place where they are praying has to be as well. The idea of a portable, clean mat

stemmed from there. It wasn't until the 14th century that they turned to "carpets" since it was then when travellers were first reported carrying carpets for prayers. There are no specific dates in the case of these prayer rugs, seen as it was the evolution of many years. Now fast forward to the 21st century, prayer carpets have transitioned from wool to cotton and silk as the raw material. This has meant that not only are they cheaper to produce but much more accessible as well. Another change has been in usage. Over the years, the use of rug as a medium for prayer has increased, and that as an item for decor has decreased. One thing that, however, hasn't changed is the regard the rugs are held in. Undoubtedly these rugs are one of the most revered Muslim household items. They have also changed over the years to become more suitable for larger age groups, meaning there has been a variety of janamaz created to cater to the comfort of knees, legs and head when one goes down in prostration. Also, the rugs are being modified to cater to the health needs of worshippers. These are multi-layered carpets aimed at absorbing weight and hence reducing the pressure on the worshippers' body. These have also become a cultural expression, seen as every Muslim household has them. They can be customized and come in a variety of colours and patterns. They are wide and long enough for your body to fit on it when you go into prostration on the ground because doing that on the rough surface of a floor can be very uncomfortable. Many times young children are given prayer mats in order to help them get accustomed to praying. Usually, children are encouraged from a very young age to ask Allah (Name in Islam for God) for even the smallest of things such as eating candy after dinner that night. A janamaz in our household, not only ours but all Muslim households is very precious. It is the one thing where we pray. The one thing that acts as a constant in our life seen as it will never change. When in time of crisis, knowing that at home I have a place where I can return and find solitude allows a person to stay grounded. Many people consider it a safe haven, where they can find peace, a place where they can talk to Allah alone. Canada has not really impacted this specific culture in any way. The act of praying, and praying on a clean surface in Islam has

been part of my culture for centuries. Canada may have impacted the places where these janamaz are made and exported. Also, many people around the world still pray of palm tree leaves around the world seen as it was done by The Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be Upon Him), but since palm tree leaves are not as accessible in Canada, the cloth ones are used. When it comes time to pray the mat is placed facing the Ka'aba, which is a building in the center of Islam's most important mosque (located in Saudi Arabia). The amazing fact about this is that five times a day, Muslims pray to face this direction all around the world no matter where they are. The arch that is on most janamaz is called "mihrab", which signifies the direction of the Ka'aba and it seems like it's pointing in that direction. My janamaz was given to me as a present for my 13 birthday by my mom. It is a red janamaz made of wool and cotton with bubble sort of

circles. I feel like my design is very unique since I have never seen one like it. If a person were to look at prayers rugs they would know that they are used for praying since many times you could find a picture of a mosque on it. Also because since the religion of Islam is becoming so well known that a lot of people know about the five daily prayers and how they are prayed. Lastly, you would never find a janamaz laying around the house, they are usually folded after every prayer and placed in a safe and clean location. My mom and I have our own personal janamaz and an extra one for guests like most families do. My janamaz acts like a door for me. When I pray on it, my mind is filled with a different kind of peace which you won't find anywhere else, with the exception of the Mosque but that's another story. I hope that I have shared in this short journal that you, my reader, have a better understanding of the Islamic world and the significance a mere rug has in our lives. ❀❀❀

Scientists discover fungus-farming ants evolving biomineral body armour

The body armour enables the ants to fend off attacks from marauding colonies that want their nutrient-rich fungus crops. Scientists have accidentally discovered a species of fungus-farming ant is growing its own body armour using biominerals, something never previously seen in insects.

Leaf-cutting ants are an extremely unusual evolution of the ant line, as they have - for the past 60 million years - co-evolved with the fungi that they cultivate for food. A mature colony of some species of these ants is an effective superorganism, with potentially millions of ants divided into strict castes, sometimes four and sometimes seven, including gardeners and warriors. As the colonies contain fungal crops and large broods of immature ants, they offer a rich nutritional resource for marauding ant species - including army ants. Scientists made a startling discovery while researching the relationship between the fungus-farming ant species and a bacteria which produces antibiotics that helps protect them and their crops from diseases. According to the study published in the journal Nature Communications, the researchers found that many species of leaf-growing ants are covered in a mineral layer coating their exoskeleton, effectively providing them with body armour.

The researchers led by scientists from the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that this body armour was being produced by the ants themselves, developing as the ants mature. Testing whether the biomineral armour actually helped them, the



researchers put the ants into battles - replicating the territorial ant wars that occur relatively often in nature. "In direct combat with the substantially larger and stronger soldier workers, ants with biomineralised cuticles lost significantly fewer body parts and had significantly higher survival rates compared to biomineral-free ants," they found. In six-day battles, they found that 50% of ants with body armour managed to fight off the stronger soldier workers, while 0% of ants without it managed to survive.

"Notably, biomineral armour is present in mature major workers, which forage outside of the nest, further indicating that epicuticular high-magnesium calcite is critical in a highly competitive environment," the researchers added. They say that their results are "consistent with a role for epicuticular high-magnesium calcite as armour that defends workers from aggressive interactions with other ants, even though more ant species need to be further investigated". ❀❀❀



What is religious tolerance? Religious tolerance is the condition of permitting people to worship according to the practises of any religion they choose. Islam, the religion of peace and submission revealed to the Holy Prophet (pbuh) by God Almighty teaches love, reconciliation, and brotherhood.

The Holy Quran teaches us that:

“There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong; so, whosoever refuses to be led by those who transgress, and believes in Allah, has surely grasped a strong handle which knows no breaking. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.” [chapter 2: verse 257]

An example of this verse being put into context is the account of a slave of Hazrat Umar (ra). He narrates, although he was a slave of Hazrat Umar (ra), he was never forced to become a Muslim by Hazrat Umar (ra). Hazrat Umar (ra) used to explain to him with affection to become a Muslim but the slave would refuse and Hazrat Umar (ra) would say: “There is no compulsion in faith and fell silent after that.” He set the slave free before his death. Around the world there have been many examples where Muslims have come together to protect and stand up for other religions. In 2013, 200-300 Muslims formed a human chain outside the St Anthony church in Peshawar, to show solidarity to

the victims of the church attack. More recently in August of 2020, Muslims formed a human chain to safeguard a temple in Bengaluru after riots. These events show us that in Islam we are brought up with the teaching of, love and protect your neighbours and always be ready to help them in their times of need. The definition of a ‘neighbour’ in Islam is very broad, it includes not only the people who live near you, but according to the Holy Quran, all the people living in a Muslims town or city is your neighbour. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) has repeatedly instructed Muslims to fulfil the rights of their neighbours. In chapter 4, verse 37, the Holy Quran states:

“And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and show kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbour who is a kinsman and the neighbour who is a stranger, and the companion by your side, and the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. Surely, Allah loves not the arrogant and the boastful.”

