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Editorial

Dr. Busharat Elahi Jamil
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Pakistan's unpredictable political and electoral fabric is entirely woven on undemocratic basis. Since 1947, the political history of Pakistan suggests the purpose of elections has never been to serve the nation but to advance the power for certain drives. Moreover, the public is whipped to support to a particular party (mostly a person) through the General Elections. The international and local establishments play their particular role in this process to ensure the accomplishment of their specific agendas. Both the establishments only pick those political parties who can safeguard their interests, mostly with no decision-making powers and very likely to entertain the certain bias, which comforts to settle the political, foreign and financial affairs of the Country in the future.

The lack of proper leadership, unity, political consciousness and training Political, elite and political clutches cannot practise their political policies while the establishments take advantages of this scenario to reinforce their peculiar interference by using political entities as tools. In fact, this is the key reason for the absence of political will and realization in politicians as well as in public. In Pakistan, political elite is pampered with "justified" perception to involve in every kind of corruption hollowing out the roots of the country.

These political parties' manifesto, in Pakistan practically, leads to the acquisition of personal interests and power with an attitude of ignorance towards public opinion in general elections. The phenomenon makes it almost impossible to promote political awareness among the people compromising their interference in the Country's political affairs. Significantly, this political disaster in the General Elections does not allow the change in peoples' lives. Electoral history of Pakistan is horrific and merciless.

To gain the power, political workers can go to any extreme. In this whole electoral process, the fundamental human rights and socio-political rights of the people have no standing. The election process divides Pakistanis into political parties and groups which is extremely harmful for the unity and solidarity. In these circumstances, whether the people vote or not, the electoral process becomes worthless.

Both vote and voter are in miserable situation in Pakistan. Unfortunately, the election system encourages selection rather than election. The selected ruler upholds his rule for the pleasure and willingness of his master. Regrettably, important national decisions of Pakistan are still made elsewhere while politicians are only busy in extra political engagements, hegemony, moral and financial corruption.

The present status-quo is a system of cruelty and reparation of rights defying the international democratic norms which cannot end without education and political awareness among the people. The gradual education and political training, political consciousness can create a certain willingness and self-confidence among Pakistanis.

Steadily, the importance of vote and voter can empower the electoral system. Now people are moving towards achieving their political and social rights. Recent standing of Pakistanis against status-quo and rotten political system is a positive indicator. Conceivably one can predict the Pakistan of future with political consciousness.

'Managing' the Israel-Hamas Conflict Has Been a Disaster | Opinion



The international community has "managed" the conflict between Israel and Hamas for more than a decade. To call that policy a total failure of imagination, morality, and leadership is an understatement. The "management" strategy was always flawed because it assumed Hamas was rational.

That assumption was based on wishful thinking, not an honest assessment of reality. A rational Hamas would've prioritized reconciling with the Palestinian Authority (PA) and joining the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the internationally recognized representative of the Palestinian people since 1974.

A rational Hamas would've also agreed to abide by international law. Namely, UNGA 181 (the 1948 partition plan for the British Mandate of Palestine), UNSC 242 (the 1967 borders for a two-state-solution), the Oslo Accords (the roadmap to peace, agreed upon by the PLO and Israel in 1993 and 1995), and the Arab Peace Initiative (which called for the normalization of relations between Israel and the MENA region in 2002).

Hamas did none of the above. In fact, it steered Gazans and the Palestinian solidarity movement in the opposite direction. In the 16 years since it seized control of Gaza, Hamas has built a terrorist statelet by stockpiling weapons, constructing a 300-mile-long network of tunnels as deep as 200 feet underground, and installing military infrastructure in residential areas near hospitals, schools, and mosques with the intent of "obliterating" the state of Israel. To make matters worse, all of this was accomplished under the watchful eye of countless IGOs and NGOs in Gaza.

The consequences of our collective cowardice to stand up to Hamas have unfolded before our eyes for the umpteenth time since Oct. 7. Once again, Hamas reminded the international

community that its use of violence has never been a means to an end but an end in itself: to eradicate all Jews from "the river to the sea" and replace the free, prosperous, and democratic state of Israel with an Islamic State of Palestine. The Israel-Hamas conflict must be resolved because "managing" it has been a complete disaster. Even those who considered the status quo sustainable during Operations Cast Lead, Pillar of Defense, or Protective Edge have changed their minds since Oct. 7. Israel understands this, even if the rest of the international community is still in denial. Pausing the conflict now and doubling down on the international community's failed "management" strategy will only delay the inevitable Israel-Hamas war to a later date.



This would prolong everyone's suffering by helping the terror group avoid accountability for its crimes against humanity and enabling Hamas to regroup and reload until it commits another Oct. 7 massacre. Yet not all is doom and gloom. As the primary benefactor of the Palestinian cause for the past three decades, the West should continue leading the security, financial, and diplomatic efforts on the complicated journey to transform Gaza from a terrorist statelet into Dubai on the Mediterranean once Hamas is disarmed, dismantled, and defeated.

If a joint NATO-Egypt-Jordan-UAE military occupation of Gaza is necessary after the war to enforce a permanent ceasefire between Israel and the Palestinians, to guarantee that Hamas remains disarmed, to ensure that taxpayer dollars reach their intended beneficiaries instead of being embezzled by terrorists, and to institute reforms that lead to good governance, a stable economy and better living conditions for civilians in the Strip, then so be it.

Only power imposes order to chaos, not the wishful thinking that conceptualized and executed the international community's failed "management" strategy to begin with. A stable, predictable, and well-governed Gaza is a prerequisite, not a roadblock, for establishing a free and prosperous state of Palestine that can coexist peacefully beside the state of Israel.

A Palestinian state should exist where leaders have both the self-awareness to engage in introspection and the vision to look forward optimistically to the year 2100, like former Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, instead of politicians who blame their endless list of mistakes and failures on everyone but themselves.

A state where the powerful are subject to the rule of law, and the powerless have access to the same resources and opportunities as the people who govern them, is what Palestinians need. A Palestine whose citizens worry not whether their children will survive another heart-breaking Israel-Hamas war, but about pursuing happiness, working hard, and enjoying the fruits of their labor. The international community has failed in "managing" the Israel-Hamas conflict for more than a decade. The brighter path of peace and prosperity is nonetheless possible for those who are wise enough to pave it after Israel wins this war.

<https://www.newsweek.com/managing-israel-hamas-conflict-has-been-disaster-opinion-1844860>

Apec summit ends with unity on WTO reform but not Gaza or Ukraine



Pacific Rim leaders have shown divisions over the wars in Ukraine and Gaza after a two-day summit of the Apec forum, while pledging support for reform of the World Trade Organization. The 21 economies that make up the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum – among them Russia, China, the US and Australia – did not mention either conflict in their final joint communique. Instead an accompanying chair's statement noted the bloc had “exchanged views on the ongoing crisis in Gaza”.

Days of meetings involving Apec ministers and leaders were dominated by a summit on Wednesday between the US president, Joe Biden, and China's Xi Jinping aimed at cooling tensions between the world's two largest economies. Apec is largely focused on trade and includes countries as disparate as Muslim-majority Indonesia and the US, Israel's most important ally.

Biden used the Apec summit in San Francisco to highlight the strong US economy and its ties to other Pacific nations, even as his vision for greater regional cooperation to counter China's influence stumbled on the trade front over his bid to strengthen workers' rights. The managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva, said the Biden-Xi meeting was a badly needed signal that the world needs to cooperate more and a positive sign for cooperation on global challenges, especially climate change.

Much US-China tension is linked to democratically governed Taiwan, which China claims as its territory. Taiwan's Apec envoy, the semiconductor magnate Morris Chang, said on Friday he believed the Biden-Xi summit had been a “good meeting”. He said he had informal interactions with Biden and his vice-president, Kamala Harris, and with Antony Blinken, Biden's secretary of state, but not with Xi.

On the Gaza war, an Apec chair's statement noted the bloc had merely “exchanged views on

the ongoing crisis". The war is Israel's response to a Hamas terrorist raid from Gaza into Israel on 7 October that left about 1,200 people dead and 240 people taken hostage. "Some leaders objected to the inclusion of this language in the accompanying 2023 Apec leaders' Golden Gate Declaration on the basis that they do not believe that Apec is a forum to discuss geopolitical issues," the chair's statement said. "Some leaders also shared the united messages of the joint Arab-Islamic summit in Riyadh on 11 November 2023."

Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia in a joint statement said they were among the Apec members who supported the messages of the Riyadh summit, which had called for an immediate end to military operations in Gaza, rejecting Israel's justification of its actions against Palestinians as self-defence. The three countries also called for an "immediate, durable and sustained" humanitarian truce, and for the unhindered provision of essential goods and services to civilians in Gaza.

On Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the statement said there had been no accord but "most members strongly condemn" the aggression. "We note with deep concern the adverse impact of the war in Ukraine and stress that it is causing immense human suffering and exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy."

The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, was not among heads of state at the meeting as he faces an arrest warrant from the international criminal court. Russia instead sent deputy prime minister Alexei Overchuk. -The Apec leaders' declaration reaffirmed their determination "to deliver a free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, inclusive, and predictable trade and investment environment ... We are committed to necessary reform of the WTO to improve all of its functions, including conducting discussions with a view to having a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all members by 2024."

<https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2023/nov/18/apec-summit-ends-with-unity-on-wto-reform-but-not-gaza-or-ukraine>

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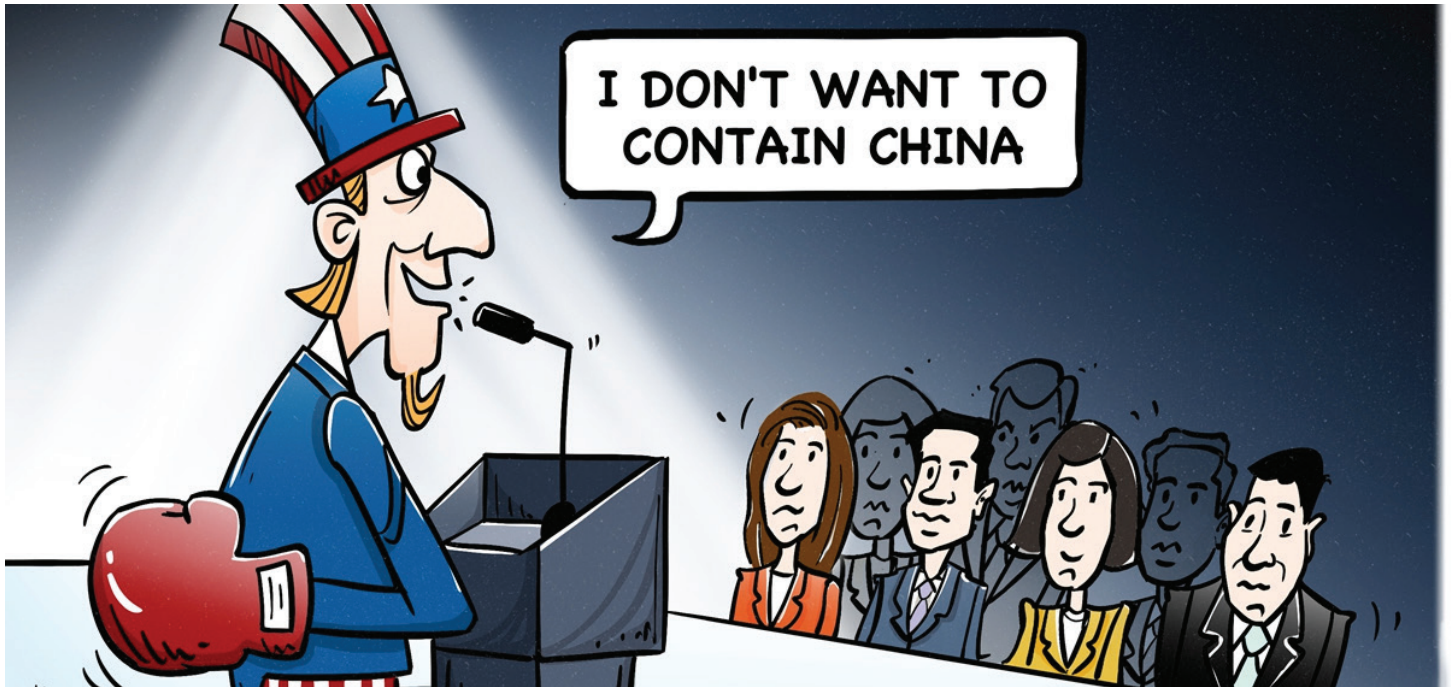
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Containing China through an economic war is a terrible and naïve idea: Jeffrey Sachs



The 30th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting is underway in San Francisco. Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden will meet during the event, which has already attracted great attention from worldwide. Will it become a turning point of the China-US relationship? How will the US' sanctions on Chinese companies affect the sentiment at the summit?

