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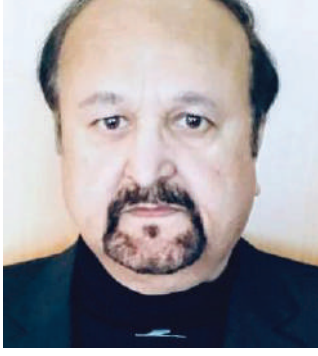


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Editorial



Dr. Busharat Elahi Jamil

Post Jinnah Pakistan endorsed a feudal, mercantile and landlord class to acquire the political system of Pakistan. These power seekers and mostly British rewarded stratum were not in fact leaders but merely the rulers of Pakistan. Imprudent and senseless ruling class is only power seekers lacking interests for the state and the countrymen.

The number of ruling families in Pakistan has now reached 32. Pakistan's anguish has advanced into the existing system of ruling class in the faces of Bilawal Zardari, Maryam Nawaz, Aimal Wali, Asad Mahmood, Shahzain Bugti, Awais Laghari, etc. subjecting to their personal agendas. Piling up the debt for the generations of Pakistanis, the ruling peers are becoming wealthier and affluent.

In Pakistan, generally around two dozen Islamic bands are following the fanatic religious ideologies. Because of their street power, they are the need of practised political culture. Political parties and establishment both need them. Religiopolitical assemblages have a resilient aspiration to rule over Islamic Republic of Pakistan but never agreed to let others sects lead in prayers, being the main reason for the national bifurcation.

4 National Assembly of Pakistan has 342 seats including 10 reserve seats. Among those 332 seats, there is hardly a common man among them. It verifies the phenomenon that common masses have their representation with the remaining 10 reserve seats only.

It was all being exploited in the very name of democracy, despite being the antithesis of the democracy. Democracy actually means to serve humanity not only the powerful classes. From August 1947 to April 2022 the connivance of privileged political forces, religious groups, establishment, judiciary and bureaucracy have brought the country on the brink of destruction. Later the regime change operation changed the concept of Pakistani democracy, and revealed the rogue exercises of the above said institutes.

The current unspeakable situations of Pakistan exposed the responsible factors and their objectives in which PTI and Imran Khan took full advantages of the social media trial of so-called democratic and authoritative forces. Social media and real democratic forces portrayed political understanding for the common people. Now Pakistanis have started questioning and worrying about the hard comings of Pakistan. This is the suitable time to subtract the unwanted authoritative, political non-political forces for the safety and the prosperity of the Pakistan.

Simply, Pakistanis need to be decisive regarding the decision making. The non-democratic entities should remain in limits and the foreign interventions should not be tolerated. Pakistani nation have woken up; no institution is powerful enough as compare to the will of Pakistanis, because the verdict of a real democratic nation has ever proven sufficient to deal with the anti-state Immersions.

DRY-CLEANED POLITICIANS



where the funds used to develop the residence came from, and it is suspected that the money was channelled through a third party under a shady deal. Both cases are now back with the NAB chairman because the court hearing them says it no longer has jurisdiction following the National Accountability (Second Amendment) Act of 2022. After the PDM parties' breathless outrage over the watches and other

THE dry cleaning of our political elite continues unabated, thanks to the controversial amendments made to our accountability laws just a few months earlier. The most recent instance is quite outrageous, considering that it allegedly involves past misappropriations from the Toshakhana by a different set of prime ministers. According to reports, an accountability court, citing recent changes to NAB laws, has granted a reprieve to Nawaz Sharif, Asif Ali Zardari and Yousaf Raza Gilani in a case concerning the alleged appropriation of vehicles from the Toshakhana in return for paltry sums of money. The former two leaders allegedly 'bought' vehicles from the state gift repository at throwaway prices with the help of Mr Gilani, who, according to NAB, "dishonestly and illegally" relaxed the procedural requirements for the disposal of state gifts in order to facilitate them. Separately, Mr Zardari has also won relief in a case concerning the alleged use of ill-gotten money in the construction of his residence in Clifton, Karachi. According to NAB, Mr Zardari could never sufficiently account for

items appropriated from the Toshakhana and later sold by PTI chairman Imran Khan, it is difficult to square these developments with the loud pursuit of Mr Khan on charges of malfeasance. How do the PML-N and PPP expect the public to buy into their narrative about the PTI chief when their own top leaders are cynically manoeuvring their way out of similar charges, with the help of changes that they forced onto NAB laws soon after seizing power? If the cases in question against the PML-N and PPP leaders were frivolous or falsified, it would have been much more appropriate to win an acquittal from the courts. Neutralising these legal challenges in such a manner leaves little doubt about the PDM parties' intent behind 'reforming' the NAB laws all along. The fig leaf has been cast aside with nary a thought as to what message it is giving to the citizenry about accountability and the abuse of power.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1728106/Dry-cleaned%20politicians>

NAB files fresh reference against Nawaz, Zardari and Gilani in fake accounts case

By: Tahir Naseer

The National Accountability Bureau on Monday filed a new reference against former prime ministers Nawaz Sharif and Yousuf Raza Gilani and former president Asif Ali Zardari in the fake accounts case. The reference has been filed at an accountability court in Islamabad. The reference, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, also named Omni Group CEO Khawaja Anwar Majid and his son Khawaja Abdul Ghani Majid. According to the reference, Gilani, in order to extend illegal benefit to accused [Zardari and Nawaz], allowed the retention of vehicles gifted to them by different foreign states and dignitaries by relaxing procedures relating to submission of gifts in the Toshakhana. The accused “through dishonest and illegal means for their personal benefit and interest” retained the vehicles in question “against a nominal payment of 15 per cent of the total value”, the reference stated. It added that Zardari made the payments for the vehicles through the Omni Group CEO and his son “for which he has no plausible justification.” “It was established during investigation that these amounts are in the context of illegitimate laundered proceeds for the benefit of the accused,” the reference reads. The reference maintained that Gilani, in connivance with Zardari and Nawaz, “dishonestly and illegally relaxed the procedure for the acceptance and disposal of gifts [...] which stipulate that vehicles shall not be allowed to be purchased by the recipients”. “The accused [Gilani] floated and suppressed the law and the procedure to grant undue concession, and benefits resulting in wrongful loss to the national exche-



quer,” the statement added. According to the reference, during his tenure as president of Pakistan, Zardari accepted and received vehicles as gifts from the United Arab Emirates in 2005 and from Libya in 2008. “He neither reported the gifted vehicles nor deposited the same. The accused preferred his own personal interests and obtained undue concession and benefits,” it added. Meanwhile, the reference maintained that Nawaz, who did not hold any public office in 2008, “knowingly and with dishonest intention obtained illegal favour in connivance with [Gilani] by obtaining the relaxation of the said procedure for acceptance and disposal of gifts”. The fake accounts case pertains to a massive money laundering scam that was being probed by the Federal Investigation Agency. The suspects include Zardari, his sister MNA Faryal Talpur, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, former Pakistan Stock Exchange chairman Hussain Lawai, Omni Group CEO Anwar Majeed and his sons and several other high profile persons. The case was later taken over by NAB on the Supreme Court's orders.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1537855>

Part - 1

History: The Fall Of Dhaka From Bihari Eyes

By: Engr Imtiaz Alam Khan

On December 16, 1971, Pakistani troops laid down their arms and surrendered to India for the secession of East Pakistan. The lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians were lost. Much has been written about this watershed in Pakistan's history. For the younger generation, I would recommend Brigadier Siddique Salik's book *Main Ne Dacca Doob-tey Dekha* which throws ample light on the subject and is worth reading. I simply believe, though, that we should remember this day to pay homage to the patriots who gave their lives for Pakistan so that we can learn lessons from the events that occurred in the past in order to avoid any such recurrence in the future. So to commemorate, in a way of speaking, the '48th death anniversary' of East Pakistan, I would like to recount here some of the events that I, as a resident of Dhaka, witnessed. My parents migrated from the Indian province of Bihar to East Pakistan in 1947. I was born and bred in Dacca, as it was formerly called, the capital of East Pakistan. My father was an employee of Pakistan Postal Service. The Post and Telegraph (P&T) colony, where we lived, consisted of several three-storied apartment buildings, surrounded by a boundary wall. The demography here was roughly 90 percent Bengali and 10 percent Non-Bengalis, or Biharis as they were usually called. India had set up hundreds of training camps in West Bengal where they trained and armed Bengali youths from East Pakistan to form the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Army). By mid-November 1971, the situation in the border areas had become alarming as more and more Mukti Bahini fighters kept pouring in from Indian Bengal. The border

skirmishes were rapidly turning into bloody attacks on Pakistani troops. Eventually, on December 3, 1971, war with India was declared. A survivor of the 1971 civil war recounts the harrowing events of December 16 as a resident in a Bihari locality in Dhaka. On the morning of December 4, I caught a small group of people looking up at the sky, trembling with excitement. Following their gaze, I lifted my head to scan the sky. After some moments, I caught sight of several white specks moving about in an orderly fashion. Indian planes, MIG-21s and SU-7s, were circling over Dhaka at a very high altitude to avoid ground fire. They tried to bomb Dhaka Airport and the Dhaka Cantonment area but the bombs, dropped from such a great height, went astray and missed their targets. The very next day, the Indian Air Force attacked Dhaka Airport with their full might. Wave after wave of MIGs and Hunters flew over the airport dropping heavy bombs. The Pak gunners on the ground put up a brave fight. They shot down several enemy planes, yet there were so many Indian planes that the airport runway was destroyed, with all the planes standing there. The war on the ground was being fought in the border areas and towns of Jessore, Khulna, Natore, Kushtia, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Sylhet, etc. Dhaka is situated almost in the middle of the country and is surrounded by the rivers Ganges (Padma), Meghna and Brahmaputra. As such, there was no sign of the Mukti Bahini or Indian forces near Dhaka or its adjoining areas. In the city, the only indications of a war being fought was the continuous presence of Indian planes which kept circling high up over the city, and

the mandatory blackouts at night. Occasionally, from the balcony of our second-floor flat, we could see Indian planes dive and fire rockets at the Governor House. Streaks of fire leaping from the plane would explode over the eastern dome of the Governor House and flames shooting from the ground would explode in the sky as the Pakistan army gunners tried to down these planes. The Governor House was empty as Governor Abdul Malik and his staff had already shifted to the Intercontinental Hotel. The Indian forces had yet to cross the rivers before they could reach Dhaka. This was not easy as the river bridges had been destroyed. The city wore an uneasy calm and the atmosphere was charged with tension. Fear and anxiety was gradually but steadily tightening its grip on the citizens. Such was the state of affairs when December 16 dawned over Dhaka. On that harrowing day, just after Fajr prayers, there was a knock on the door of our flat. I opened the door and saw it was our Bengali neighbour Mallu Bhai. His actual name was Muhammad Ali Khan but everybody affectionately called him by his nickname. He lived with his family in the only other flat on our floor. This handsome man was usually a calm and collected person but today he appeared wildly excited. His eyes were shining, his cheeks were flushed and his voice was loud and shrill. "Imtiaz, have you heard the big new? Akashvani [All Indian Radio] says Pak Army is going to surrender today!" I laughed loudly (little knowing that this would be my last laugh for a long time), "Oh, come on, Mallu Bhai," I said, "you know better than to believe Akashvani." It was late in the evening, nearing dusk, when we heard a loud commotion outside. I rushed to the balcony but what I saw made me freeze with terror. A large unruly mob brandishing bamboo sticks and leather whips was coming down the road to our building. Their faces were distorted with hate and fury. They were in a frenzy, shouting 'Joy Bangla, kill the Biharis, kill the traitors'. Mallu Bhai

replied, "No, you do not understand. This time they have given a [test] as proof to check the veracity of their announcement. They say that our planes will fly low over Dhaka but there will be no fire from the ground. The Pak army's Ack-Ack [anti-aircraft] guns will stay silent." On hearing this, I felt panic rising within me but I controlled myself and said, "Just think, Mallu Bhai, how is this possible? The Indian Army has not reached Dhaka. They are still far away. So then, why should Gen Niazi surrender? And to whom is he supposed to surrender?" This repartee dampened Mallu Bhai's excitement considerably and he went to his home, murmuring, "Ok, we will know the truth in a few hours." Despite my bravado, I was badly shaken. I went back inside my flat in a state of trepidation. I told my family the news. We kept hoping and praying that it would turn out to be false news. Every now and then, one of us would go to the balcony and scan the sky for Indian planes. And then, what we hoped would not happen, did happen. The Indian planes came around 10 am. The first few sorties were made at considerable altitude but they soon started to fly lower and lower until we could clearly see the pilots. In stark contrast to previous routine, not a single shot was fired on them from the ground. It was the most bizarre scene. We did not see, as we used to see, flames leaping from the ground to attack these planes. Instead, large numbers of pamphlets were being thrown from the planes. Printed in English, Bengali and Urdu, they invited the public to Ramna Race Course ground in the afternoon to witness the surrender of the Pakistan Army. Intrigued and hopeful, Bengalis flocked to the race course. There, in the presence of several lakhs of Bengalis raising thunderous slogans of 'Joy Bangla' and 'Jai Hind', Gen Niazi signed the Instrument of Surrender and handed over his pistol to General Arora Singh. East Pakistan died and Bangladesh was born. At the end of the ceremony, the mammoth crowd that