This verse alone is a prime example of morality and human rights. In this verse God Almighty commands Muslims to support the most vulnerable members of the society, including orphans and those who are deprived in any way. In conclusion, The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) says: “Whoever is kind to the creation, God is kind to him; therefore, be kind to man on earth whether he be good or bad; and being kind to the bad, is to withhold them from badness.”



Muslim death squada hunting for Christian girl

Campaigners are urging Boris Johnson to offer asylum to a 14-year-old Christian girl being hunted by Islamist death squads in Pakistan after fleeing her forced marriage to a Muslim man 30 years her senior.

Catholic altar server Maira Shahbaz, who was abducted at gunpoint and gang-raped before her wedding, is in hiding after being accused of apostasy for breaking off the marriage – an offence punishable by death in Islam.

More than 9,000 people have signed a petition asking the Prime Minister to grant the teenager and her family asylum in Britain to save her from ‘certain death’. Her supporters cite parallels with

the case of Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian who was hounded by Islamic vigilantes on her release from prison after bogus blasphemy charges....

Last night, Maira appealed directly to Mr Johnson. ‘I am very much scared due to threats to my life and my family. Please protect me,’ she said



The Legacy behind ancestral homes of Bollywood stars in Peshawar



PESHAWAR:

Tucked away near the centuries-old Storytellers' Bazaar, the decaying Pakistani mansions once home to Bollywood superstars are being brought back to life in Peshawar.

The ancestral homes of Golden Age heroes Raj Kapoor and Dilip Kumar in the northwestern city are symbols of its link to the world's largest film industry but have suffered from decades of neglect. The region's archaeology team says it is close to wresting the more than 100-year-old buildings, located in the heart of the historic walled city, from their private owners so they can be restored and turned into museums.

"I always feel sad and angry while looking at Kapoor's house, that it once was a beautiful mansion of top quality," said Samiuddin Khan, who remembers running through the 40-room abandoned house as a child and flying kites from the rooftop. "It was extremely beautiful inside. The structure is still intact but some walls have collapsed and much of the wood has been damaged."

Once an architectural wonder, the family home of Kapoor, who died aged 63 in 1988, is influenced by the Mughal empire, Central Asian and British colonial design, featuring ornately carved doors and balconies and gothic-style windows. Kumar lived in a simpler home down a small lane in a busy market, its entrance faded and its roofless interior heavily damaged. The actors grew up in a quarter that is home to the fabled Qissa Khwani (Storytellers) Bazaar where travellers would share

tales of their adventures. Kumar, who is now 97, has credited his successful career to his early life in the neighbourhood, where he first learned to narrate. But like many emerging actors, the pair were enticed away from Peshawar to India's entertainment centre Bombay, now Mumbai, in the years before the partition of British-ruled India. The pair even starred alongside each other at the beginning of their careers, in the 1949 hit *Andaz*. "This is our cultural heritage and we take pride in preserving it. We are very proud that Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor were from Peshawar," said Abdul Samad, director of archaeology and museums in KP. Present-day Indian superstar Shah Rukh Khan, known as the King of Bollywood, also has links to the area but his family home which is still in use has not suffered the same decline. Across the country, hundreds of pre-partition buildings have been left to ruin or been demolished over the years. Many had been built by Hindus and Sikhs who left them behind when they fled newly founded Muslim-majority Pakistan for India, archaeology experts say.

Heritage treasure trove

Peshawar suffered a set-back to its cultural standing after the city witnessed multiple terror attacks from the 1980s onwards, bringing an end to the golden era of Pashto-language cinema in the region, known as Pollywood. As the city revives, more than 1,800 heritage buildings with traditional features have been identified for preservation by the province's archaeology team, but impoverished Pakistan will need years to arrange the finances required to their purchase and restoration. "If a proper archaeological survey was conducted, we would discover a cultural site almost every kilometre," said archaeological director Samad about Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. There are hurdles still to overcome in saving the Kapoor mansion too. Its owner Hajji Ali Qadir told AFP he would take the authorities to court if they did not pay him at least two billion



rupees (\$12.5 million). "I told them that it's an antique and the price for an antique is multiplied 10 times," he said. "We will get more money if we build a plaza here."

The archaeology department has said it will use legal powers if needed to purchase the Kapoor and Kumar homes with taxpayer money, for a figure still to be determined by the province's financial

authorities. Bollywood movies and their leading actors are loved by Pakistanis. Millions bypass bans on Indian films in cinemas and on television by watching them on YouTube. "We felt proud and held our heads high while watching the actors from Peshawar performing in Indian movies, that this land has produced such great actors who proved their worth in Mumbai," Khalo Khalil Sarhadi, an 80-year-old resident of Peshawar, told AFP. "Now the new generation will know how Peshawar has produced big stars and actors, those who have given an identity to Pakistan and India," he said of the museum projects. <http://thelightnewspaper.co.uk/the-legacy-behind-ancestral-homes-of-bollywood-superstars-in-peshawar/>



USA: Over half of Muslim candidates win US elections

Seven of 110 Muslim candidates make history as first Muslim officials elected to respective state office. More than half of all Muslim-American candidates for public office who ran in the general election won their races, a trio of Muslim advocacy groups said Friday. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Jetpac and MPower Change said of the 110 Muslim-Americans who ran for a variety of posts, 57 emerged or are projected to emerge victorious following the Nov. 3 general election. The individuals ran in competitions that spanned 24 states and Washington, D.C., and the number of Muslim candidates in the election is the highest the groups have tracked since 2016.

