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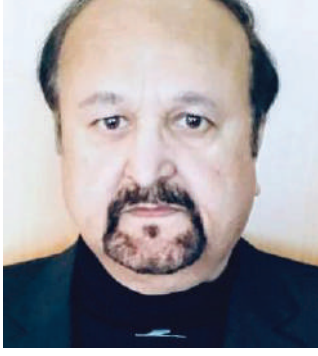


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Editorial



Dr. Busharat Elahi Jamil

4 The contemporary world regards truly democratic and welfare states for their thriving role in the international political phenomenon. Regrettably, after the sad demise of Mr. Jinnah, so-called feudalistic minded politicians and Mullahs hijacked 'Republic of Pakistan' and turned it into 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan' during 1950s. Since 1947, more than two dozen families have been enjoying the political privileges in the Country. These classes are power seekers and consider it their "divine right" to rule in Pakistan. The problems of hereditary politics now in front of us in the persons of Maryam Safdar, Bilawal Zardari, Asfand yar Wali and Asad Mahmood etc. eliciting sneer from the true democracy. Politics is meant for service, and democracy further strengthens and purifies these services. But party-oriented politics and personal interests of politicians are the obstacles in the way to address the concerns of masses. Mainly, the hereditary politics is an enormous demerit in flourishing the democratic performances. The big-guns of democracy are the dictators in their respective political parties. This political mind-set is responsible for begetting a rigid social mind-set of 220 million people distressing the socio-political and economic progress of Pakistan. The leaders of the religious political assemblages exploit establishment and political groups because of their street power and a certain religious mind set. JUI-F's role in PDM and the opportunistic politics of JI are its worst examples. Moreover, the use of Madrasa students for political gains and to penetrate their own political ideology is adequate to politicise the madrasa culture. These young scholars from madrasa do not only strengthen their political muscle but ensure a future with the same branding and ideology propagating

through the mosques in the area. Awfully, JUI-F is not serving the Islam but only standing with corrupt political accumulations. Pakistani so-called politicians are also gravely involved in the promotion of racism and provincialism. Particularly PML-N and PPP are responsible to rift the nation by using provincial cards for political advantages. Unfortunately, it was the main reason of the fall of Dhaka in 1971. More than 180 registered political parties with around 1500 candidates/representatives intending to hijack the political and administrative system of the country, recent steps PDM regime regarding NAB and election reforms etc. are its most awful recent illustrations. They are not dealing with the public issues but only amending the system to solve their own glitches and hitches. The recent political phenomenon is pretending the nastiest intentions of political elite. According to them VIP protocol, costly clothes, shoes, lavish life and socio-political power is democracy. Pakistan's nationalism is written with the military-pen under the intents of political elite for established drives. They have no concerns for a common man and his problems. This system is steadily widening the gaps producing breaches between ruled and rulers. In Pakistan democracy is a fashion to decorate the political elite. Unfortunately, all four pillars are responsible to demerit the democracy in Pakistan. A true democratic culture cannot flourish and fortify in Pakistan without the appropriate participation of common masses and overhauling the socio-political and administrative systems, and we only can measure the contemporary Pakistan's prosperity by practising the unbearable accountability, which is the need of time and the strong and democratic Pakistan.



Imran & America

By: Ayesha Ijaz Khan



SHEHBAZ Sharif's government is inching close to default. Hindsight is 20/20 but what was the point of the no-confidence vote, many are asking, if there was no economic plan? Why jump on to the Titanic when it was already sinking? Why bear the political fallout of IMF-mandated measures when those measures were assented to and then reneged on by the previous government?

Answers, of course, aren't straightforward. Had the no-confidence vote not gone through, there was always the chance, as Khurram Dastgir recently recounted, of Imran Khan appointing a partisan army chief and barring opposition leaders from contesting elections en masse, thereby turning Pakistan into a fascist one-party state and assuming the role of a civilian dictator. There is also the possibility that Shehbaz Sharif saw this as a unique opportunity to become prime minister and couldn't resist, even as the more politically astute brother, Nawaz, cautioned against it. For their part, the kingmakers have always looked upon Shehbaz as an efficient administrator who is relatively innocuous compared to brother Nawaz, who, along with daughter Maryam, are not to be trusted. Yet what difference do palace intrigues and political machinations make to the lives of ordinary Pakistanis, who are rapidly losing faith in the current government's ability to manage? In light of this bleak and dire political scenario, could Imran Khan make a comeback? The short answer is: no, he cannot. Regardless of how popular or unpopular he may be (depending on who one talks to), or how well he spins his own failures and his opponents' misfortunes, in his final days, Imran Khan made some politically fatal moves in his desperation to hang

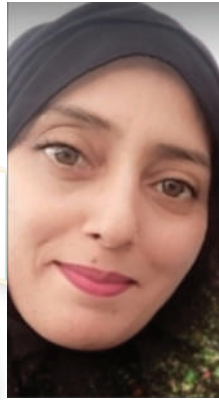
on to power. Not only did he go after the "neutrals", but he also ensured that he crossed the most powerful country on earth, the United States of America. The Americans were never particularly keen on Imran, even when he came to power in 2018. He was viewed as a stooge of the military, and given the uneasy relationship between the Pakistani military and the US in the aftermath of the war on terror, US engagement with Imran Khan wasn't going to be smooth. "Pakistan's military has its fingerprints all over the elections", ran a headline in the Washington Post back in July 2018. But Imran had insisted that he knew the West better than any other Pakistani and had convinced the kingmakers that foreign policy would be his forte. After all, he had played an English game, cricket, all his life and excelled at it. He had not only beaten the gora at his own game but also managed to marry an aristocratic 'gori'. If anyone could explain the point of view of the Pakistani state and get it the respect it deserved, it had to be him. Sadly, there were no takers for his explanations in the US. Imran Khan was seen as sympathetic to terrorists and he solidified this view by calling Osama bin Laden, US's enemy par excellence, a martyr. As if that wasn't bad enough, he visited Moscow on the eve of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He really didn't think that Putin would invade, he offered, in an interview with Aftab Iqbal recently. Really? The CIA had called it a good five days before he made the trip. Western embassies had packed up and left Kyiv prior to his visit, and he still had no idea that Putin would invade that week? So while there is absolutely no truth in the assertion that the US conspired against Imran Khan's government,

it is true that the US chose not to engage with him at the level that Pakistan is accustomed to and requires for its economic survival. In the four years that he was prime minister, the US did not appoint an ambassador to Pakistan, and despite Moeed Yusuf's efforts, Biden never called. After the Russia trip, he left no doubt that he leaned against US interests, but was nevertheless unable to issue a joint statement with President Putin, proposing how he and his Russian counterpart intended to move the bilateral relationship forward or detailing what benefit Pakistan would accrue. It is easy to spin it now as Pakistan would have gotten cheap Russian oil, but there was no such agreement. In fact, had Pakistan stood with Ukraine at that important juncture and played it smart, it may have been in a position to revive its pipeline with Iran, as even some voices in the West were calling for relaxing sanctions on Iran in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its negative impact on global energy supplies. In short, Imran Khan will remain a media star and a demigod to a powerful domestic minority, but internationally, he does not have the credibility to resuscitate Pakistan's economy.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1696119/imran-america>

Religion is the practice of nature

By: Esha Saima -Taxila Pakistan



Islam is a complete code of life and guides us in every aspect of life. Since the child's first school is the home, it is most important that the home environment be adapted to the religion of nature because the child learns what he sees his adults or parents do. We should train the child from infancy in

such a way that he connects with the rest of the relationship and also strengthens the relationship with his Lord so that he will never face failure in life. We often treat children harshly in worldly matters and try our best to correct them, but in religious matters we never question them. For example, when a child breaks a ten rupee cup at home, the mother gets angry and may even slap him saying that he has caused harm, but sadly when the same child breaks the rule of Shariah of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), the lice do not crawl on his mother's ears. One of the traditions of Aala-o-Salam is more valuable than the whole world. Therefore, inside the house which has the status of the first school, the parents should follow the religion of nature themselves and also encourage the children towards it as it is the responsibility of the parents. Make religion the most important thing in the eyes of your children, become a follower of the Sunnah yourself and encourage children to adopt good habits too. Bad habits will go away and their good habits will be strengthened when parents or elders of the family repeat good habits in front of them again and again. If they get upset about not doing their homework, we can plan their time. We arrange tuition. The child realizes that it is very important so he is ready to do it. Try to make your child pray five times a day and adopt good habits so that he does not become the fuel of Hell and becomes entitled to Heaven. These children will not only be successful themselves but will also become a charity for you.

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Imran Left Economy In Worse Shape: US Economist

US economist Mian Atif was selected by the Imran govt in its first year to serve the country.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's economy is now in a worse shape on all accounts under the three-and-a-half year rule of PTI led government in 2022 than it had inherited from the PMLN led government in 2018, it has been claimed by a US economist Mian Atif, who was selected by the Imran govt in its first year to serve the country but was later dropped after a controversy. Renowned Pakistani-American economist Atif Mian stated that the PM was voted out of office by the parliamentarians after 3.5 years; he had inherited a bad economy but leaves it in even a worse shape.

"The PTI tenure could be marred by low GDP growth, higher inflation, especially food inflation, average low tax collection of FBR, higher expenditures, rising public debt and liabilities as well as an escalating monster of circular debt. Now the twin deficits known as yawning fiscal deficit and current account deficit are again skyrocketing, especially the current account deficit was again touching a level that was inherited by the PTI government when it had assumed reins of power after winning the 2018 general elections."

Atif said: "There's been zero increase in average income, and Pakistan never got out of the balance of payment (BoP) crisis. The Covid gave temporary respite to BoP crisis as oil imports and domestic demand contracted due to the pandemic, but with pandemic receding, it is back in serious trouble." He said that the

larger failure was an incapacity to understand Pak macro challenges the PTI inherited, a currency crisis that was already months in motion. Yet the new govt had done no planning. Precious time and reserves were wasted with silly schemes, he added. "When finally external adjustment was forced upon the government, it could have enacted new policies to ensure that Pak: (a) gets out of BoP trouble, (b) gets on a sustainable growth path. But even (a) never happened, (b) had no chance." He raised a question why and replied that because the government policy went for the usual shortcuts: open capital account for speculative portfolio investment, encourage unproductive real estate investment, continue to subsidize an elite-favoring rentier economy, go on foreign begging trips, etc. "What should have been done was not done, e.g. engineering an ambitious energy-independence policy, without which Pakistan cannot have sustainable growth. This would have required pulling the best renewable energy scientists into the country and giving them discretion and resources. Instead we got the emotional appeal for a dam fund. Growth is serious business. It requires building value-chains inside your country, it requires building capacities of your people, your firms, your government. This basic sense was missing." It is extremely unfortunate that a government that millions had pinned high hopes on has ended in such colossal failure. Atif added: "I hope those who come next learn from this, and their own past failures."

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/949245-imran-left-economy-in-worse-shape-us-economist>

Profile: High life, Lahore



Soaked in the golden age of the '60s, Lahore was an island of hedonistic pleasure. For teens who had yet to say goodbye to the loss of innocence that perforce visits every adult when real life issues strike, ours was a fairytale existence. Who can forget 'Mr Chips'? With his bagful of packets of chips he would pop up from every corner of Anarkali bazaar to accost you. His voice, 50 years later, still rings in my ears. The channa chaat at Bano Bazaar had to be eaten after mom would finish with her petticoat and blouse matching with the saris she'd tote around.