Jeffrey Sachs (Sachs), a world-renowned American economist, shared his insights on these questions. In an exclusive interview with Global Times (GT) reporter Wang Zixuan, Sachs explained why he is confident in China's economy, and stressed that the US foreign policy toward China in recent years has been ineffective, misguided and crisis-provoking.

GT: The San Francisco summit has been regarded as a chance to ease China-US tensions. How do you think this summit may affect the China-US relationship?

Sachs: The Biden administration may be looking for an easing of tensions at this stage, since the US situation is not good. The US now is enmeshed in two dangerous and costly wars, in Ukraine and in Gaza. In neither situation is the US ally (Ukraine, Israel) in good shape. The US itself is deeply divided politically, and is entering the frenetic period of an election year.

The president is unpopular. All of this means that both foreign and domestic tensions are very high, so the US may therefore choose to ease the China-US tensions. This would be highly desirable, as the US foreign policy toward China in recent years has been negative, ineffective, misguided and crisis-provoking.

GT: The US has imposed sanctions on a number of Chinese companies several weeks before the summit. Some are concerned that the summit may be tainted with political sentiments. What's your take? Sachs: The US should agree with China to end this pattern of unilateral sanctions, and to negotiate the withdrawal of these sanctions. In my view, the US trade and technology policies have been self-defeating, unsuccessful, and very often in violation of

WTO principles. The US should agree with China that major bilateral trade, technology and financial measures will be negotiated in the future, and in compliance with international rules, rather than imposed unilaterally without prior negotiation or consultation, and in violation of WTO standards.

GT: In your recent article, you mentioned that "Western press is filled with China's supposed misdeeds... Yet much of the slowdown is the result of US measures that aim to slow China's growth." Why are you confident in China's economy? Why did you say the policy of containing China will backfire on the US?

Sachs: China is not in a "middle-income trap," as is widely portrayed in the Western media. The whole idea is ridiculous in my view. A middle-income trap is caused by a failure of a country to climb the technology ladder, as in many Latin American countries in past decades.

By contrast, China is making huge advances in 21st-century technologies, and China is a high-quality, low-cost global producer of many of the key cutting-edge technologies, such as 5G, fast rail, large hydropower, long-distance power transmission, photovoltaics, electric vehicles, advanced computers, to name a few.

GT: Some have said that the US economy has been impeded by political dysfunction, and the US-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) didn't perform well. However, many countries have recognized the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative as a success. What is the fundamental reason for this situation? What's the key to achieving a win-win result for both China and the US?

Sachs: China is a high-saving country with a successful record of modern infrastructure investment, including thousands of kilometers of fast inter-city rail, 5G, long-distance power transmission, among others. The BRI aims to make these technologies available to China's trade partners, which is a win-win proposition. The US is a low-saving country which has not modernized much of its infrastructure in decades, for example, there is no fast rail, and EVs constitute a small proportion of new car sales.

Also, the US political system is not very much interested in the low-income developing countries, whereas China is. And it also has practical experience and technologies to share with them. The US and EU should aim to cooperate with the BRI, for example in ASEAN countries and in Africa.

GT: APEC is an important organization for multilateral economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Under the intensifying tensions, what positive role will the APEC meeting play in the economy and development of the Asia-Pacific region?

Sachs: If China and the US announce a return to cooperation, not only APEC countries but the entire world will breathe a huge sigh of relief. The US has caused these tensions with the idea of engaging in an economic war to "contain" China.

This was a terrible and naïve idea. I hope that the US is ready to drop it, but this is clearly unlikely. There are still many US politicians that have a naïve, poorly informed anti-China attitude. Biden should now use the APEC meeting to end the dangerous and misguided US policies of recent years.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202311/1301872.shtml>

‘From the river to the sea’ and the decolonisation of our collective future

By: Mark LeVine



“From the river to the sea, Israel will be free.”

OK, that is not the way it is supposed to go, is it? But at this moment of war and mass death, this proposition is worth reflecting on: Palestine cannot be free without Israel – or at least the Israelis – being free. True freedom between the river and the sea can only be achieved by breaking free from the chains of settler-colonialism but also the narrow bounds of the nation-state.

Before I explain further, let me get into the current debate over the slogan “river to the sea”. When most Israelis, and no doubt a significant number of Palestinians, hear the phrase “river to the sea,” they imagine it in exclusivist terms. This is not surprising.

The zero-sum understanding of the nation-state – a specific territory under the exclusive control of one national community, has been the determinative communal identity for at least four centuries. Its logic is as simple as it is violent: if this territory belongs to my group, it cannot belong to yours. Not every country’s identity and politics are based on this logic, but many are. Even countries with a long tradition of intercommunal tolerance can rapidly veer towards chauvinism.

The dynamics are even clearer in settler-colonial societies, where the settler community has to conquer the territory and subdue or expel the Indigenous population in order to build its own society. Genocide is more often than not a core experience of this process.

Israel is, of course, the quintessential settler-colonial society; yet it is also one whose maximalist impulse has yet to be realised. Palestinians have not been reduced to a manageably small minority who can be given formal political rights and then ignored, repressed and extracted without meaningful resistance – as was the fate of Indigenous Americans and Australians.

Given the violence inherent to colonialism, Indigenous resistance has naturally been imagined by settler societies as the mirror image of their eliminationist impulses and policies: We want them gone and will commit whatever violence is necessary to achieve that goal, so they must want and would do the same. Not surprisingly, when resistance does take the form of mass violence, as happened on October 7, that imagination is powerfully reinforced.

In this context, when most Zionist Israelis and Israel supporters hear the phrase “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”, they hear “a genocidal call to violence to destroy the state of Israel and its people to replace it with a Palestinian state extending from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea”. The fact that some Palestinians, particularly Hamas, have leaned hard into a violently exclusivist connotation of the phrase only serves to reinforce the idea.

But Hamas has never represented most Palestinians, despite the concerted efforts of the movement and successive Israeli governments (for very different reasons) to elevate its status. Its popularity in, if not control over, Gaza had waned significantly before the October 7 attack. Into this deeply dysfunctional mix enters Representative Rashida Tlaib, currently the only Palestinian American member of the United States Congress. Along with her colleague Ilhan Omar and occasionally other members of “The Squad”, she has been the only national political voice advocating unhesitatingly for Palestinian rights.

For the vast majority of her congressional colleagues and most who describe themselves as “pro-Israel”, Tlaib’s use of the “river to the sea” slogan permanently marked her as an enemy of Israel. This was why, on November 6, she was officially censured by the House of Representatives.

Of course, Palestinians are not the only ones advocating a “river-to-sea” discourse. It has more or less been the official policy of the Israeli state since 1967, when it occupied the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights. Since then, every Israeli government has pushed for the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, rendering the two-state solution an impossibility well before the Oslo peace process began.

Within the Israeli political space, from the far-right to the liberal left, the idea of sharing the land with the Palestinians as equals was never on the table. The problem Israel has faced – like other settler-colonial powers – has been that Indigenous populations rarely if ever go gentle into that good night. Revisionist Zionism founder Ze’ev Jabotinsky would not have disagreed with Tlaib’s argument in the immediate aftermath of the Hamas attack, that the “suffocating, dehumanising conditions” of permanent occupation inevitably “lead to resistance”.

Exactly a century ago, in his 1923 manifesto, *The Iron Wall*, he advocated overwhelming Jewish power to turn Palestine from the river to the sea into a Jewish ethnostate precisely because of the inevitability of Palestinian resistance.

Regardless of whose side one is on, as long as the understanding of the “river-to-sea” discourse is filtered through the prism of the inherently colonial nation-state, one’s imagination of other possibilities will be highly constrained. And a far more expansive imagination is precisely what is most desperately needed today, not only to establish freedom, justice and peace for all the inhabitants of Palestine/Israel in the midst of the present horror, but to address humanity’s myriad existential problems, in which the Israeli occupation is deeply embedded.

In that regard, Tlaib’s argument – echoed by innumerable Palestinian activists and their allies, including many Jews – that “from the River to the Sea is an aspirational call for free-

dom, human rights and peaceful coexistence, not death, destruction or hate” represents a radically post-nationalist imagination of the future in Palestine and Israel. In fact, it is one that Palestinians on the front lines of the occupation, joined by Israeli and international solidarity activists, have been putting into practice, however tentatively and against overwhelming force, for decades, as anyone who is engaged in solidarity work in the occupied territories will attest.

To share a communal meal in Nabi Saleh or Bil'in, Atwani or the Jordan Valley after a day spent planting or harvesting olive trees, walking children to school, facing off against Israeli settlers, bulldozers or tear gas – and now to struggle daily together in the US and across the West, is to repeat an experience common to the Freedom Riders, the multi-racial African National Congress, and others who struggled for freedom.

Intercommunal solidarity and joint action towards a common future were central to all these struggles, as they pushed for imagining possibilities for sharing land, resources and power that previously seemed naïve, far-fetched or even dangerous.

Every day, more and more Jews and others join Palestinians in causing precisely the sort of “good trouble” that previously helped end – however imperfectly – apartheid in America and South Africa, and formal colonial rule across the Global South. There is a growing awareness, particularly among young people, that the stakes of Gaza extend beyond Palestine and Israel, representing the front lines of a battle for the future, for the possibility of humanity not being engulfed by growing violence and inequality as we veer towards ever more deadly threats to our collective survival.

For those still trapped inside binary identities and safely ensconced in an increasingly psychopathic global capitalist system, a free Palestine from the river to the sea – indeed, a truly free, equal and sustainable world – remains an unthinkable proposition.

But as the latest wave of violence confirms, Israel cannot be free until Palestine is free, and the price of that freedom is real decolonisation. This means the creation of a political order, whatever its name or form, in which all people living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea are accorded the same fundamental rights and freedoms. In the face of the horrors of Gaza, we should be working to encourage real decolonisation not just in Israel/Palestine, but globally, before the violence engulfs us all.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/11/15/from-the-river-to-the-sea-and-the-decolonisation-of-our-collective-future>

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When it comes to Palestine, the Philippines is on the wrong side of history

By: Susan Reyes Kurdli

On October 27, the United Nations General Assembly passed a nonbinding resolution with overwhelming support calling for an immediate humanitarian truce between Israel and Hamas and demanding aid access to Gaza. One hundred twenty countries voted in favour of the resolution, clearly expressing their opposition to the continuation of Israel's siege and bombardment of Gaza, which has claimed thousands of civilian lives. The Philippines was not one of those countries. Along with 45 others, it abstained from voting on



the resolution. Instead, it acknowledged Israel's "right to self-defence" while remaining mum on the human rights abuses and war crimes faced by Palestinians in Gaza. Although disappointing, this was not exactly surprising. The government of the Philippines has been supporting Israel unconditionally for many decades, turning a blind eye to its many violations of international law and grave crimes against Palestinians living under its occupation. The ties between the Philippines and Israel are as old as Israel itself. The Philippines was one of the 33 countries that voted in favour of UN Resolution 181 in 1947 to partition Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish, with Jerusalem placed under a special international regime. This plan, as we all know, never materialised. But the Philippines continued to support the Israeli state and its unlawful expansion into Palestinian territories. Israel and the Philippines established full diplomatic relationships in 1957 and signed a treaty of friendship in 1958. Manila's support for Israel has remained robust since then. It not only never pressured Israel to cede occupied Palestinian territories but also always actively sought to protect it from international criticism. In 2017, for example, openly contradicting its 1947 position, the Philippines abstained from voting on a resolution criticising then-United States President Donald Trump's attempt to unilaterally cement Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. A year later, Rodrigo Duterte became the first Filipino president in history to visit Israel. Duterte had promised early in his tenure to carve out an independent foreign policy that wouldn't automatically toe the US policy line. Yet under his administration, as exemplified in his 2018 visit to the country, the Philippines continued its unconditional diplomatic and political support for Israel on all fronts. Today, under the administration of Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the Philippines is firmly back in the US sphere of influence, and the country's support for Israel remains as strong as ever. Since the October 7 Hamas attacks on Israel, in which about 1,200 people were killed and more than 200 taken captive, the Philippines repeatedly demonstrated solidarity with Israel and condemned the harm inflicted on Israeli civilians. But it did not stop there. In line with its long-held pro-Israel position, the Philippines went beyond advocating for the human rights of Israelis and offered blind support for the Israeli government and its vengeful and objectively disproportionate attacks on Palestinian civilians in Gaza. By showing unconditional and unquestioning support for the Israeli government and its war on Gaza, the Philippines has placed itself firmly on the wrong side of history and ended up working against its own interests. Israel's siege and bombardment of Gaza