Of the 57 victors, seven made history as the first Muslims elected to their respective state offices. "Increasing our political representation is a critical part of defeating the violent rise of Islamophobia here and around the world because it forces elected officials and the media to include our perspective in the narrative on healthcare, the economy, criminal legal system, and every other issue impacting American life," Mohammed Missouri, executive director of



Jetpac, said in a statement. In all, the advocacy groups tracked roughly 170 candidates who ran for office, including those who were eliminated in primary contests, and therefore did not make it to the Nov. 3 election. That figure is roughly 30 more than the previous high of 134 Muslim-American candidates who ran in 2018. Jetpac, CAIR, and MPower said they plan to distribute a full list of local, primary and general election candidates after general election results are certified.

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/groups-say-over-half-of-muslim-candidates-win-us-office/2035090>



Pakistan: 13-year-old Christian girl rescued from her 44-year-old abductor and rapist 'husband'



BBC.COM

Sindh: A 13-year-old Christian girl in Pakistan who was allegedly abducted and forced to convert and marry a Muslim man has been rescued, officials said.

The recovery of the girl came nearly a month after the girl's parents alleged that she was abducted by Ali Azhar, 44.

The courts had failed to act earlier because they accepted statements the girl gave saying she was 18 and had married of her own free will.

But pressure from campaign groups and a public outcry prompted action.

Leaders from the Catholic Church in Pakistan and human rights groups demanded that the court ruling be reconsidered, arguing that the girl had been forced to give her statement after entering a child marriage. Protesters also took to the streets in the Pakistani city of Karachi.

On Monday, the Sindh High Court ordered police to find the teenager. She was recovered later in the day and will remain in protective custody until a court hearing on 5 November. Her alleged abductor was arrested later the same night and is due to appear in court on Tuesday.

30 The girl's family first reported her missing on 13 October. Two days later, according to Christian Organisation the Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement (Class), her father was informed that Mr Ali had produced a marriage certificate

stating that she was 18 and had converted to Islam.

The family claimed the identification papers were fake, but when the case went to court on 27 October the Sindh High Court granted custody to the girl's alleged abductor. The court also offered protection from the girl's family.

The family claimed the identification papers were fake, but when the case went to court on 27 October the Sindh High Court granted custody to the girl's alleged abductor. The court also offered protection from the girl's family.

The decision was condemned by human rights and religious groups. "It is the responsibility of the state to... protect its citizens, especially minor girls," Joseph Arshad, a local archbishop, told news outlet Crux Now at the time.

Father Saleh Diego, vicar general of the Archdiocese of Karachi, also addressed the issue of forced conversions, telling the Catholic News Agency that "a 13-year-old cannot decide about her religion. She is an innocent girl... [she] still has a lot to learn about her own religion."

In late October, the family's lawyer Jibrán Nasir said the girl's parents had filed a harassment petition on her behalf. Sindh High Court initially dismissed this application, but later reversed the decision following protests. The girl is now under the court's protection, though Mr Nasir hopes she will soon be returned to her family.

"[The] safest place for a child is with her parents," he said in a Twitter post. "Hopefully [the] court will return her to [her] parents soon after [the] next hearing."

According to a recent United Nations report, child marriages are still commonplace across South Asia. In Pakistan, nearly 25% of women in their early 20s were married by the time they are 18, the report found.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-54789714>



Afghan woman shot, blinded, for getting a job

Reuters

The last thing 33-year-old Khatera saw were the three men on a motorcycle who attacked her just after she left her job at a police station in Afghanistan's central Ghazni province, shooting at her and stabbing her with a knife in the eyes. Waking up in hospital, everything was dark.

"I asked the doctors, why I can't see anything? They told me that my eyes are still bandaged because of the wounds. But at that moment, I knew my eyes had been taken from me," she said.

She and local authorities blame the attack on Taliban militants — who deny involvement — and say the

assailants acted on a tip-off from her father who vehemently opposed her working outside the home.

For Khatera, the attack caused not just the loss of her sight but the loss of a dream she had battled to achieve — to have an independent career. She joined the Ghazni police as an officer in its crime branch a few months ago.

"I wish I had served in police at least a year. If this had happened to me after that, it would have been less painful. It happened too soon ... I only got to work and live my dream for three months," she said.

The attack on Khatera, who only uses one name, is indicative of a growing trend, human rights activists say, of an intense and often violent backlash against women taking jobs, especially in public roles. In Khatera's case, being a police

officer could have also angered the Taliban.

The rights activists believe a mix of Afghanistan's conservative social norms and an emboldened Taliban gaining influence while the United States withdraws its troops from the country is driving the escalation.

The Taliban are currently negotiating in Doha, Qatar, with the Afghan government to broker a peace deal in which many expect them to formally

return to power, but progress is slow and there has been an uptick in fighting and attacks on officials and prominent women around the country.

In recent months, the Taliban have

said they will respect women's rights under Sharia law but many educated women say they have doubts. The insurgent group has opposed a reform to add mother's names to identity cards, one of the first concrete stances they have revealed on women's rights as they engage in the peace process. "Though the situation for Afghan women in public roles has always been perilous, the recent spike in violence across the country has made matters even worse," said Samira Hamidi, Amnesty International's Afghanistan campaigner. "The great strides made on women's rights in Afghanistan over more than a decade must not become a casualty of any peace deal with the Taliban."

<https://www.khaleejtimes.com/world/rest-of-asia/afghan-woman-shot-blinded-for-getting-a-job>



Prof Abdus Salam, an unrecognized genius

(1926- 21 November 1996)

By Nasir Rather, Kashmir

If Science is the shared heritage of mankind as Prof Abdus Salam rightly believed, so is His own legacy a shared heritage of world.

Three years ago when Nobel Prize in Physics was announced, I was as usual attending a dull and insipid lecture on Nuclear Physics. As soon as I came out from my lecture hall a friend from the same department shouted from a distance " Nasir, Nobel Prize in Physics this year has won by Three Physicists for their contribution to LIGO and detection of Gravitational waves". I was thrilled with excitement and joy as the prize was won by the three physicists who specialized in one of my areas of interest.