A play at the Alhambra was like being a part of the cast; a cricket match at the Gaddafi Stadium was like a fashion parade; we all had our favourite cricketers whom we fancied, my poster boy being Ijaz Butt (don't go rolling your eyes, he was quite a looker then); ice cream at Chalet on the Mall was like sitting in a Swiss cabin with a school buddy (mine being Zenobia Khurshid, now Mrs Akhund, and Nasreen Muzaffar, now Mrs Iqbal); book browsing at Ferozesons on the Mall with my two older brothers was a trip to wonderland

and textbook buying with parents at Imperial Book Depot was a growing up activity, each new school year signalling a march towards maturity; orange juice binging at Hall Road in winter was a drink from heaven; grocery shopping at Tollington Market lent its own colonial aura and jiving at the Gymkhana (Lawrence Hall) if one was lucky to find a partner, well let me continue... Teenage Ball was an annual winter affair at Lahore Gymkhana Club, the building also known as Lawrence Hall. With promises made to be goody good, permission to attend would be reluctantly granted by parents who ensured that big brothers went along to keep an eye on their kid sister. But big brothers being big brothers had their own conquests to tend to while forgetting about me and my cousin Kaye (that was her nickname) now Mrs Imran Ahmad. While popular Kaye would be on the floor, yours truly, awkwardly attired in an ill-fitting half coat (that's what they were known as then) with a bulging behind packed in a sack shirt (the fad in the 60s) would be sitting like a wallflower waiting to be asked to dance. 'Teddy boys' that's what the St Anthony

crowd were called. The late Shahid Rehman was our Rock Hudson. Girls liked him. Others like Munir Akram (our ex ambassador to the UN) Dawar Shaikh, the late governor Punjab Salman Taseer, aka Billo for his blue eyes, and Sunny Saeedudin (son of Brigadier Saeeduddin) were the regulars at 'mixed' teenage parties which, while other teenagers attended, were a no-go area in our household. Among girls, the talented and beautiful Naveed Rehman stood out as all-rounder. She was a student of Queen Mary College. We were next door at the Convent of Jesus & Mary. Our head girl, Syeda Abida Hussain aka Chandi, was a stunner. As alumni, each year she'd return for a summer break from her finishing school in Switzerland and she'd be invited to talk about her experiences. It was awesome. As a rare embodiment of beauty and brains, (with wealth thrown in) Abida's taffeta dresses and smooth delivery brought about a lively sense of happenstance. We all wanted to copy her. Ah! The movies of those times. Plaza, Regal and the Odeon cinemas were our watering holes. During intermission, we'd recognise our friends from school — Lahore was so cliquish in those days, it still is till today! As teenagers, we easily related to movies featuring teenage love affairs like *Splendour in the Grass* starring Natalie Wood and Warren Beatty whose story of sexual repression, love and heartbreak played havoc with young minds like ours. *Peyton Place* was another sizzler. The exposé of the lives and loves of the residents of a small town in the US where scandal, suicide and moral hypocrisy hid behind a veneer of pretentious living introduced our impressionable minds to the American way of life. *Lolita* was another bombshell. (The government film censor board must have worn blinkers then!) Magazines like *Playboy* and *True Romance* had already 'educated' the teenagers of Lahore about the 'birds and the bees.' But it was the American movies that captured our attention

about teens across the Atlantic. We considered ourselves liberated (not in the sexual sense though) but America appeared downright promiscuous. Alongside the adult stuff, one still stuck to reading Barbara Cartland, Georgette Heyer, Daphne du Maurier's haunting love story 'Rebecca', the Bronte sisters and of course Jane Austen. We had already graduated from Enid Blyton mysteries. On balmy nights we'd sit and listen to Noor Jehan or Farida Khannum or Iqbal Bano sing Faiz at the open-air theatre in Bagh-i-Jinnah. On one such event, a senior official shushed a lady who was rather loud. The lady, wife of a senior bureaucrat, turned around to slap him. The news spread quickly. Yes, Lahore had its scandals hitting it all the time. That's what made the place so 'sexy.' Foreign dignitaries, including emperors, empresses, queens and first ladies visited Lahore. After empress Farah Diba of Iran came, we teased our hair into a beehive hoping to have a 'Farah Diba bouffant.' Memorable was the vying for attention by US First Lady Jackie Kennedy and her sister princess Lee Radziwill from president Ayub Khan. He must have appeared a conflicted man, having to choose between two ethereal beauties. Fashionistas, the devoted followers of fashion alongside their lesser trendy sisters, the hidebound ladies of Lahore learnt firsthand how women (Jackie and Lee) across two continents, dressed and lived a life celebrated for being direct, free-spirited and open. The rich and stylish culture that the 60s embraced still makes Lahore the heartthrob of Pakistan. Nasir Kazmi's verse says it best: Shehr-e-Lahore, teri raunaqain dayam aabad: Teri galyon ki hawa khainch ke layi mujh ko. (O city of Lahore, may your lights never dim; It was the breeze of your streets that pulled me back).— Anjum Niaz

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1021751/profile-high-life-lahore>

Tax Relief of Billions for Bourse

Govt reduces capital gains tax on shares sold after two years of purchase

By: Shahbaz Rana

ISLAMABAD:

The government has given billions of rupees in income tax relief to the stock market by lowering the capital gains tax rates on sale of shares after holding them for two years and has completely abolished the tax by the sixth year.

The billions of rupees relief has been given by rejecting a proposal of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) that recommended the government to increase the existing 12.5% capital gains tax to 15% to earn an additional revenue of Rs5 billion, according to government sources. However, the government set the rate at 15% for the shares sold within one year and once again linked the tax on gains with the holding period. The minimum estimated relief of Rs8 billion to the stock market players is almost double when compared with what the government will earn by taxing the expenditure of the salaried class on health and life insurance and on the payment of bank loans in the next fiscal year. The move is contrary to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's policy of taxing the rich and giving back to the poor and is also against Pakistan's harsh economic ground realities amid the looming threat of default. "PM Sharif has instructed to withdraw the tax relief given to the stock market and the proposed amendments will be withdrawn," said Finance Minister Miftah Ismail while talking to The Express Tribune. The Finance Bill 2022 showed that the government had proposed to charge 15% capital gains tax, if shares are sold in the first year. The rate is reduced to 12.5% in the second year. It will go down further to 10%, if the shares are sold after the second year of pur-



chase, which is below the current capital gains tax rate. The coalition government has proposed 7.5% tax if the shares are sold after the third year and 5% if sold after holding them for four years. The rate further goes down to a mere 2.5%, if the shares are sold after five years. There is no tax on the gains made by selling the shares after six years, according to the Finance Bill. Under the existing law, the capital gains tax is 12.5%, irrespective of the holding period. "It is a relief to the stock market and according to my assessment around Rs4 billion relief has been given," said Syed Shabbar Zaidi, former FBR chairman. He said that most of the stock trading took place within the first year but there were many companies and individuals who held the shares for longer periods to avoid tax payments. The estimated revenue collection from the stock market is around Rs20 billion and according to sources the relief can be as high as Rs8 billion a year. The government has passed on the relief to the wealthy people at a time when talks between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are not moving forward, creating uncertainty in the

country. One of the contentious issues is the proposed tax on the salaried class, which offers a relief of Rs47 billion. The IMF wants an increase in the tax rates for the salaried class and it has conveyed the same on Sunday to the government, according to the sources. In such circumstances, the government has given billions of rupees worth of relief to the wealthy. The rupee on Monday dipped to its lowest-ever level at Rs204 to a dollar. Pakistan is a unique country that gives dual benefits to the big players of the stock market. Instead of charging the normal income tax of 35%, the government wants to collect just 15% to zero taxes. Not only that, the previous government had allowed the stock market players to carry forward the losses being sustained on the trading of shares. Shabbar Zaidi said that the reduced tax rates and the carry forward of losses should not be offered simultaneously. The FBR had also proposed to slap 1% capital value tax on all moveable assets, including shares, having value of over Rs100 million. Instead, the government has proposed 2% asset tax on cars having value of over Rs5 million but did not approve a similar tax on shares. The capital gains tax on the sale of immovable property has been increased to 15% if sold within one year. This rate will become zero over the period of six years. The move to provide relief to the stock market weakens the government's case for hike in the prices of petroleum products. It has increased apprehension that the coalition government is not fully realising the gravity of the economic challenges. Sources said that the government may have to further increase petrol prices by Rs19 per litre and high-speed diesel prices by Rs53 per litre just to abolish the subsidy. The increase in petroleum product prices is expected within days.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2361445/tax-relief-of-billions-for-bourse>

COVID-19 positivity rate exceeds 22% in Karachi

KARACHI: Pakistan logged 382 daily COVID-19 infections on Monday as Karachi's positivity rate surged to 22.65 — the highest in the country — during the past 24 hours, according to the statistics of the National Institute of Health (NIH). In view of the recent spike in COVID-19 cases in the country, the health experts had warned that the surge in new infections may turn into the sixth wave of the pandemic. In Karachi, 234 new infections were detected after 14,437 diagnostic tests were conducted over the past 24 hours. Meanwhile, Hyderabad reported 0.3% positivity rate, Mardan 2.44%, Islamabad 2.31%, Lahore 2.76%, Peshawar 3%, Sargodha 1.64% and Rawalpindi 1.05%. In addition to this, Sindh's overall positivity rate stands at 6.17%, Punjab's 1.17%, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's 1.15% and AJK's 2.94, said the NIH. As per the latest statistics of the NIH, two more people succumbed to the virus in the country during the past 24 hours. The fresh infections — detected after diagnostic testing on 13,412 samples — took Pakistan's COVID-19 positivity rate to 2.85% and the total case count to over 1.53 million. Meanwhile, 87 patients suffering from the disease are being treated in intensive-care units (ICUs), while two others succumbed to the virus, taking the country's COVID-19 death toll to 30,390. With the fresh cases and deaths, Pakistan's number of active cases stands at 4,632.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/969568-covid-19-positivity-rate-exceeds-22-in-karachi>



Uncertainty, Ukraine War Major Risks to Pakistan's Economic Outlook

By: Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: Conceding for the first time that mismanagement of contracts in its previous tenure was a major source of current energy sector challenges, the PML-N-led government has identified domestic political uncertainty, Russia-Ukraine war, higher provincial deficits and significant losses and debts of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) as key risks to next year's budget and medium-term macroeconomic outlook.

In an integrity statement to parliament required under the Public Finance Act as part of the federal budget, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail and Secretary Finance Hamed Yaqoob Sheikh have also highlighted a possible increase in expenditures because of higher subsidies and interest payments and an anticipated setback to revenue collection owing to import and demand contraction, posing substantial risks to the economic growth and sustainability of fiscal and monetary projections. VV“The main reasons behind the power sector losses include high cost of generation, attributable to costlier technologies and poorly designed contracts, resulting in exorbitant profits for private investors and front-loading of debt repayments during the first ten years of plant operations, above-average transmission and distribution losses and below-average recoveries of electricity bills,” the joint statement issued by the finance ministry said. As a result, the power sector is the largest recipient of government subsidies at present, it added. The statement said several fiscal risks confronted Pakistan and a lot of effort was needed to overcome or mitigate the potential adverse effects of such risks.

Higher provincial deficits, significant losses and debts of SOEs may also lead to budget slippages, finance ministry says

“The silver lining is that the country has already made considerable progress in certain areas and a number of strategies are available to address the risks that remain,” the statement said. It promised the risk management strategy under the Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms to bring discipline, transparency and credibility at all stages of the budget cycle to prevent or lower exposure to such risks and create buffers to counter. Fuel imports — those of oil, gas and coal — constituted a large portion of Pakistan's import bill and their prices affected the prices of various goods and services as they fed into the costs of production through multiple channels, including transportation costs, energy costs, etc., the statement said. “Volatility in prices of these fuels is a major reason behind the volatility in inflation rates which, in turn, contribute to volatility in interest rates and exchange rates.” Moreover, an increase in the cost of imported fuels — whether due to rising global prices or a falling rupee, or both — could affect the wider economy in the form of lower GDP and revenue growth besides higher current account deficit, inflation, interest rate, the interest cost, fiscal deficit and public debt. “Currently, there are little or no fiscal buffers or risk management framework for dealing with adverse shocks in the prices of imported fuels,” the statement said. Likewise, the statement pointed out that “strict fiscal discipline” on the part of provinces and, resultantly, their cash surplus was a crucial component in reducing the country's overall consolidated fiscal deficit. “In the absence of legally binding commitments from provinces, the risk remains high that the projected provincial budget surpluses (Rs800bn for the next year) may not materialise,” it said, adding that this

risk was “particularly elevated considering that any shortfalls in [Federal Board of Revenue’s] projected collections may provide the provinces with the justification not to meet the budget surplus targets”. The ministry also highlighted that the number and aggregate size of SOEs had grown considerably over time. Losses and excessive debt of SOEs have necessitated costly government bailouts in the form of subsidies, grants, loans and guarantees. “The fiscal cost of running the loss-making SOEs has been quite high and has worsened an already fragile financial position of the government”, whose policy to keep them has aggravated the fiscal situation. Also, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has been identified as a significant risk factor to Pakistan’s positive economic outlook as the prolonged conflict could further raise international oil and food prices and impede world trade through additional supply disruptions affecting our imports, exports and taxes on imports and put additional inflationary pressures. Furthermore, higher international commodity prices could strain Pakistan’s fiscal account and subsidies to protect citizens significantly increase the risk of fiscal slippages. The statement said the domestic political uncertainty could result in macroeconomic imbalances and monetary tightening and fiscal consolidation measures to reduce the demand pressures would slow down economic growth in the coming year. On top of that, the exchange rate depreciation has an immediate impact and can be especially severe when a large portion of the debt is in foreign currency. The finance ministry said Pakistan’s fiscal stance was vulnerable to commodity prices, especially those of oil, and a fluctuation impacts revenues on account of the petroleum development levy and on the expenditure side through fuel subsidies. “As a result, it causes severe macroeconomic imbalances. To deal with such circumstances, fiscal buffers become increasingly important,” it said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1694559>

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Remembering Great Urdu Poet: Iqbal Majeedi

By: Mansoor Ahmad BCA, BEM

Member – Commonwealth Journalists Association



Each person who comes to this world must leave one day. There are some who, when they depart, leave an exceptionally large group of grieving loved ones behind. The absence of such a beloved personality certainly creates intense sorrow. Thus is the case of the recent passing of the great Urdu poet, the late Mr Iqbal Majeedi. 'Ina Lilah e Waina Alla-e-Rajeehoon' - We belong to Allah and to Allah we all shall return.' Iqbal Majeedi was a gifted and prolific Urdu poet who was born on the 10th June 1955 in Chittagong, which is a commercial capital and port city in Bangladesh, then East Pakistan. He was the cousin of my late father. I was fortunate enough to have known him growing up as a close member of our family. Iqbal Majeedi earned the respect of many as a result of his honesty and integrity. He cared for his family with great affection and diligence. He was renowned for his admirable qualities of justice and courage. He was as gifted in poetic recitation as he was a poet, engaging his audiences in passionate and enjoyable displays of poetic grandeur.