spilled out from the Race Course Ground was on an ecstatic high. The euphoria of freedom kicked in an adrenaline rush, making the crowd boisterous. The cries of 'Joy Bangla' were now intermingled with cries of 'Kill the Pakistanis'. But no one dared to attack the Pakistani troops; most of them were still armed. So, in their murderous mood, the mob spread out in the city to kill and plunder the supporters of Pakistan and the Pakistani army — the Biharis. A strange celebration of independence. An estimated 300,000 Biharis lived in Dhaka city. They were scattered in various localities of the city, namely Shahjahan Pur, Kamla Pur, Motijheel, Purana Pultan, Nawabpur road, Nawab Bari, Thatheri Bazar, Moulvi Bazar, Armani Tola, Islam Pur, Azim Pur, Saddar Ghat, Eskatan, Dhanmandi, Dhakesh-wari, Neel Khet, etc. In all these localities, Biharis were in a minority amounting to five to seven percent of the population. That night, the Bihari residents of every locality were attacked by the wild mobs who were on a killing, burning and looting spree. To give you a glimpse of the gruesome happenings, I now go back to my flat in P&T Colony, Motijheel. It was late in the evening, nearing dusk, when we heard a loud commotion outside. I rushed to the balcony but what I saw made me freeze with terror. A large unruly mob brandishing bamboo sticks and leather whips was coming down the road to our building. Their faces were distorted with hate and fury. They were in a frenzy, shouting 'Joy Bangla, kill the Biharis, kill the traitors'. As I looked on, they entered a building that stood very close to the right of ours. On the top floor of that building lived Mr Yahya, a Bihari, with his family. The mob went straight to his flat, broke open the door, locked his wife and children into a room and dragged out Yahya Sahib. They started to beat him savagely and then pushed him towards the stairs. I then saw the mob emerge from the staircase and on to the road. Yahya Sahib appeared a bloody mess. He could hardly stand on his legs. Soon

he fell to the ground. The mob was now kicking him like a football. They kicked him from the road on to the open grassy space in front of our building. The beating and kicking carried on until he finally died. I saw some of them jumping on his dead body. Then, with a mighty roar, this bloodthirsty, demonic mob headed towards our building and into the entrance of the staircase. Seeing all this terrified me so much that I completely lost my nerve and started to weep. My father (may Allah rest his soul in peace in heaven) became angry with me. He slapped my face hard and said, "Stop weeping. I won't have my son dying like a coward. If we are to die then, we try to face death bravely. They will have to kill me first before they can touch you. Ask Allah for His help. Only He can save us.

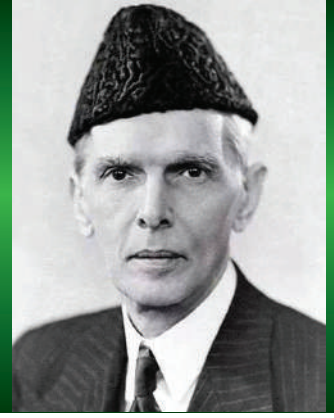
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1941-1947

(The Transfer of Power)



The period of 1941-1947 is very important in the political career of Quaid-i-Azam regarding establishment of Pakistan. The Pakistan Resolution of 23rd March 1940 defined the goal of Pakistan. On the face of Congress opposition to the Pakistan scheme, Quaid-i-Azam stood firm like a rock. In an article published in the Times and Tide of London, Quaid-i-Azam reiterated that Hindus and Muslims are two different nations and insisted on the two nations sharing the governance of their common motherland. The Second World War had a significant effect on the events leading to creation of Pakistan. The British Government was eager to attain the cooperation of leading parties of India including All India Muslim League. Quaid-i-Azam elaborated Lord Linlithgow on the League Working Committee's stance that as a pre-condition of League's full cooperation and support to the war effort, the British Government should give assurance that no policy declaration would be made or any constitution framed without the approval or consent of the Indian Muslims. On August 8, 1940, in a view to gain Indian support, the British Government issued a white paper that "after the war a constituent Assembly would be formed which will include all the elements of the national life and its task would be to prepare the framework of the country's future constitution".³ The scheme was called the August Offer. Quaid-i-Azam as a constitutionalist realized the importance of August Offer and in a meeting of League Working Committee "expressed his satisfaction over the British Government decision that no future constitution would be adopted without the prior

approval and consent of the League". To bring an end to the political deadlock of India, the British Government send Sir Stafford Cripps. He arrived in India on 22nd March 1942 and held talks with Indian leaders including Quaid-i-Azam on his famous proposal called as CRIPPS PROPOSALS. The proposals included some important points like complete independence to India after war, framing of new Constituent Assembly and if a province wants not to accede, she was given this option. The Cripps proposals were rejected both by the Congress and Muslim League. Though Quaid-i-Azam was against these proposals and termed it as "vaguer terms and unfair to Muslims in obliging them to take part in a constitution making body whose main object, contrary to their, was the creation of an all-India union".⁵ Besides rejecting, Quaid-i-Azam saw a ray of hope in the Cripps proposals and had admitted that the only positive aspect of the plan was that "for the first time, the British Government agreed in principle to the idea of partition". The Congress was adamant to oppose the British Government at any cost. To give impetus to this stance, the Congress Working Committee on 14th July 1942 passed a Resolution calling upon the British Government to quite India immediately. Quaid-i-Azam sensed the real motive of Congress Resolution. In an statement to the press, Quaid-i-Azam revealed that the aim of the Congress is "blackmailing the British and coercing them to concede a system of government and transfer power to that government which would establish a Hindu raj immediately under the aegis of the British bayonet thereby placing

the Muslims and other minorities and interests at the mercy of the Congress raj". Not all Muslims looked up to Jinnah. Many criticized him, some because they found him too Westernized, others because he was too straight and uncompromising. One young man, motivated by religious fervour and belonging to the Khaksar, a religious party, attempted to assassinate him on 26 July 1943. Armed with a knife he broke into Jinnah's home in Bombay and succeeded in wounding him before he was overpowered. Jinnah publicly appealed to his followers and friends to "remain calm and cool"⁸ The League declared 13 August a day of thanksgiving through out India. When Gandhi realized that Quit India Movement was heading nowhere but towards failure, he approached the Viceroy and at the same time, sought settlement with the Muslim League. With this end in view, C. Rajagopalachari, the only person who was seeking some understanding with the Muslims, wrote a letter to Quaid-i-Azam on 8 April 1944. He forwarded to the Quaid-i-Azam his formula known as C.R. Formula. C. Rajagopalachari termed it "a basis for a settlement which I discussed with Gandhiji in March 1943 and of which he expressed full approval".⁹ Quaid-i-Azam responded to C. R. Formula not by himself but instead said that the matter to be presented before Working Committee of the All India Muslim League. Salient features of the C. R. Formula were formation of interim government, plebiscite to decide the issue of separation from Hindustan, mutual agreements in case of partition etc. The C.R. formula became the basis for Gandhi in connection with his talks with Quaid-i-Azam. JINNAH GANDHI TALKS are an interesting chapter in the history of India. The two major figures of their parties were watched with an air of expectancy, aimed at breaking the political stalemate between the League and the Congress for a settlement to pave the way for

Indian independence. Though the talks were between two personalities but actually it was the clash of two schemes, C. R. Formula advocated by Gandhi and Pakistan Resolution by Quaid-i-Azam. Gandhi and Jinnah met on 9 September 1944 and the meeting was followed by a series of letters exchanged between the two. In a letter wrote to Gandhi, Quaid-i-Azam questioned his position, "representative Character and capacity on behalf of the Hindus or the Congress".¹⁰ Quaid further wrote that you cannot discuss the Hindu-Muslim settlement and you have no authority to do so. To this M. K. Gandhi replied that he was participating in the talks in individual capacity.¹¹ Quaid-i-Azam primarily based his views on Lahore Resolution that the areas in which the Muslims are in majority should be grouped to constitute independent states. M. K. Gandhi insisted on C.R. Formula as starting point. He added that after the war an interim government would be set up and a plebiscite will be held as to decide in favour of separation from Hindustan or against it. To this Jinnah replied and sought clarification for the mechanism and authority to decide and work out these matters. The Jinnah-Gandhi talks failed as C.R. Formula and Pakistan Resolution could not be reconciled. But it exposed the Gandhi's Congressite-cum-Mahasabhi face. He wrote to Quaid-i-Azam that "I find no parallel in history for a body of converts and their dependants claiming to be a nation apart from the parent stock".¹² Quaid-i-Azam reiterated that Muslims are a nation by any definition and by all canons of international law. The failure of Gandhi-Jinnah talks necessitated the need for all the political parties of India to come to some political settlement of the communal tangle. On June 14, 1945, Lord Wavell announced for re-organization of Governor General's Executive Council. The arrangement put forward by Lord Wavell is called WAVELL PLAN. A conference was called by the Viceroy at Simla

and invited inter alia Quaid-i-Azam to attend the Conference. At the SIMLA CONFERENCE the Muslim seats became the bone of contention. Congress insisted on nominating two Muslims of its own while Quaid-i-Azam demanded that "all Muslims appointed to the Council should be from among the All India Muslim League".¹³ The Simla Conference failed mainly because of the refusal of the British Government and the Congress to recognize the All-India Muslim League as the only representative body of Muslim India. Now the challenge before Quaid-i-Azam and Muslim League was to prove that Muslim League is the only representative organization of Muslim India and it was proved in the General Elections of 1945-46. To set the preparations for GENERAL-ELECTIONS 1945-46, a campaign for collection of funds was started in July 1945. In response donations in large sums received from all over the India and the Indian Muslims abroad. Parliamentary Boards were set-up in each province to decide the issue of allocation of Muslim League tickets. The democratic attitude of Quaid-i-Azam can be witnessed in allocation of seats and it was made clear by Quaid-i-Azam that he will never interfere with the work of the Parliamentary Boards nor be interceded on behalf of any aspirant. Quaid-i-Azam urged on the Leaguers to concentrate exclusively on the elections. In a telegram to medical students of Calcutta, he advised "establish complete unity, face election with grim determination. Issue life-death. Every vote for the League means rescue of hundred million Musalmans, Islam Pakistan".¹⁴ The League performed well in the elections. It swept all the Muslim seats in the Central Assembly and captures 428 out of 492 Muslim seats in the provincial legislatures. The League's claim to speak on behalf of Muslim India has now been fully realized. After the War the British Government was left with no option but to give independence to

India. In these circumstances the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pathick Lawrence on February 19, 1946, announced the formation of the CABINET MISSION to solve the Indian political tangle. The salient features of Cabinet Mission Plan were long term and short term. The long term plans were union of India, grouping of India into 3 groups based on Communal lines and option of reconsideration for any group, the terms of constitution after 10 years. The Short term plan including setting up of an interim government by the Indian representatives. Quaid-i-Azam rejected the Cabinet Mission plan and in a statement on 22 May 1946 said, "Pakistan is the only solution to the constitutional problems of India".¹⁵ But being a lover of democracy, the Quaid-i-Azam rested the decision with the League Council. In the meeting of League Council, Quaid-i-Azam expressed his firm faith that the Muslims of India would not feel at rest till the creation of Pakistan. He further added, "the scheme contained in itself, a basis for Pakistan".¹⁶ The Congress out rightly rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan while the Muslim League accepted it. It was binding on the British's Government to invite Muslim League for the formation of interim government but it was not done so. Under these circumstances, the League on 27 July 1946, decided to withdraw its support for the plan and to take DIRECT ACTION to attain Pakistan. In this meeting Quaid-i-Azam remarked, "the Cabinet Mission has played into the hands of the Congress. It has played game of its own".¹⁷ However due to the stern responses, the League along with Congress was invited to form the interim government. The last Governor General of India, Louis Mountbatten arrived India on 22nd March 1947. Louis Mountbatten was sent by the British Government on a special mission to transfer power to India. With this end in view he prepared a plan for the transfer of power known as MOUNTBATTEN PLAN OR 3RD JUNE