already has had an immense human cost, claiming more than 11,000 lives, many of them children, in just several weeks. Like all countries, the Philippines has a moral obligation not to take part in, support or in anyway condone state policies and actions that lead to thousands of deaths, widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure and mass displacement. It also has an obligation to hold all states, including its allies, to account when they blatantly violate international law. A foreign policy that does not actively demand an end to all violence in Gaza undermines these obligations and leaves the Philippines open to accusations that it is complicit in Israel's human rights violations and alleged war crimes in Gaza. Showing blind support for Israel is also contrary to the Philippine government's own long-term interests. The Philippines has first-hand knowledge of the perils of having a militarily and economically powerful neighbour that routinely disregards international law and tries to expand into the territories of surrounding smaller states. The Philippines has long been involved in territorial disputes with China and has had confrontations with Chinese ships over such issues as recently as this week. Supporting violators of international laws and norms weakens the Philippines' moral stance on the international stage and its calls for condemnation of China's territorial aggression in the South China/West Philippines Sea. The Philippines cannot expect the international community to help it confront violations of international law by a neighbouring state while it is actively lending its support to similar violations by another nation. Therefore, for reasons ranging from moral obligation to self-interest, the Philippines should revise its policies on Israel, end its unwavering support towards the Israeli government and, most importantly, adopt a foreign policy that recognises and respects the human rights of all peoples, including the Palestinians. The Philippines must acknowledge that it is wrong to kill civilians, whether they are Israelis or Palestinians, no ifs, ands or buts.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/11/17/when-it-comes-to-palestine-the-philippines-is-on-the-wrong-side-of-history>

Google to begin deleting inactive

Gmail accounts this week

Google, earlier this year, announced it was taking a step towards improving the security of its users by deleting inactive Gmail accounts in December of this year. The company's cleanup comes after it observed that forgotten or unmanaged accounts are more vulnerable to hijacking due to the lack of security checks and two-step verification. According to Axios, the likelihood of two-step verification being enabled on abandoned accounts is at least 10 times lower than that of active accounts. In light of this, Google has revised its account policy and stated that "once an account is compromised, it can be used for anything from identity theft to a vector for unwanted or even malicious content, like spam." Starting from December 1, accounts that have not been used within a two-year period, along with their content and data, may be deleted. However, this policy does not apply to accounts set up through an employer or school. Google will send notifications to both the account's email address and a recovery email if one was provided, before deleting an account. You can still continue to use your accounts and avoid Google's attempt to purge the internet community of potential malicious users. Here's how to do that. It is not difficult to preserve your older Google accounts because all you need to do is sign in at least once every two years, so if you cannot remember doing that already, now is the time. Other activities like reading or sending an email, using Google Drive, watching a YouTube video, downloading an app on the Google Play Store, using Google Search or using Google to sign in to a third-party app or service will keep your account active. Additionally, it counts as an activity if you have a subscription to Google One, a news source, or an app set up through your Google account.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1133281-google-to-begin-deleting-inactive-gmail-accounts-this-week>



History: The Legacy Of The Balfour Declaration

By: Saman Siddiqui



The roots of the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict can be traced to the early 20th century, when the British arrived in the region. At that time, Palestine was home to a diverse population, consisting of around 700,000 Arabs, 85,000 Jews, and a smaller percentage of Christians, whose ancestors had lived in the area for centuries. The Jewish population was primarily concentrated in Jerusalem and Safed, focusing on urban economic activities, while the Arabs were more prevalent in the agrarian sector.

The Birth of Political Zionism

Theodor Herzl, a Jewish journalist from Vienna, played a pivotal role in the formation of political Zionism. Herzl believed that Jews constituted a distinct nation and the only way to escape centuries of persecution was to establish their own homeland. Early Zionist leaders explored various territories, including Uganda and Yemen's Socotra Island, as potential Jewish homelands. However, these options were eventually rejected in favour of Palestine, due to its historical and religious significance.

November 2 marked the anniversary of the colonial British diktat. It remains the root cause of the conflict in Palestine, which rages to this day with increasing devastation, more than 100 years later

The Balfour Declaration

In 1917, during World War I, the British government made a pivotal decision. They promised the Jewish community a homeland in Palestine, in exchange for its support in the war. Simultaneously, to gain the military and political support of the Arabs, Britain pledged to back their struggle for independence in lands previously ruled by the Ottoman Turks, which notably included Palestine. On November 2, 1917, the British government publicly declared its intention with the Balfour Declaration — named after its author, conservative British politician Lord Arthur Balfour — stating that it favourably viewed the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. The declaration also emphasised the importance of

safeguarding the civil, religious and political rights of the non-Jewish communities in the region. The Balfour Declaration, which publicly pledged support for a Jewish settlement in Palestine, marked the beginning of a complex historical legacy. While it was a moment of hope for Jews on their path to statehood, it marked a new era of struggle and displacement for Palestinians. Edwin Montagu, a Jewish member of the British cabinet, even labelled Zionism a mischievous political creed that could promote anti-Semitism. The Balfour Declaration faced immediate opposition from the Arabs, and some within the British War Cabinet were sceptical of its validity. Nevertheless, the British government chose to issue the Declaration, setting the stage for later conflicts.

The Division of Palestine

After World War I, in the Treaty of Versailles, Palestine was divided between British and French rule. British forces subsequently invaded and occupied Palestine, initially welcomed as liberators from Ottoman rule. The British fulfilled their promise by supporting Zionist efforts with the necessary governance and infrastructure.

This support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland became official with the appointment of Herbert Samuel, an ardent Zionist, as the first High Commissioner for Palestine, responsible for administering the territory. The British-backed Zionist project led to significant changes on the ground. Landowners who had been living in exile in other regions, such as Beirut and Damascus, started selling large portions of their land, displacing many Palestinian workers, and creating landless refugees. Urban centres like Tel Aviv developed, attracting Jewish refugees from Eastern European countries. As the Nazi regime rose to power in the 1930s, the influx of Jewish refugees into Palestine increased. In response, the Arab population began developing their own national aspirations and fighting for independence. The Arab Revolt was harshly suppressed by the British through measures such as arrests, curfews, the destruction of homes, torture, extrajudicial killings and aerial bombardments, resulting in significant Palestinian casualties. Following World War II, the British empire's presence in the region waned and they faced financial constraints. The situation in Palestine remained turbulent, leading to the eventual decision to end the British mandate and transfer the issue to the United Nations. Regarding the British role in the Israel-Palestine conflict, some argue that it favoured the Arab side, while others contend that it leaned towards the Jewish perspective. In reality, the British administration's primary allegiance was consistently and exclusively to British interests, which led to the clutter.

The United Nations' Partition Plan

In 1947, the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into two states: one for Jews and one for Arabs. However, this decision did not lead to peace. Instead, it triggered a war between Israel and neighbouring Arab countries, further complicating the situation. Despite presenting a united front, each Arab party was primarily focused on advancing its own individual interests, and a pervasive sense of mutual distrust prevailed. Lebanese and Egyptian troops harboured suspicions toward one another, while Transjordan actively pursued an arrangement to claim what would later be recognised as the West Bank, driven by its own self-interest. This intricate situation resulted in a state of chaos, with ordinary Palestinians finding themselves trapped in the midst of it all.

The Nakba and Its Consequences

The war resulted in the 'Nakba', a 'catastrophe' for Palestinians, with at least 750,000 forced to flee their homes and lands during the establishment of the state of Israel. David Ben-Gurion, considered the founder of Israel and its first prime minister, took deliberate measures to avoid the occupation of the West Bank, encompassing Jerusalem, the Old City and Gaza. This decision was influenced by the presence of Arab refugees who had been forcibly expelled and denied the opportunity to return to their native land, which we now recognise as Palestine.

The British Were Responsible

November 2 marks the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, an exceedingly contentious and ill-considered proclamation, made with limited understanding of the region and a lack of concern for its inhabitants. The British must be held responsible and reflect on their actions because, when they assumed control in 1917, Palestinians constituted 90 percent of the population. However, when they departed, the majority of Palestinians found themselves displaced and living in refugee camps. The commitment to safeguarding the rights of the non-Jewish population was left unfulfilled, and fundamental human rights were consistently disregarded, both during the British mandate and in the state of Israel.

The writer is an academic specialising in politics and international relations

Nuclear-armed submarine suffered malfunction

By: Jonathan Beale

A Royal Navy nuclear submarine suffered a "concerning" malfunction while diving, the BBC has been told. The incident on board the unnamed Vanguard class submarine, which carries the UK's trident nuclear missiles, happened more than a year ago while it was preparing to go out on patrol. A defence source said "there was a problem and it was concerning", but that it was picked up by "the system". A Royal Navy investigation into the incident took

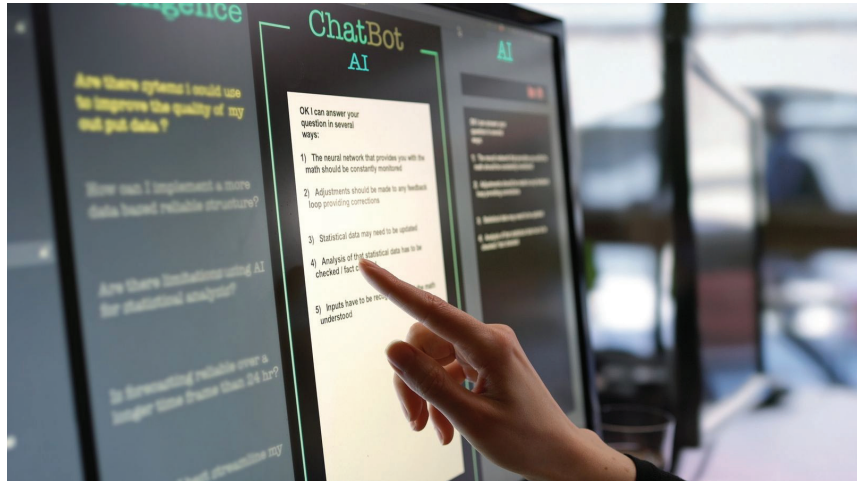


place, the source said. But they declined to give further details. During the incident the main depth gauge on the submarine failed as it was diving, a defence source confirmed, but a secondary depth gauge was still working. Submarines have to be strong enough to withstand enormous pressures exerted by the ocean when diving. Redundancy systems are built into nuclear armed submarines to prevent problems from escalating. Details of the incident were first reported in the Sun newspaper which said engineers on board alerted the crew to the failure while the submarine was diving. The paper said the submarine was still within its limits for operating safely but was diving towards its "crush depth" before the alarm was raised. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) does not normally comment on the operations of the UK's submarines. The Royal Navy said its submarines continue to meet their commitments and that while it does not comment on operations, the safety of its personnel is always the highest priority. The Vanguard submarines are based at Faslane in Scotland and, according to the Royal Navy, normally have a crew of 132 officers and men. In January this year it was reported that inspectors found a "defect" on HMS Vanguard, the lead boat of the four Vanguard-class submarines, while it was undergoing maintenance work. The defect, from "work done in the past" was "promptly reported and fixed", the MoD said at the time. In May the vessel finally left the Devonport dockyard where it had undergone a seven-and-a-half-year refit.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-67473729>

Cambridge Dictionary reveals word of the year – and it has a new meaning thanks to AI

Cambridge Dictionary has declared "hallucinate" as the word of the year for 2023 – while giving the term an additional, new meaning relating to artificial intelligence technology. The traditional definition of "hallucinate" is when someone seems to sense something that does not exist, usually because of a health condition or drug-taking, but it now also relates to AI producing false information. The additional Cambridge Dictionary definition reads: "When an artificial intelligence (= a computer system that has some of the qualities that the human brain



has, such as the ability to produce language in a way that seems human) hallucinates, it produces false information." This year has seen a surge in interest in AI tools such as ChatGPT. The accessible chatbot has even been used by a British judge to write part of a court ruling while an author told Sky News how it was helping with their novels. However, it doesn't always deliver reliable and fact-checked prose. AI hallucinations, also known as confabulations, are when the tools provide false information, which can range from suggestions which seem perfectly plausible to ones that are clearly completely nonsensical. Wendalyn Nichols, Cambridge Dictionary's publishing manager, said: "The fact that AIs can 'hallucinate' reminds us that humans still need to bring their critical thinking skills to the use of these tools. "AIs are fantastic at churning through huge amounts of data to extract specific information and consolidate it. But the more original you ask them to be, the likelier they are to go astray." Adding that AI tools using large language models (LLMs) "can only be as reliable as their training data", she concluded: "Human expertise is arguably more important - and sought after - than ever, to create the authoritative and up-to-date information that LLMs can be trained on." AI can hallucinate in a confident and believable manner - which has already had real-world impacts. A US law firm cited fictitious cases in court after using ChatGPT for legal research while Google's promotional video for its AI chatbot Bard made a factual error about the James Webb Space Telescope.