Iqbal Majeedi travelled to many parts of the world to recite his poetry at Mushaira (Poetic Symposiums). He attended 'Jashan-e-Aali Poet Symposium', which was organised by Urdu Society Dubai and Abu Dhabi. In 1990 he attended in 'Jang e Azadi 1857' poetry symposium held in Delhi, India. Iqbal Majeedi was honoured to join 'Annual Poet Symposium of Sham Bahar Trust, India 1989-1990' and International Poet Symposium held in Doha, Qatar in 1995. He was honoured to recite his poems three times in Dubai and three times in Qatar. Iqbal Majeedi was awarded 'The 'Passionate Poet' Award pre-



sented by ILO Educators Course and 'Solidarity Award' at Clyde Cameron College in 1994 in Australia. Iqbal Majeedi visited USA in 2001 in a Mushaira, and also attended many Mushairas in India. In 1997 he went to Malaysia to attend a seminar and recite his poetry. This was a selected gathering which was attended by about 150 participants in a hall. The symposium which he attended in the US was especially significant. He was invited and presented, air ticket, honorarium. The terms and conditions of this symposium was that poets must render poems with reference to Pakistan. This was attended by high officials, dignitaries, and ambassadors. He rendered such a great poem that it was telecast

every Sunday on PTV in the name Pakistan Zindabad. Iqbal Majeedi was a simple and pious man, with a special relationship with God Almighty. He always remained patient and unaffected by the negative attitudes of others. He possessed many admirable qualities which he imparted to his family. He was always smiling and made others smile.

He served his parents with great responsibility. He was a humble man dedicated to the service of mankind. He was honest and thus earned great respect amongst his peers. Iqbal Majeedi earned his Master's Degree in Urdu from Karachi University in 1985. He was honoured with the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation Headquarters Award 'National Milli Naghmas' in 2007 on the occasion of the 60th Independence Celebration. Iqbal Majeedi was the son of the leading Urdu poet Mubarak Ahmad Mungeri, and the grandson of Maulvi Abdul Majeed. He possessed great love and reverence of his family. His father, who was the author of several poetry collections, including *Sehra Say Gulistan Tak*, *Boojho to Janey*, and *Sailab-i-Khoon* based on the bloodshed in Dhaka (1970-71), had suffered the pain of two migrations — from India to East Pakistan and then to Karachi. Every year Iqbal Majeedi used to organise a poetic symposium on the occasion of his father's death anniversary in which he would invite authors, poets, friends & relatives. Iqbal Majeedi passed away on the 25th May 2022, in London, UK at the age of 66. He was laid to rest in Merton & Sutton Joint Cemetery. His death shall be mourned and grieved by his admirers all over the world. He has left behind his wife, two daughters & one son, and many relatives. May Allah the Almighty elevate his status in Paradise and rank him amongst His beloved, accepting his prayers and good wishes for his children. Ameen.

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka shuts schools, urges work from home to save fuel

Troops in Sri Lanka handed tokens on Monday to people queueing for petrol amid a severe fuel shortage in the nation battling its worst economic crisis in seven decades, while schools shut in Colombo and public employees were asked to work from home. With its foreign exchange reserves at a record low, the island of 22 million is struggling to pay for essential imports of food, medicine and most critically, fuel. "I have been in line for four days, I haven't slept or eaten properly during this time," said autorickshaw driver W.D. Shelton, 67, one of those who received a token meant to hold his place in the queue for when fuel becomes available. "We can't earn, we can't feed our families," added Shelton, who was 24th in line at a fuel station in the centre of Colombo, but set to stay there as he had no petrol for the journey to his home just 5km away. It was not immediately clear how far the government could stretch its fuel reserves. The stockpiles stand at about 9,000 tonnes of diesel and 6,000 tonnes of petrol, Power and Energy Minister Kanchana Wijesekera said on Sunday, but no fresh shipments are due. Fuel station queues have grown rapidly since last week. "This is a tragedy, we don't know where this will end," Shelton said. Public transport, power generation and medical services will get priority in fuel distribution, with some rationed to ports and airports. A team from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is visiting Sri Lanka to hold talks on a \$3 billion bailout package. Although the Indian Ocean nation is hoping to reach a staff-level agreement before the visit ends on Thursday, that is unlikely to unlock any immediate funds.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1696981>

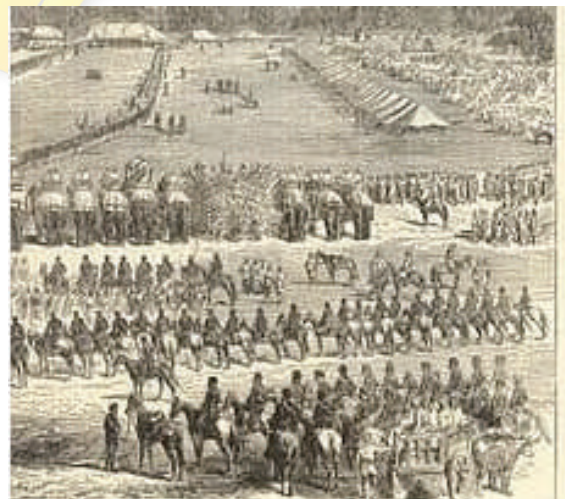
British loyal to Punjabi origin

By: Badaruddin Kalhoro, Bureau Chief Lahore International London



Looking at the origin of the world's largest kingdoms, it seems that their origin and ethnicity are no longer widespread, but because of their brutality, climate, and rains, they have spread their far, distant territories. Tearing down the races and nations, they were obliged to obey the land and the cities wherever they went. Then the people continued to recruit their troops from these areas. The British continued to do so. Well, this is a map of British India during the British Government of 1929, and under this map the rate at which the British were drawn out of the local nations was levied to support their rule. As Pakistan has today become a nation forcibly linked to the mini-centuries ago, a large number of its army has been of Punjabi origin since day one and they are not the only Punjabi descendants who entered the Army after the formation of Pakistan. But during the British rule, the Indian army accounted for almost 62% of all the nations, and then the Gurkhas of Nepalese descent were soldiers, when the feet of the British lost their independence in the war of 1857, General Bakht Khan. From Mirad, Dhule occupied that they were Punjabi soldiers who were driven out of the safe by the English rulers, and later by treachery with

the local revolutionary soldiers, once again helping the British to victory. At that time Sindh was occupied not only by the British but at that time Sindh was considered to be a division level only, and Sindh was annexed to Bombay. Therefore, the annexation of Sindh was purely the result of British imperialism. It was criticised even by Englishmen. Innes wrote : "If the Afghan episode is the most disastrous in our Indian annals, that of Sindh is morally even less excusable." Even the Court of Directors described it "unjust and impolitic" and even threatened Ellenborough to call him back from India. However, they failed to rectify the injustice already done. Sindh became a part of the English empire in India.



Boris Johnson Survived The Confidence Vote. What Next?

A constitutional crisis was averted on Monday – but politically (as distinct from constitutionally) the result was the worst possible for the current Prime Minister.

By: David Allen Green



On Monday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson survived a confidence vote from his own members of parliament by 211 votes to 148. This means the potential constitutional crises that would have been caused had he then refused to resign have been averted. But the size of the vote against him indicates serious problems ahead. One problem is that Johnson still faces a report from the important House of Commons privileges committee that is investigating whether he misled parliament about the extent and scope of the unlawful parties at his official residence during the pandemic lockdown imposed on the rest of the country. Johnson has already received a penalty from the police, and there has been a scathing report from senior civil servant Sue Gray, but the matter is still not concluded. The privileges committee can even recommend sanctions, such as his suspension from the House of Commons. Monday's vote shows

that he may not have the support to contest an unwelcome finding of fact and sanctions decision. Another problem is that the vote shows how little support he can safely rely on for this government's programme. There are 650 seats in the House of Commons, and the implication of Monday's vote is that only 211 members of parliament have confidence in him as prime minister. This indicates that the more contentious and extreme proposals of the government may face more difficulty in getting majority support. He can no longer take majorities for granted. This is a remarkable predicament for a politician who, in December 2019, won a substantial overall majority of 80 seats. We are now about halfway through this parliamentary term. A new general election does not need to take place for another couple of years. Because of the repeal of legislation that fixed term lengths for parliaments, the next general election will

take place at a moment of the prime minister's choosing, as long as the election is called before the end of 2024. Many things can change before the next general election, and a politician as wily and opportunistic as Johnson should not be underestimated. He has spent his career getting out of situations that wiser people would not have got into. But the structural problems facing Johnson's premiership are now formidable. There is no quick and easy solution to the problems presented by the Northern Irish Protocol. There are no articulated visions for the post-Brexit relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union. Support for the government has collapsed in Scotland and Wales; in England, the government is expected to lose heavily in constituencies in two different parts of the country to two different opposition parties. All this, in addition to a cost-of-living crunch and haphazard – almost randomly generated – tax-and-spend policies. A constitutional crisis was averted on Monday – but politically – as distinct from constitutionally – the result was the worst possible for the current prime minister. The vote means there will be weak political leadership during a time of substantial challenges. Johnson may carry on being prime minister, but it is difficult to see his government doing anything other than having things happen to it – responding to events rather than shaping them. The uncoded, “unwritten”, constitution of the UK makes it possible for prime ministers to be replaced mid-term. Every single prime minister since 1974 has either come to power or left office, or both, between general elections. It is now a waiting game: How will the weak and directionless Johnson premiership come to an end, or will it linger on for want of an alternative until the next general election?

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/6/7/boris-johnson-survived-the-confidence-vote-what-next>

Prince Andrew's 'Restoration' Would 'Make A Mockery' Of The Queen's Firm

Prince Andrew's restoration would become a 'mockery' of the Queen and monarchy



Prince Andrew's possible redemption blasted as a 'mockery of the monarchy' and Queen waiting to happen. This warning has been issued by a source close to The Telegraph. There began by admitting, "The colonelcy of the Grenadier Guards was his most coveted title and he wants it back. Having remained a Counsellor of State, he also believes he should be included at royal and state events."

"Most importantly for him is his status as an HRH and 'Prince of the Blood' and he feels that should be reinstated and his position recognised and respected."

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/966712-prince-andrews-restoration-would-make-a-mockery-of-the-queens-firm>

Will Indo-Pacific Policies Reconnect Canada and India?