PLAN. Important points of 3rd June Plan were adequate arrangements of Punjab and Bengal assemblies if they favor partition of these provinces, referendum in NWFP and Sylhet for deciding their fate to join India or Pakistan etc. The Plan was presented on June 2, 1947 before the Indian leaders including Quaid-i-Azam. Being a constitutionalist and firm believer in democratic norms, he remarked, “I can express my own opinion in this regard but the Muslim League is a democratic institution. Therefore, the League and Working Committee would contact the people before making any final decision”.¹⁸ The plan was finally approved by League Council on 9th August 1947.¹⁹ The plan of 3rd June paved the way for partition of India in general and of Punjab and Bengal in particular. To give effect to the 3rd June Plan, a commission was formed headed by Sir Cyril Radcliff known as RADCLIFFE COMMISSION. The Commission was assigned the task of demarcating the contiguous Muslim and non-Muslim majority areas of the Punjab and Bengal. The award of Radcliffe Commission was very astonishing to the Muslims. Great injustices were done by the Award. The Muslim majority areas of Gurdaspur, Jullundur, Ferozpur, Zira and Ambala were handed over to India due to the clandestine efforts of Congress in general and V.P. Menon in particular. The Quaid-i-Azam expressed his grief and resentment on the Award and said that they have been squeezed inasmuch as it was possible and it was an unjust, incomprehensible and even perverse Award.²⁰ During these circumstances the independent Muslim State of Pakistan emerged on the map of the world on 14th August 1947 and Quaid-i-Azam became the undisputed first Governor General of Pakistan.

https://pakistan.gov.pk/Quaid/pakistan_movement.html

New biometric system for SIM cards



ISLAMABAD: An enhanced version of the biometric verification system has been designed to thwart the sale of fake SIM cards. The Multi-Finger Biometric Verification System (MBVS) will be used by telecom companies to verify users' identities before issuing a new SIM. A contract was signed between Nadra and telecom operators at PTA headquarters on Friday. The move was necessitated by scammers who had managed to bypass the older biometric system designed to identify users before issuing SIM cards. The old biometric verification devices used by the sales departments of all network providers — Jazz, Ufone, Telenor and Zong — have been upgraded to meet the requirements of the new system. Officials believe the new system will make it impossible to get a new SIM card using fake fingerprints. The new system will require impressions of multiple fingers for authentication — as opposed to only a thumb impression in the old system — before issuing a new or duplicate SIM card. The system will ask for impressions of two separate fingers randomly, a move aimed at minimising human control over the system.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1727981/new-biometric-system-for-sim-cards>

Dollar Smugglers Devise Novel Ways

Officials inform Dar disabled persons, LEAs personnel involved in letting hard cash into Afghanistan

Shahbaz Rana

ISLAMABAD: Despite official foreign currency reserves falling to a critically low level of \$6.7 billion, the government has failed to stop the smuggling of the dollars to Afghanistan that was underway using orange crates and with the connivance of law enforcement agencies (LEAs), revealed the proceedings of a huddle held on Friday. It also emerged during a meeting that the Customs Act was not in conformity with the new limits set for outbound currency flow, hampering the registration of criminal cases against the smugglers. The heads of the LEAs were called by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar to Q-Block in the Pakistan Secretariat amid the state's failure to guard its borders and international airports that have been turned into dens of smuggling. Dar chaired an inter-ministerial huddle to review as to why the LEAs had failed to stop the smuggling of the US currency, imported wheat and fertiliser to Afghanistan. Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar; PM's aides Tariq Bajwa and Tariq Pasha; State Bank of Pakistan governor; finance and interior secretaries; Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) chairman; directors general of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Intelligence and Investigation (I&I) Customs as well as senior officers from the Finance Division and intelligence agencies also participated in the meeting, according to a statement issued by the finance ministry. It emerged during the meeting that US dollars were being smuggled to Afghanistan through orange crates. The government officials disclosed that disabled persons and the personnel of the LEAs were also involved in currency smuggling to Afghanistan. However, the more worrisome aspect



was that there was no clear roadmap on how to address this crisis. The statement read that Dar emphasised the relevant authorities to devise a robust and proactive roadmap to curb the cross-border smuggling of various items in order to bring economic and financial stability to the country. Pakistan's gross official foreign exchange reserves dipped to a four-year low level of \$6.7 billion as of last week, sufficient to finance only five weeks of imports and not enough to meet the country's \$8.5 billion external debt repayment needs for January-March 2023. Last month, the central bank lowered the outbound flow of the currency to \$5,000 per person. However, the Customs Act was not accordingly amended that still mentioned the \$10,000 limit. As a result, the Customs authorities cannot register criminal cases against the smugglers and their actions are only limited to the seizure of the currency. The Customs authorities nabbed a person at Islamabad airport carrying abroad Saudi currency equivalent to \$6,500. However, he had to be set free as the Customs law

does not permit criminal cases below \$10,000, according to the officials. In recent months, the Customs authorities made about 100 seizures involving foreign currency equivalent to \$4.2 million. At the Torkham border, a policeman was caught by the Frontier Constabulary enabling smuggling of \$50,000. The maximum single seizure by Customs was \$30,000 and the man was arrested. The sources said the finance minister expressed his displeasure over the FIA and other LEAs' inability to stop the smuggling. It was discussed in the meeting that the FIA had to take severe measures as were made to dismantle the Khanani and Kalia network, according to the officials. Dar urged the LEAs to catch "big fish" instead of focusing on smaller ones. The sources said that one serious problem was the involvement of the LEAs in the smuggling of the currency, particularly at the airports. The authorities have so far failed to break the network. The participants of the meeting also discussed the role of the foreign exchange dealers in the smuggling but they remained short of coming up with concrete measures to force them to behave. The finance ministry stated that the meeting discussed and reviewed the economic situation as well as the current mechanism for preventing the smuggling of foreign currency, wheat and urea. Various measures were discussed in order to strengthen the anti-smuggling regime. The finance minister, highlighting the economic situation in the country, stressed the need for coordination among all the necessary platforms for this purpose, the statement added. It further read that the meeting would be reconvened next week once the LEAs had a clear roadmap for dealing with the menace of smuggling.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2390431/dollar-smugglers-devise-novel-ways>

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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Hoping for an encouraging response for our readers for this noble cause.

May Allah be with you - Amen

A Child Prodigy.

By: Safeer Ahmad Khan - MA (Edu) USA.



It all started in a dusty little town of Central Punjab known as Chenab Nagar, where a skinny little fourth grader was destined to cross path with me by sheer chance. We bonded on first sight and never looked back. Demonstrating an unmatched intensity to learn and grasp which I had never witnessed before in my 36 years of teaching career. Sitara is a living embodiment of the famous verse, "Honhaar birwa ke chiknay chiknay paat. She gives the impression of an athlete at the starting point eager to jump into action when the pistol is fired. She is too curious to learn with an endless stream of questions and counter questions, which was too much for the asking in a conventional classroom geared to boring repetitive monologues and rote learning, with no emphasis on creativity. Sensing an unusual capacity for a child of her age, her mother, herself a chemistry teacher pulled her out of grade 5 and homeschooled her here onwards. So much for the background. It was the summer of 2006 and I was in the middle of taking an 'Advance English Language Class for teachers,' when I heard a faint knock at my door. Having a distaste for interruptions, I ignored my tormentor the first time, but after a few moments there was a louder tap at the door. Quite perturbed, I opened the door to confront the intruder. The sight I saw is vividly etched in my memory to this day. I saw a neatly dressed little girl in white frock and blue stockings with two pony tails tightly done, a baby plastic chair in one hand and a copy and pencil in the other. She eyeballed me with a tax-collector's glance and broke the silence. "I want to attend your class Mr. Khan." Overwhelmed by the sheer determina-

tion in the eyes of my visitor, I stood speechless for a few fateful moments. "But this is an Advance English Class for Teachers," I retorted. "I want to attend your class. Sir," was the response. Disarmed completely, I ushered her in with a gesture and introduced my visitor to the class in the following words. "Ladies and gentlemen, we have a baby student who insists attending this class, so let's give her a big hand." I seated her in front of the class and proceeded with the lecture. At the end of the lesson I shot a question to the class which was received with complete silence. I waited for a few moments and repeated the question, with no change in the situation. Just then I noticed a tiny hand going up from the corner of my eyes. It was Sitara wanting to respond. "They are silent, so you might as well go ahead," I said. Lo and behold she came up with the correct answer. Sitara has not looked back since then. If you asked me to single out one quality she possesses in abundance, it has got to be her very mature head on those tiny shoulders at such a young age. She would sit down with me for hours after school and bombard me with endless stream of questions, always ready for more; a product of her extremely fertile mind. Within weeks her oral communication skills improved by leaps and bounds and she would time and again surprise me with her brilliance and an insatiable desire to learn. Year 2006 was momentous in Sitara's march to stardom. Having developed confidence in her speaking skills I exposed her on the stage in a series of Seminars organized in her school and every time she amply justified the confidence reposed in her ability to speak in public. She dwarfs her contemporaries in

academic achievements and mental maturity. An ordinary soul would not accumulate that much silverware in a lifetime as she has done already. Her boundless energy coupled with a burning desire to learn and explore will be an asset to any school she attends. I am very happy to note that Sitara has not let her outstanding achievements go to her head as she is intrinsically grounded and maintains a low profile. Sitara had developed a vision of finding cures for various maladies afflicting the poor majority of our country very early in her academic journey. She wants to be on the side of the disenfranchised, who continues to be at the mercy of a failing medical apparatus. She wants to serve humanity to the best of her ability by scientific research in her chosen field of Bio-chemistry. Her role models include Dr. Abdus Salam, Sir Issac Newton, Albert Einstein, Stephen Hawking, Marie Curie and Maria Montessori to name a few. Hailing from a humble middle-class background she is all set to break the social barriers and rise to the very top of the social ladder. She draws her inspiration from the Quranic wisdom which exhorts mankind to study, investigate, research and explore the mysteries of the universe. Sitara's aims are not personal but universal she thinks ahead of her time and talks about emancipation of mankind through scientific research and has a yearning to leave a footprint in the scientific realm. Sitara is currently in London, studying at the University of Oxford's Department of Oncology, engaged in the research of Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia and Novel Therapeutics. She is a member of her college's GCR executive Board and representative to the Medical Sciences Board's Graduate Joint Consultative Committee. Never before was so much achieved in so less a time by such a young person with such intensity. In ending I would say, "your name is Sitara and you are a star."

'The Crown' workers unhappy with 'obscene' Diana death scene on show

The Crown workers are disgusted by Princess Diana's death scene



The Crown workers have objected to Princess Diana's funeral scene on the show. A source told The Sun: "The bosses went way over the top to chase ratings." The insider added: "They actually made Elizabeth [Debicki] climb into a coffin and play dead as Diana." They added: "Everyone was very uncomfortable doing the shoot. "It is obscene and should be banned from broadcast." Adding about Diana's funeral scene, they continued: "Viewers will see a French priest administering the last rites for Diana as she is pronounced deceased." "Prince Charles - played by Dominic West - enters the room and is in flood of tears. "In his hysteria he notices that Diana is missing an earring. It is all he can focus on as grief envelops him. "Charles tells French officials, 'You've got to find that earring. She loved that earring,' in terribly upsetting scenes," they reveal.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1022585-the-crown-workers-unhappy-with-obscene-diana-death-scene-on-show>

The Sign of the Mosque of the Grand Victory in Zion will Bring About a Significant Change in the Lives of our Progeny



Part - 1

By. Mohiuddin Abbasi, London

I was one of those fortunate ones who had the blessed opportunity to witness the recent tour of Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V, may Allah be his helper, to the USA and also the historic event of the inauguration of the Masjid Fath e Azeem (The Mosque of the Grand Victory). I was literally beside myself with joy when I received an invitation from Sahibzada Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad Sahib, Amir Jama'at Ahmadiyya, USA. As a mark of thankfulness, I made a prostration of gratitude to Allah. I had the blessed opportunity to join in the congregational prayers led by Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V and also benefited spiritually from his company besides having been blessed with the opportunity to offer special prayers. May Allah enable us to benefit from the blessings of the Khalifa of the time and also to follow his advice and instructions in letter and spirit. (Amen).

Friday, the 30th September, 2022 was an extraordinarily significant day in our lives which can never be effaced from the slate of our heart and mind. This was the day which would be remembered as a great landmark in the annals of the Jama'at Ahmadiyya because on this day the grand prophecy of the Promised MessiahAS regarding Dr Alexander Dowie culminated during the blessed reign of the fifth Khilafat. On this blessed day, inaugurating the Masjid Fath-e-Azeem with his Friday sermon, our beloved Hudhur said: The Promised MessiahAS, upon receiving a revelation from Allah, had made a prophecy about the death of Dowie and said that it would be a sign of a 'Grand Victory' which would appear soon. And exactly the world witnessed



that within fifteen to twenty days Allah inflicted Dowie with an ignominious death. The inauguration of this mosque in this city is the next phase of that prophecy. The first phase of this revelation was fulfilled 115 years ago and today we are witnessing the fulfillment of the next part. Hudhur further stated: Due to the historical significance of this city and the fact that a false claimant to prophethood – someone who used extremely foul language against the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) – who then perished away, and given the fact that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is now established in that very city, are all such aspects which should make every Ahmadi Muslim grateful to Allah. We should also be grateful to Allah Who enabled us to build this mosque. Therefore, it is not only a day of jubilation but also a day of expressing our profound gratitude to Allah,

Who, besides enabling us to build this mosque, made us witness a sign of the truthfulness of an ardent and true lover of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him.