'A profound shift in perception'

Dr Henry Shevlin, an AI ethicist at Cambridge University, said: "The widespread use of the term 'hallucinate' to refer to mistakes by systems like ChatGPT provides [...] a fascinating snapshot of how we're anthropomorphising AI." "'Hallucinate' is an evocative verb implying an agent experiencing a disconnect from reality," he continued. "This linguistic choice reflects a subtle yet profound shift in perception: the AI, not the user, is the one 'hallucinating'." "While this doesn't suggest a widespread belief in AI sentience, it underscores our readiness to ascribe human-like attributes to AI." "As this decade progresses, I expect our psychological vocabulary will be further extended to encompass the strange abilities of the new intelligences we're creating."

<https://news.sky.com/story/cambridge-dictionary-reveals-word-of-the-year-and-it-has-a-new-meaning-thanks-to-ai-13008080>

Scapegoating the refugee



By: Prof. Pervez Hoodbhoy

HERDED like cattle, over 1,700,000 Muslim refugees — more than twice the number of Palestinians evicted in 1948 by Zionist Israel — are presently being expelled from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. A compliant caretaker government wants all undocumented Afghans booted out of the country. Taking this a step further, the Balochistan caretaker information minister declared earlier this week that, in line with the state's decision, even those Afghans with legal documents would be expelled. Who runs the state is clear.

Once these unfortunates cross the Torkham border, hell awaits them. Large numbers have never visited, much less known, the famine-stricken land to which they allegedly belong. Hundreds of thousands were born on Pakistani soil but could never acquire documents.

Pakistani authorities gave but 30 short days to sell off possessions acquired over a lifetime, decreed that only Rs50,000 per family could be carried in cash, and forbade evictees from taking along their livestock. Who could be more heartless? Zionists?

The story of loss and displacement doesn't end here. After enduring extortion by Pakistani border guards, they will enter a country run by a primitive, murderous and misogynist militia that hates all forms of modernity except its guns. No girl may go to school, no woman may work, music and art are forbidden, limb-chopping and stoning to death are back in vogue.

In 1996, Pakistan was the first of three countries to recognise the Taliban as Afghanistan's lawful government. They committed hideous crimes but Pakistan's high-placed duffers — as the inimitable Asma Jahangir famously called them — carefully explained away their savagery. For decades Pakistan remained the Taliban's chief champion and loudspeaker to the world.

When the Ashraf Ghani government fell in 2021, there was glee all around. Then-ISI chief Gen Faiz Hameed preened before television cameras in Kabul as though celebrating his personal victory, while then-PM Imran Khan famously proclaimed Afghans had “broken the shackles of slavery”. Things have changed dramatically since then and we know exactly why. After a victory, the force of fanaticism does not diminish — it grows. Backed by the government in Kabul, TTP now savagely attacks Pakistan's army and police almost daily.

Worried Pakistani rulers tried persuading Afghanistan's rulers to denounce these terrorist acts but met a brick wall. Why expect otherwise? Both the TTP and Afghan Taliban carry the same mindset and have the same goals.

Although many Afghans fled to Pakistan after the 2021 Taliban victory, they are now being falsely accused of providing TTP terrorists a base. In fact the TTP was born in Swat under the nose of our security forces. Had there been a will, Maulana Fazlullah — aka Mullah Radio — could have been instantly neutralised in 2006-2007.

To cover up the establishment's past incompetence and complicity, hapless refugees are now being scapegoated. They are victims of Pakistan's bungled foreign policy and its delusory pursuit of strategic depth. The days of dollar-fuelled 'jihad' being over, these penniless people are no longer useful as cannon fodder. Rich Afghans, of course, may stay.

Had Pakistan ever been serious about wanting to destroy TTP's ideologically charged terrorism, it would have looked for places where the call to 'jihad' is loud and strident.

All across the Muslim world the mullah has been tamed by the state. Yet there's little chance that Pakistani madressahs preaching violence will be investigated. Maulana Abdul Aziz, leader of the Lal Masjid insurrection that killed well over 200, supports the TTP but struts around Islamabad with armed escort.

Those who ordered the sudden deportations claim to defend Pakistan's ideological frontiers. But unknowingly they are hollowing out the Islamic premise upon which Pakistan was founded.

To understand this, let's wind back to the mid 1940s when the secular Indian National Congress was in power in NWFP and Dr Khan Sahib, brother of Bacha Khan, was chief minister. The All-India Muslim League was rising but still on the back foot.

To woo the Pakhtuns and counter the Khan brothers' popularity, Mr Jinnah insisted that Islamic unity must trump ethnicity. As recorded in the Jinnah Papers, on June 29, 1947, he declared, "I want the Muslims of the Frontier to understand that they are Muslims first and Pathans afterwards".

With closely knitted Pakhtun families living on either side of the Durand Line — a British construct designed to demarcate British from Russian spheres of influence — Jinnah never suggested Pakhtuns would ever be prevented from freely crossing over.

How could a Muslim from Uttar Pradesh become a Pakistani but not another Muslim living right across an arbitrarily drawn line? It made no sense. Jinnah thus won over the Pakhtuns.

The Afghan refugee issue starkly exposes the inherent contradictions within a state created on the basis of religious identity. Still, in my opinion, Pakistan cannot and should not allow every Muslim from anywhere to migrate to the country. While the mass deportation ordered by the government is wrong and has been widely condemned, the wishes of the majority must be kept in mind.

We know, for example, that tensions exist in interior Sindh between the indigenous Sindhi population and the newly arrived Afghans, the latter tending to be socially conservative but also ready to work harder. Such tensions bring to mind Pakistani migrants in Europe who bring along with them their conservative culture plus a host of other problems, particularly crime.

Still, mass deportations of Pakistanis from Europe similar to what Pakistan is doing to Afghans would be wrong and immoral. Migration across borders is now a universal feature of humankind for which there are no absolutes and no clear answers. Open borders are still a distant dream for humanity. For now, sensitive, scientific management is needed. Europe is only halfway up the learning curve.

Afghans in Pakistan must be dealt with as per universal norms that respect human rights and dignity. At a very minimum, those born in Pakistan must be declared Pakistani citizens with rights equal to the rest. For this, the documentation process must be simplified. Girls and women must not be forced back to suffer at the hands of misogynist rulers. Individuals at high risk must be given asylum, not deported. Nothing less is acceptable.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1790340>

Opinion: Money management crucial as cost of living rises

By: Calgary Herald



Canadians don't need another media story to tell them that the cost of living is skyrocketing. But at a time when it's nearly impossible to balance the books, they might benefit from hearing that money management is still critical to help make ends meet.

Inflation is eroding Canadians' purchasing power. Day-to-day costs are becoming increasingly challenging. In a recent RBC Canadian Financial Wellbeing Survey, almost half of Albertans reported that stress related to finances is affecting their mental health. For those living on lower incomes, inflation and rising living costs hit particularly hard. Tight budgets provide little room to manoeuvre, and even small price increases of essential goods and services can have a disproportionate effect.

The rising cost of food is a powerful example. We all experience increased grocery prices. But for Canadians living on lower incomes, increased food prices are resulting in record demand for food banks. This year, Food Banks Canada reports that food bank usage rose to its highest level on record.

In times of rising costs and interest rates, it is arguably even more important for us to manage our finances as prudently as possible. Money management isn't just about pinching pennies; it's about preserving our financial well-being as best as possible despite the current economic challenges. Financial literacy can empower people with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed financial decisions. We can't control our entire financial situation, but effective money management can provide some sense of control, which in turn contributes to reduced stress and greater peace of mind.

A few ways that financial literacy can help people navigate inflation and rising costs include budgeting, debt management, savings and access to other resources. Budgeting can help track spending and cut unnecessary expenses, while assessing other possible income sources. Debt management skills can support with managing existing debts as effectively as pos-

sible, such as pursuing debt consolidation. Regular savings — even a very small monthly amount — can help build an emergency fund for the unknown. Financial literacy can also lead to connecting to other resources, such as lower-cost banking options and access to income-boosting government benefits. Money management support is becoming increasingly important in this time of inflation and record debt levels. Many community organizations in Alberta have worked for years to increase access to money management resources. Since 2011, Momentum and community partners have offered money management programs to more than 30,000 Albertans. On-demand money management courses can be taken by anyone, anywhere, at any time. Financial coaches in Calgary are also able to work through personal financial challenges on an individual basis. Community-based tax clinics have also supported more than 2,300 Calgarians already this year to file taxes, putting \$370,000 in tax return dollars back into the pockets of people living on lower incomes. But money management skills can only do so much. The challenge for people living on lower incomes is often not one of financial mismanagement, but a lack of financial resources. Stagnant or fixed incomes limit the effect of good money management practices when faced with ballooning living costs. We need more living wage employers that pay staff enough to get by every month, and we must develop more affordable housing and boost rent supplements for people living on low incomes since housing is often a household's single biggest expense. Financial literacy is not a silver bullet solution to financial challenges facing many Canadians, but it is a powerful tool that can empower people to reduce debt and build savings. As we mark Financial Literacy Month this November in Canada, let us remember the importance of money management as a critical life skill while also striving to provide more economic opportunities for all Canadians. Let's work toward leaving no one behind in ensuring Canadians have the financial resources needed to make ends meet.

<https://calgaryherald.com/opinion/columnists/opinion-money-management-crucial-as-cost-of-living-rises>



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Cash-strapped Pakistan

sold weapons worth USD 364 million to Ukraine: Report

A British military cargo plane flew from Pakistan Air Force Base Nur Khan in Rawalpindi to the British military base in Cyprus, Akrotiri, and then to Romania a total of five times to supply arms to the war-torn country, the BBC Urdu reported on Monday. Cash-strapped Pakistan reportedly earned USD 364 million in an arms deal with two private US companies last year to supply ammunition to