The two nations' friendship has often been sorely tested, but common interests regarding the US and China may strengthen ties

By: Swaran Singh

The prime ministers of Canada and India are expected to meet either next weekend on the sidelines of the Group of Seven summit at Schloss Elmau in Upper Bavaria, Germany, or toward the end of this month at the Commonwealth Heads of Government conference in Kigali, Rwanda. In the view of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who is to visit India next year to attend the G20 summit, this earlier meeting could not only be groundbreaking for Canada-India bilateral relations, but could carry deeper implications for the evolving Indo-Pacific realignments. These reports are sourced to Wednesday's phone conversation of two countries' foreign ministers, Mélanie Joly and Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. Though their official briefs make no mention of a prime-minister-level summit and both underlined their (varying) perspectives about building consensus against "Russia's invasion of Ukraine" and "misuse of freedoms and the dangers of extremism," they both reiterated their unity on building a "free and open Indo-Pacific," which has lately come to be a point of convergence in their flip-flop relations. As recorded in the Canadian readout, the two ministers "affirmed the importance of a free and open Indo-Pacific region." In the wake of India's growing recognition as the region's net security provider and rising regional leader, while Canada seeks new partners in the face of its growing marginalization in this region, this could well become their new glue to stabilize their historically mercurial yet special relations.

The roller coaster

Independent India got off to a good start, with



Jawaharlal Nehru's October 1949 visit to Ottawa opening doors for Canada's development assistance leading to supply of the CIRUS (Canada-India Reactor Utility Services) nuclear research reactor in 1954 laying the foundations of India's nuclear program. But soon, Cold War dynamics were to push them into opposite camps and, in 1974, prime minister Pierre Trudeau, father of current prime minister, was to describe India's peaceful nuclear explosion as "betrayal," suspending all cooperation. The early 1980s saw Sikh militancy in India emerge as an added, though sporadic, irritant, the lingering effects of which were seen in Justin Trudeau's last India visit in February 2018. A few uncanny events were to make this visit the second low point in Canada-India relations. It was on the last day of the Trudeau family's week-long visit that Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with him briefly. When contrasted with Modi having personally accompanied foreign leaders to multiple Indian cities and holding joint public rallies and roadshows with them, this diplo-

matic distancing was not lost on anyone. The first friendly follow-up gesture came in October 2018 when Canada, defying strong Sikh lobbies at home, announced that it “would not recognize” Referendum 2020, a campaign that was being promoted by US-based “Sikhs for Justice” for holding a plebiscite on the secession of Punjab province from India. But again, Trudeau’s December 2020 remarks on the farmers protest in India were to unleash public outrage, including India’s Ministry of External Affairs calling it “unwarranted” and telling a Canadian envoy of such remarks having “potential to ‘seriously’ damage bilateral ties.” Soon, Trudeau’s use of emergency provisions in the wake of February’s truckers’ protests in Canada were again to trigger a spate of commentaries calling out his hypocrisy in dealing with protests. However, the two leaders have continued meeting at such forums as the G20 and G7 summits and held online conversations marking rituals of mutual engagement. Last September, Modi congratulated Trudeau on getting elected as prime minister for a third time and tweeted that he looked forward to “strengthening India-Canada relations, as well as our cooperation on global and multilateral issues.” As a sign of positive momentum, their negotiations from 2021 for a full-fledged Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) hoped to achieve “an interim trade deal” before the end of this year. Yet it remains unclear if CEPA can boost their bilateral trade, which slipped during the pandemic.

The US disconnect

This is where these two friends of the United States – feeling at variance with US Indo-Pacific strategy – may reconnect in building post-pandemic resilience that has become inordinately China-centric, even anti-China. This is because, unlike the US, both Canada and India wish to restrain China by building mutually beneficial engagements with it, and not by alienating it. China’s unprecedented

economic rise and resultant political influence remain at the core of Indo-Pacific geopolitical imaginations. The past two decades have seen the Indo-Pacific region, led by China, emerge as the global growth engine and therefore the new global center of gravity. Chinese President Xi Jinping’s Belt and Road Initiative has accelerated debate on the United States’ relative decline, causing the US to band together its allies to redress their so-called “shared” China challenge. Canada, as a Pacific nation, has always aligned its policies with the US, becoming an ASEAN Dialogue Partner in 1977 and staying part of US-led Five Eyes Intelligence Sharing Network of World War II vintage. But when Five Eyes was revived by US president Donald Trump as part of his anti-China rhetoric, Canada refused to “share metadata with its Five Eyes allies,” respecting the privacy of its citizens. Last month, Canada also became the last to join Five Eyes’ US-led campaign against accessing China’s fifth-generation (5G) technologies. No doubt, Canada was neither included in the Quadrilateral Security Framework of Indo-Pacific democracies nor added to the AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, United States) security mechanism launched in September 2021; the UK was added in the latter though it is not even a Pacific nation. Canada has also so far failed to join the East Asia Summit except once as a special invitee. Now, US President Joe Biden has not included Canada in his Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), though it also excludes Mexico, Chile and Peru, which defies logic as all four nations already have free-trade agreements (FTAs) with the US. Also, all four were part of US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership, which, after the US departure, has been revived as the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Besides the US, seven of the 12 IPEF members also have an FTA with Canada as part of CPTPP. Moreover, unlike IPEF, the CPTPP

has been in force since 2018 and offers concrete tariff reductions, market access and dispute settlement provisions. The proposed IPEF, just beginning negotiations, aims to create some open-ended modules for flexible alignments, and it remains open to other aspirants like Canada or even China, which has already applied for inclusion in the CPTPP. One explanation for Biden's distancing from his close Pacific allies is that he wants to project IPEF as an exclusive US initiative for Asia and "didn't want to share the stage and photo ops with non-Asian countries." But others put the blame on Trudeau, saying "the current government is unfocused on the Indo-Pacific."

Exploring alternative alignments

Both Canada and India continue to explore autonomous partnerships across the Indo-Pacific region. Both are averse to jumping on the bandwagon of the US Indo-Pacific Strategy, which they feel remains too China-centric. India continues to engage China, which is its largest trading partner. With the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, as its fourth-largest trading partner, India this year celebrates the 30th anniversary of their Dialogue Partnership. Likewise, facing exclusion from US-led Indo-Pacific initiatives, Canada has also been exploring alternative partners and paradigms. But does their growing clash over US Indo-Pacific strategies bring Canada and India closer? Canada has already initiated negotiations for partial FTAs with India and ASEAN that promise to be far more substantive than IPEF. As well, there are good reasons to believe that IPEF is unlikely to win congressional approval in the US. This should open up avenues for Canadian and Indian negotiators. Canada has already applied to join the Digital Economic Partnership Agreement (DEPA) of Chile, New Zealand and Singapore – three Indo-Pacific nations that are already with Canada in the CPTPP. In fact Canada would be better placed in DEPA,

which unlike IPEF is a traditional trade agreement with provisions for tariff reductions, rules of origin for market access and dispute settlement mechanisms. This past Tuesday, Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong welcomed Canada's application to join the DEPA, which aims to explore innovative realignments for post-pandemic resilience by building infrastructure, smart cities and cybersecurity and address other issues of digitization. Likewise, the coming Monday will see Gabriel Boric, the president of Chile – another member of DEPA – arrive in Ottawa to take their relationship forward. Google plans to lay its first sub-sea cable carrying 16 pairs of fiber-optic wires from Vancouver to Japan. Called Topaz, this project will provide faster access to Google services – including its search engine, Gmail, YouTube and Google Cloud – and will be ready by next year. Can all this open new possibilities for middle powers like Canada and India coming together to balance the US anti-China preoccupation? Will the much-awaited Canadian Indo-Pacific Strategy reveal such a rethink and reconnect Canada and India? Since early this year Joly has been reported saying that in spite of the all-consuming Ukraine crisis, she has been "activity working to deliver on a key marching order given her by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau: to create a comprehensive new Indo-Pacific Strategy." This January saw the India and Canadian navies join the six-nation anti-submarine-warfare drill called Sea Dragon 22 in the Indo-Pacific waters. Their gradual coming together may work to make the US Indo-Pacific strategy more balanced and to their comfort. Alternatively, they could begin to explore alignments in spite of the US. Either way their reconnect in the Indo-Pacific region promises to bring enduring stability to Canada-India relations.

<https://asiatimes.com/2022/06/will-indo-pacific-policies-reconnect-canada-and-india/>

Russia-Ukraine War Deciding 'Rules of This World,' Zelensky Warns in Plea

By: Andrew Stanton



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned Saturday that the Russia-Ukraine war could set the future "rules for the world" in remarks at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. The conflict, ordered in late February by Russian President Vladimir Putin, continues raging on in the Eastern European country. In light of the invasion, many world leaders have condemned Putin for lacking a justification for the conflict and violating Ukraine's sovereignty—putting him at odds with international norms. Zelensky warned that these norms could be permanently threatened by the outcome of the war. He explained Saturday that the West's support of Ukraine does more than just protect his country's borders and independence, but that the future of global norms could hinge on their support. "I am grateful for your support. But this support is not only for Ukraine, but for you as well," the Ukrainian president said, according to Reuters. "It is on the battlefields of Ukraine that the future rules of this world are being decided along with the boundaries of the possible." He made his remarks in a virtual speech, speaking to 575 delegates from 40 different countries during the conference, where world leaders discussed topics relating to Asian security issues, according to Reuters. His sen-

timents were echoed by United States Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin during his own speech during the summit. Austin, representing the Biden administration, doubled down on his assertion that the "rules-based international order" matters across the globe. He warned that Russia's invasion could be a "preview" to a "world of chaos and turmoil" where this order is not respected by powerful world leaders. Austin has been a vocal supporter of Ukraine throughout the conflict. "Russia's invasion of Ukraine is what happens when oppressors trample the rules that protect us all," he said. "It's what happens when big powers decide that their imperial appetites matter more than the rights of their peaceful neighbors." In further remarks on Saturday, Zelensky also sounded the alarm about the immediate worldwide impacts of Russia's invasion—specifically speaking about concerns related to the global food supply. Russian blockades in Ukrainian port cities along the Black Sea have prevented the export of grain, potentially exacerbating food shortages across the world, leaders have warned. "If due to Russian blockades we are unable to export our foodstuffs, the world will face an acute and severe food crisis and famine in many countries in Asia and Africa," he said. Russia, meanwhile, has defied the criticism and sought to justify its invasion by insisting that its goals with the war are not to take over Ukraine, but instead to "liberate" the Donbas region, which has a high number of Russian-speaking individuals.

<https://www.newsweek.com/russia-ukraine-war-deciding-rules-this-world-zelensky-warns-plea-1714942>

Putin Has Ukraine War 'Hunger Plan' to Destabilize EU With Refugees: Snyder

By: Fatma Khaled

Yale University history professor Timothy Snyder argued Saturday that the Black Sea blockade caused by Russian President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine "is meant to generate refugees" and potentially lead to instability within the European Union. "Putin's hunger plan is also meant to generate refugees from North Africa and the Middle East, areas usually fed by Ukraine. This would generate instability in the EU," Snyder wrote on Twitter. The ongoing war has caused Black Sea ports in Ukraine to shut down, threatening food supplies and challenging a number of nations that heavily rely on the country since it's one of the world's largest grain exporters. Snyder also warned that if the Russian blockade continues, "tens of millions of tons of food will rot in silos" and millions of people in Africa and Asia "will starve" as a result.

Putin 'Blackmailing the World'

Ala Stoyanova, the deputy governor of the Ukrainian city of Odessa, made a similar warning about the consequences of grain products piling up at Ukrainian ports due to the blockade, and therefore fueling food shortages across parts of the world. "It is his aim, I think, to make these poor countries starve from hunger without this grain. When he blocks our ports, by this means he is blackmailing the world," the deputy governor told The Telegraph about Putin in an interview published last month. On a normal day, around 3,000 container loads of grain would arrive by train at Odessa and other Ukrainian ports where they are kept in vast silos, according to The Telegraph. Meanwhile, nearly 276 million people worldwide have been experiencing acute hunger since the beginning of this year. However, that number could increase by another 47 million people, specif-



ically in sub-Saharan Africa, if the war continues. Last month, speakers at a United Nations' Security Council meeting warned that Yemen, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Ethiopia are among the countries at risk of increased food insecurity, stemming from the lack of grain exports. Additionally, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) also recently warned that many would be "marching towards starvation" worldwide unless Ukrainian ports reopen.

Mass Death Needed for Russian Propaganda

The professor on Saturday also expressed concerns about starvation in some parts of the world, adding in a series of tweets that Russia has a "hunger plan" in which Putin would prepare to "starve much of the developing world as the next stage in his war in Europe." "The horror of Putin's hunger plan is so great that we have a hard time apprehending it. We also tend to forget how central food is to politics," Snyder said in one tweet. In predicting the Russian president's goals and plans, Snyder also noted that "most horribly, a world famine is a necessary backdrop for a Russian propaganda campaign against Ukraine. Actual mass death is needed as the backdrop for a propaganda contest."