(Alfazl International, 16 October, 2022)

Regarding this prophecy, the Promised Messiah AS was vouchsafed the following revelation from Allah on 20th February, 1907: "I shall manifest a fresh sign which will contain a great victory. It will be a sign for the whole world and will be wrought by the hands of God and will be from the heavens. Let every eye wait for it for God will manifest it soon as His testimony that this humble one who is being reviled by all peoples is from Him. Blessed is he who benefits from it. Amen."

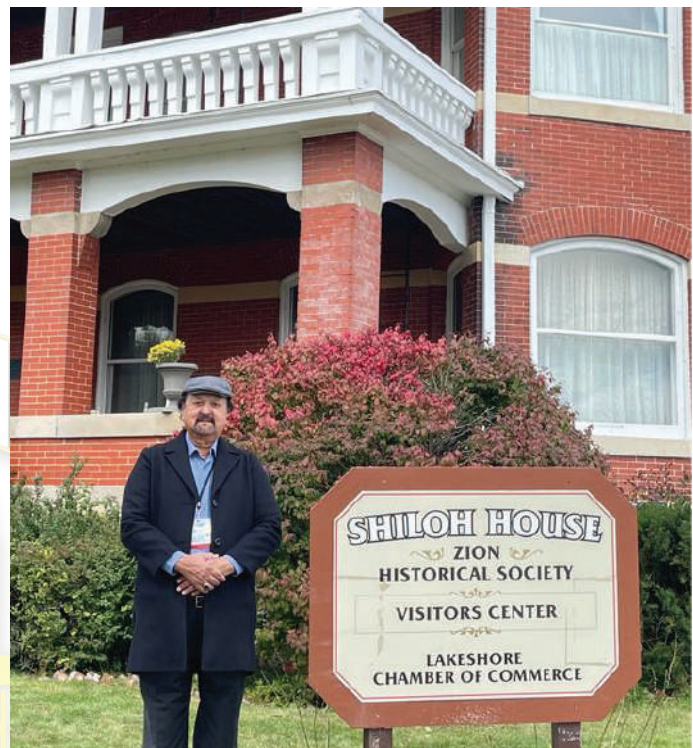
(Majmua Ishtiharat, Vol 3, p. 560, Edition 1989). Hudhur further said: We are inaugurating the Fath-e-Azeem Mosque, the Mosque of the Grand Victory in Zion as a symbol of true religious freedom. Its doors open with an enlightened message pronouncing that the religious rights and peaceful beliefs of all people and communities are to be forever protected and cherished.

(Report USA tour, No.6, Alfazl online)

At the inauguration of this Grand Mosque, thousands of people also witnessed the fulfillment of this revelation of the Promised Messiah AS: 'O Masroor, verily I am with you.'

(Tadhkira, p.630)

We have witnessed the fulfillment of this revelation on many previous occasions also. The first occasion was when Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad Sahib was elected to the office of Khilafat. We shall continue to witness many more such occasions in the future also, Insha'Allah. This day assumes a special significance in the annals of the Jama'at Ahmadiyya as millions of Ahmadi brethren witnessed this occasion live on MTA International and through social media. This spiritual sight can never be obliterated from our memory. During the Friday prayers, we saw many devout Ahmadis literally sobbing and



crying in their prayers. It was a momentous sight and all this was being done to express gratitude to Allah. Blessed are those who had the opportunity to witness this sight and also the other functions attended by Khalifatul Masih. Only the fortunate ones are offered such great opportunities. I also was among those fortunate ones and had received such an opportunity after decades. Prior to this, I witnessed the historic inaugural ceremony of the Basharat Mosque in Spain in 1982. The city of Zion was the Headquarters of Dr Dowie. I have gathered some details about this city from various sources which I would like to share here with our readers in brief. A detailed article on this topic has been published in the Alfazl International of 7th October, 2022.

Historical significance of the city of Zion

Zion, also known as Saihoon, is a small city situated in the Illinois state of the USA. Towards its north is situated the famous Lake Michigan. Zion was founded by Dr Alexander Dowie in 1901. Most of the roads and streets of this city bear biblical names. Dr Dowie built a magnificent church in Zion which was named as Christian Catholic Church of Zion. The word Zion signifies those chosen ones of God who are making preparations for the

second coming of Jesus. At the centre of a roundabout in the city of Zion, Dr Alexander Dowie laid the foundation of his Church, which stands even today, though it is owned by some other sect of Christianity. Dowie's ancient house, now converted to a museum and in a dilapidated condition, is also situated in this area. We visited this area to see his old house and Central Church, but could not enter it as it is opened only on particular days for a limited time. However, we went round it from the outside and had a close look at it and its surroundings. The inhabitants of this area do not know this city by Dowie's name. Even the elderly and old aged people failed to give any clue about it. At this point, a couplet of the Promised Messiah AS flashed across my mind which says:

I was poor and helpless, unknown and unskilled,

No one knew as to where Qadian was located.

Today the world has come to know where Qadian is situated and also about Zion, but through the Promised Messiah AS and his prophecy regarding Dowie. Today Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad Sahib, the fifth Caliph of the Promised Messiah AS, has lent this place a special significance. Sometime later, when the replica of the Minaratul Masih will be built here, its spiritual radiance will scatter across the ends of the world and thus this sign of the Mosque of the Grand Victory will bring about a spiritual revolution in our posterity.

Dr Dowie's Life in brief

Dr Dowie was born in Edinburgh, Scotland in May, 1847. His father's name was John Murray Dowie. It is said that Dowie had finished reading the Bible just at the age of six. In 1860, his family emigrated to Australia. Dowie worked at the shop of his uncle who had a shoe business in Australia. Thereafter, he did odd jobs at many places. At the age of 20, he hired a teacher to become an evangelist. Later he went to Edinburgh City

University to study theology. He also worked as an honorary evangelist in a reputed hospital. He was appointed as an evangelist in Sydney where he rendered services during 1873-74. Here the Church had a large number of followers. Later, he was appointed at Newton. In 1876, he married his cousin, Jeanie. This marriage was wrought with conflicts and disputes as the Christians generally do not marry their cousins and it is considered immoral. Dowie had three children from this marriage. In 1878, Dowie took a Theatre hall on rent and started his preaching sessions. He announced that he wanted to establish Free Christian Church. His proposal received wide acclamation and response. He also contested a parliamentary election which he lost by a huge margin and as a result he ran into heavy debts. Facing financial stringency and also following the death of his daughter, he wrote a letter to his wife that he could not afford a single meal in a day rather he had to go without meals sometimes for 48 years. He further wrote that it seemed that he was on the brink of death. During 1884, his financial condition improved greatly. So he established Free Christian Church in Melbourne and also built a prayer hall. Thereafter, he started the Ministry of Divine Healing during a Convention. His basic concept was that diseases come from Satan, and they can be cured only through the mercy of Jesus. Listening to this speech, many people joined him and became his followers. However, his enemies also increased proportionately. This led to the formation of a law prohibiting conduction of preaching sessions or meetings on the streets or roads. Dowie violated this law and said that he was just following the teachings of the Gospel. He also held such meetings and sessions both in England and Australia. He was arrested and produced in the court of law where he was found guilty and was fined five pounds. He refused to pay the fine and consequently he had to undergo imprisonment for

thirty days. In 1880, he migrated to America and established the International Divine Healers Association. His family also moved to America from New Zealand. He started preaching of Divine Healing and settled in Evanston, Chicago where he was met with severe opposition and he was declared a liar and an imposter. There was another person namely, Jacob Schwin Furth who also claimed to be the Messiah. He also attracted many followers, mostly women. Dowie's followers claim that he went to meet Jacob and defeated him in a debate. According to the available details of this meeting, it is said that Dowie made some insolent comments about the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, during his discussion. Here I want to add that in 1890 Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Sahib claimed to be the Messiah. He wrote a treatise entitled *The Victory of Islam* which was published in 1891 in which he claimed:

The Messiah who was to come is this very person.....

This humble one has been sent in the name of the Messiah, in order that the doctrine of the Cross may be smashed into pieces.

(*The Victory of Islam*, p. 10, footnote 11)

Dr Dowie did not receive much acclamation when he settled in Chicago in 1893. However, people started visiting him for divine healing. When his group took some houses on rent in that area, he was met with bitter opposition. People named those houses as mental asylums. During that period, he started his paper entitled 'Leave of Healing' to propagate his mission. His followers continued to increase but his enemies also grew proportionately. The Chicago Board of Health also joined his enemies. Consequently, arrest warrants were issued for Dowie. He was arrested, tried in a court and was fined for he was found guilty. In 1896, Dowie made a prophecy that about his popularity that: If God grants me life, and if he rose to the position of General and Steer in the Church, then his Christian Catholic

Church will become so strong and wealthy that the world did not witness the like of it before. (*Exemplary End of Dowie*, p. 24)

Venting his bitter hatred against Islam, Dr Dowie made the following remarks on 25th August, 1890: "I warn the Christians of America and Europe that Islam is not a dead religion, rather it is full of potential strength. Though Islam must perish, Mohammadanism must perish, its destruction cannot be executed by the indolent Latin Christianity or the impotent Greek Christianity." (*Tarikh e Ahmadiyyat*, Vol. 2, p. 242). On 19th October, 1899 Dr Dowie announced that he would deliver a lecture on the topic 'Doctors, Drugs and Devil' in Chicago. Its main objective was to attack the medical world. Therefore, the medical students and persons working in the medical field decided to launch a severe protest against the proposed lecture of Dowie. No sooner did the function start, people attacked Dowie. He was meted out the same treatment in other cities also. In 1899, Dr Dowie's Church declared a holy war against the prevailing evils in Chicago. It is worth mentioning here that prior to this announcement, Dr Dowie read out the prophecy of prophet Malachi. This he did in order to proclaim himself as the one who came to fulfill the said prophecy of Malachi. He also revealed the good news that during the past one year, the Church had received donations to the tune of one million dollars. Between the period 1899-1900, Dr Dowie claimed to be a prophet and rechristened his community as Christian Catholic Apostolic Church. (*Tarikh e Ahmadiyyat*, Vol. 2, p.241)

The same year he made a plan to establish a couple of industrial units to manufacture lace cloth. On 15th July, 1901, he laid the foundation of Zion city and declared that the Messiah would appear in that very place.

(*Tarikh e Ahmadiyyat*, Vol.2, pp 241-242)

Continue.....

Ukraine fighting is deadlocked, spy chief Kyrylo Budanov tells BBC

Fighting in Ukraine is currently at a deadlock as neither Ukraine nor Russia can make significant advances, the head of the Ukrainian military intelligence agency has said, while Kyiv waits for more advanced weapons from Western allies. "The situation is just stuck," Kyrylo Budanov told the BBC in an interview. "It doesn't move." After Ukrainian troops recaptured the southern city of Kherson in November, most of the fiercest battles have been around Bakhmut, in the eastern Donetsk region. Elsewhere, Russian forces appear to be on the defensive while winter has slowed down the pace of Ukraine's ground operations across the 1,000km (620-mile) front line. Mr Budanov said Russia was "now completely at a dead end" suffering very significant losses, and he believed the Kremlin had decided to announce another mobilisation of conscripts. But, he added, Ukrainian forces still lacked resources to move forward in multiple areas. "We can't defeat them in all directions comprehensively. Neither can they," he said. "We're very much looking forward to new weapons supplies, and to the arrival of more advanced weapons." Earlier this month, after a series of

Russian military setbacks, Ukrainian officials warned about the possibility of another ground offensive by Moscow's forces from Belarus at the start of 2023. The push, they said, could include a second attempt to seize the capital, Kyiv, and involve tens of thousands of reservists being trained in Russia. Mr Budanov, however, dismissed Russia's activities in Belarus, including the movement of thousands of troops, as attempts to make Ukraine divert troops from the battlefields in the south and east to the north. Recently, he said, a train loaded with Russian soldiers stopped in a location close to the Belarus-Ukraine border and returned, several hours later, with everyone on board. "They did it openly during the day, so that everyone would see it, even if [we] didn't want to," adding that he saw no real, imminent threat from the troops in Belarus. "As of now, I don't see any signs of preparations for an invasion of Kyiv or northern areas from Belarus." The interview in Mr Budanov's dimly lit office in Kyiv took place days after Russian President Vladimir Putin travelled to the Belarusian capital, Minsk, for the first time in more than three

years. His visit raised speculation that he might try to persuade President Alexander Lukashenko, a long-time ally, to send Belarusian troops to Ukraine. Belarus has been used by Russian forces as a launchpad for attacks, but Mr Budanov believes Belarusian society will not support any further involvement in the war and analysts have ques-



tioned the level of preparedness of its 48,000-strong army. "That's why President Lukashenko is taking all steps to prevent a disaster for his country," he said. Since retaking Kherson, Ukrainian forces have been engaged in brutal fighting with Russian troops around Bakhmut, in trench warfare that has been compared to World War One. For Russia, capturing the city would disrupt Ukraine's supply lines and open a route for an advance towards other Ukrainian strongholds in the east, including Kramatorsk and Sloviansk. The offensive, Mr Budanov said, was being led by the Wagner Group, a Russian mercenary army. Its founder, Yevgeniy Prigozhin, is believed to want to capture the town as a political prize, amid rivalries between senior Russian officials.