Ukraine in its war with Russia, according to a media report. A British military cargo plane flew from Pakistan Air Force Base Nur Khan in Rawalpindi to the British military base in Cyprus, Akrotiri, and then to Romania a total of five times to supply arms to the war-torn country, the BBC Urdu reported on Monday. Islamabad has, however, consistently denied that it has provided any ammunition to Ukraine, a neighbouring country to Romania. Citing details of the contract from the American Federal Procurement Data System, the BBC report claimed that Pakistan signed two contracts with American companies named “Global Military” and “Northrop Grumman” for the sale of 155mm shells. These agreements to provide weapons to Ukraine were signed on August 17, 2022, and were specifically linked to the purchase of 155mm shells. The Foreign Office in Islamabad has denied any sale of arms and ammunition to Ukraine, saying that Pakistan maintained a policy of “strict neutrality” in the dispute between the two countries and did not provide them with any arms or ammunition in that context. These alleged agreements took place during the rule of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) – a multi-party coalition that ousted Imran Khan-led government through a no-trust vote in April last year. Then Pakistan Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, who had pledged to take Pakistan-UK relations to a “new height”, retired in November 2022. In August 2022, when these alleged contracts were signed, the Ukraine crisis was very much a part of the political discourse in Pakistan, particularly in the wake of the cricketer-turned-politician Khan’s visit to Russia on February 24, when Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an invasion of Ukraine. Months after the visit, Gen Bajwa publicly distanced from Khan and called for the invasion to be stopped immediately. During a visit to Pakistan this July, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba also rejected reports that Pakistan was supplying arms to Ukraine to support its military during the ongoing conflict with Russia. The BBC Urdu report claimed that a USD 232 million contract was awarded to Global Military while another USD 131 million contract was signed with Northrop Grumman. “These agreements expired last month i.e. October 2023,” it added. The report alleged that the deliveries were made in a British military cargo plane from the Nur Khan Air Base, which landed in Rawalpindi five times. The first such plane landed in Rawalpindi in August 2022. “Each time, the plane flew from Nur Khan Airbase to the British military base in Cyprus and then to Romania, that too at a time when Russia was waging war in Romania’s neighbouring country Ukraine,” the report claimed. BBC Urdu, while citing further evidence for its claims, said data

by the State Bank of Pakistan also showed that the country's arms exports increased by 3,000 per cent during FY 2022-23. "Pakistan exported arms worth USD 13 million in 2021-22, while these exports reached USD 415 million in 2022-23," it said. Earlier reports said secret Pakistani arms sales to the US to be used by Ukraine helped cash-strapped Islamabad secure a crucial International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout earlier this year. The arms sales were made for the purpose of supplying the Ukrainian military — marking Pakistani involvement in a conflict it had faced US pressure to take sides on. Pakistan's Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, however, rejected as "baseless and fabricated" the report which says the cash-strapped country provided arms to the US to get its support to clinch the USD 3 billion deal with the IMF towards the end of June to avoid default.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/pakistan/pakistan-sold-weapons-worth-usd-364-million-ukraine-9026371/lite/>

King George III's taste for kebabs shown in Essex University data

By: Lewis Adams

Turkish kebabs have been revealed as an unexpected royal favourite dish by an academic study. Detailed analysis involving the University of Essex looked at food eaten by kings including George III and his son, the Prince Regent, George IV. It resulted in a database of 43,000 dishes served in royal households between 1788 and 1813. Dr Lisa Smith, of the university, said the royals were late adopters of kebabs. They were the surprise dish alongside a top five of chicken broth,



sweet tarts, roast capon, roast mutton and asparagus. "Turkish kebabs might seem unexpected but they are part of a group of foods enjoyed by the kings and their households that demonstrate the impact of the British Empire, travel, and trade on eating habits," said Dr Smith, co-author of the study, which also involved Leeds Beckett University, the University of Birmingham and University College London. "If anything, it is quite late to see them at the royal table as recipes had already been in circulation since the 1750s." The researchers used data from two kitchen ledgers from Kew Palace and Carlton House that detail the daily food allocations of every table in the two palaces. They found George III's favourite dish was chicken broth, whereas George IV favoured richer food including deep-fried cream and potatoes with chicken, a forerunner of chicken and chips. Dr Smith, of the university's School of Philosophical, Historical and Interdisciplinary Studies, worked alongside Dr Rachel Rich, Dr Sarah Fox and Dr Adam Crymble while undertaking the analysis, with their findings being published in the Food & History journal. Dr Smith added: "Our project looks at the royal table as a key location for nation-building at a time when Britishness was being defined. "And crucially, the absence of certain foods, such as curry, can tell us as much about British food and changing tastes as the King's occasional taste for kebabs."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-67475155.amp>

White House slams House GOP impeachment inquiry into Joe Biden in rare shot across the bow

By: Ken Tran

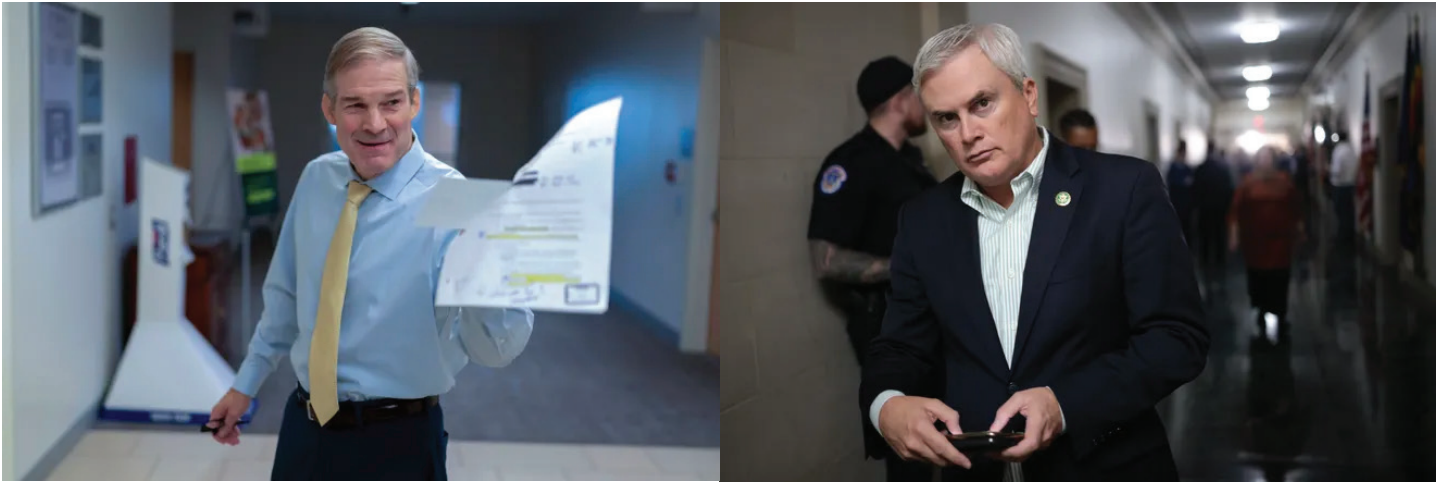


WASHINGTON – The White House flouted House Republicans' impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden in a scathing letter to GOP investigators leading the probe, accusing them of "improperly weaponizing the oversight powers of Congress." Sent to House Oversight Chair James Comer, R-Ky., and House Judiciary Chair, Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, the letter accuses the two chairmen of being "so determined to impeach the President that you have misrepresented the facts, ignored the overwhelming evidence disproving your claims, and repeatedly shifted the rationale for your 'inquiry.'"

The letter, sent by Richard Sauber, a special counsel to the president, is a rare shot across the bow from the White House rebuking the inquiry, which has largely dismissed the probe in response to House Republicans' demands and requests for information. "You have consistently misrepresented the documents and testimony you have received and then moved the goalposts when your claims have been debunked, as you appear to be doing here. This pattern of distortions and falsehoods lays bare that no amount of truthful testimony or document productions will satisfy you."

House Republicans opened the formal impeachment inquiry into Biden in September over allegations the president personally benefited from his family's foreign business dealings. So far however, GOP investigators have yet to produce evidence directly implicating the president in those overseas ventures. "If President Biden has nothing to hide, then he should make his current and former staff available to testify before Congress about his mishandling of classified documents," Comer said in a statement. "We are not deterred by this obstruction and will continue to follow the facts and hold President Biden accountable to the American people."

"The White House is TERRIFIED of what we're uncovering with our impeachment inquiry," The GOP-led House Judiciary Committee said in a post on X, formerly Twitter, in response



to the letter. In one of the GOP's most significant escalations of the probe, the House Oversight Committee issued subpoenas to the president's close family and their business associates earlier this month "to question them on" the evidence the committee has collected in regards to Biden's "family's influence peddling schemes." While investigators have found that the president's son Hunter Biden and other business associates made millions from their foreign business endeavors, they have not produced evidence showing the president reaped his own financial benefits. The letter slams the subpoenas as "unjustified requests" which were sent despite "voluminous records and testimony from dozens of witnesses (that) have refuted your baseless allegations about the President."

The letter also comes ahead of a Nov. 20 deadline for multiple senior White House aides to schedule voluntarily transcribed interviews with GOP investigators on Biden's handling of classified documents which is currently under investigation by special counsel Robert Hur. Sauber takes aim at how the inquiry "has apparently shifted to focus" on the documents rather than the GOP's allegations that the president benefited from his family's dealings.

"The testimony that you seek from the President's aides involves the subject matter of an ongoing Special Counsel investigation," the letter reads, adding that their requests "appear to be motivated by a desire to boost your subpoena numbers ... rather than any legitimate investigative interest." Comer contended in his statement that investigators "need to know if these classified materials aided the Bidens' global influence peddling enterprise that brought in tens of millions for the Bidens and their associates."

Sauber repeatedly dismisses the probe as an impeachment inquiry "lacking constitutional legitimacy," taking aim at House Republicans, including Comer and Jordan for previously criticizing House Democrats for opening their 2019 impeachment inquiry into former President Donald Trump without a formal vote on the House floor, only to end up doing the same.

Former House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., who previously said an inquiry into Biden would see a vote on the House floor, backtracked in September and opened the investigation without the vote. The letter notes how McCarthy's successor, House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., also rebuked Democrats for opening the inquiry in 2019 without the approval of the lower chamber. The letter asks Comer and Jordan to "reconsider your current course of action and withdraw these subpoenas and demands for interviews."

"If you do in fact have legitimate requests for information within the White House pursuant to an appropriate oversight inquiry," the letter concludes, asking the chairmen to contact Sauber "so that the constitutionally approved processes can be implemented."

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2023/11/17/white-house-slams-gop-impeachment-inquiry-joe-biden-letter/71623174007/>

Spain's Sánchez seals deal to stay in power

By: Aitor Hernández-Morales



MADRID — Pedro Sánchez has secured the crucial support he needed to stay in power as Spain's prime minister, vindicating his dramatic gamble on a snap election earlier this year. On Thursday the Catalan separatist Junts party gave its backing to Sánchez's Socialists to form a government, four months after that election resulted in no single party winning an overall majority in Spain's parliament. The deal puts Sánchez, the 51-year-old who's been premier since 2018, on course to extend his career at the top. That seemed a far-fetched outcome when he called for a national vote last May, just hours after regional and local elections which saw his party suffer devastating losses across the country.

But after 15 weeks of tortuous horse-trading with other leftist parties — and, critically, an offer of an amnesty to Catalan separatist plotters — Sánchez has sidestepped the threat of fresh elections and managed to ensure his continuity as prime minister. In exchange for the backing of Junts' seven lawmakers, the prime minister's Socialists agreed to propose a new law granting a blanket amnesty to everyone involved in the failed 2017 Catalan independence referendum. The amnesty bill, which is expected to be passed with the support of Sánchez's left-wing allies, as well as Basque and Catalan separatist parties, could benefit up to 1,500 people convicted — or currently on trial — for their participation in different separatist actions, some of which took place years before or after the independence vote.

Although no one has yet seen the final text of that draft bill — which is set to be submitted to the Spanish parliament next week — its content is already causing tension at home and abroad. Throughout this week thousands of protesters repeatedly surrounded the Socialist Party headquarters in Madrid, angrily demanding Sánchez not move forward with the amnesty deal. The center-right Popular Party has called for further protests in every major city in Spain this Sunday. Meanwhile, in Brussels, the bill attracted the attention of European Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynders, who on Wednesday sent a letter to Spain's justice and presidency ministers stating that news of the amnesty had raised “serious concerns.” The commissioner went on to request details “as regards the personal, material and tempo-

ral scope of this envisaged law.” Responding in a terse missive to Reynders, Spain’s Presidency Minister Félix Bolaños pointed out that Spain’s government is currently fulfilling caretaker functions, and can therefore not propose any laws. “Any bill that may be registered in the Congress of Deputies [Spain’s parliament] will come from the parliamentary groups and not from the council of ministers,” Bolaños wrote.

Thursday’s deal was forged after weeks of tense negotiations between representatives of Sánchez’s Socialist Party, his allies in the left-wing Sumar coalition, and Junts’ de facto leader, former Catalan President Carles Puigdemont, who has lived in self-imposed exile in Belgium since fleeing Spain in 2017. During the final days of negotiations, Sánchez’s representative, Socialist Party’s Organizational Secretary Santos Cerdán, shuttled back and forth between the Spanish and Belgian capitals, smoothing out the final details that made it into the formal agreement he signed today with Junts’ Secretary General Jordi Turull.

In a press conference, Puigdemont said the agreement “established the conditions to address the topics that we have spent years saying are key to resolving the historic conflict between Catalonia and Spain.” “This is the way to return a political issue to the political sphere,” he added. Within the agreement, Junts appeared to renounce any repeat of the 2017 attempt to unilaterally declare independence. Instead, the party proposed holding an autodetermination referendum in line with Article 92 of the Spanish Constitution, which allows for referendums in which “all citizens” participate.