<https://www.newsweek.com/putins-ukraine-blockade-generate-refugees-destabilize-eu-snyder-1714976>

The 250th Birthday of the US. Is Just a Few Years Away. Get Ready for Controversy

By: John Garrison Marks

The big event is still more than four years away, but from federal agencies to local museums, the nation's history community has already begun planning for the 250th anniversary of the United States. Beyond simply celebrating the Revolution, the "Semiquincentennial" commemoration is also an opportunity to share American history in ways that fully explore the diverse people and complex events of our country's past. As debate over what history is and who controls the nation's historical narrative continues to be a partisan lightning rod, it is a minor miracle the 250th has so far taken shape beneath the radar. Although the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission and its private, nonprofit partner the America250 Foundation have been accused in recent weeks of a variety of misdeeds (including discrimination, which the foundation denies), the actual content focus of the 250th—its approach to history—has remained out of the limelight. That peace seems unlikely to last long. Over the next few years, as planning for 2026 collides with the Presidential election of 2024, the attention of both politicians and the public will turn more directly to the Semiquincentennial. The controversies sure to ensue stand to have a profound effect on the way many Americans understand our shared national past for decades to come. After all, major anniversaries have a remarkable ability to shape public engagement with history. Nearly 50 years ago, as historian M.J. Rymysza-Pawlowska has shown, the 1976 Bicentennial transformed how Americans connect with history and understand our national story. When President Richard M. Nixon tried to steer federal Bicentennial planning toward an unquestioning



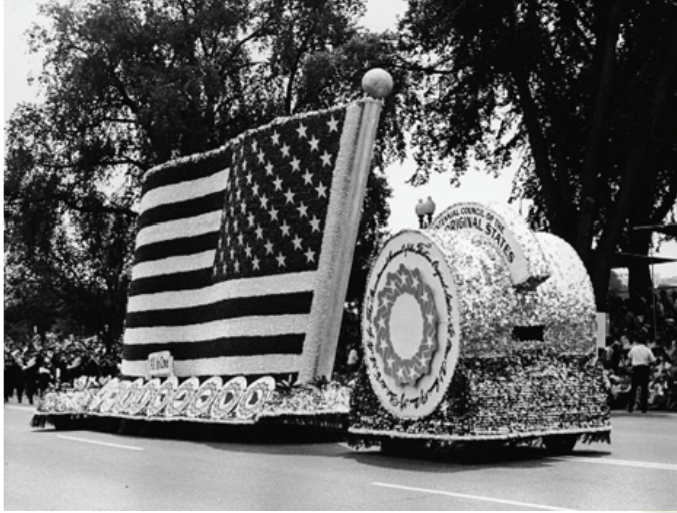
celebration of American achievement, communities across the country responded with a vision of American history that included a wider range of voices, correcting gaps and silences in the mainstream historical narrative. Grassroots efforts led to the creation of thousands of new museums, historical societies, and history programs that shared a more complete story of the American past. These institutions and programs form an important part of today's history infrastructure, and a more expansive conception of history has become core to professional historical practice. Today, the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission has embraced this particular Bicentennial legacy, intentionally planning a commemoration of U.S. history driven by local interests. Established by Congress in 2016, the Commission includes members of Congress, heads of major federal agencies related to history and education, and 16 private citizens appointed by both parties. Together with America250, the Commission has set the ambitious goal of making the Semiquincentennial "the most inclusive commemoration in our nation's history." The effort to explore history through multiple perspectives extends to state-level planning as

well. In the past few years, 21 states established commissions tasked with planning the 250th anniversary commemoration, and 11 more have introduced legislation to create state commissions already in 2022. In South Carolina, the state's 250th commission plans to share history "from all points of view," including "the beauty and the warts and the terror of it all." Expanding on traditional commemoration approaches, the Nebraska 250th commission will "promote under-represented groups from the American Revolutionary War, including, but not limited to, women, American Indians, and persons of color." Many other states have similarly prioritized an approach to the 250th that includes diverse perspectives, leaning on their state's history and museum community to develop the commemoration program for 2026. Though these national and state-level efforts have thus far avoided the kind of overt politicization tied to other forms of public engagement with history, there have been several near misses.



When Donald Trump established the "1776 Commission" in the final months of his presidency—part of his effort to narrowly define the terms of "patriotic" history—he left out mention of the federal Semiquincentennial Commission, which, during his tenure as President, had advanced plans for a broad commemoration of the American Revolution.

Similarly, in the summer of 2020, Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas introduced a bill to ban the 1619 Project from being taught in schools, as part of a backlash that sees the project (which tells the story of American history through the lens of slavery) as insufficiently reverent toward the Founding Fathers and the legacy of the Revolution. Cotton made no mention, however, of the upcoming 250th anniversary—despite being an appointed member of the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission. At the state level, the disconnect between 250th planning and the wider history wars is even more stark. Many of the same legislatures that passed bills to create 250th commissions dedicated to exploring the full depth of the American past have also introduced hundreds of so-called "divisive concepts" bills to restrict the teaching of slavery, racism, and violence in U.S. history. Such bills frame nearly all shameful parts of our history as merely momentary deviations from the march of liberty and progress. With the anniversary more than four years out, the 250th is still just a bit too distant to register much concern among either the public or elected officials. Audience research conducted by state history organizations has suggested that few people are yet thinking forward to 2026. So, although Semiquincentennial plans are developing alongside broader arguments over what history is or should be in recent years—providing plenty of tinder for turning the 250th into a political fire—the immediacy and passion of education issues seem to have offered lower hanging fruit, leaving 250th planning largely unscathed. The history wars and the Semiquincentennial have thus proceeded in parallel, though they seem certain to intersect in the coming years. Yet for history professionals, advancing Semiquincentennial plans against the backdrop of current controversies has been strategically useful, offering new perspective on the effort required to bring to fruition a commemoration



that shares a more honest story of our nation's past. In Utah, planning for an inclusive 250th commemoration is proceeding amid the growing national debate about what history is and whose stories count. To fortify efforts to share the full history of the state, Utah's Division of State History is deliberately working in concert with a broad range of stakeholders and community partners. That includes collaborative efforts such as "Peoples of Utah Revisited," a project supported by the state's leadership that demonstrates a strong commitment to amplifying diverse voices. "We know and fully understand the arc of the national dialogue," Division Director Jennifer Ortiz told me recently. "If we do this work together, we're going to be stronger." Other organizations around the country are taking a similar tack, using collective effort to slowly shift public knowledge of the past toward a broader understanding of who and what makes up U.S. history. Though some in the field want to see a wholly unapologetic approach, these more deliberate strategies can help maintain public trust, and—amid heated partisan controversy—provide the strong foundation required to sustain programs that encourage critical engagement with history. Today, it is a vocal minority that actively opposes more complete, more nuanced historical narratives. Recent research reveals that most Americans see the value of including multiple perspectives in history, think it's acceptable for

people to feel uncomfortable when learning difficult subjects, and believe an increased focus on the history of race and slavery is good for society. Museum audience researcher Susie Wilkening has calculated that fewer than 20% of Americans have truly "anti-inclusive" attitudes. Planning for 2026 is bound to be fraught. As 250th programming comes into sharper focus over the next few years, both legitimate debate and bad-faith point-scoring will drive a major public conversation about how we commemorate the nation's complex past. Yet as plans for the Semiquincentennial progress, today's partisan debates about history enable government agencies, museums, scholars, and the public at large to more effectively chart a path forward for history work that is both inclusive and sustainable. Dealing with the current history controversy shows that, as 2026 nears, museums should proceed deliberately, coordinating with stakeholders to help audiences recognize that history, like detective work, requires us to evaluate all available perspectives and update our understanding as new evidence comes to light. Americans among the majority that values deep, thoughtful history can voice their desire for a commemoration grounded in that approach—particularly in states that have not yet created 250th anniversary commissions. With four years left to prepare, all Americans who support continuing to explore the nuance of the past can play a role in overcoming politically motivated attempts to sanitize this anniversary. By working together, we can ensure the Semiquincentennial can help us make progress toward a more just society by providing a widely shared and complete understanding of our nation's history—one that endures as a lasting legacy of this anniversary.

<https://time.com/6159112/250th-anniversary-american-history/>

Putin Warns of New Targets if Ukraine Supplied with Long-range Missiles



Russian President Vladimir Putin warned on Sunday that Moscow will strike new targets if the West supplies long-range missiles to Ukraine and said new arms deliveries to Kyiv were aimed at “prolonging the conflict”. If Kyiv is supplied with long-range missiles, “we will draw the appropriate conclusions and use our arms [...] to strike targets we haven't hit before,” Putin was quoted by Russian news agencies as saying. In extracts of an interview to be broadcast late on Sunday on Rossiya-1 television, Putin did not specify exactly which targets could be hit nor the exact range of the missiles to which Moscow would react. But his comments came just days after the United States announced it would supply Ukraine with Himars multiple launch rocket systems. Himars is a mobile unit that can simultaneously launch multiple precision-guided missiles up to 80 kilometres away. Military experts say that the range of the Himars systems is slightly longer than that of similar Russian systems, meaning Kyiv's forces could strike enemy artillery while keeping out of Moscow's reach. US President Joe Biden has nevertheless ruled out supplying Ukraine with systems that could reach as far as Russia, despite Kyiv's repeated demands for such weapons. Putin said that there was “nothing new” in the weapons supplied by Washington to Kyiv, and that Ukrainian forces had at their disposal weapons “similar to Soviet- or Russian-made systems”. The range of the missiles did not “depend on the system itself, but on the missiles used,” the Russian leader continued. “From what we know and understand today, they are systems using missiles with range of 45-70 kilometres”. Putin said that the sole aim of the West supplying arms to Ukraine was “to prolong the conflict for as long as possible”.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1693275>

The European Commission recommends E.U. candidacy for Ukraine and Moldova, but not Georgia.

By: Matina Stevis-Gridneff, Monika Pronczuk and Dan Bilefsky

BRUSSELS — The European Union's executive branch recommended on Friday that Ukraine be granted candidate status in the country's bid to become a member, the first formal step in a process that normally lasts longer than a decade. Becoming part of the Union would moor the former Soviet state to the world's biggest trading bloc. Beyond the economic benefits, Ukraine would also gain a bigger voice on the global stage if it succeeds in joining a giant union that includes Europe's largest economies like Germany, France and Italy. The political stability of being anchored to a large group of countries also helps draw foreign investment. The European Commission also recommended a similar status for Moldova — which applied for membership to the bloc soon after Ukraine, spurred by concerns about Russian aggression in the region — but not for neighboring Georgia, which was deemed not ready for E.U. candidacy. The European Union's offer of membership has been one of its greatest foreign policy tools in the post-Cold-War world, pushing aspiring countries to make difficult political and economic changes required to join. The prospect forced Bulgaria and Romania to try to tackle corruption and accelerated the arrest of war criminals in Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro. Ukraine's candidacy took on an air of inevitability on Wednesday, when the leaders of France, Germany, Italy and Romania announced their support during a visit to Kyiv. And Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission's president, opened Friday's meeting of E.U. commissioners in Brussels wearing a blue shirt and a yellow blazer,

Ukraine's national colors. Still, the ultimate decision about making Ukraine a candidate will be in the hands of European Union leaders meeting June 23 and 24 in Brussels to tackle the thorny question. President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine said the Commission's recommendation would help his country's efforts to stave off Russian aggression. "It's the 1st step on the EU membership path that'll certainly bring our Victory closer," he wrote on Twitter. In St. Petersburg, President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia said on Friday that his country does not oppose Ukraine joining the European Union, even though it has gone to war with Ukraine in large part over its desire to join the NATO military alliance. Mr. Putin said that, unlike NATO, the E.U. is "not a military organization," and joining it is "the sovereign decision of any country." "We were always against military expansion into Ukrainian territory because it threatens our security," Mr. Putin said. "But as for economic integration, please, for God's sake, it's their choice." Russia, in fact, opposed Ukraine's trade agreement with the European Union that Kyiv was negotiating in 2013. Ukraine then backed away from the pending deal under Russian pressure, a move that sparked the country's pro-Western uprising the following year. The European Commission stressed that Ukraine's and Moldova's candidate statuses are tied to overhauls on the rule of law, justice and anti-corruption. The need to make difficult changes will be especially pronounced in Ukraine, a country that has struggled with corruption and will eventually have to grapple with the war's aftermath. "Starting accession

negotiations is further down the line,” Oliver Varhelyi, the bloc’s top official for enlargement, told reporters. “Today it’s not about that. Once conditions are met, then we’ll have to come back to it and reflect.” The steps that Ukraine is required to take include strengthening the fight against corruption and against oligarchs, legislation on the selection of judges to the country’s top court and protection of minorities. The Commission said it would assess the progress at the end of this year, leaving the war-battered country less than seven months to introduce a number of complex and costly reforms.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/17/world/europe/ukraine-european-union.html>

Apple store workers vote to form their first US union



SAN FRANCISCO: A majority of employees at a US Apple store have voted to form a union, a first for the tech giant, which has so far tried to discourage unionising attempts.