Away from the battlefields, Russia has carried out a relentless air campaign since mid-October, targeting Ukraine's critical infrastructure with missiles and drones, leaving millions without electricity, heating and water. Mr Budanov said the strikes were likely to continue, but suggested Russia would not be able to sustain the level of the attacks because of dwindling missile reserves, and the inability of Russian industry to replenish them. Although Iran has provided most of the drones used in Russia's attacks, the spy chief says it has so far refused to deliver missiles to Russia, aware that Western countries are likely to impose measures on Tehran, already under crippling sanctions because of its nuclear programme. The war may be deadlocked for now, but Mr Budanov is adamant that Ukraine will ultimately retake all the territory now under occupation, including Crimea, the peninsula that Russia seized in 2014. He envisages Ukraine returning to its 1991 borders, when independence was declared with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64109024>

Scientists intrigued by Mars' 'mysterious' craters

There are many great mysteries on Mars. Was there ever microbiological life there? Under the polar cap, are there any undiscovered "lakes"? The Arabia Terra region in the northern half of Mars is home to a number of craters, which are surrounded by a number of intriguing mysteries. Using its HiRise camera, NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter took several aerial photos of craters in Arabia Terra. According to Paul Geissler of the HiRise team, the craters in question "contain unusual deposits with puzzling forms and distribution." University of Arizona researchers manage HiRise, reported CNET. The crater enigma is complicated in many ways. According to Geissler, the deposits feature horizontal laminations that could be strata or terraces. They also have ridges that radiate light. Only the south sides of craters larger than 1,970 feet (600 metres) in diameter have peculiar deposits. Smaller craters are devoid of them. The unique shapes are quite puzzling, but there may be an explanation related to the sublimation of glacial material on Mars (sublimation is the process of a solid turning directly into a gas). "The terraces might represent different epochs of sublimation," Geissler wrote. "Perhaps the larger craters penetrated to a water table between 45 and 60 metres below the surface and were flooded after formation." Mars values sublimation a lot. The "Happy Face Crater," a crater located in the planet's icy south polar zone, is a great example. The crater's appearance, as well as the smiling face inside it, have evolved with sublimating frost over time.

www.t.ly/4P-Y

Bill Gates says he 'will drop down', 'eventually off' World's Richest list in future

Bill Gates said, 'Being wealthy makes my life much more comfortable, but not more fulfilling.'



Bill Gates is not concerned with his status as a 'billionaire' or his rank on the 'World's Richest' list. In his annual Gates Foundation update via his blog, the Microsoft CEO opened up on more personal topics alongside with his usual reviews of recent technological advances and climate change. "I turned 67 in October. It's hard to believe I'm that old — in America, most people my age are retired!" Gates began his blog post. The billionaire then stated that his status would not be the same any more in the near future on the World's Richest list as he will keep on giving back to the society. "But I won't be slowing down anytime soon. I'm still going full speed on the project I began more than two decades ago, which is to give the vast majority of my resources back to society," he scribed. "Although I don't care where I rank on the list of the world's richest people," he wrote, "I do know that as I succeed in giving, I will drop down and eventually off the list altogether." After giving significant updates about the Gates Foundation — including cutting the

childhood death rate in half, helping the world better prepare for future pandemics, helping truly eradicate polio, and using AI technology to help save mothers and babies in underdeveloped countries — he turned to his personal life, per People. "With the pandemic, war in Ukraine, and downturn in the economy, the past three years have been some of the hardest in recent memory," Gates wrote. "Everyone in the world has experienced loss during this time — of loved ones, financial security, or a way of life." He then opened up about his personal life. "Because of my position, I'm insulated from many of these hardships. But I too have hit some personal low points over the past few years, including the death of my father and the end of my marriage." "Being wealthy makes my life much more comfortable, but not more fulfilling. For that, I need family, friends, and a job where I work on things that matter. I'm grateful to have all three."

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1022602-bill-gates-says-he-will-drop-down-eventually-off-worlds-richest-list-in-future>

Israel's Netanyahu Back With Extreme-right Govt



After a stint in opposition, Benjamin Netanyahu will return to power in Israel on Thursday, leading what analysts describe as the most right-wing government in the country's history. Senior security and law enforcement officials have already voiced concern over its direction, as have Palestinians. "It becomes for Netanyahu's partners a dream government," Yohanan Plesner, president of the Israel Democracy Institute think-tank, told AFP. "And one side's dream is the other side's nightmare," he said, adding: "This government is expected to take the country in a completely new trajectory." Netanyahu, 73, who is fighting corruption allegations in court, already served as prime minister longer than anyone in Israeli history, including a record 12-year tenure from 2009 to 2021 and a three-year period in the late 90s. He was ousted from power in the spring of 2021 by a motley coalition of leftists, centrists and Arab parties headed by Naftali Bennett and former TV news anchor Yair Lapid. It didn't take him long to come back. Netanyahu will present his new government to the Israeli parliament for a ratification vote at 11am (9am GMT). Following the election on Nov 1, Netanyahu entered into negotiations with ultra-Orthodox and extreme-right parties, among them Bezael Smotrich's Religious Zionism formation and Itamar Ben Gvir's Jewish Power party. Both have a history of inflammatory remarks about the Palestinians. They will now take charge respectively of Israeli settlement policy in the West Bank, and of the Israeli police, which also operates in the territory occupied by Israel since 1967.

'Thirst for power'



Even before the government was sworn in, the majority parties passed laws that would allow Aryeh Deri — a key ally from the ultra-Orthodox Shas party — to serve as a minister despite a previous guilty plea to tax offences. They also voted to expand the powers of the national security minister, a portfolio set to be handed to Ben Gvir who would have authority over the police. The assignment comes despite Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara's warning against the "politicisation of law enforcement". On Monday, in a phone call to Netanyahu, armed forces chief Aviv Kochavi expressed his concerns regarding the creation of a second ministerial post in the defence ministry for Smotrich, who will oversee the management of civilian affairs in the West Bank. Israel's ally, the United States, has also spoken out. Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned that Washington would oppose settlement expansion as well as any bid to annex the West Bank. But in a statement of policy priorities released on Wednesday, Netanyahu's Likud party said the government will pursue settlement expansion. About 475,000 Jewish settlers — among them Smotrich and Ben

Gvir — live there now in settlements considered illegal under international law. Analysts said Netanyahu offered the extreme-right vast concessions in the hope he might obtain judicial immunity or cancellation of his corruption trial. He is charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust — allegations he denies.

Denis Charbit, professor of political science at Israel's Open University, told AFP the government "is the addition of Netanyahu's political weakness, linked to his age and his trial, and the fact that you have a new political family of the revolutionary right that we had never seen with this strength in Israel". Smotrich and Ben Gvir "have a very strong thirst for power" and their priority remains the expansion of West Bank settlements, Charbit said.

'Explosion'

Ben Gvir has repeatedly visited Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound, the third-holiest site in Islam. It is also Judaism's holiest, known as the Temple Mount. Under a historical status quo, non-Muslims can visit the sanctuary but may not pray there. Palestinians would see a visit by a serving Israeli minister as a provocation. "If Ben Gvir, as minister, goes to Al-Aqsa, it will be a big red line and it will lead to an explosion," Basem Naim, a senior official with the Islamist movement Hamas which rules the Gaza Strip, told AFP. Israel and Hamas fought a war in May 2021. This year, other Gaza militants and Israel exchanged rocket and missile fire for three days in August. In the West Bank, violence has surged this year and many are afraid of more unrest. "I think that if the government acts in an irresponsible way, it could cause a security escalation," outgoing Defence Minister Benny Gantz said on Tuesday, expressing fear over the "extremist direction" of the incoming administration.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1728860>

Cody Fisher: Two men charged with Birmingham nightclub stabbing murder



Two men have been charged with murder following the stabbing of footballer Cody Fisher at a nightclub in Birmingham on Boxing Day. Kami Carpenter, 21, and Remy Gordon, 22, both from Birmingham, have been remanded in custody, police said. The men, who were also charged with affray, will appear before Birmingham Magistrates' Court on 2 January. Mr Fisher, 23, a non-league footballer and a school sports coach, was attacked at the Crane nightclub in Digbeth. A man, 22, also arrested on suspicion of murder, has been released on bail. And four other people arrested on suspicion of assisting an offender have been released on bail. Detective Chief Inspector Ian Ingram, from West Midlands Police, said the arrests were "a significant development in our investigation," as the force "seeks to get justice for Cody, his family and friends". He added officers were keen to hear from anyone with further information about the incident.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-birmingham-64117352>

Australia to extradite ex-US fighter pilot over China training

Former US pilot faces charges of conspiracy to export defence services to China over training of military pilots.

The Australian Attorney-General's Department has approved a request to extradite a former US Marine Corps fighter pilot to the United States where he faces charges of breaking US arms control laws by engaging in the training of Chinese pilots. Arrested in Australia in October, Daniel Duggan, 54, is accused of money laundering and conspiracy to export defence services to China by instructing Chinese military pilots in how to land on aircraft carriers, according to a 2017 indictment unsealed by a US court in December. Australia received an extradition request from the US for Duggan on December 9, the Attorney-General's Department said on Thursday, and was required to make a decision by December 25 as to whether to formally accept the request. "The Attorney-General has complied with this requirement, and Mr Duggan's lawyer has been informed of that decision," the department said in a statement to the Reuters news agency. The move indicates the attorney general is of the opinion that Duggan is an extraditable person to the US, according to Australia's Extradition Act 1988. The 2017 indictment says "Duggan provided military training to PRC (People's Republic of China) pilots" through a South African flight school on three occasions in 2010 and 2012, while he was a US citizen.

The violations he is accused of also include providing aviation services in China, evaluating Chinese military pilot trainees and instruction in landing on aircraft carriers. Duggan faces four US charges, including conspiracy to export defence services to China, conspiracy to launder money and violating the Arms Export Control Act. The extradition

matter is due before a New South Wales state magistrate on January 10, the Attorney-General's Department said. Duggan's lawyer, Dennis Miralis, was not available for comment. Fighting the extradition request, Miralis had said Duggan was an Australian citizen who renounced his US citizenship and denies breaking any law. Duggan was arrested in a rural part of New South Wales in October by Australian Federal Police acting on a US request for his arrest. He had arrived in Australia from China just weeks before. In October, the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence issued an intelligence alert warning its former and current military pilots against Chinese headhunting programs aimed at recruiting them. The UK said it would also change its national security laws to stop former military pilots being recruited by third-party agencies to help train Chinese forces. Media reports said the pilots had been offered approximately \$300,000 to train China's air force. Canada and New Zealand said they were also investigating if former service personnel had engaged in the training of Chinese military pilots. Australia's defence minister, Richard Marles, in November ordered an urgent review of the military's secrecy policies in response to concerns that Australian pilots were among Western military personnel recruited to provide training to the Chinese pilots. The defence minister warned former pilots to remember that revealing Australian military secrets was a "clear and unambiguous" crime.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/29/australia-to-extradite-ex-us-fighter-pilot-over-china-training>

2022 Will Be Warmest Year Ever For UK, Met Office Says

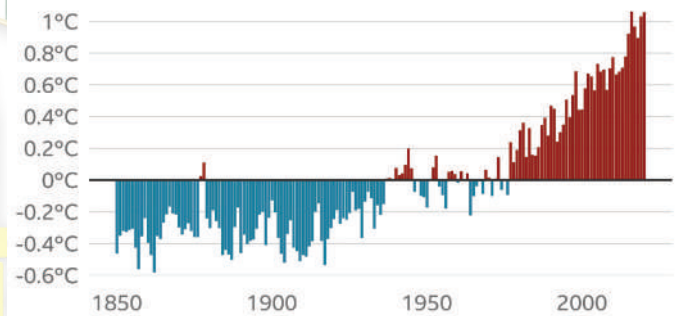
The Met Office has said 2022 will be the warmest year on record for the UK. According to provisional figures, every month was hotter than average, with the exception of December when the UK experienced a notable cold snap. The year's average temperature will likely beat the previous all-time high of 9.88C, set in 2014. The exact mean temperature is set to be confirmed in the new year but the Met office said the consistent heat this year had been noteworthy. Dr Mark McCarthy, a senior climate scientist at the Met Office, said the provisional figures are in line with the "genuine impacts we expect as a result of human-induced climate change". "Although it doesn't mean every year will be the warmest on record, climate change continues to increase the chances of increasingly warm years over the coming decades," Dr McCarthy added. A spell of heatwaves in June led to the UK experiencing its fourth warmest summer on record, as temperatures broke the 40C mark for the first time. During the intense heat in July, the Met Office issued its first ever red warning for extreme heat. The temperatures seen in mid-July would have been "extremely unlikely in the pre-industrial period - the era before humanity started emitting lots of greenhouse gases," Dr McCarthy explained. "As we have seen in the first two weeks of December, our climate is still subject to notable cold spells during the winter season, but our observational data show these have generally become less frequent and less severe as our climate warms," he said.