A bid for Catalan independence in which all Spaniards would have the right to vote would likely not succeed. The acceptance of this option by Puigdemont, who six years ago defied the Spanish legal system by only asking Catalans if they supported autodetermination, was interpreted by political commentators as a reversal of his historically rebellious position and a return to the constitutional fold.

In his own remarks, Socialist Santos Cerdán reaffirmed his party’s position on independence referendums had not changed, and that anything Junts attempted in that regard had to be in line with the Constitution. “That has always been our red line,” Cerdán said.

The agreement concludes months of political paralysis in Spain, which has been without an effective government since the national elections resulted in a hung parliament in which neither the left-wing nor right-wing political blocs gained enough seats to control the 350-seat chamber. Sánchez is expected to submit himself to a vote in parliament next week, after which he will be able to form his new government.

From the very start it was evident that Junts’ separatist lawmakers would determine Sánchez’s political future, and in exchange for his backing Puigdemont has managed to secure an amnesty the Socialists had long said was impossible to grant. The deal clears the way for the separatist politician to return to Spain and potentially reinvigorate his campaign for Catalan independence.

While the agreement will keep Sánchez in power, the complex negotiations — and considerable concessions — required to make it happen bode poorly for Spain’s political stability. Junts has made the Socialist leader pay a high cost to remain in office and the party’s representatives have already made clear that they won’t be any less demanding when its crucial votes are needed to pass legislation.

“We are not part of any Spanish [voting] bloc,” Míriam Nogueras, Junts’ spokesperson in the Spanish parliament, said last month. “We never have been and we never will be.”

<https://www.politico.eu/article/spain-pedro-sanchez-government-deal/>

Is the Liberals' signature climate change agenda collapsing?

By: Bruce Uzelman

A political and media storm is swirling around the federal government since it offered a three year pause on the application of the carbon tax on heating oil, a response to mounting pressure from the Atlantic Canadians and their Liberal MPs. The action has further stirred up carbon tax discontent, and provided Pierre Poilievre and his Conservatives more ammunition to aim at the tax and the Prime Minister. Political pundits are almost unanimous that the



Liberals have damaged their signature policy and their integrity, credibility and political brand. That argument is not totally convincing. It is, so far, one limited exemption. PM Justin Trudeau and the Finance Minister are adamant it will be the only one. Time will tell if they can resist further concessions. In any case, additional political fallout is coming. Several premiers have already aggressively called for similar treatment for other heating fuels. The carbon tax is only one component of the Liberal's climate change agenda that is under significant stress. The Impact Assessment Act, seeks to govern the environmental impact of projects that are under federal jurisdiction. The Supreme Court has ruled that those sections that deal with projects not on federal lands or federally financed – “designated projects” – are not aimed at the impact of the project, but are aimed at regulating the project even when under provincial jurisdiction. The court's Chief Justice wrote, “Parliament has plainly overstepped its constitutional competence” The government claims it can rewrite the legislation to comply with the decision. It promised the revised act would add tools to collaborate with provinces and respect jurisdictions. It remains to be seen if that is so. The environment minister's authority, “to designate projects will be paused” until the revisions are complete. Reviews in process will offer “an opinion” on whether projects impact federal jurisdiction. The court's decision creates uncertainty for federal climate change initiatives in development. First, the proposed Clean electricity regulations are already very contentious. The Alberta government has offered to comply with net-zero electricity supply by 2050, while Ottawa demands compliance by 2035. (The success of another important clean power program is in doubt with the cancellation of the Atlantic Loop power project.) Second, Premier Danielle Smith has repeatedly stated Alberta's opposition to a proposed federal emissions cap on the oil and gas industry. Details on the cap are expected soon. Last week's Alberta throne speech warned of a response under the Alberta Sovereignty Act to the federal imposition of the two proposals. The recent Supreme Court decision may not impact directly on either proposal, but an Associate Professor of Law at the University of Calgary told the CBC that the ruling sent a message that Ottawa does not have complete jurisdiction over emissions. Martin Olszynski said, “There's a bit of a warning here, a vibe from the Supreme Court that it wants the federal government to play conservatively.” There are yet more problems with Ottawa's climate agenda. Sustainable Development Technology Canada, with a budget of \$1 billion from 2021 - 2030, is tasked to invest in clean energy start-ups. The minister appointed a 3rd party to investigate alleged improprieties. The probe revealed inappropriate funding and breaches of conflict of interest rules by management and board members.

The Auditor General decided subsequently to launch an inquiry into the agency, and will likely find more violations. Easy money promotes abuses. A negligently executed Liberal program to promote federalism resulted in the sponsorship-scandal two decades ago. A current assistant deputy minister in the department of industry was secretly recorded linking the SDTC offenses with “free money”. “That is almost a sponsorship-scandal level kind of giveaway,” he said. Almost \$83 billion has been allotted for clean energy tax credits and incentives to 2034-35. If the violations at SDTC foreshadow problems in any of the other multiple clean transition programs, the whole agenda will attract further scrutiny and criticism. The affordability crisis already impacts households across Canada. New federal Clean Fuel Regulations require refiners to reduce the carbon intensity of transportation fuels by 3.7% this year, growing to 15% by 2030. The costs will be passed on to consumers. The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates in 2030 the regulations will cost households from \$231 to \$1008, depending on income levels. As the bite of these regulations and the carbon tax grows, Canadians’ household budgets will be increasingly strained. A response to climate change is critical, but it must be affordable for Canadians and the government. The biggest threat to the Liberal’s climate agenda is the government’s electoral prospects. It is unlikely to survive the next election. (A recent Leger poll showed the Liberals trail the Conservatives by 14%.) It is clear a Poilievre government would kill the carbon tax and likely more pieces of the clean transition. But it is entirely unclear if the Tories would advance new, effective, Conservative climate measures.

<https://www.trailtimes.ca/opinion/uzelman-is-the-liberals-signature-climate-change-agenda-collapsing-6832369>

Ahmadiyya Worship Place in AJK Attacked By 'Mob'

A mob of around 40 people attacked an Ahmadiyya place of worship in Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Friday. The attack brought to an end a short period of respite where Ahmadiyya places of worship in the country were not attacked. According to



the Ahmadiyya community, Friday's attack took place in the Doliyan Jatan area of Kotli District of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. A community spokesperson said that around 40 unidentified miscreants arrived at the place of worship prior to afternoon prayers on Friday. They destroyed the minarets and niche of the worship place within remits of the Narr Police Station in Kotli. They then left while chanting religious slogans. The community said that this specific place of worship was built in 1954. This year alone, 40 Ahmadiyya places of worship were desecrated across the country. The community said that the attack should be a wake-up call for the authorities. They demanded that the authorities take action against the culprits.

<https://thefridaytimes.com/25-Nov-2023/ahmadiyya-worship-place-in-ajk-attacked-by-mob>

Part - 14

Forced Marriage: A Violation of Human Rights

By **Munazza Abbasi M.A LL.B (Hons)**



Combating Forced Marriages in the United Kingdom: Progress and Challenges

Forced marriage is a critical human rights abuse and the United Kingdom has taken significant strides in combating this issue through its dedicated Forced Marriage Unit (FMU). However, while commendable progress has been made, there's still much work to be done, especially in targeting rural areas where this practice is prevalent. Yet, there's a delicate balance to strike between intervening in cultural traditions and upholding universal human rights.

The challenge lies in respecting cultural differences while addressing practices that contravene human rights standards. It raises the question: Is it acceptable for external entities to condemn traditions within communities? The Minister, Baroness Scotland, rightly acknowledges this as a complex, sensitive issue without easy answers.

Changing deep-rooted cultural and religious beliefs takes time, and resistance to change is often strong within communities perpetrating these acts.

Key stakeholders such as police, educators, healthcare workers, and women's organizations play pivotal roles in identifying and supporting victims. Guidelines issued by the Forced Marriage Unit must be effectively implemented to encourage victims to come forward and seek help, eradicating the culture of self-blame and fostering a supportive environment.

Efforts to raise awareness through media involvement, emphasizing the distinction between forced and arranged marriages, can encourage more victims to seek assistance. However, the ultimate goal isn't just reporting cases but reducing occurrences. Prevention is deemed superior to cure, necessitating proactive steps to terminate the practice entirely.

Immigration reform is proposed as one approach to address forced marriages, considering instances where individuals use marriage to obtain resident permits for family members abroad. Statistics reveal alarming trends, such as instances where individuals, often vulnerable, are pushed into marriages without consent, leading to visa applications being refused. Yet, challenges persist in properly interviewing sponsors and protecting victims within the immigration process.

The recent increase in the minimum age for marriage visas and requirements for spouses to learn English aim to prevent forced marriages. However, skepticism remains regarding their efficacy, with concerns that stricter immigration rules might not deter determined families from forcing their children into marriages.

Balancing cultural diversity with women's equality remains a continuous challenge. Achieving legal and cultural changes while celebrating successful arranged marriages without intruding on family decisions is a fine line to tread.

In conclusion, the battle against forced marriages in the UK is ongoing and multifaceted. It demands a delicate balance between cultural sensitivity and human rights, necessitating ongoing efforts from various sectors and continuous evolution in approaches and policies.

Five countries ask International Criminal Court to investigate the situation in Palestinian territories

By Michael Rios



(CNN) — The International Criminal Court's prosecutor Karim Khan says his office has received a referral from five countries to investigate whether crimes have been committed in the Palestinian territories as part of Israel's response to the October 7 Hamas terror attacks.

South Africa, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Comoros and Djibouti submitted the referral, Khan said.

"In accordance with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, a State Party may refer to the Prosecutor a situation in which one or more crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court appear to have been committed requesting the Prosecutor to investigate the situation for the purpose of determining whether one or more specific persons should be charged with the commission of such crimes," Khan said in a statement.

He noted that his office was already conducting an investigation on the situation in the Palestinian territories over possible crimes committed since June 2014 in Gaza and the West Bank. The investigation began in March 2021.

"It is ongoing and extends to the escalation of hostilities and violence since the attacks that took place on 7 October 2023," Khan said. "In accordance with the Rome Statute, my Office has jurisdiction over crimes committed on the territory of a State Party and with respect to the nationals of States Parties."

Both Hamas and Israel have been accused of war crimes as the death toll from the conflict mounts. Israeli attacks on Gaza have killed nearly 11,500 Palestinians since October 7, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Ramallah, which draws on medical sources in the Hamas-controlled enclave. Israel says its airstrikes intend to target Hamas command-

ers and infrastructure, following the militant group's October 7 terror attacks which left 1,200 people dead in Israel and saw 240 taken hostage.

Israel's siege of Gaza has included a near-total blockade of food, water and electricity, with exceptions for what the United Nations has called a "trickle" of humanitarian aid. On Friday however, Israel's war cabinet agreed to allow two fuel tankers to enter Gaza each day to support water and sewage systems.

The conflict is covered by a complex system of international law developed after World War II, which attempts to balance humanitarian concerns and the military requirements of states.

A UN report said last month said it was collecting evidence of war crimes in the wake of the Hamas attack. The report said Israel may be committing the war crime of collective punishment, after the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the "complete siege" of Gaza. A number of prominent human rights groups concur with the UN's assessment.

Earlier this month, Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, called the October 7 attacks "atrocities", saying they – and the holding of hostages – were war crimes.

But he added "the collective punishment by Israel of Palestinian civilians amounts also to a war crime, as does the unlawful forcible evacuation of civilians."

The South African government has called for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. In a statement last month, South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation accused Israel of war crimes and said "the continual bombardment of civilian targets, the denial of the civilian population of Gaza of water, food, fuel, and electricity is prohibited under International Humanitarian Law and by Geneva Conventions."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called accusations that Israel is committing war crimes in Gaza "hogwash." "We're deliberately doing everything in our power to target the terrorists, and the civilians – as happens in every legitimate war – are sometimes what are called collateral damage," he told NBC News on Sunday.

Israel is not a member of the ICC and rejects the court's jurisdiction. That has not stopped the court from investigating its actions in the occupied Palestinian territories. Fatou Bensouda, then the ICC's prosecutor, spent five years conducting a "painstaking preliminary examination" and concluded she was "satisfied that war crimes have been or are being committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip." But no arrests were made, and Bensouda left office in 2021.