Of the 110 employees at the Towson, Maryland shop, 65 voted in favour and 33 against, according to a live count broadcast on Saturday by the federal agency overseeing the vote.

The vote comes after a group of employees called AppleCORE campaigned for unionisation.

“We did it Towson! We won our union vote! Thanks to all who worked so hard and all who supported! Now we celebrate... Tomorrow we keep organising,” AppleCORE tweeted. They are demanding a say in deciding on wages, hours and safety measures.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1695761/apple-store-workers-vote-to-form-their-first-us-union>



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Restoration: On Sri Lanka's Return to Parliamentary Democracy

Sri Lanka will be well served by a return to parliamentary democracy

The resignation of Sri Lanka's Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa as Member of Parliament on Thursday did not come as a surprise, given the adverse public mood he and the rest of his family, including his brothers President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and former Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, have been facing. But what was surprising was that he took a month to quit after unprecedented violence in Sri Lanka. The violence was an outcome of the attack unleashed by supporters of the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) on peaceful anti-government protesters, who have been running the campaign "Go home Gota [Gotabaya Rajapaksa]" over the country's worst economic crisis. It needs no reiteration that Basil Rajapaksa, regarded as the livewire of the SLPP, was perceived in certain quarters as one of those responsible for the attack on the protesters. His political departure comes at a time when efforts are on to get Cabinet clearance for the proposed 21st Constitutional Amendment, which is aimed at empowering Parliament over the executive President, apart from barring those holding dual citizenship from entering the legislature. Basil Rajapaksa, who holds American citizenship too, would have been affected and realisation may have dawned on him. The development should provide a breather to Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, who has been battling for significant changes in the Constitution. Needless to say, he would like the complete restoration of the 19th Amendment, which was adopted by Parliament in April 2015 when he was the PM; Maithripala Sirisena was the President. Gotabaya

Rajapaksa, who assured his country days after the violence that he would take steps to amend the Constitution to bring back the 19th Amendment, should honour his word. He should not be influenced by voices within the SLPP that the economic agenda should take precedence over the political agenda of constitutional amendments. The two agendas have become so intertwined that the government's performance in the context of the political agenda would create a conducive climate for the international community to consider investing in Sri Lanka in a big way. The President, who has said that he would like to complete his remaining term of two and a half years, should keep this in mind and facilitate the task of Mr. Wickremesinghe in reconstructing the beleaguered economy. One should not forget that the 19th Amendment, while in force, was no bar for then President Maithripala Sirisena to effect a constitutional coup. This is why the demand for the abolition of the office of executive President assumes significance. There may still be a long way to go for abolition but, in the event of the proposed 21st Amendment being passed, the experience gained should be used by all stakeholders constructively to pursue the goal of bringing back the parliamentary form of government, which was in existence in Sri Lanka for 30 years since Independence in 1948.

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/restoration-the-hindu-editorial-on-sri-lankas-return-to-parliamentary-democracy/article65514572.ece>



Turkey Barter With US, Russia Ahead Of Syria Incursion

By: Nikola Mikovic

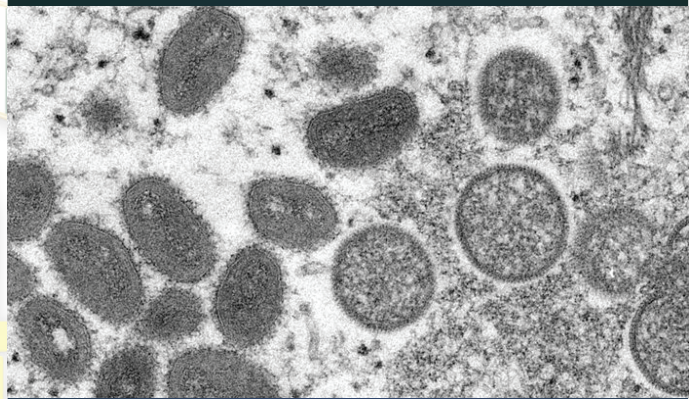
With the world's attention focused on Russia's war in Ukraine, Turkey is preparing to launch its own "special military operation" in northern Syria. Ankara appears to be taking advantage of the conflict in Eastern Europe to achieve strategic goals in the Middle East. It is not a secret that Turkey aims to create a 30-kilometer-deep buffer zone across its border with Syria. But to do that, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan would have to get the green light from Turkey's NATO ally the United States, as well as at least a tacit approval from its frenemy Russia. Turkish troops plan to seize the towns of Tel Rifaat, Kobani, Ain Issa and Manbij in northern Syria. Currently, the region is under the control of the Kurdish-dominated People's Protection Units (YPG), which Turkey considers to be a terrorist organization and an extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The problem for Erdogan is that Washington sees the YPG as an allied force against Islamic State (ISIS) militants. Could the US be about to "betray" the Kurds again? Recent comments from State Department spokesman Ned Price indicate that the US and Turkey still have not reached a final deal on northern Syria. "We recognize Turkey's legitimate security concerns on its border," Price said. "But again, we are concerned that any new offensive would further undermine regional stability." Given that Washington needs Erdogan not to sabotage NATO membership requests from Finland and Sweden, it is entirely possible the US will soon indirectly approve the Turkish military incursion in northern Syria. Without external support, Kurdish forces are unlikely to be able to withstand the combined power of the Turkish Armed Forces and its proxies from the remaining Syrian rebel stronghold in Idlib. If the US does not prevent Turkey from launching a military operation in the region, the Kurds will almost certainly lose control over a significant portion of strategically important territory. Still, it is questionable if the Turkish military will seize Manbij – a town that sits on a major intersection of roads on Syria's west-east highway known as the M4. Given that it is the Russian army that patrols along this route, Turkey is unlikely to attack Manbij unless it first attempts to make a deal with the Kremlin. From the Russian perspective, some sort of a "land swap" – Manbij for Jabal al-Zawiya in Idlib – would be the best option. But given Russia's weak position in the international arena, and its preoccupation with the ongoing military fiasco in Ukraine, it is unlikely that Turkey would agree to make such an arrangement. Instead, in order not to seize Manbij, Ankara could demand certain economic concessions from Moscow, such as a discount on Russian energy and grain. Russia's isolation does not allow the Kremlin to set any conditions on Turkey, which means that a potential deal with Erdogan would come at a very high price for Moscow. Reports suggest that Russia has recently redeployed some of its troops from Syria to Ukraine. More important, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's claim that "Russian forces in Syria have almost no military missions left" clearly indicates that, at least for the time being, what is happening in Syria is not Moscow's top priority. For the Kremlin, at this point, it is very important to avoid a new escalation in the region, and to preserve relatively good relations with Turkey. It is not

improbable, therefore, for Russia simply to turn a blind eye to a new Turkish incursion into Syria, even though such a move would represent another humiliation for the Kremlin on the global stage. Although Russia acts as a major ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, in reality Moscow cannot guarantee Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. A passive approach regarding Turkish operations in the north of the country would be yet another demonstration of Ankara's leverage over Russia. Theoretically, Russia could provide a "symmetrical response" to Turkish actions by pushing Assad's Syrian Arab Army to launch a military offensive in Idlib. The problem, however, is that Assad's forces are unlikely to make any significant gains in the province where Turkey increased its military presence, and continues backing its proxy forces, namely the Syrian National Army. In response to Erdogan's announcement of an operation in northern Syria, Russia has reportedly sent fighter jets and helicopter gunships to a base close to the border with Turkey. The move could be interpreted as a message from the Kremlin to Ankara. But Turkey is quite aware of Russia's poor military performance in Ukraine, as well as Russia's unfavorable geopolitical position, and therefore Moscow's gesture will be seen as an empty threat that will not affect its military plans. The fate of the Syrian Kurds will largely depend on the US, rather than on Russia. If the US approves Turkish actions, Ankara will establish control over significant portions of northern Syria. In the future, Turkey, through its Syrian rebel proxies, would be able to use the territory as an instrument against Assad in Damascus and his ally Russia.

<https://asiatimes.com/2022/06/turkey-bar-ters-with-us-russia-ahead-of-syria-incursion/>
<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/restoration-the-hindu-editorial-on-sri-lankas-return-to-parliamentary-democracy/article65514572.ece>

South Africa records first case of monkeypox

South Africa joins some 40 other countries that have identified patients with the disease



JOHANNESBURG: South Africa on Thursday reported its first case of monkeypox, joining some 40 other countries that have identified patients with the disease. "The patient is a 30-year-old male from Johannesburg who has no travel history, meaning that this cannot be attributed to having been acquired outside South Africa," Health Minister Joe Phaahla told a news conference. "Working with the relevant health authorities, a process of contact tracing has begun." Initial symptoms of monkeypox typically include a high fever, swollen lymph nodes and a blistery, chickenpox-like rash. The disease is usually mild and patients normally recover after two or three weeks. The World Health Organisation said last week that Europe remained the epicentre of the global monkeypox outbreak. The UN health body is due to hold an emergency meeting on Thursday to determine whether to classify the global monkeypox outbreak as a public health emergency of international concern.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/968557-south-africa-records-first-case-of-monkeypox>

Afghanistan Quake: Many Children Feared Dead In Disaster

By: Leo Sands



Doctors in Afghanistan have told the BBC that many children may have been killed in Wednesday's earthquake. More than 1,000 people died in the disaster, and heavy rain, threadbare resources and rugged terrain are hampering rescue workers. Unknown numbers were buried in the rubble of ruined, often mud-built homes by the magnitude 6.1 earthquake. One woman in hospital in Paktika province told reporters she had lost 19 family members. "Seven in one room, five in another, four in another, then three in another, have all been killed in my family," she said from her bed. By Wednesday night Taliban officials said search and rescue operations had finished in most places, although in remoter areas some continued still. "We can't reach the area - networks are too weak," a Taliban spokesman was quoted by Reuters news agency as saying earlier. The United Nations is among those scrambling to provide emergency shelter and food aid to remote areas in Paktika. Survivors and rescuers have told the BBC of villages completely destroyed near the epicentre of the quake, of ruined roads and mobile phone towers - and of their fears that

the death toll will rise further. Some 1,500 people were also injured, officials say.

The Taliban authorities have called for more international aid. Most of the casualties found so far have been in the Gayan and Barmal districts of Paktika. Locals report dozens of villages collapsed. "There was a rumbling and my bed began to shake," a survivor called Shabir told the BBC. "The ceiling fell down. I was trapped, but I could see the sky. My shoulder was dislocated, my head was hurt but I got out. I am sure that seven or nine people from my family, who were in the same room as me, are dead." A mother of six who was badly injured in the earthquake told the BBC many in her village had been killed, including seven of her own family members. "We are very poor. We cannot reconstruct our homes again," she said. "We have nothing to eat." All her family's food supplies are buried under the rubble. "There is nowhere to go," she added. "I demand the Taliban rebuild our houses."

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-61900260>

Mansoor Ahmad Honoured with the British Empire Medal (BEM) in Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Honours List 2022



British Bangladeshi Mansoor Ahmad has been honoured with the British Empire Medal (BEM) in Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Honours List 2022 for his extraordinary contributions, continued support, and voluntary services to the British Community. Mansoor will be presented with the British Empire Medal and be invited to attend the Queen's Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. The British Empire Medal (BEM) is a British medal awarded for meritorious civil or military service worthy of recognition by the Crown which was established in 1922 to replace the Medal of the Order of the British Empire. Recipients are entitled to use the post-nominal letters "BEM" and it is divided into civil and military medals in a similar way to the Order of the British Empire. Mansoor Ahmad generously supported the British Community during the challenging period of the Covid-19 pandemic. He has provided a telephone contact service for older civilians, provided medication, taken part in food bank projects, and has offered advice on civilian welfare entitlements during the lockdown. Mansoor actively and enthusiastically served the community in partaking of essential relief efforts such as shopping for the vulnerable and elderly, and delivering hygiene items like hand sanitizers, gloves, and cleaning products. Mansoor has also received some other awards & recognitions at local levels, such as School Governors' Awards and Community Awards, for his contribution, efforts and supports towards the British community.