The weather extremes of 2022

• In February, Storm Franklin became the third named storm to hit the UK in a week -

The world is getting warmer

Annual mean land and ocean temperature above or below average, 1850 to 2020



Note: Average calculated from 1951 to 1980 data

Source: University of California Berkeley

BBC

following Dudley and Eunice - the first time this has happened since the storm naming system was introduced in 2015

- A new record UK high of 40.3C was recorded at Coningsby in Lincolnshire on 19 July 2022
 - An official drought was declared in large parts of England in August, as low-water levels and tinder-dry conditions gripped the UK
 - Autumn 2022 was one of the UK's warmest, with November being 1.8C above average, making it the third warmest on record, behind only 2006 and 2011, according to the Met Office
 - December's cold snap put the UK in the grip of a spell of severe cold weather, with snow, ice and fog warnings in place across the UK
- Last week, the Met Office said it was expecting 2023 to be warmer than this year, and one of the hottest on record.

Predictions suggest it will be the 10th year in a row where the global temperature is at least 1C above average. Scientific evidence shows that climate change is driving up the global temperature, and governments around the world have promised to cut emissions to keep

temperature rises below 1.5C. In a separate report, the National Trust warned that extreme weather seen throughout the year has set a benchmark for what a typical year could be like. The charity said high temperatures, drought and back-to-back storms have created major challenges for nature in years to come. In its annual review, it said this year was a "stark illustration" of the difficulties many UK species could face without more action to tackle climate change. The hot summer and months of low rainfall dried up rivers, fragile chalk streams and ponds, damaged crops and natural habitats, and fuelled wildfires that destroyed landscapes, the charity said. The National Trust's climate change adviser, Keith Jones, said there was "no escaping" how challenging this year's weather had been for nature. "Drought, high temperatures, back-to-back storms, unseasonal heat, the recent cold snap and floods means nature, like us, is having to cope with a new litany of weather extremes," he said. He added weather experts were predicting the future would see more torrential downpours, along with very dry and hot summers.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64111625>

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India halts production of syrup linked to Uzbekistan deaths



NEW DELHI: India's drug regulator said on Thursday that it had inspected a facility that made a cough syrup linked to deaths of 19 children in Uzbekistan and promised more action based on its findings. A legal representative of Marion Biotech, the Indian maker of the Dok-1 Max syrup, said the company regretted the deaths and has halted its production. The regulator reviewed the company's Noida facility in the Uttar Pradesh state and is in regular touch with its Uzbekistan counterpart, the Indian health ministry said in a statement.

"The samples of the cough syrup have been taken from the manufacturing premises and sent to Regional Drugs Testing Laboratory, Chandigarh for testing," the ministry said. Uzbekistan's health ministry has said that at least 18 children in Samarkand city died after consuming the syrup manufactured by the Indian drugmaker. On Thursday, Uzbek news site report.uz another death of a one-year-old, citing regional prosecutor's office.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1728988/india-halts-production-of-syrup-linked-to-uzbekistan-deaths>

Less than half of England and Wales population Christian, Census 2021 shows

By Aleem Maqbool

For the first time fewer than half of people in England and Wales describe themselves as Christian, the Census 2021 has revealed. The proportion of people who said they were Christian was 46.2%, down from 59.3% in the last census in 2011. In contrast the number who said they had no religion increased to 37.2% of the population, up from a quarter. Those identifying as Muslim rose from 4.9% in 2011 to 6.5% last year. People were also asked about their ethnic group and national identity - the responses of which were released in the results just published. The census is carried out every 10 years by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). People were asked the broad question what their religion was rather than being asked more specifically about their beliefs or religious practices, in the voluntary question included in the census since 2001. Ticking "no religion" does not mean having no beliefs, says Prof Linda Woodhead, from King's College London. "Some will be atheist, a lot will be agnostic - they just say, 'I don't really know' - and some will be spiritual and be doing spiritual things," she said. Separately when people were asked about their ethnic group, 81.7% of residents in England and Wales identified as White, down from 86.0% a decade earlier, according to the census. And 74.4% of the total population identified as White as well as English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British. The next most common ethnic group was Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh accounting for 9.3% of the overall population - 5.5 million people, up from 4.2 million. The number of people identifying as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African was 4% of the population, up from 3.3%, taking the figure from 1.9 million to 2.4 million. One in 10 of households across England and Wales are now made up of people from two or more different ethnic groups - an increase from 8.7%. And Luton, Birmingham and Leicester are among 14 areas in England where people identifying as White are now in the minority. In terms of national identity, among those who described it as not being the UK, the most common response was Polish, followed by Romanian. It may feel like a pivotal moment, with the census showing fewer than half of people in England and Wales identifying as Christian, but for years social surveys have shown a rapid rise in those who define themselves as having no religion, often reporting that as the largest category - that is not the case in the census data. With its very simple optional question, "What is your religion?", the census does not illustrate the range of 22.2 million people in the "no religion" category; from those who do not believe in God at all to those who do in some form, or believe in the power of prayer and an afterlife or are spiritual in some way. The trend away from faith is not something that is reflected in major non-Christian religions which all saw a rise, with more than 1.2 million more people identifying as Muslim in England and Wales in 2021 as compared to 2011. As with ethnicity, patterns of family size and immigration are seen as contributory factors. Of those who chose to write in their answer under the "any other religion" option, the largest group identified as Pagan, with a tenfold rise from 2011 in those identifying themselves as Shaman. In terms of religion, London is the most religiously diverse region of England, with just over 25.3% of people reporting a religion

other than Christianity. And south-west England is shown to be the least religiously diverse region, with 3.2% selecting a religion other than Christian. The figures also showed differences in nations - in England alone, 37.2% of people said they had no religion, while in Wales this rose to 46.5% from 32.1% in 2011. Following the announcement, the Archbishop of York said the country had "left behind the era when many people almost automatically identified as Christian". The Most Rev Stephen Cottrell said: "It's not a great surprise that the census shows fewer people in this country identifying as Christian than in the past, but it still throws down a challenge to us not only to trust that God will build his kingdom on Earth but also to play our part in making Christ known." He said that, facing a cost-of-living crisis and war in Europe, people still needed spiritual guidance, adding: "We will be there for them, in many cases, providing food and warmth." Chief executive of Humanists UK Andrew Copson added the figures should be a "wake-up call which prompts fresh reconsiderations of the role of religion in society". "No state in Europe has such a religious set-up as we do in terms of law and public policy, while at the same time having such a non-religious population." The census explores how British society is being shaped from people's answers to questions about themselves, their household and their home. The results help organisations make decisions on planning and funding public services including transport, education and healthcare. The 2021 survey, carried out on March 21 last year, was filled out by more than 24 million households across England and Wales. More data from the census is set to be published in stages over the next two years. Scotland's census was due to take place in 2021 but was delayed by a year due to the Covid pandemic.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63792408>

Saudi Arabia's club Al-Nasr reports signing contract with Cristiano Ronaldo



Portuguese football player Cristiano Ronaldo has signed a contract with the Saudi Arabian football club Al-Nasr, the club's press office announced on Saturday. According to Agence France Presse (AFP), the agreement runs through 2025. "This is more than just a story," the club's press office said in a statement, "This is a transfer that will not only inspire our club to new successes, but also inspire our league and future generations to become a better version of themselves." The Spanish newspaper Marca earlier reported that the value of the contract is estimated at about 100 million euros. According to the report, Ronaldo will get another 100 million euros under advertising contacts, which will make him the world's highest-paid athlete. The UK club Manchester United on November 21 said it terminated the contract with the Portuguese footballer by mutual agreement. That happened after Ronaldo said in an interview to The Sun before the football World Cup in Qatar that he had no respect for the club's current coach Erik ten Hag. Ronaldo, 37, is a celebrated player who won multiple titles in the sport.

<https://tass.com/sport/1558145>

Three wise men and star of Bethlehem

By: Masood Ashraf

In the Gospel of Mathews there is a story that talks about three wise men from the East coming to Bethlehem who were led by what they thought was a bright star in the sky towards baby Jesus (as) in search of a newborn king. These men were also commonly known as Magi which mean wise men. Word Magi could include everyone expert in their field such as Magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers. By the Middle Ages, most believed that three Magi visited the Christ child and that they were kings who symbolized the three ages of man. In keeping with Matthew's account that the Magi journeyed from the East, writers first suggested that the kings were Persian. Later commentators proposed that they represented the three known continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa. From a wide assortment of names suggested for the Magi, those that eventually prevailed were Gaspar (or Caspar), Melchior, and Balthasar. But the names, like the lands of origin, were never consistently assigned to a particular king. But a question arises, is it possible to have a bright star in the sky that leads someone directly to a place? It is quite impossible. It is like chasing the moon as a kid and just when you think you have got it, it is not reachable. However, there is a lot of truth to the story but not as modern-day Christians portray it. It is important to understand that it was the combination of their wisdom, intelligence, and foresight of time and events related to the Holy Scriptures and many time line prophecies that led them to seek Jesus (as).



witnessed before and after the appearance of these messengers Professor Gary Durham writes in his article "First, they would have followed the insights given them in the prophecies of Daniel concerning the timing of the Messiah's birth and death. The most important of these is the ninth (9th) chapter of Daniel where the Angel Gabriel gives Daniel a cryptic calendar organized according to the sacred system of Heptads (seven-year cycles) and patterned forward on the structure of the Exile which the Jews were about to complete, and which Daniel had read in the Prophet Jeremiah, would be 70-years long and was about to be completed in Daniel's old age. Therefore, this is the reason Daniel falls down and prays for the restoration of Jerusalem in the first part of chapter nine. Then he writes "In Luke 21-25 we are told that the heavens will be used to communicate once again at the second coming of the Messiah. "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring of the seas. Pharaoh Ramses of Egypt's 19th dynasty had decreed that all baby boys were to be slaughtered or thrown into the Nile River to eradicate all potential threats against him. Further evidence from analyzing suggests that there is a deeper meaning behind the events that took place during that time period. Comparatively, it is

recorded in the Bible that King Herod of Judea initiated a similar plan to murder all the male infants in Bethlehem when He learned that the wise men left without telling him where the Christ child was born. The internal fear of a possible threat propelled these individuals to meticulously plan a scheme that would guarantee their success and eliminate all possible hindrances. But we do have to give them credit for recognizing the time of the advent of a Prophet. So logical conclusion we can draw from the story is that they did see bright star appeared in sky and they knew it that it was time for Prophet to appear but star did not lead them but star did affirm their inkling and they were looking for any sign that would lead them to that great Prophet and upon learning that there was a birth without the father in Bethlehem they decided to make long journey to investigate it. Three wise men did not get to see baby Jesus' contrary to popular nativity scene till he was two years old. Because the Bible tells us after three wise men refused to reveal where that great king was born to king Herod, the king decided to kill all babies under two years old. Also, upon arrival, the individuals also left gifts with religious significance to bless the baby including frankincense, gold and Myrrh. These gifts were meant to signify that he will face inevitable hardship and persecution as evidence by events previous Prophets had gone through and also individuals prayed for Jesus' peace on him also and they left knowing that they were old and would not see Jesus' peace be on him grow up as adult and claim Prophethood. Another Question arises here because we are told in Luke "that heavens will be used to communicate once again at the second coming of the Messiah. There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring of the seas. Is there an anguish in the world now or world is at peace at large ? If not than we should look harder if second coming of the Messiah has happened and has heavens and earth bore any testimony to this ?