Then as we were coming out of the university and on our way towards Sir Syed Gate (Aligarh) we started talking of scientific backwardness in the Muslim world and the

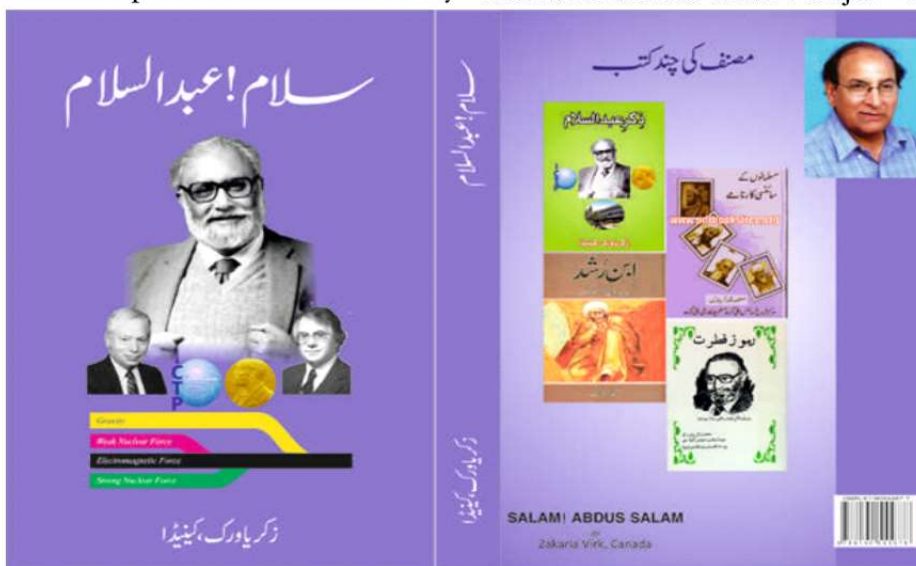
reasons for it as such. All of a sudden I asked my friend I he had heard of Prof Abdus Salam? No, I have not heard of him, he answered. The answer left me shocked . How a student pursuing masters in physics could knew not Prof Salam! This experience of ignorance on part of students in particular and people in general about Prof Abdus Salam was anyway not first of its kind for me. Prior to joining Kashmir University for my masters I had the same experience in a local Private School of my area where I taught for more than 6 months. The students and teachers there had heard names of Einstein, Newton and Hawking but not of Prof Abdus Salam. So this article is an attempt on my part to introduce the physicist to general readers, whose legacy by and large is unrecognized and unheard of in Muslim Countries.

Prof Abdus Salam was born on 29 Jan 1926 in a

middle class family in Jhang Punjab. He began his primary school education at the age of six. For his higher education his father enrolled him in Government College Lahore. At Lahore college Prof Abdus Salam continued with English and Urdu alongside mathematics. In Lahore he enjoyed classical Urdu poetry and it was during this period he wrote his first literary paper on Ghalib which appeared in "Chenab".

In English he enjoyed the rapier wit of Oscar Wilde and heavy stuff such as T.E Lawrence's " The seven Pillars of wisdom". He pursued his masters in Mathematics from Punjab University and not

only topped the exam but as he has done before also set a new record by scoring 573 Out of 600 , an extraordinary milestone and achievement by any standard. This extraordinary milestone won



Prof Abdus Salam a scholarship in Cambridge for his further studies. Unlike Oxford, a city big enough to engulf it, Cambridge is dominated by its ancient machinery of learning. Prof Abdus Salam loved it, and flourished there. It was at Cambridge that he came across so many heavyweights in physics like Freeman Dyson, Fred Hoyle, Paul Dirac. Unlike many scientists who do their best work in solitude, Prof Abdus Salam was otherwise. He was to become a highly imaginative scientist, sometimes almost too imaginative and learned that he functioned best when he worked with a partner with whom he could argue out his ideas and who could spur his raptness.

Scientific Contributions:

Prof Abdus Salam's work in physics has been for reaching and highly influential. He made a fundamental contribution to Theory of Unified

Weak and Electromagnetic interaction between Elementary Particles, including the prediction of weak neutral Current for which he shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1979 with other two Physicists, making him only the 2nd Muslim to win this prestigious award and so far first Muslim in the field of physics to have won it. Apart from it he made a major contribution in Quantum field theory, Neutrino Physics and Supergeometry. Among his notable achievements include his work on Grand Unified Theory, Super Symmetry and Renormalization. Because of his Pathbreaking Work in the vast domains of Physics Prof Abdus Salam was invited by Cambridge University to deliver Third Paul Dirac memorial lecture in 1988. He also made a significant contribution towards the 2012 success in the search for the Higgs Boson.

Prof Abdus Salam's legacy: Prof Abdus Salam was quite keen on seeing science flourishing in the Muslim world and Muslims contributing to this mankind's endeavor in its pursuit of truth and exploration of reality as was the case in Islamic Golden period. For Prof Abdus Salam the creation of Physics was a shared heritage of mankind and not of East or West. He almost Singlehandedly established ICTP, a research center in Italy which brings together Physicists from the developing Countries. Prof Abdus Salam also played a huge role in the advancement of Mathematics Department at prestigious Imperial College London. In Pakistan Prof Abdus Salam contributed to developments in Theoretical and Particle Physics. He was the founding director of the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), and responsible for the establishment of the Theoretical Physics Group (TPG) in the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission. Prof Abdus Salam also played a monumental role in the development of Pakistan's first Atomic Bomb Project. Prof Abdus Salam's legacy as a teacher and mentor is unparalleled in Muslim World.

Among his notable students include Pakistani's nuclear physicists Pervez Hoodbhoy and Ishfaq Ahmad among many others. The recognition of Pakistani physicists at the world level also owe much to Prof Abdus Salam under whose dynamic and vibrant mentorship Pakistani Physicists tackled and solved some of the outstanding

problems in Physics and Mathematics.

In the field of mathematics and Physics, Prof Abdus Salam in the words of Ishfaq Ahmad send almost 500 student's to best western universities for higher education on Scholarship. Prof Abdus Salam's legacy continues to inspire many students to excell in the field of Physics. In 2019 a young Kashmiri researcher Mohsin Ilahi at Aligarh Muslim University dedicated his Ph.D thesis to Prof Adus Salam. In short If Ibn Hathyam was a face of Physics in Islamic Golden age, so is Prof Abdus salam face of modern Muslim world. The last paragraph brings me back to the question on why a physicist of Prof Abdus Salam's stature with such illustrious legacy remains unheard of in muslim world?