Khan has said previously that the acts committed by Hamas on October 7 are "serious violations, if proven, of international humanitarian law." He also stressed that "Israel has clear obligations in relation to its war with Hamas: Not just moral obligations, but legal obligations... It's there in the Geneva Conventions. It's there in black and white."

<https://amp.cnn.com/cnn/2023/11/17/middleeast/israel-gaza-war-crimes-icc-referral/index.html>

ODI World Cup winners full list:

Australian men dominant; double delight for India, West Indies

By Ali Asgar Nalwala



Over the last five decades, cricket has undergone rapid evolution. However, a turning point occurred in the sport's history when the first One Day International (ODI) was played between England and Australia in Melbourne on January 5, 1971. Two years later, the International Cricket Council (ICC), then known as the International Cricket Conference, planned to host the men's Cricket World Cup in 1975. In all, 13 editions of the ODI World Cups have been played so far. Australia have won six trophies while West Indies and India have won two titles each. Pakistan, Sri Lanka and England complete the list of ODI World Cup winners.

West Indies emerge as early trendsetters

The first edition of the men's ODI Cricket World Cup in 1975 was played in England featuring eight teams — England, India, Australia, Pakistan, West Indies, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and East Africa. The West Indian cricket team, led by Clive Lloyd, won the inaugural World Cup by defeating Australia in the final by 17 runs at Lord's. Bowlers Keith Boyce, Andy Roberts and Bernard Julien and legendary batter Vivian Richards and Lloyd himself helped the Caribbean side win the Cup without losing a match. England also hosted the next two editions of the World Cups. With their core intact, the West Indies won the 1979 edition as well, defeating the hosts by 92 runs in the final.

Underdogs India end West Indies reign

India exited in the group stages at the 1975 and 1979 ODI World Cups and very few gave

them a chance to lift the title in 1983. West Indies and India progressed to the semi-finals from a group also consisting of Australia and Zimbabwe. India went on to beat England in the semi-finals while West Indies got the better of Pakistan. After bowling out India for a modest 183, West Indies looked set for their third title on the trot. However, inspired bowling performances from Mohinder Amarnath and Madan Lal, who took three wickets each, helped India bowl out West Indies for 140 in 52 overs. It remains the lowest-ever total successfully defended in a World Cup final. It was also the last time West Indies played in the final of the ODI World Cup.

Australia win maiden title

The 1987 World Cup was hosted jointly by India and Pakistan. Though the number of teams remained the same, the matches were played over 50 overs per side instead of 60 in previous editions. After failing to make the semi-finals in 1983, Australia, under the leadership of Allan Border, emerged as a true force in the 1987 World Cup. They beat Pakistan by 18 runs in the semi-finals and riding on David Boon's 75, posted 253/5 against England in the final to win by 17 runs at the iconic Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

Imran Khan's cornered tigers

The 1992 ODI Cricket World Cup was co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand. Nine teams, including South Africa, participated in the fifth edition. Played in a league format where each team faced the other eight teams once to qualify for the semi-finals, Pakistan won just one of their first five games. However, they sneaked into the semi-finals by winning the next three league stage matches. Inzamam-ul-Haq's 60 off 37 helped Pakistan beat pre-tournament favourites New Zealand in the semi-finals by four wickets. Pakistan, led by captain Imran Khan's 72, posted 249/6 in the final and bowled out England for 227 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Sri Lanka beat the mighty Australia

The 1996 Cricket World Cup was jointly hosted by India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. A total of 12 teams, divided into two groups, fought for places in the quarter-finals. The island nation, led by Arjuna Ranatunga, remained unbeaten during the group stage. Sri Lanka beat England by five wickets in the quarter-finals, defeated India by 131 runs in the semi-finals and then handed Australia a seven-wicket defeat to win the title in Lahore.

Australia's unrivalled dominance

No team in cricket history dominated the sport the way the Australian team did in the 1990s and 2000s. Steve Waugh's Australian team, who sneaked into the final on the basis of net run-rate after the tied semi-final with South Africa, strolled past Pakistan final to win the 1999 World Cup in England. Four years later, Ricky Ponting's men added a third World Cup title to Australia's cabinet, beating Sourav Ganguly-led India by 125 runs in the summit clash at the Wanderers in Johannesburg. Ponting's Australia enjoyed another unbeaten campaign in the West Indies in 2007. Powered by Adam Gilchrist's 149 this time, Australia beat Sri Lanka by 53 runs in the final to become the first cricket team in history to win a hat-trick of World Cup titles.

India win title after 28 years

The 2011 World Cup, hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, was the first time two Asian teams — India and Sri Lanka — clashed in the final. A total of 14 teams, divided into two groups of seven, played for a spot in the quarter-finals. India, who lost to South Africa and

tied with England in the group stages, ousted Australia in the quarter-finals, defeated Pakistan in the semi-finals and beat Sri Lanka in the final by six wickets to claim their second trophy. MS Dhoni's composed captaincy style, Yuvraj Singh's match-winning knocks and crucial breakthroughs from Zaheer Khan proved pivotal in India's title-winning run.

Australia reclaim top prize

In 2015, Australia matched India's feat of winning the World Cup on home soil. The number of teams and format remained the same like the 2011 World Cup. Though New Zealand and India emerged unbeaten from the group stages, Australia beat both sides en route to winning their fifth title. After beating Pakistan by six wickets in the quarter-finals, Australia beat India by 95 runs in the semi-finals and handed New Zealand a seven-wicket loss at the MCG to win the title. Mitchell Starc, for taking 22 wickets in eight matches, was adjudged player of the tournament.

England win World Cup on boundary count

After losing the World Cup final three times, England finally claimed the World Cup trophy by beating New Zealand in the 2019 World Cup final at the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground in London. The final ended in a tie with England bowled out on 241 in reply to New Zealand's 241/8 in 50 overs. Ben Stokes' 84 not out took the match into the super over which was won on 'boundary count' by England after even the super over was tied with both sides ending up on 15 runs. Earlier in the competition, England defeated Australia by eight wickets in the semi-final after finishing third in the league stage.

Australia beat favourites India

Australia won their sixth ODI World Cup title after beating hosts India in the final of the 2023 World Cup in Ahmedabad. India were unbeaten coming into the final against an 'underdog' Australian team that had a shaky start to the tournament, which involved losing their opening two matches. In the semi-finals, India beat New Zealand while Australia won a tight contest against South Africa to make the summit clash. In the final, Australia won the toss and bowled first, limiting the mighty Indian batting line-up to just 240. Led by Travis Head's century (137 in 120 balls), Australia chased the target down comfortably with six wickets and seven overs to spare.

ODI World Cup winners list

Year	Winner	Runners-Up	Hosts
1975	West Indies	Australia	England
1979	West Indies	England	England
1983	India	West Indies	England
1987	Australia	England	India, Pakistan
1992	Pakistan	England	Australia, New Zealand
1996	Sri Lanka	Australia	India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
1999	Australia	Pakistan	England
2003	Australia	India	South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya
2007	Australia	Sri Lanka	West Indies
2011	India	Sri Lanka	India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh
2015	Australia	New Zealand	Australia, New Zealand
2019	England	New Zealand	England, Wales
2023	Australia	India	India

<https://olympics.com/en/news/odi-world-cup-winners-list-champions>

France issues arrest warrant for Syria's President Assad over alleged war crimes

By: Samuel Osborne

France has issued an international arrest warrant for Syrian President Bashar al Assad over the alleged use of banned chemical weapons against civilians. It is the first international arrest warrant issued for the Syrian head of state, whose forces responded to protests that began in 2011 with a brutal crackdown that UN experts have said amounts to war crimes. Warrants were also issued for Mr Assad's brother, Maher al Assad, who commands the 4th Armoured Division, and two Syrian army generals, Ghassan Abbas and Bassam al Hassan.



While Mr Assad is unlikely to face trial in France, international warrants for a serving leader are exceptionally rare and send a strong message at a time when some countries have welcomed him back into the diplomatic fold. A report by a former International Criminal Court judge recently said Mr Assad should not be invited to this year's COP28 climate talks because of the environmental destruction he and his regime have caused. The arrest warrants, which refer to charges of complicity in crimes against humanity and in war crimes, follow a criminal investigation into chemical weapons attacks in the town of Douma and the district of Eastern Ghouta which killed more than 1,000 people in August 2013. Syria denies using chemical weapons, but a previous joint inquiry of the United Nations and Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons found the Syrian government used the nerve agent sarin in an April 2017 attack and has repeatedly used chlorine as a weapon. The volume and detailed evidence in the Eastern Ghouta case convinced the judges there was "serious or corroborating evidence making it likely" that Mr Assad, his brother and the generals "took part in planning an execution of these attacks and bear individual criminal responsibility for the crimes," the NGOs behind the complaint said in a statement. "The president is responsible for many crimes in Syria - but with this type of weapon in particular - sarin gas - it's impossible to jump over the gap [of his involvement]," Mazen Darwish, lawyer and founder of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), which filed the case in France, told Reuters. Similar complaints have been submitted to authorities in Germany and Sweden. Watchdogs allege Syrian forces continue to carry out chemical attacks. The Assad regime blamed the Douma and Eastern Ghouta attacks on opposition forces it said were trying to push for foreign military intervention. The US threatened military retaliation in the aftermath of the attack, with then president Barack Obama saying Mr Assad's use of chemical weapons would be Washington's "red line", but the US was wary of a new war following its invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Instead Washington settled for a deal with Russia for Syria to give up its chemical weapons stockpile, which Damascus said it did, though watchdog groups have continued to allege Syrian forces have carried out chemical attacks since then.

<https://news.sky.com/story/france-issues-arrest-warrant-for-syrias-president-assad-over-alleged-war-crimes-13009450?dicbo=v2-W2nWNLg>

Ipswich family discovers history of missionary Mufti Sadiq

By: Abygail Fossett



An Ipswich family has told of the incredible journey they have been on this year, discovering the true extent of their grandfather's missionary legacy which spanned across the globe. When Daphne Bassett's grandchildren and some of her nieces and nephews said they wanted to know more about their family, nobody could ever have predicted the secrets they would uncover. Daphne herself was one of nine children born to Frederick Bassett and his wife, Sylvia. "Dad was very private, and he didn't like to talk about his childhood," explained Daphne. They did, however, know a few details, thanks to the research of Daphne's late sister, Linda. Frederick Arthur Bassett was born in London on May 20, 1920, to Ethel Bassett, a housemaid, and Mufti Sadiq, a Muslim missionary from India. Whether Ethel ever revealed to Mufti that she was with child, Daphne and her siblings will never know. Mufti left England for America, and Ethel was left to raise Frederick alone. Life was difficult for Frederick, especially being a mixed race little boy growing up in the 1920s. When he was just seven, Ethel made the decision to take him to a Doctor Barnardo's home. He lived in various homes until he was 15, when he was sent to work on a farm in Stowmarket, which his children say he hated. Frederick went from farm to farm in Suffolk, before he met Sylvia Rayner in Christchurch Park, Ipswich. The couple married on August 30, 1941, and soon welcomed nine children of their own: June, Michael, Fatima, Patricia, Ann, Linda, Marina, Leon and Daphne. During the 1940s, Mufti had somehow made contact with his son. They exchanged a few letters, and Mufti was delighted to learn that Sylvia was expecting their third child. If the baby was a girl, he asked that they named her Fatima, after the daughter of the prophet Muhammad, and Sylvia and Frederick agreed. Perhaps due to the Second World War, they never made contact again. Mufti died in 1957, and Frederick later passed away in 1994. In the late 90s, Daphne and Marina were determined to learn more about their father's family. Linda wrote letters to anyone she could think of with a connection to Mufti – and was

delighted to receive a reply from his half-brother, Ahmad Mufti, who had no idea of their existence. He journeyed to Ipswich from America with his wife, Karim, in 2000, meeting his nieces and nephews for the very first time. So, when Daphne's granddaughter Morgan asked to learn more about Mufti, the family believed they had found out as much as it was possible to learn. However, when her mother, Kerrianne Crane, searched his name online, she was shocked at what she read. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, it turned out, was one of the very first Muslim missionaries to the UK and USA. He sought to spread the word about Islam and clear up any misconceptions about the faith, which he did by publishing pamphlets and delivering public lectures. Mufti arrived in Philadelphia in 1920, the year Frederick was born. He continued to preach about racial equality and harmony at a time when America was deeply segregated. Mufti spoke seven languages, and is thought to have converted 1,000 Americans to Islam during his three year stay. He was given an honorary doctorate from Lincoln-Jefferson University, and founded the Moslem Sunrise, a monthly magazine that exists to this day. When Daphne realised how significant her grandfather had been, she, like Linda, began writing to everywhere she could think of to find out more. The Fazl Mosque, the first purpose-built mosque in London, was delighted to hear from her, and immediately invited the family to visit. On Saturday, Daphne travelled to the mosque with her sister, Fatima, and daughters, Kerrianne and Siobhan. They were met by Raheel Ahmad. Mr Ahmad said: "The meeting with Daphne and her family was imbued with warmth and a sense of kinship. They embarked on a tour of the Fazl Mosque, during which we delved into the history of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, with a particular focus on Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Sadiq's tireless efforts. "Daphne and her family generously shared their connection with Mufti Sahib, displaying pictures of their father and his letters to Mufti Sahib, highlighting the regular correspondence between them. "The day's events did not feel like a meeting of strangers but rather resembled a heart-warming family get-together, solidifying the enduring bonds that unite the Ahmadiyya community." "They were so lovely, and so welcoming," said Daphne. "They said, you can come back whenever you like - you are family."