North Korea fires ballistic missiles capping record year of tests

SEOUL: North Korea fired three short-range ballistic missiles on Saturday, Seoul's military said, adding a final salvo to Pyongyang's record-breaking blitz of launches this year. Military tensions on the Korean peninsula have risen sharply in 2022 as the North has conducted sanctions-busting weapons tests nearly every month, including firing its most advanced intercontinental ballistic missile ever. Saturday's launch comes a day after South Korea successfully tested a solid-fuel space launch vehicle, and follows the incursion of five North Korean drones into the South's airspace earlier in the week. South Korea's military said it had detected "three short-range ballistic missiles launched by North Korea into the East Sea from the area of Chunghwa County, North Hwanghae Province, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan. The missiles flew about 350 kilometres before splashing down, it added. "Our military maintains a full readiness posture while closely cooperating with the US and strengthening surveillance and vigilance," the Joint Chiefs of Staff said. Monday's North Korean drone incursion was the first such incident in five years and prompted an apology from Seoul's defence minister after the military failed to shoot down a single drone despite scrambling jets for a five-hour operation. South Korean president Yoon Suk-yeol called the incident "intolerable" and added that the South should ensure that Pyongyang realised that "provocations are always met with harsh consequences". <https://www.dawn.com/news/1729344/>

Forced Marriage: A Violation of Human Rights

By Munazza Abbasi LL.B (Hons)



Anthropology, On the other hand, it may also be viewed that culture stems from religious beliefs. It is this diffusion of religion with social practices and cultural forms that allows forced marriages to elope as a religiously acceptable practice. However, this dire practice “cannot be justified on any religious or cultural basis.” Although the Western world regards forced marriages as a religious practice, “no major world faith condones forced marriage” and the element of consent being freely given by the spouse(s) to the marriage is a prerequisite of all marriages in major world religions, whether it is Christian, Muslim, Hindu or Sikh marriages. Mike O'Brien, Minister for Racial Equality, expressed that The government must respond sensitively to the issues of cultural diversity, but multicultural sensitivity is no excuse for moral blindness. In some countries, this traditional practice is perpetuated by culture and tradition that, often unknowingly, proves to be harmful to their own community. This is coupled with the occurrence of family violence, which is “the most insidious forms of violence against women.” This violence in the context of forced marriages consists of battering, sexual assault, mental and other forms of violence. Many individuals associate forced marriage as being a practice that is acceptable in Islam. However, Islamic Scholars, such as Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bin Abdullah-Sheikh, have condemned the practice, declaring that it “is not permissible” under Islamic law’ and “fathers who coerce daughters into marriage should be jailed and not released ‘until they change their minds.” This stems from the Islamic view related by the

Prophet Muhammed (peace be on him):

A previously married woman shall not be married without being consulted and a virgin shall not be married without her consent.

It is stated in the Muslim Holy book, the Qur'an, that: He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that, surely, are Signs for a people who reflect. This element of tranquility and affection is clearly absent in a forced marriage. The Islamic code of conduct being Sharia Law, which derives from the combination of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the ‘Sunnah’ of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH), signifies the importance of upholding the principle of a female's right to freely enter into a marriage, enabling her to find happiness in her marriage. Thus, declaring the conduct of forcing someone into marriage as being unacceptable and “contrary to the teachings of Islam.” Expanding upon the teachings of Islam, many Christian denominations also consider forcing someone into marriage to be a sin, and the Church of England deems forced marriage to be grounds for granting an annulment. No major worldly faith pardons and forced marriages, as it goes against any religious beliefs. It is therefore, concluded that “Forced marriage cannot be justified on either religious or cultural grounds.”

(Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2004, Human Rights Annual Report Ch. 7, p.197

See footnote 13 Ibid, Per Mike O'Brien, Minister for Racial Equality, House of Commons Debates on Human Rights (Women) 10 February 1999. General Recommendation 19

(CEDAW) number 23 Head of the Council of senior scholars, and Saudi Arabia's top religious authority. 'Saudi Arabia bans forced marriage' BBC News (12 April 2005) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4437667.stm>accessed October 2008

From the viewpoint of Muslims, 'peace be on him' should be said whenever uttering or hearing Prophet Muhammed's name. Hereafter, PBOH will be cited whenever the Prophet (PBOH) is mentioned. Taken from 'Bukhari', a collection of 'Hadith' (sayings of the Holy Prophet PBOH). The Muslim code of conduct is the Holy Quran and the actions of the Prophet Muhammed PBOH.

The Holy Quran, Ch. 30 (Surah Al-Rum), Pt. 21, Verse 22 actions and words of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) Per Shaykh Abdul Qayum, Scholar and Imam of the East London Mosque at the Forced marriage seminar (see footnote 15) Foreign Office/Home Office Summary of responses to Forced Marriage: A Wrong Not a Right, Consultation Paper, June 2006 p.4)

1.6 Motives behind a Forced Marriage

The most likely reason why forced marriage occurs is to save the family "izzat" (honour). A list was created by the Manchester City Council's Adult's Division, which comprised many motives that are likely to lead to a forced marriage. One of these reasons is to control unwanted behaviour and sexuality - particularly in women, and thus preventing 'unsuitable' relationships that is outside the ethnic, cultural, caste or religious group. These motives further include responding to community groups or family pressure, fulfilling long standing family commitments and attempting to strengthen family ties, along with protecting perceived cultural ideas.

It may also be that many women, in areas where the practice most frequently occurs, have lack of economic independency. In furtherance to this, parents may accept a wealthy alliance for their daughters who are

offering to give a high dowry (money, jewelry, clothes, furniture) in return for the marriage to take place. Where a woman defends herself from being coerced into a marriage, it cannot be said that she does not wish to maintain the strong cultural heritage of her community, but is merely, whilst upholding that heritage, she wishes to carve out an enjoyment of increased independence and personal freedom.

Another unfortunate motive may derive from the fact that men may dominate the family responsibilities and decisions, which abrogates the woman's opportunity to voice her opinion on her marriage. This compels women to give in to their parents and family's wishes and remain within the often-violent relationship, as their ability to participate in their family matters is impaired on the basis of gender inequality.

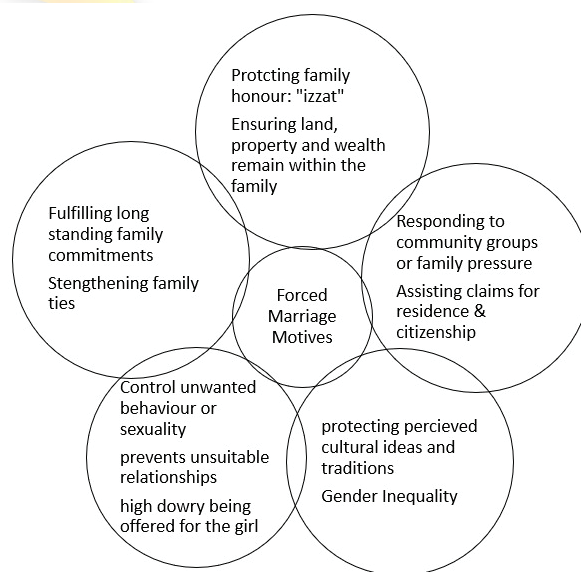


Figure 1.1 Symptom Chart illustrating the main motives behind a Forced Marriage:

1.7 Demographics

Forced marriage affects men and women from all over the world, and across many cultural groups. The British Royal Family even has a history of it, as did many members of the British aristocracy in the past. Some suggest that Princess Diana married Prince Charles inadvertently. Her marriage could, therefore, be said to have taken place without

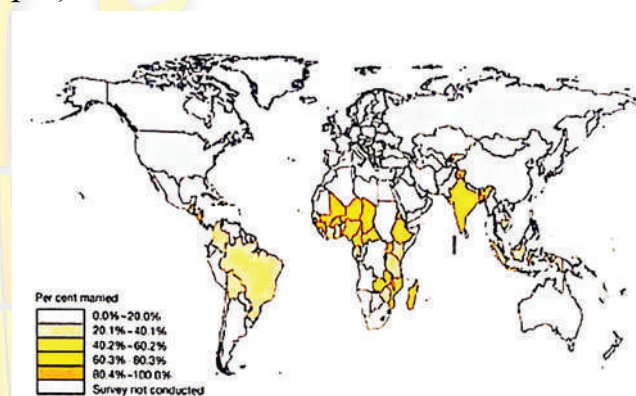
the exercise of her free and full consent.

1.7.1 Socio-demographic variables:

It is important to appreciate that the practice is not limited to just a few cultural groups, although it does usually affect women who are of the South Asian origin. Some may wish to justify the practice on grounds of upholding Asian values, as the former Prime Ministers, Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, and Mahathir bin Mohamad of Malaysia, both claimed in the 1990s that Asian values were significantly different from Western values, and included a sense of loyalty and foregoing personal freedoms for the sake of social stability and prosperity. This was, however, countered by Mahathir's former deputy, who concluded that "[t]o say that freedom is Western or unAsian is to offend our traditions as well as our forefathers, who gave their lives in the struggle against tyranny and injustices. This view was supported by Singapore's opposition leader Chee Soon Juan who states that it is racist to assert that Asians do not want human rights. It is therefore, significant to acknowledge that "the vast majority of the Asian population... that practice forced marriage feel equally abhorrent as we [non-Asians] do towards these practices." "Most victims are young women between the ages of 14-25, but only those who are aged 16 and over get married in this country. Girls who are much younger are sometimes taken to other countries and made to marry whilst there. Child marriages overlap with forced marriages as minors are deemed incapable and they occur mostly in the African continent and in the South Asian origin. Although the practice has been reducing, at a descriptive level, it still remains common, especially in poverty stricken less developed and rural areas, rather than urban areas. The justification for this is that whilst the family is removed from the tightly coiled rural setting, there is a gradual transformation and encouragement to adapt to their surroundings. The women discover what

Helen Ralson refers to as, "a third space" of a fresh and positive authorised personal identification. Furthermore, the issue of maintaining honour and reputation is not the top concern. Statistics show that around 42% of girls under the age of 18 are married. This figure extends to around 50% in India and Bangladesh. In African countries, however, this figure is much higher. For example, in Niger this figure of child marriages is said to be about 76%.⁵¹

(http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/presskit/factsheets/facts_child_marriage.htm#ftn2#ftn2 accessed 19 March 2009 Research by Helen Ralson into the challenges confronting young Muslim women in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, 1997. See Abdullahi An-Na'im's paper on forced marriage, 2000 p.6)



A significant amount of these children are unaware of their marriage ceremony that they are entering into. In places such as West Africa and Ethiopia, commonly the age at which girls are married is as early as 7 years. It is sufficient to propose that at this very delicate age, the child is naïve to such practices, and is often unaware of the situations surrounding them at the time.

Figure 1.2 Proportion of girls married by age 18:

This figure was obtained from UNICEF: Early Marriage A harmful traditional practice, A statistical exploration, 2005 p. 3 http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Early_Marriage_12.lo.pdf accessed November 2008

This is how democracy dies in Canada — we give it away

We are slowly allowing our democracy to die by eroding the power of the people we elected to represent us — from city councillors to MPs.

By: John Beebe



With the passage of Bill 39, Premier Doug Ford's government just took away the power of the majority of city councillors in Toronto and Ottawa to make decisions on the most critical issues facing our cities. Instead, he has given that power to one person, the mayor, and one third of city council. It makes a mockery of the most basic principle of democracy — majority rule. And according to John Tory, "nobody" cares. Let's be clear, Tory is not talking about Ottawa's new mayor, Mark Sutcliffe, who says he will not use the powers granted to him by Bill 39 or Ottawa's city council, which is unanimously opposed to the new law. Nor is he talking about every living Toronto mayor and over two thirds of Toronto city council members who are opposed. Or the editorial board of every major paper that has spoken against Bill 39. Clearly they are all "nobodies" in Tory's world. Tory is talking about Torontonians who are concerned about the "multiple crisis" facing our city. His solution to these crises — "trust me." We hear the same refrain from

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith when she seeks to erode the power of the Alberta legislature and consolidates power in her cabinet. And Premier Doug Ford when he erodes the power of elected regional representatives or unilaterally blocks municipal governments from choosing how councillors are elected. And Justin Trudeau and prime ministers before him when they consolidated power in Prime Minister's Office and reduced the power of our elected MPs. We are slowly allowing our democracy to die by eroding the power of the people we elected to represent us — from our city councillors to members of Parliament. In a representative democracy, we elect people to advocate on behalf of our communities. At a time of crisis we need to ensure that the people we elected to represent us have a voice in deciding how to respond. When their power is eroded, our power is eroded. For this reason, Bill 39 is a particular affront to democracy. It was introduced and rushed through at the end of the legislative session without considered debate or consultation. It

passed after two recent elections where neither Premier Ford nor Mayor Tory mentioned their support for this major change. There are no checks on the power it gives to Toronto's third term mayor, who may decide to retire and never face the voters again. It is sold as a response to a housing crisis, but, unlike emergency measures in response to a crisis like a pandemic, it is not time limited and will continue to provide extraordinary power to the mayor well past this a crisis. And according to Ford, this is meant as a model for municipalities across Ontario. But most fundamentally, it is based on a lie. The argument goes, we face an (insert crisis) because we have too much democracy and we can only solve the crisis if we give more power to one person. This is the same argument made by autocrats the world over, from Putin to Bolsonaro, from Modi to Trump. When we concentrate power in the hands of one person, the consequences can be disastrous. And not just in repressive regimes like Russia, even in the U.K. we recently witnessed the self-inflicted economic crisis as a result of the overreach of Prime Minister Truss. It was only democracy's guardrails that prevented the economy from going over the cliff. As we tackle critical issues, from housing to climate change, the answer is more democracy, not less. We must strengthen the connection between people and the elected leaders they choose to represent them. Only then can we develop creative policy responses required to address the concerns of everyone living in Toronto and cities and towns across Ontario. When we see less than 30 per cent of voters showing up to vote in Canada's largest city, clearly the connection has been broken. The solution is not easy but it starts with ensuring that our elected representatives have a voice in critical decisions that affect us.