The answer lies in sectarianism. Prof Abdus salam belonged to marganilized Ahamdiya Muslim community. The sectarian strife and divide has taken a heavy tool rather it has blinded the Muslim community from recognizing their own legends and brilliant minds. Though it is still not too late to celebrate the legacy of this physicist who did so much for the advancement of science in the Muslim world in particular and developing nations in general but one remains skeptical of things changing for good on ground. But If science is the shared heritage of mankind as Prof Abdus Salam rightly believed, so is His own legacy a shared heritage of World that we need to celebrate and feel proud of.

Conclusion:

In order to revive a culture of Science and critical thinking back in the Muslim world the understanding and reading of Muslim history is must for that would provide much food for thought on what had gone wrong and what needs to be done. The first step in that direction would be the recognition of the legacy of physicist like Prof Abdus Salam. Unless we celebrate minds like Him, the revival of Scientific culture in the muslim world is a distant dream. In this connection, Canadian historian of science respected Zakaria Virk's biography of Prof Abdus Salam titled as "Musalmano ka Newton" and Cosmic Anger: Abdus Salam, the first Muslim Nobel scientist by Gordon Fraser are two important reads for any student or teacher interested in knowing Prof Abdus Salam's Life and legacy in detail. (The author is student of physics and hails from Kashmir. He can be reached at nasirrather45@gmail.com)



Trump's Election tantrum

By Charles M. Blow

When my oldest son was 3 years old we got him into a preschool class at an elite private school across the street from Prospect Park in the Park Slope neighborhood of Brooklyn.

It was more than we could afford — we couldn't even afford to live in Park Slope, but instead lived in the neighboring Prospect Heights section — but, nervous and stressed by the unreasonable pressure new parents often feel with a first child to give them the absolute best at all costs, we found the money anyway. I thought my son was well adjusted. I had worked evening or late shifts since my son was born. He spent his mornings with me. I took him to the park and to play spaces with other children. He always seemed to socialize well with them. In the interview for the preschool — yes, there was an interview for a 3-year-old — the admissions officer dumped a tub of toys on the floor, watched him play with them, and asked him questions. Apparently, he passed. On the first day of school, I took him to class. He seemed fine, navigating the space with comfort and ease. But, then they told the parents that it was time for us to go. We nervously shuffled out and stood near the door in the hall, peeking through the gaps in the artwork taped to the window. Some of the children cried, but none of them like my son. He threw a full tantrum, fighting and scratching the teachers who tried to calm him, screaming and crying until he finally threw up. I was stunned and anxious and mortified. I came back into the room and they let me take him home. His tiny body heaved in my arms as I walked him home until the crying stopped and he dozed off. I realized that he was always so comfortable when in the park or in play spaces because I was always there. I was the comfort. I was the safety. I was his power. For a week, I took him to class, and the scene repeated itself every day: fighting, scratching, screaming, crying and then the vomit. At which point, each day, I would collect him and take him home. This could not continue. I asked his teachers if I could sit in the back of the class with him — his school day ended at noon — until he got comfortable. They allowed it. So, every day I would sit in the back of the class in a chair design for a preschool — yes, they are very, very, very small and low, like sitting on a small stack of books — with my coffee and newspaper, him glancing over every now and then to make sure that I was still there. When they snacked, I snacked. When they went out for recess, I went out for recess.

This went on for months until one day when we were heading out for recess, he turned to me and said, "Dad, it's OK, you don't have to come." And that was it. That was the last day I stayed with him at school. I



am reminded of that story now that President Trump is refusing to concede the election and throwing into question whether or not he will peacefully relinquish power: He is acting like a child throwing a tantrum because he is being displaced from his comfort and power. The smattering of states that four years ago handed Trump the presidency abandoned him this year and he is unable to handle that idea.

But, my son didn't hold the power of the presidency. Americans simply don't have months to let Trump grow up and get comfortable with his loss. So he is doing, and has done, everything in his power to undermine the legitimacy of this election. And, among his supporters, that is working. A poll this week by The Economist/YouGov found that 86 percent of Trump voters believe that Joe Biden didn't legitimately win the election. That would represent about 62 million voters under Trump's misinformation spell. Trump is of course being aided and abetted in his deceit by a devout, deceitful conservative press and the conservative cowards in Congress who don't want to get crosswise with him, even if Trump does damage to our democracy.

Trump has essentially thrown in the towel on fighting the surging coronavirus pandemic, instead choosing to fight the will of the majority of the American electorate. Many legislators think that they can simply ride Trump's anger as he works his way through the stages of grief, finally to acceptance. That's the mistake they made when Trump was first elected. They thought he would grow into the normalcy of the presidency. He didn't. He took their silence as license. And by the time they thought they needed to confront him, he had grown too strong for them to do so. Trump is once again taking Republicans' silence as license, and by the time they speak up, he could be too invested in the idea of resisting the Election Day reality. Trump isn't only throwing a tantrum, he's cutting his teeth. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/11/opinion/trump-concede-election.html>



Covid-19: Oxford University vaccine is highly effective

By James Gallagher

The coronavirus vaccine developed by the University of Oxford is highly effective at stopping people developing Covid-19 symptoms, a large trial shows.



Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is currently in the final stages of testing

Interim data suggests 70% protection, but the researchers say the figure may be as high as 90% by tweaking the dose. The results will be seen as a triumph, but come after Pfizer and Moderna vaccines showed 95% protection. However, the Oxford jab is far cheaper, and is easier to store and get to every corner of the world than the other two.

So the vaccine will play a significant role in tackling the pandemic, if it is approved for use by regulators.

"The announcement today takes us another step closer to the time when we can use vaccines to bring an end to the devastation caused by [the virus]," said the vaccine's architect, Prof Sarah Gilbert. The UK government has pre-ordered 100 million doses of the Oxford vaccine, and AstraZeneca says it will make three billion doses for the world next year. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said it was "incredibly exciting news" and that while there were still safety checks to come, "these are fantastic results".

What did the trial show?

The vaccine has been developed in around 10 months, a process that normally takes a decade.

Oxford vaccine: How did they make it so quickly?