'It's an extremely pleasant surprise to have been recognised with the award in Her Majesty The Queen's New Year Honours List 2022. I am truly honoured, humbled and very proud to receive this award for something I really love doing every day as per teaching of the community I belong. I trust this will absolutely inspire me to continue my contribution and sincere efforts towards the British Community'.

Mansoor served, and is still serving, as a co-opted member (Education & Special Sector) and parent governor representative on the Merton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission, and Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel from September 2016 to November 2017, and from March

Mansoor expressed his feelings

2020 onwards. He has currently been serving as a Governor of Ricards Lodge Secondary School and St. John Fisher Primary School. He has also been dynamically involved with many school committees under Merton Council and some other voluntary groups. Mansoor completed his B.Com (Honours) & Master's Degree in Accounting from Chittagong University Bangladesh. He is a fellow member (FFA) of Institute of Financial Accountants UK (IFA), fellow member (FCMA) of The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of India (ICMAI), which is the second largest Cost & Management Accounting body in the world and the largest in Asia, associate member of Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), associate member of Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment (CISI) UK and has associations with some other professional bodies of the world. Mansoor served as Finance Manager with Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE), Bangladesh for over 11 years. He also served as a visiting lecturer with University of Science & Technology (USTC), Preston University, Pre-

mier University, Southern University Bangladesh, Edward University & University of Honolulu (Chittagong Campus, Bangladesh) and taught at BBA, MBA and ACCA Levels.

Mansoor is a member of the Commonwealth Journalists Association UK and has authored numerous articles published in prestigious national and international journals, magazines and newspapers. He participated in a number of esteemed Seminars, Workshops and Conferences where he spoke as presenter and key note speaker on various occasions. Mansoor Ahmad migrated to the United Kingdom from Bangladesh in February 2007 under the British Government's Highly Skilled Migration Programme. He has currently been serving as Manager of Accounts & Finance with Al Shirkatul Islamiyyah, one of the largest charities in the UK. He is a life devotee of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK.

Mansoor is the father of three children. His elder son studies at Oxford University, his younger son reading for his A Levels, and the youngest daughter reading in Year Nine.

List of Awards & Recognitions

Mansoor has so far been received the following Awards & Recognitions for his selfless outstanding role and support to the British Society which he made in people's lives making his significant contribution for a period of over 15 years.

S/No	Awards / Recognition	Awarding Body	Year
1	British Empire Medal (BEM)	Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Honours List – Queen Honours	Jun-22
2	British Citizen Awards (BCA) -	BCA – House of Lords, UK Parliament	Sep-21
3	All England Lawn Tennis Club (Royal Box) Recognition	All England Lawn Tennis Club	Jun-21
4	Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London Recognition	Her Majesty The Queen's personal representative Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE Recognition	Jul-21
5	Covid-19 Award	Mayor of London Borough of Merton	Dec-20
6	BCHA – British Community Honours Awards	British Community Honours Awards UK House of Lords, UK Parliament	Oct-19
7	Certificate of Recognition	British Citizen Awards	Jan-19

Prince Charles accepted suitcase with 1 million euros from Qatari sheikh, Sunday Times reports

By: Max Foster and Karen Smith



(CNN)Clarence House said Prince Charles received charitable donations and the correct processes were followed regarding those donations after a British newspaper reported the Prince of Wales once accepted a suitcase containing €1 million (\$1.05 million) in cash from a Qatari politician. According to the Sunday Times, the suitcase containing €1 million in cash was one of three lots of cash he personally received, totaling €3 million, from former Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani between 2011 and 2015. CNN has not independently verified The Sunday Times report. "Charitable donations received from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim were passed immediately to one of the Prince's charities who carried out the appropriate governance and have assured us that all the correct processes were followed," Clarence House told CNN in a statement. A royal source tells CNN they dispute many of the details in the Sunday Times report. The royal source said they do not dispute the fact of the charitable donations and asserted that all the

correct processes were followed from what they have looked at, from over a decade ago. They add the report contained several mistakes, and their lawyers are involved. The Sunday Times reported on one occasion, Sheikh Hamad gave Prince Charles €1 million reportedly stuffed into carrier bags from the upmarket London department store, Fortnum and Mason. On another occasion, Prince Charles accepted a duffel bag containing €1 million during a private one-on-one meeting at Clarence House in 2015, the Sunday Times reports. The Sunday Times reports the payments were deposited into the accounts of the Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund (PWCF), an entity that bankrolls the prince's private projects and his country estate in Scotland. There is no suggestion the payments were illegal.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/06/26/uk/prince-charles-qatari-sheikh-gbr-intl/index.html>

ONE GOD ONE HUMANITY

How to overcome racial and religious divisions and establish peace in our world

By: Sir Iftikhar Ahmad Ayaz, KBE, OBE, PhD.

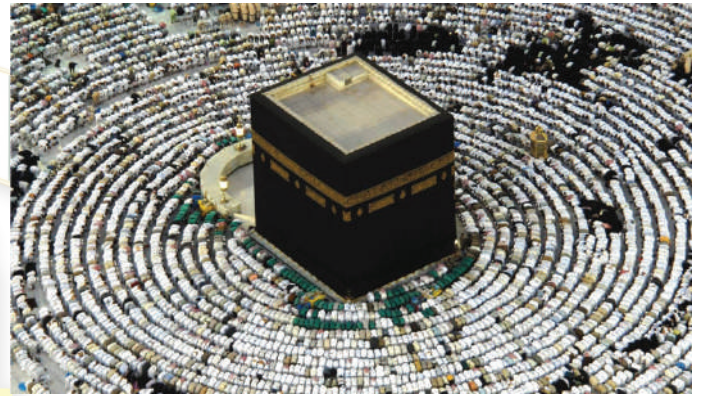


Whether one believes in a God or not, the reality we see facing us is that humanity is divided. It is divided across many lines, ranging from racial divisions, disparities between rich and poor and differing cultural and religious affiliations. And whilst many recognise that prejudice, discrimination and oppression come in many shapes and forms, a large number of influential commentators erroneously blame religion or God for most of the conflicts and social tensions that arise. This is especially the case in the Western world.

We may possibly have reached a point where this misinformed opinion needs to be challenged and examined more robustly. The social unrest and racial riots in the US and elsewhere triggered by the brutal killing of George Floyd, has shown that social unrest and tension has nothing to do with religion but everything to do with politics, social injustice and racial discrimination and in many cases outright oppression. George Floyd's name is now known around the globe, and his death may well have awakened a desire in people to question more deeply what divides us? And what can unite humanity?

The death of George Floyd would normally just have been another statistic; however, the extraordinary cruelty of George Floyd's killing was captured on video, circulated widely, and it has shocked many in the world. Floyd, a 46 year old black man, was restrained by a white police officer, kneeling on the neck of Floyd for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, whilst Floyd was handcuffed, lying face down in the street, begging for his life and repeatedly saying "I cant breathe". A second and third officer further restrained Floyd while a fourth prevented bystanders from intervening.

After videos made by witnesses and security



cameras became public, all four officers were fired the following day, none of the police officers were initially questioned or charged for Floyd's death. This triggered demonstrations and protests in more than 75 U.S. cities and around the world against brutality, racism, and lack of and political accountability. The social injustice and discrimination exposed by George Floyd's death is part of the historical civil rights struggle and has been taken on board by the civil rights group 'Black Lives Matter'- a group set up in 2013 following another very public killing of a black person by the police. As support grows for the 'Black Lives Matter' movement, many societies are being forced to reassess the racial divisions and injustices that exist in their societies and to look at the role and contribution of many legendary figures who played a key role in the slave trade and racial discrimination in the past. Europe and North America which dominated the world in the past via colonialism and imperialism, is feeling the heat of the protests being led by the Black Lives Matter movement. Demands are growing to rewrite history and remove the statues and names of slave traders, imperialists, conquerors and explorers such as Christopher Columbus, Cecil Rhodes and Belgium's King Leopold II. Even some of the

universities have become a stage for the ongoing protests. At the University of Oxford, protesters have demanded the removal of a statue of Rhodes, the Victorian imperialist who served as prime minister of the Cape Colony in southern Africa.

The Roots of Racial Discrimination

Prejudicial attitudes have existed between races for thousands of years, but systematized racial oppression first arose in the 1600s along with the introduction of capitalism. Although colonial exploitation and slavery were widespread before this period, slaves were usually taken as a result of military conquest. However, when European traders discovered that their superior technology gave them a tremendous advantage in Africa, including firearms and their sailing ships, they began to plunder Africa's wealth and take slaves. Expanding European empires in the New World lacked one major resource— a work force. In most cases the indigenous peoples had proved unreliable either dying on the battlefield or dying from diseases brought over from Europe. The Europeans themselves were unsuited to the climate and suffered under tropical diseases. Africans, on the other hand, were excellent workers: they often had experience of agriculture and keeping cattle, they were used to a tropical climate, resistant to tropical diseases, and they could be "worked very hard" on plantations or in mines. The large scale and profitable management of sugar, tobacco and cotton plantations would not have been possible without the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The exact numbers of Africans shipped overseas during the slave trade are hotly debated - estimates range between 10 and 28 million. What is undisputed is the degree of savage cruelty endured by men, women and children. Up to 20% of those chained in the holds of the slave ships died before they even reached their destination. Participation in the Transatlantic Slave Trade stretched across Europe, beginning with the Portuguese and Spanish and closely

followed by the Dutch, French and English. The enslavement of Africans by the English reached proportions that were not known before and England was home to the most famous and important trading company – the Royal Africa Company, set up in 1672. Individuals from the country's ruling classes, from the monarchy, to MPs, politicians and merchants who went on to found some of England's economic monuments such as the Bank of England, were involved in the enslavement of Africans for great profit. It is debated as to whether this was the decisive factor in Europe's Industrial Revolution, however, the trading in enslaved Africans certainly fueled the economic development of Europe on a massive scale. There is much said and written nowadays about the influx of immigrants into Europe from the old colonial lands. It should not be forgotten that even after the colonial period Europeans continued to emigrate, largely to countries which they claimed to have "discovered". (A.Giddons, Socio.P261)

Culture of White Supremacy

White Europeans and Americans who participated in the slave industry tried to justify their economic exploitation of black people by creating a "scientific" theory of white superiority and black inferiority. In 1795, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in his book, *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*, he divided humanity into five varieties. He associated each with a particular geographic area—Negro (African), Mongolian (Asian), Malay (Southeast Asia), American Indian (American), and Caucasian (European). Blumenbach introduced the word Caucasian "to describe the variety of mankind—the Georgian—that had originated on the southern slopes of Mount Caucasus." This, to Blumenbach, was the most beautiful race, and he said it must be "considered as the primate or intermediate of these five principal races." Other races represented "a degeneration from the original type." These were not the isolated opinions of a few scientists, many

other scientists, including Louis Agassiz, the greatest biologist of mid-nineteenth-century America, argued that God had created blacks and whites as separate species. Samuel George Morton, an American anthropologist, also theorized in the mid-1800s that intelligence is linked to brain size. After measuring a vast number of skulls from around the world, he concluded that whites have larger skulls than other races and are therefore "superior." Not surprisingly, those who questioned scientists like Morton were ignored or marginalized. German professor Friedrich Tiedemann attempted to replicate Morton's work during this period but could not reproduce the results. He also found no evidence for the racial hierarchy—a kind of racial ladder on which Caucasians always stood at the top and Africans at the bottom—that Morton had claimed to uncover. Tiedemann's work did not attract much attention; it was largely ignored or dismissed as "unscientific." The work of important scientists gave racism legitimacy. Journalists, teachers, and preachers began to popularize their findings. The defenders of slavery took much comfort from this assertion, for biblical prescriptions of charity and equality did not have to extend across a species boundary. What could an abolitionist say? Science had shone its cold and dispassionate light upon the subject. Thomas Jefferson (1743– 1826)- American Founding Father who served as the third President of the United States from 1801 to 1809 contributed significantly to "scientific racism", describing black people as: In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection... Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me, that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one [black] could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous... I advance it there-

fore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind. Despite the abolition of slavery in the 1860's, the life of African Americans in the US has been full of hardship, even after the rise of the Civil Rights movement led by charismatic figures like Dr Martin Luther King and Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) in the 1950's and 1960's.