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2022/12/16/this-is-how-democracy-dies-in-canada-we-give-it-away.html>



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Don't Be Surprised About Germany's Shift on Defense | Opinion

By: Daniel R. Depetris



Days after Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his war in Ukraine and ushered in Europe's biggest security crisis in over 75 years, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz delivered a rousing speech in front of the Bundestag with a core message: Berlin will immediately reinvest in its own defense capabilities after decades of atrophy. "It is clear that we must invest much more in the security of our country," Scholz told the assembled lawmakers, unveiling a one-time €100 billion fund to rebuild the Bundeswehr and promising to finally meet the NATO target of spending 2 percent of GDP on the military. It seemed, for a moment, that the Germans were not only busting out of their shell but perhaps eager to take on a growing leadership role in Europe. Alas, those hopes seem to have been derailed. In the 10 months since Scholz delivered a speech that was warmly greeted on both sides of the Atlantic, Berlin has flailed at implementing its promised *Zeitenwende*. The Bundeswehr remains in a state of disrepair, with the force plagued by a shortage of ammunition, critical enablers and weapons sys-

tems—all of which are needed if a large-scale conventional conflict erupted. Multiple parliamentary commissioners tracking the state of the Bundeswehr describe a military in dire straits, with half of its equipment non-operational. Steffen Hebestreit, Scholz's chief spokesperson, acknowledged it will take Germany years before the NATO defense spending target is reached. For Americans, all of this is a cause for concern. Complaining about inadequate German defense spending has become second nature in Washington. Germany is the poster child for Europe's general disinterest in squaring its rhetoric with concrete action. U.S. presidents as far back as Dwight D. Eisenhower have scolded Europe for outsourcing its security problems to America. It's easy for U.S. politicians and policymakers to place all of the blame on Europe for the vast asymmetry of power between Washington and the rest of the continent. But the truth is this would also be self-serving. U.S. policy is a big part of the problem. For decades, Washington has pushed the Europeans to increase their defense budgets

in order to ensure they can field fully funded, capable, and proficient militaries in the event Europe's security is threatened. Former President Donald Trump was of course the most outspoken, if not abrasive, in pursuit of this aim, repeatedly reminding European leaders how unfair it was that Washington was expected to perpetually protect a region just as wealthy as the U.S. But he was hardly the only one; seven years earlier, then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates faulted Washington's European allies for "meager" defense budgets and cuts to force structure. The U.S., however, has never really wanted Europe to take the lead on its own affairs. The mainstream assumption in U.S. foreign policy circles is that Washington, and Washington alone, should remain at the head of the pack. And if Europe does want to assert itself as a security partner instead of a security dependent, it should be within the confines of NATO, a security organization the U.S. has dominated since its establishment in 1949. In other words, while the U.S. wants greater European military capacity, it also wants European subservience. We know this because previous U.S. administrations have frequently frowned upon any attempts by Europe to transition into a more independent actor on defense. Months after then-British Prime Minister Tony Blair and French President Jacques Chirac issued a joint declaration calling for "autonomous action" from the European Union, then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright delivered remarks essentially dissuading the formation of an independent European military force. A U.S.-led NATO, she insisted, must remain the primary structure for the continent's security. The Trump administration used the same argument, albeit in its own unique way. When the EU was exploring pan-European military projects, the White House issued a sternly-worded letter warning the bloc about undercutting or duplicating NATO in the process. Add this history

to the significant U.S. military presence in Europe, and it's no wonder why Germany feels comfortable backtracking on earlier commitments. More than 35,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Germany at any given time, with a well-entrenched network of bases and training facilities spread out across the country. As a NATO ally, Berlin possesses a U.S. security guarantee, which means there isn't much need for German politicians to worry about external defense. The status-quo has allowed Germany to focus most of its federal budget on domestic needs, such as powering its economy, which has more than doubled over the last 20 years. As long as this arrangement continues, it's difficult to imagine Scholz or any future German chancellor devoting the resources and long-term investments needed to build the Bundeswehr into a semi-respectable military force. The U.S. has done everything it possibly can to disincentivize that from happening. If the U.S. truly wants to entice Germany and the rest of Europe to reverse course, then it must be willing to reverse course itself. That means reducing, not increasing, the U.S. troop presence on the continent and permitting instead of discouraging the very European strategic autonomy that French President Emmanuel Macron has talked about for years. While this may sound like a faulty recommendation given that a war continues to rage in Ukraine, the fact is that the balance of power is solidly in Europe's favor—and if anything, has gotten more favorable as Russian military power is steadily weakened as a result of impressive Ukrainian resistance. Even then, Germany's policy elite may not demonstrate the political will needed to implement its *Zeitenwende* policy. But Germany will at least be forced to decide one way or another.

<https://www.newsweek.com/dont-surprise-about-germany-shift-defense-opinion-1767497>

'Proud and strong': Afghan girl stages solo protest against Taliban university ban



University gates, Marwa courageously carried a placard that read “Iqra”, the Arabic word for “read”. “They said really bad things to me, but I stayed calm,” she said. “I wanted to show the power of a single Afghan girl, and that even one person can stand against oppression. When my other sisters (women students) see that a single girl has stood against the Taliban, it will help them rise and defeat the Taliban,” Marwa said. While the Taliban

An 18-year-old Afghan student endured Taliban taunts and insults at the weekend as she staged a solo protest against the ban on women attending university. “For the first time in my life, I felt so proud, strong, and powerful because I was standing against them and demanding a right that God has given us,” Marwa told AFP, asking not to be further identified. Women-led protests have become increasingly rare in Afghanistan since the Taliban's return — particularly after the detention of core activists at the start of the year. Participants risk arrest, violence, and social stigma. But Marwa was adamant. Her sister shot a video of the silent protest with a phone from a car as Marwa held up a poster just metres from the entrance to the Kabul University campus, the country's biggest and most prestigious institution. In their latest assault on women's rights, the Taliban last week banned university education for women, prompting international outrage. Some women have tried to protest the ban, but they have been swiftly dispersed. On Sunday, in front of Taliban guards deployed at the Kabul

promised a softer form of the rule when they returned to power in August last year, they have instead imposed harsh restrictions on women — effectively squeezing them out of public life. On Saturday, authorities ordered all aid groups to stop women employees from coming to work. Secondary schools for girls have been closed for over a year, while many women who lost their government jobs are being paid a fraction of their salary to stay at home. Women have also been barred from going to parks, gyms, and public baths. The Taliban say the restrictions are because women are not observing a strict Islamic dress code, including wearing hijabs. The country has become a prison for women, said Marwa, who dreams of becoming a painter. “I don't want to be imprisoned. I have big dreams which I want to achieve,” she said. “That's why I decided to protest.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1728539/proud-and-strong-afghan-girl-stages-solo-protest-against-taliban-university-ban>

Was Xi Jinping's Saudi Arabia trip a game changer?

China is expanding its influence in a region that remains one of the most strategically critical in the world

By Yun Sun



42 In geopolitics, as the saying goes, there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests. More often than not, bilateral relations require a constant calibration of those interests from both sides, such is China's relationship with other superpowers, including the US and Russia. And it is the same for China's relationship with powers in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia. Much has been said about the strategic importance of Chinese President Xi Jinping's recent state visit to Saudi Arabia, during which he also attended the first China-Arab Summit and the first China-GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Summit. China is expanding its influence in a region that remains one of the most strategically critical in the world because of its energy resources. With the decline of the US presence in the Middle East, China's engagement with Saudi Arabia, a long-standing ally of Washington, and with other Arab Gulf countries is viewed

with suspicion from America. In particular, the contrast between the grand, high-profile reception Riyadh laid on for Xi and President Joe Biden's rather understated trip earlier in the summer is illustrative of China's rapid ascension in the Middle East. It is a rise that may even be displacing the US as the region's most prominent external superpower.

Many practical considerations have brought China and Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf countries, closer. As the biggest crude-oil importer, China is Saudi Arabia's largest trading partner. The Russian war in Ukraine has driven up energy prices and sparked a supply crisis, leading China to push to protect its sources of crude oil. Based on this alone, there is no doubt that ties between China and Arab countries will continue to grow. China is the largest consumer of Middle Eastern oil, with 47% of its imports coming from the region. With energy security at risk, China has a personal stake in the stability of Gulf countries and

broader peace and security in the region. China fears that the US has the ability to sabotage its energy supplies from the Middle East and therefore Beijing sees a dire need to consolidate its influence there and minimize its vulnerability. China is hoping to reach carbon neutrality by 2060, which aligns with Saudi Arabia's desire to shift away from fossil fuels to greener energy, such as hydrogen and solar. Saudi Arabia is also investing heavily in new infrastructure projects, such as those related to the Neom megacity. This provides rich commercial opportunities for China, which has vast experience building large-scale projects around the world. The decades-long alliance between Washington and Riyadh has endured despite the fundamental difference between their systems of governance, but there have been times when this has caused friction. China, on the other hand, follows the principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs. Therefore, the internal politics of Gulf countries is not an issue for China. But along with their shared interests, it is important also to understand the limitations in China-Saudi relations, especially in terms of the pace and scope of the cooperation they will pursue. For the 34 investment deals the two sides signed during Xi's visit, it is entirely unclear as to the nature of the arrangements and the countries involved. What is more intriguing is the Chinese plan increasingly to use its own currency, the yuan, instead of the US dollar, to pay for oil and gas from the Persian Gulf region. Xi said China would use the Shanghai Petroleum and Natural Gas Exchange, a state-backed national energy trading platform, for this purpose. The move would be a threat to the dollar's dominance of the global oil market. Using Chinese yuan was reported earlier this year as Saudi Arabia's relationship with the US cooled. Given China's desire to boost its currency for global payments and the significance of China's energy trade with Gulf countries, it is under-

standable why China would push for this. However, Saudi Arabia does not seem to have embraced the proposal. Chinese media have also dialed back their cheering of the step, recognizing that the energy trade is severely subject to the constraints imposed by geopolitics. It now looks unlikely that China will push the same issue in the near future. While the Gulf countries are getting closer to China, they still maintain critical ties with the US. The regional dynamics and internal politics might be shifting, but it is too early to assume that China is anywhere near to displacing the US as the security guarantor. This is evident in China's lack of meaningful involvement in regional security. Beijing has developed a nascent desire for a more active role, but an effective result remains to be seen. Another important limitation for China's role in the Middle East lies in its tradition of balancing diplomacy. China has historically remained neutral between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and between Israel and Palestine. With Beijing's rapidly growing engagement with Gulf states, the question is whether China has abandoned this approach. It is possible that China regarded a 25-year cooperation agreement signed in March 2021 with Iran as adequate assurance to Tehran that Beijing is still pursuing close ties with both camps. However, Iran was angered by a reference to its island disputes with the United Arab Emirates in the China-GCC joint statement. China tried to make up by sending Vice-Premier Hu Chunhua to Iran on the same day. But as Hu is stepping down from the Politburo, the political significance he carries is limited. In this sense, whether Xi's trip to Saudi Arabia suggests a deviation of China's traditional approach will be a key issue in the future. If China begins to favor one side, it will lose one of the most important diplomatic levers that have contributed to its diplomatic success in the region. <https://asiatimes.com/2022/12/was-xi-jin-pings-saudi-arabia-trip-a-game-changer/>

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