There are two results from the trial of more than 20,000 volunteers in the UK and Brazil.

Overall, there were 30 cases of Covid in people who had two doses of the vaccine and 101 cases in people who received a dummy injection. The researchers said it worked out at 70% protection, which is better than the seasonal flu jab. Nobody getting the actual vaccine developed severe-Covid or needed hospital

treatment. Prof Andrew Pollard, the trial's lead investigator, said he was "really pleased" with the results as "it means we have a vaccine for the world".

However, protection was 90% in an analysis of around 3,000 people on the trial who were given a half-sized first dose and a full-sized second dose. Prof Pollard said the finding was "intriguing" and would mean "we would have a lot more doses to distribute."

The analysis also suggested there was a reduction in the number of people being infected without developing symptoms, who are still thought to be able to spread the virus.

When will I get a vaccine?

In the UK there are four million doses of the Oxford vaccine ready to go. But nothing can happen until the vaccine has been approved by regulators who will assess the vaccine's safety, effectiveness, and that it is manufactured to high standard. This process will happen in the coming weeks. It is also unclear who will get this vaccine or the other vaccines the government has ordered. However, the UK is preparing to press the go button on an unprecedented mass immunisation campaign that dwarfs either the annual flu or childhood vaccination programmes. Care home residents and staff will be first in the queue, followed by healthcare workers and the over-80s. The plan is to then to work down through the age groups.

How does it work?

It uses a completely different approach to the vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna, which inject part of the virus's genetic code into patients. The Oxford vaccine is a genetically modified common cold virus that used to infect chimpanzees. It has been altered to stop it causing an infection in people and to carry the blueprints for part of the coronavirus, known as the spike protein. Once these blueprints are inside the body they start producing the coronavirus' spike protein, which the immune system recognizes as a threat and tries to squash it. When the immune system comes into contact with the virus for real, it will know what to do.

Why is the low dose better?

There is not a straightforward answer. One idea is the immune system rejects the vaccine, which is built around a common cold virus, if it is given in too big an initial dose. Or a low then high shot may be a better mimic of a coronavirus infection and lead to a better immune response.

Are the results disappointing?

After Pfizer and Moderna both produced vaccines delivering 95% protection from Covid-19, a figure of 70% is still highly effective, but will be seen by some as relatively disappointing. But this is still a vaccine that can save lives from Covid-19 and is more effective than a seasonal flu jab. It also has crucial advantages that make it easier to use. It can be stored at fridge temperature, which means it can be distributed to every corner of the world, unlike the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, which need to be stored at much colder temperatures. The Oxford vaccine, at a price of around £3, also costs far less than Pfizer's (around £15) or Moderna's (£25) vaccines. And the Oxford technology is more established, so the vaccine is easier to mass produce cheaply. AstraZeneca has also made a "no-profit pledge".

What difference will this make to my life?

A vaccine is what we've spent the year waiting for and what lockdowns have bought time for. However, producing enough vaccine and then immunising tens of millions of people in the UK, and billions around the world, is still a gargantuan challenge. Life will not return to normal tomorrow, but the situation could improve dramatically as those most at risk are protected. Health Secretary Matt Hancock told BBC Breakfast we would be "something closer to normal" by the summer but "until we can get that vaccine rolled out, we all need to look after each other".

What's the reaction been?

Prof Peter Horby, from the University of Oxford but not involved in the trial, said: "This is very welcome news, we can clearly see the end of tunnel now. There were no Covid hospitalisations or deaths in people who got the Oxford vaccine."

Dr Stephen Griffin, from the University of Leeds, said: "This is yet more excellent news and should be considered tremendously exciting. It has great potential to be delivered across the globe, achieving huge public health benefits."



51-year-old woman gives birth to her own grand-daughter

Wyatte Grantham Philips

USA TODAY

Serving as a gestational carrier for her daughter, a 51-year-old woman gave birth to her granddaughter this month. The family welcomed Briar, a healthy baby girl, in an Illinois hospital on Nov. 2. Julie Loving, 51, delivered the newborn with her daughter, Breanna Lockwood, by her side. "My mom was an absolute rockstar through a difficult delivery," Lockwood wrote in an Instagram post announcing the birth. "The sacrifices she took to bring this little slice of heaven into our world take my breath away." Lockwood confirmed that Briar and her mother are doing "fantastic and healthy." According to Good Morning America, the delivery marked the first cesarean section for Loving, who is a mother of two. The mother-daughter duo has been widely followed on Instagram, where Lockwood shares their surrogacy journey with more than 129,000 followers. In one post, Lockwood explained the process. After struggling with infertility, she and her husband, Aaron, had their reproductive DNA fertilized and

frozen via in vitro fertilization (IVF). Loving enthusiastically volunteered to be the surrogate.

"My mom breezed through every preliminary test she took, to be able to give us this gift. Defying the odds at 51 years old, she's pushing reproductive science out of the box."

Lockwood, who has experienced multiple miscarriages, also uses her story for infertility and pregnancy/infant loss awareness – to remind those struggling similarly that they are not alone.

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development reports that about 9% of men and 11% of women in the U.S. have experienced fertility problems. And according to the Winne Palmer Hospital for Women and Babies, 1 in 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage.

"1 in 4. Let's break the stigma," Lockwood writes. "You are not alone."

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/11/12/51-year-old-illinois-surrogate-gives-birth-her-granddaughter/6248492002/>



Dealings with US possible despite crimes, says Iran

TEHRAN: The “crimes” committed by the United States against Iran do not prevent “carefully considered” exchanges from taking place, Iran’s foreign ministry spokesman said on Sunday. “The future of relations between Iran and the United States is not simple,” Saeed Khatibzadeh acknowledged at a press conference in Tehran, as President Hassan Rouhani’s government makes signs of apparent overtures to US president-elect Joe Biden. “The United States has committed repeated crimes against the Iranian people,” added Khatibzadeh, citing a long list.

They included Washington’s support for Baghdad during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, the “series of sanctions” against Tehran, and the US drone strike that killed top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in January.

President-elect Biden has promised a return to diplomacy after four hawkish years under Trump

“It is natural that (between two) members of the United Nations (like the US and Iran) there have

always been, and there are, very carefully considered exchanges, in a known framework,” Khatibzadeh said, while noting that this “does not mean that Iran is forgetting this list of crimes”.