Between 1955 and 1968, acts of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience, produced crisis situations and productive dialogues between activists and government authorities. Federal, state, and local governments, businesses, and communities often had to respond immediately to these situations, which highlighted the inequities faced by African Americans across the country. Sadly, both Dr King and Malcolm X were assassinated in mysterious circumstances. Despite the struggles and widespread racial discrimination, the African American community produced some outstanding international figures including Muhammad Ali, and Barak Obama the first black President of the USA elected in 2009. However, it would seem from the grievances expressed by the Black Lives Matter movement and the George Floyd case very little has changed for the average black person. The dream of Dr Martin Luther King seems to have faded into a memory of the past.

I say to you today, my friends. So even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow. I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal". [Dr Martin Luther King] .

The lives of famous Muslims like the legendary Muhammad Ali have helped many in the US and the Western world to have a wider and deeper understanding of the role of Islam in the modern world. In the latter part of his life,

Malcolm understood the role Islam could play in healing some of the divisions in the US and the modern world. In his famous letter during the pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca he wrote:

“This pilgrimage to the Holiest of Cities has been a unique experience for me, but one which has made me the recipient of numerous unexpected blessings beyond my wildest dreams...., Never have I been so highly honoured and never had such honour and respect made me feel more humble and unworthy. Who would believe that such blessing could be heaped upon an American Negro!!! (But) in the Muslim World, when one accepts Islam and ceases to be white or Negro, Islam recognizes all men as Men because the people here in Arabia believe that God is One, they believe that all people are also One, and that all our brothers and sisters are One Human Family. I have never before witnessed such sincere hospitality and the practice of true brotherhood as I have seen it here in Arabia. In fact, all I have seen and experienced on this pilgrimage has inspired me to “re-arrange” much of thoughts and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This “adjustment to reality” wasn’t too difficult for me because despite my firm conviction in whatever I believe, I have always tried to keep an open mind, which is absolutely necessary to reflect and must go hand in hand for an intelligent quest for truth. There are Muslims here of all colours and from every part of this earth. During the past days here in Mecca while understanding the rituals of the Hajj, I have eaten from the same plate, drank from the same glass and slept on the same bed or rug used by the Kings, potentates and other forms of rulers, with fellow Muslims whose skin was the whitest of white, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, and whose hair was the blond-est of blond – I could look into their blue eyes and see that they regarded me as the same, because their faith in One God (Allah) had actually removed “white” from their mind, which automatically changed their attitude

and their behaviour (towards) people of other colours. Their belief in Oneness made them so different from American whites that their colours played no part in my mind or in my dealing with them....., If white Americans could accept the religion of Islam, if they could accept the Oneness of God (Allah) they too could then sincerely accept the Oneness of Man, and cease to measure others always in terms of their “difference in colour”. And with racism now plaguing America like an incurable cancer, all thinking Americans should be more respectful towards Islam as an already proven solution to the race problem.”

Equality of Humanity-the Message of Islam

The message of Islam is for the whole of humanity and when this message was delivered in the form of the Holy Quran by the Prophet of Islam, God Almighty made it absolutely clear, that all of mankind share their origins and are part of One Humanity. God Almighty says in the Holy Quran: “O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female; and We made you into tribes and sub-tribes for the sake of easy recognition. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” (49:14). Islam takes note of the diversities of race, colour, language and wealth etc, which serve their own useful purposes in the social scheme, and describes them as Signs of God for those who hear and possess knowledge and wisdom. However, none of these confer any privilege or impose any disability. Shortly before his death, Prophet Muhammad delivered a sermon during the Hajj, in the Year 10 AH of the Islamic Calendar or 632 CE, which came to be known as his "Farewell Sermon". The farewell sermon was reminder to his followers- all people are born equal. Praising, and thanking God, the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said:

"O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I

know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore, listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today....., All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white; [none have superiority over another] except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves. Remember, one day you will appear before God and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone". The meanings found in this sermon are indeed astounding, touching upon some of the most important rights God has over humanity, and humanity has over each other. Though the Prophet's soul has left this world, his words are still living in the hearts of true Muslims. It should be obvious from this sermon and the life and practice of the Holy Prophet of Islam that people of all nationalities and races are equal according to the teachings of Islam and they should be granted equal rights without any discrimination or prejudice. This is the key and golden principle that lays the foundation of harmony between different groups and nations, and for the establishment of peace. However, today we find that there is division and separation between powerful and weaker nations, between Western Christian nations and Muslim nations, between Asian nations and Western nations, between followers of different religious groups and differences within nations between blacks and whites etc.

The Holy Quran, perhaps speaking of this age, states:

"We bring to witness that age when man as a

whole would be in a state of loss. Except for those few who believe and do good deeds and exhort others to the truth and admonish others to be patient" (103:2-4). Modern man is desperately in search of peace at a personal level and would dearly like to establish peace and harmony at a national and international level. According to Islam true peace can only be achieved by submitting to and conforming with the will of the Creator and sustainer of the universe. The Holy Quran states that God is "the Source of Peace and the Bestower of Security" (59:24) and Muslims are instructed to greet each other with "Peace be upon you", and to extend this gesture to the ignorant as the Holy Quran says: "The servants of the Gracious God are those who walk on the earth in a dignified manner, and when the ignorant address them, they say, 'Peace!'" (25:64)

The establishment and maintenance of peace and security must be the constant objective of mankind regardless of their background or position. Every pursuit and activity which has a tendency to disturb the peace is severely condemned and so Muslims are instructed "Do not promote disorder in the earth after peace has been established" (7:56-57). Domination of one group by another in the domestic sphere or in the international sphere is a potent cause of disturbance of peace, and is strongly condemned by Islam. Whenever such an attempt is made, God's purpose works for the uplift of those who are dominated or oppressed. The Quran states: "There are those who talk glibly and plausibly on all subjects and call God to witness as to the sincerity of their motives and intentions, and yet they constantly promote dissension by their persistence in magnifying differences and disputes, and when they happen to wield authority they run about in the land seeking to create disorder, which destroys harvests and entails severe suffering and hardship upon men. Allah loves not such conduct." (2:205-206).

To Be Continue.....

Peut-on sortir de l'engrenage du suicide dans les pays développés ?

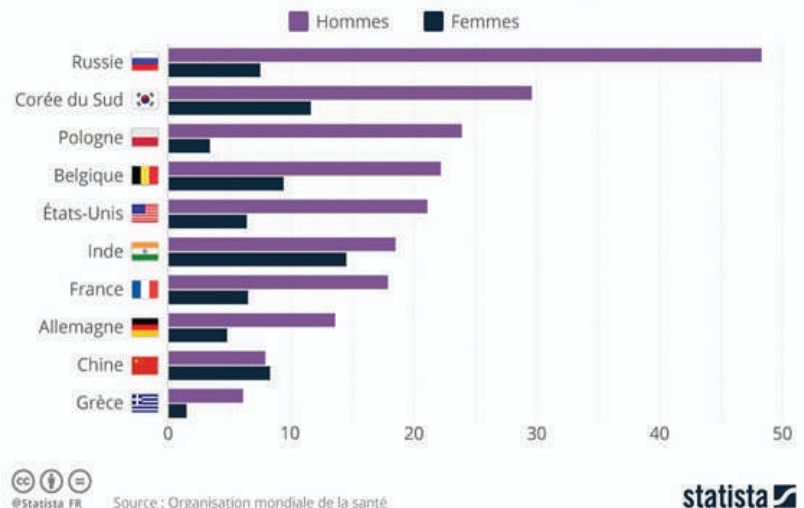


By: Dr Idrissa KONE

Le monde développé a emprunté ces dernières années un virage de plus de 90° par rapport à la morale qu'elle s'était imposée. On voit de plus en plus de dépravations qui étaient jadis condamnées par cette société. Se cachant sous le couvert de la liberté retrouvée, ce virage a des conséquences terribles dont l'une est le suicide. Selon un article paru le 18 mai 2022 sur le site web du journal français 'le monde', il est écrit : « Près de 9 000 personnes décèdent de suicide chaque année dans notre pays, laissant plus de 100 000 personnes endeuillées, et plus de 150 000 personnes tentent de se suicider. Le coût économique des conduites suicidaires en France a été estimé à 10 milliards d'euros en 2009 ». Alors pourquoi se suicider alors que la société dite développée a fait des progrès remarquables à tous les niveaux de la vie. Toutes les facilités sont disponibles pour mener une vie agréable et paisible. A contrario dans les pays pauvres et en voie de développement, le taux de suicide est très faible malgré parfois leur extrême pauvreté et l'impossibilité de satisfaire les besoins les plus élémentaires. Est-ce à dire l'adage bien connu : « l'argent ne fait pas le bonheur » doit nous pousser à méditer ? Malgré le progrès fulgurant de cette société, la plupart du temps, ses membres ont oublié dont ils venaient et ils croient qu'ils sont le fruit du hasard. Au lieu d'être reconnaissant envers leurs créateurs, ils l'ont tout simplement oublié. Loin s'en faut, nous sommes bien venus de quelque part et nous avons été créés par l'être suprême à savoir Dieu qui a

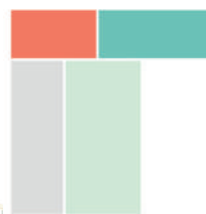
Les chiffres du suicide dans le monde

Taux de suicide selon le sexe dans une sélection de pays, en 2016 (pour 100 000 habitants)



défini le but de notre existence. Si dans la Bible il est écrit que Dieu a été créé à son image ; dans le Saint Coran, Dieu dit clairement : « Et Je n'ai créé les djinns et les hommes que pour qu'ils M'adorent. » (St Coran chapitre 51, verset 57). Or le monde développé gangrené par l'athéisme galopant a fait fit de ces injonctions et s'est donné d'autres buts basés sur le matérialisme, la luxure et l'immoralité et qui a pour conséquence de pousser à des plaisirs sans cesse insatisfait. L'esprit et l'âme alors commencent à se tourmenter pour chercher une voie de sortie qui en définitif est une issue incertaine et insurmontable d'où l'idée d'en finir en se suicidant. Parlant de ce monde terrestre, Dieu dit dans le Saint Coran : « Sachez donc que la vie de ce monde n'est qu'un jeu et un amusement, et un ornement, et une source d'orgueil entre vous-mêmes, et de rivaliser à multiplier richesses et enfants. Cette vie est pareille à de la pluie qui produit de la végétation dont se réjouissent des cultivateurs. Ensuite elle se dessèche, et tu la vois jaunir ; puis elle devient

des particules de paille brisée. Et dans l'Au-Delà il y a un châtement rigoureux, et aussi le pardon de la part d'Allah, et Son plaisir. Et la vie de ce monde n'est rien que de la jouissance trompeuse. » (Chapitre 57, verset 21). Commentant le verset suscité, Feu Sa Sainteté Mirza Tahir Ahmad 4ème Calife de la communauté musulmane Ahmadiyya dit : « Le Saint Coran présent la métaphore de la torture infligée par un mirage que l'homme assoiffé tente vainement à attendre, jusqu'au moment et où il n'y a plus la force de marcher où il meurt. La personne réalise la futilité de sa poursuite, et la prise de conscience soudaine du réel devient une punition. » Tel est le constat amer du monde développé qui pousse au suicide. La paix réside le plus souvent dans le cœur et l'homme ressent une forme de tranquillité lorsque ces désirs sont satisfaits mais le virage emprunté par le monde développé ne peut aboutir à une paix du cœur et une tranquillité de l'esprit. En effet l'homme vidé de son essence spirituelle est à la recherche d'un plaisir qui n'attendra jamais car comme le dit le verset suscité : « Et la vie de ce monde n'est rien que de la jouissance trompeuse. » Il a atteint donc le gouffre qui le poussera au suicide. Or l'homme animé d'essence spirituelle a toujours le but de sa création comme objectif ; il s'adonne au temps que possible à l'adoration de son Seigneur et à servir autant que possible Ses créatures atteignant ainsi la paix du cœur et la tranquillité de l'esprit. C'est pourquoi Dieu dit clairement dans le Saint coran : « Ceux qui croient et dont les cœurs trouvent la tranquillité dans le souvenir d'Allah. Oui c'est dans le souvenir d'Allah que les cœurs trouvent la tranquillité. » (Chapitre 13, verset 29). En somme, toutes les thérapies préventives visant à infléchir le nombre de suicide sont vouées à l'échec à moins que ces gens ne retournent vers leur créateur afin d'avoir la tranquillité de l'esprit et du cœur.



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