Tehran and Washington, enemies for more than four decades, have edged to the brink of war twice since June 2019, amid tensions over Iran’s 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers, which outgoing US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from. Biden has promised a return to diplomacy with Iran after four hawkish years under Trump. Rouhani’s government offered a cautious welcome to Biden’s victory, but Iran’s conservatives are critical, accusing the country’s government of yielding to what they say is an “illusion” of a change by the “Great Satan” of America. “The time has come to attack, not to compromise” with Washington, the ultra-conservative newspaper Kayhan wrote on Saturday. Published in dawn, November 23rd, 2020 ❀❀❀

Caf president Ahmad banned by Fifa for five years

Confederation of African Football (Caf) president Ahmad has been banned for five years by Fifa for breaching various codes of ethics.

The 60-year-old, a vice-president of world governing body Fifa, has been found to have breached codes relating to duty of loyalty, offering and accepting gifts, abuse of position and misappropriation of funds. “The investigation into Mr Ahmad’s conduct ... from 2017 to 2019 concerned various Caf-related governance issues, including the organisation and financing of an Umrah pilgrimage to Mecca, his involvement in Caf’s dealing with the sports equipment company Tactical Steel and other activities,” a Fifa statement read. Mr Ahmad, whose impending ban was announced by BBC Sport Africa last month, has also been fined \$200,000. He has previously denied any wrongdoing. He can appeal his sanction at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Cas) once he has received the full grounds for the decision, a process that can take up to 60 days.

Last month, the former head of Madagascar’s FA announced his intention to go for a second term in



office when Caf elections take place next March.

This is now in major doubt as Mr Ahmad, who was elected Caf president in 2017, would have to pass an eligibility test to resume his place on the Fifa Council. Any chances of re-election will be dependent on not only winning his appeal at CAS but also ensuring said appeal is heard early enough to allow him to be confirmed as a candidate.

Mr Ahmad recently stepped back from leading Caf, stating that he had done so for ‘medical reasons’ as he continues to recover from coronavirus, so leaving Caf’s first vice-president Constant Omari in charge of leading the organisation. ❀❀❀

Pakistan Army Has Cultivated The Image Of Pakistan As - An International Jihadi Tourist Resort

What is the last thing you say to your best general when ordering him to conduct a do-or-die mission? A prayer maybe, if you are religiously inclined. A short lecture underlining the importance of the mission if you want to keep it businesslike. Or maybe you just say 'good luck,' accompanied by a clicking of the heels and a final salute. On the night of July 5, 1977 as Operation Fair Play, meant to topple Z.A. Bhutto's elected government, was about to commence, the then army chief General Zia-ul-Haq took his right-hand man and the Corps Commander of 10th Corps, Lt General Faiz Ali Chishti aside and whispered to him: "Murshid, marwa na daina." (Murshid, don't get us killed.)

Zia was indulging in two of his favourite pastimes: spreading paranoia among those around him, and cosying up to the junior officer he needed to do his dirty work. General Zia had a talent for that; he could make his juniors feel as if they were indispensable to the running of this world. And he could make his seniors feel like gods — as Bhutto found out at the cost of his life. General Faiz Ali Chisti's troops didn't face any resistance that night; not a single shot was fired and like all military coups in Pakistan, this was dubbed a 'bloodless coup.' There was a lot of bloodshed in the following years though; in military-managed dungeons at Thori gate, in Bohri Bazar, around Ojhri camp and finally at Basti Laal Kamal near Bahawalpur, where a plane exploded killing General Zia and most of the Pakistan army's high command. General Faiz Ali Chisti, of course, had nothing to do with this. General Zia rid himself of his murshid soon after coming to power. Chishti had started to take that term of endearment — murshid — a bit too seriously, and dictators can't stand anyone who thinks of himself as the king-maker.

Thirty-four years on Pakistan is a society divided at many levels. There's the beghairat bunch throwing economic statistics at the ghairat brigade, there are laptop jihadis and liberal fascists and fair-weather revolutionaries. There are Balochi freedom fighters up in the mountains and bullet-riddled bodies of young political activists in obscure Baloch towns. And of course there are the members of civil society with a permanent glow on their faces, presumably on account of all their candlelight vigils. All these factions may not agree on anything, but there is a consensus on one point: General Zia's coup was a bad idea. When was the last time anyone heard Nawaz Sharif or any of Zia's numerous protégés thump their chest and say, 'Yes, we need another Zia?' And have ever you seen a Pakistan military commander who stood on Zia's grave and vowed to continue his mission?

It might have taken Pakistanis 34 years to reach this consensus, but we finally agree that General Zia's domestic and foreign policies didn't do us any good. They brought us automatic weapons, heroin and sectarianism; they also made fortunes for those who dealt

in these commodities. And they turned Pakistan into an international jihadi tourist resort. And yet somehow, without ever publicly owning up to it, the army has continued Zia's mission. Successive army commanders, despite their access to vast libraries and regular strategic reviews, have never actually acknowledged that what they started during the Zia era was a mistake. Clearly, the late Dr Eqbal Ahmed wasn't off the mark when he said that the Pakistan Army is brilliant at collecting information, but its ability to analyse this information is non-existent.

Looking back at the Zia years, the Pakistan army begins to appear like one of those mythical monsters that chops off its own head, but then grows an identical one and then proceeds on the only course it knows. In 1999, two days after the Pakistan army embarked on its Kargil misadventure, Lt General Mahmud Ahmed gave a 'crisp and to-the-point' briefing to a group of senior army and air force officers. Air Commodore Kaiser Tufail, who attended the meeting, later wrote in an article that they were told that it was nothing more than a defensive manoeuvre and the Indian Air Force would not get involved at any stage. "Come October, we shall walk into Siachen — to mop up the dead bodies of hundreds of Indians left hungry, out in the cold," General Mahmud told the meeting. "Perhaps it was the incredulousness of the whole thing that led Air Commodore Abid Rao to famously quip, 'After this operation, it's going to be either a court martial or martial law!' as we walked out of the briefing room," Air Commodore Tufail recalled.

If Rao Abid even contemplated a court martial, he must have lacked leadership qualities because there was only one way out of this mess; a humiliating military defeat, a world-class diplomatic disaster, followed by yet another martial law. The man who should have faced the court martial for Kargil appointed himself the country's president for the next decade. General Mahmud went on to command ISI, Rao Abid retired as Air Vice Marshal; both went on to find lucrative work in the army's vast welfare empire and Kargil was forgotten as if it was a game of dare between too juveniles who were now beyond caring about who had actually started the pointless game. The battles were fierce and some of the men and officers fought so valiantly that two were awarded Pakistan's highest military honour, the Nishan-e-Haider. But nobody seems to remember the amount of bloodshed during the mission And where were hundreds of others whose names never made it to any awards list, whose names were, in fact, not mentioned at all, and whose families consoled themselves by saying that their loved ones had been martyred while defending our nation's borders. Nobody pointed out the basic fact that there was no enemy on those mountains before some delusional generals decided that they'd like to 'mop up' hundreds of Indian soldiers after starving them to death.

The architect of this mission, the daring commando, General Musharraf, who didn't bother to consult his colleagues before ordering his soldiers to their slaughter, doesn't even have the wits to face a sessions court judge in Pakistan, let alone a court martial. During the entire episode the nation was told that it wasn't the regular army that was fighting in Kargil, it was the 'mujahideen.' But those who received their loved ones' flag-draped coffins, and those that didn't even get a corpse to mourn, had sent their sons and brothers to serve in a professional army, not a freelance lashkar. The Pakistan army's biggest folly has been that under Zia it started outsourcing its basic job — soldiering — to these freelance militants. By blurring the line between a professional soldier who, at least in theory, is always required to obey his officer, who in turn is governed by a set of laws, and a mujahid who can pick and choose his cause and his commander depending on his mood, the Pakistan army has caused immense confusion among its own ranks. When soldiers who cry 'Allah-o-Akbar' when mocking an attack are ambushed in real life by enemies who shout 'Allah-o-Akbar' even louder, can we blame them if they waver in their response? When the naval chief Nauman Bashir calls the PNS Mehran attackers "very well trained," is he just giving us hollow justification for what transpired, or admiring the creation of the institution he serves? When naval officials tell journalists that the attackers were "as good as our own commandos," are they giving themselves a back-handed compliment?

In the wake of the attacks on PNS Mehran in Karachi, some TV channels pulled out an old war anthem sung by Madam Noor Jehan and started playing it against the backdrop of images of the young, hopeful faces of the slain officers and service men. Written by the legendary teacher and creator of childrens' Tot Batot stories, Sufi Tabassum, the anthem carries a stark warning: Aiay puttar hatan tay nahin vick day, na labh di phir bazaar kuray (You can't buy these brave sons from shops, don't go looking for them in bazaars). Whereas Sindhis and Balochis have mostly composed songs of rebellion, Punjabi popular culture has always lionised its karnails and jarnails and even an odd dhol sipahi. The Pakistan army has, throughout its history, refused to take advice from politicians, as well as thinking professionals from its own ranks. It has never paid heed to historians and sometimes ignored even the esteemed religious scholars it has used to whip up public sentiment for its dirty wars. But the biggest strategic mistake it has made is that it has not even taken advice from late Madam Noor Jehan, one of the army's most ardent fans in Pakistan's history. You can probably ignore Dr Eqbal Ahmed's advice and survive in this country, but you ignore Madam at your own peril. Since the Pakistan army's high command is dominated by Punjabi-speaking generals, it is difficult to fathom what it is about this advice that they don't understand. Any which way you translate it, the message is loud and clear — and lyrical: soldiers are not to be bought and sold like a commodity in shops. "Na awaian takran maar

kuray" (That search is futile, like butting your head against a brick wall), Noor Jehan goes on to rhapsodise.

For decades the army has not only been shopping for these private puttars in the bazaars, it has also set up factories to manufacture them. It has, in fact, raised entire armies of them. When you raise the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish Mohammed, Sipah-e-Sahaba, Sipah-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Al-Badar Mujahideen, others encouraged by the thriving marketplace will go ahead and create outfits like the Anjuman Tahuffuz-e-Khatam-e-Nabuwwat and Anjuman-Tahuffuz-e-Namoos-e-Aiysha. And it's not just Kashmir, Afghanistan and Chechnya they want to liberate; they want to go back in time and seek revenge for a perceived slur that may or may not have been cast by someone more than thirteen hundred years ago in a country far, far away. As if the army's sprawling shopping mall of private puttars in Pakistan wasn't enough, it has also actively encouraged the import and export of these commodities and even branched out into providing rest and recreation facilities for the ones who want a break. The outsourcing of Pakistan's military strategy has reached a point where mujahids have their own mujahids to do their job and, inevitably, at the end of the supply chain are those poor, faceless teenagers with explosives strapped to their torsos being despatched to blow up other poor children.

Two days before the Americans killed Osama bin Laden and took away his bullet-riddled body, General Kayani addressed army cadets at Kakul. After declaring a victory of sorts over the militants, he gave our nation a stark choice. And before the nation could even begin to weigh the pros and cons, he went ahead and decided for them: we shall never bargain our honour for prosperity. As things stand, most people in Pakistan have neither honour, nor prosperity. They will readily settle for merely being able to survive in their little worlds without being blown up. The question people really want to ask General Kayani is that if he and his army officer colleagues can have both honour and prosperity why can't we, the people, have even a tiny bit of both?

The army and its advocates in the media often worry about Pakistan's image, as if we are not suffering from a long-term serious illness, but a seasonal bout of acne that just needs better skin care. The Pakistan army has, over the years, cultivated an image of 180 million people with nuclear devices strapped to its collective body, threatening to take the world down with it. We may not be able to take the world down with us and the world might defang us or manage to calm us a bit, but the fact remains that Pakistan as a nation is paying the price for our generals' insistence on acting like, in Asma Jahangir's immortal words, "duffers." And they are adding insult to inquiry by demanding medals and golf resorts for being such consistent duffers for such a long time. What people really want to do at this point is to put an arm around our military commanders' shoulders, take them aside and whisper in their ears: "Murshid, marwa na daina."

<https://newslinemagazine.com/magazine/murshid-marwa-na-daina/>





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