<https://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/23927180.ipswich-family-discovers-history-missionary-mufti-sadiq/>

The wars shaping the new world order

By: Brahma Chellaney



NEW DELHI – The crises, conflicts and wars that are currently raging highlight just how profoundly the geopolitical landscape has changed in recent years, as great-power rivalries have again become central to international relations. With the wars in Gaza and Ukraine exacerbating global divisions, an even more profound geopolitical reconfiguration — including a shift to a new world order — may well be in the works.

These two wars heighten the risk of a third, over Taiwan. No one — least of all Chinese President Xi Jinping — can watch the United States transfer huge amounts of American artillery munitions, smart bombs, missiles and other weaponry to Ukraine and Israel without recognizing that American stockpiles are being depleted. For Xi, who has called Taiwan's incorporation into the People's Republic a "historic mission," the longer these wars continue, the better.

U.S. President Joe Biden understands the stakes and sought to defuse tensions with China. Notably, after sending a string of Cabinet officials to Beijing and summit talks with Xi on the sidelines of this month's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in San Francisco. And he and his Group of Seven partners have stressed that they are seeking to "de-risk" their relationship with China, not "decouple" from the world's second-largest economy.

Whatever one calls it, this process is set to reshape the global financial order, as well as investment and trade patterns. Already, trade and investment flows are changing in ways that suggest that the global economy may be split into two blocs; for example, China now trades more with the Global South than with the West. Despite the high costs of economic fragmentation, China, seeking to reduce its vulnerability to future pressure, has been quietly decoupling large sections of its economy from the West.

In no small part, the U.S. has itself to blame for the current situation. By actively facilitating China's economic rise for four decades, it helped to create the greatest rival it has ever

faced. Today, China boasts the world's largest navy and coast guard and is overtly challenging Western dominance over the global financial system and in international institutions. In fact, China is working hard to build an alternative world order, with itself at the center.

Though the current system is often referred to in neutral-sounding terms such as the “rules-based global order,” it is undoubtedly centered on the U.S. Not only did the U.S. largely make the rules on which that order is based; it also seems to believe itself exempt from key rules and norms, such as those prohibiting interference in other countries' internal affairs. International law is powerful against the powerless, but powerless against the powerful. When it comes to creating an alternative world order, the current conflict-ridden global environment may well work in China's favor. After all, it was war that gave rise to the U.S.-led global order, including the institutions that underpin it, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the United Nations. Even reforming these institutions meaningfully has proved very difficult during peacetime.

This is certainly true for the U.N., which appears to be in irreversible decline and increasingly marginalized in international affairs. The hardening gridlock at the U.N. Security Council has caused more responsibility to be shifted to the U.N. General Assembly, which was forced, notably, to adopt a resolution on the war in Gaza calling for a “humanitarian truce” and an end to Israel's siege. But the General Assembly is fundamentally weak, and, in contrast to the Security Council, its resolutions are not legally binding.

As U.S.-led institutions deteriorate, so, too, does America's authority beyond its borders. Even Israel and Ukraine — which depend on the U.S. as their largest military, political and economic backer — have at times spurned U.S. advice. Israel rebuffed America's counsel to scale back its military attacks and do more to minimize civilian casualties in an already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, at least before the recent temporary cease-fire agreement that was to see dozens of Israeli hostages kidnapped during Hamas' raid into Southern Israel last month returned. U.S. officials have also blamed Ukraine's wide dispersal of forces for its stalled counteroffensive. Beyond the global reordering that the Sino-American rivalry appears to be causing, important regional shifts are possible. A protracted conflict in Gaza could set in motion a geopolitical reorganization in the Greater Middle East, where nearly every major power — except Egypt, Iran and Turkey — is a 20th-century construct created by the West (especially the British and the French). Already, Israel's war is strengthening the geopolitical role of gas-rich Qatar, a regional gadfly that has become an international rogue elephant by funding violent jihadis, including Hamas.

If the conflict spreads beyond Gaza, the geopolitical implications would be even farther-reaching. Whatever comes next, Ukraine may well be among the biggest losers. As Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has acknowledged, the war in Gaza already “takes away the focus” from his country's fight against Russia at a time when Ukraine can ill afford a slowdown in Western aid. Yet more forces and trends — including Russia's increasingly militarized economy, China's stalling growth and the growing economic weight of the Global South — are making fundamental changes to the international order more likely. Meanwhile, the world is grappling with widening inequality, rising authoritarianism, the rapid development of transformative technologies like artificial intelligence, environmental degradation and climate change. Though the details are impossible to know, a fundamental global geopolitical rebalancing now appears all but inevitable. The specter of a sustained clash between the West and its rivals — especially China, Russia and the Islamic world — looms large.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/commentary/2023/11/26/world/new-world-order/>

Sunak 'agreed' with Braverman to £40k income threshold for UK migrants'

By: Peter Walker



Rishi Sunak agreed to a series of measures with Suella Braverman to bring down migration to the UK, including raising the minimum salary threshold to £40,000, according to reports on Monday of a verbal pact with the former home secretary. While No 10 has denied any formal plan, Kemi Badenoch, the business secretary, hinted on Monday that the salary threshold could be increased anyway as part of “much, much tougher measures” being drawn up. Braverman, who was sacked by Sunak earlier this month, has repeatedly threatened to release documents showing he had agreed to policy demands on migration before she backed him to become prime minister after the collapse of Liz Truss’s government. The Daily Telegraph said it had been shown a copy of the deal, which pledged to increase the minimum salary for a skilled worker arriving in the UK from £26,000 to £40,000, as well as ending extended visas for graduates, further limiting family members people can bring, and prioritising certain universities for student visas. However, the newspaper did not print a copy of the agreement, and said it had not been signed by Sunak. He had verbally agreed to the demands, which was witnessed by others, it added. Downing Street has repeatedly rejected the characterisation of the discussions as a deal, denying that Sunak agreed to specific policies. Despite the lack of a printed document, Braverman’s latest salvo in her post-sacking war against No 10 places yet more internal Conservative pressure on Sunak after last week’s net migration statistics, which showed they had reached a record 745,000 in the year to December 2022. Downing Street is believed to be working on plans to get the figure down, with likely routes including further curbs on the dependants that new arrivals can bring with them, as well as a possible rise in the salary cap. While Sunak is facing intense pressure from MPs on the right of his party over the issue, No 10 is also very aware that many of the arrivals have come to work in the NHS and care homes, and that clamping down on student visas could harm the finances of universities, which use overseas fees to cross-subsidise the studies of UK students. Asked about the migration statistics, Badenoch told LBC that James Cleverly, who replaced Braverman as home secretary, would set out revised plans soon, indicating that a change to the salary threshold was likely. “We know that there are many levers – the salary threshold is one, dependants are another,” she said. “I am cer-

tainly in favour of us doing whatever it takes to bring the numbers down to a sustainable level ... I don't know what the plan is, but I certainly will be pushing for the strongest measures possible." Saying she had had "reservations" about the initial post-Brexit migration policy introduced under Boris Johnson, Badenoch added: "I think that you will be seeing much, much tougher measures going forward." Speaking earlier to Sky News, Badenoch hit back at Johnson after the former prime minister used his weekly Daily Mail column to express regret at how his points-based migration system had ended up working. "The points-based system was one that he brought in, and the figures that we're looking at are figures that came up while he was prime minister," she said. "This prime minister, this home secretary and the rest of the cabinet, as well as all of government, will be working hard to make sure that we bring it down. As far as I know, the figures for the coming year will be lower." Sunak faces parallel pressure over his response to the supreme court's ruling against a plan to deport to Rwanda asylum seekers who arrive unofficially in the UK. An upgraded treaty on the plan with Rwanda and a law intended to set aside the court's verdict, both initially expected immediately after the ruling, have been delayed. MPs on the right of the Tory party want the PM to commit to legislate to formally derogate from parts of the European convention on human rights, or to leave the treaty altogether, something that has alarmed other Conservatives.

<https://amp.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/nov/27/sunak-reportedly-struck-migration-deal-with-braverman-to-win-her-backing>

Here are five ways to **stop sneezing**

Sneezing is a natural body mechanism but when you're sitting with people around and suddenly begin sneezing, you might start to think of ways to stop it — but sometimes, it's just not that easy. Sneezing is frowned upon in many cultures as a social gaffe. People, on several occasions, might not have a tissue or a handkerchief to rub their nose. So, how can we stop sneezing and put ourselves out of our misery? A fact that you should know: A person kept sneezing for 976 days, and as a result, produced more than a million sneezes, according to The Guinness Book of World Records.



Let's start, here's what WikiHow tells us:

First, you could squeeze your nose by catching the tip of your nose — making it seem like you're pulling your nose out of your face. It'll not be painful but will be effective in stopping your sneeze.

Second, if that doesn't work, use a tissue to blow your nose and clear it when you feel like sneezing. This will help you clear your sinuses.

The third way is by pinching your upper lip and pressing it tightly towards your nostrils.

The fourth way is to press your tongue behind your two front teeth. Now, press it hard until the tickling sensation reduces.

The fifth way is to begin pinching your nose with your forefinger.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1128659-here-are-five-ways-to-stop-sneezing>

US says it foiled alleged plot to assassinate Sikh activist in New York

By: Phil McCausland

The US has said it foiled an alleged plot to assassinate an American citizen in New York who advocated for a Sikh separatist state. Nikhil Gupta, an Indian national, is accused of trying to hire a hitman for \$100,000 (£79,000) in cash. But the hitman was actually an undercover federal agent, prosecutors said. Mr Gupta, 52, is in jail in the Czech Republic pending extradition. The charges carry up to 20 years in prison. He was allegedly directed by an Indian government official who was



not named or charged in the indictment. The White House said it had raised the alleged assassination plot with India at the most senior levels, and officials there responded with "surprise and concern". A senior administration official said the murder-for-hire allegations so concerned President Joe Biden that he dispatched top US intelligence leaders - CIA Director William Burns and Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines - to India to speak to officials there. India's government, meanwhile, said it was investigating. While the target was not named by prosecutors, US media reported it was Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, a dual US-Canadian citizen and member of a US-based Sikh activist group. "Is India ready to face the consequences of using trans-national terrorism?" Mr Pannun said to BBC's Asian Network about the alleged plot. He added that he was sure anyone who was "attempting to kill or assassinate me - whether it is India diplomats, whether it is Indian RAW [intelligence] agents - they will face the law". Sikhs are a religious minority that make up about 2% of India's population. Some groups have long called for a separate homeland for Sikhs called for Khalistan. Those calls peaked in India in the 1980s with an armed insurgency that was later crushed, killing thousands. Supporters in the Sikh diaspora have continued to advocate for Khalistan, however. News of the alleged plot comes after Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said there was "credible" evidence tying the Indian government to the murder of another Sikh activist in British Columbia in June. India denies any role in that killing. Mr Trudeau said the indictment on Wednesday underscored the need for India to take that allegation seriously. Mr Gupta was recruited by an Indian government employee in May, prosecutors said, adding that the pair met in Delhi to discuss the potential assassination. "We will hit all our targets," Mr Gupta allegedly wrote in a text message to the official. The indictment alleges Mr Gupta suggested posing as a client for the target so he could "lure [him] to a place where he could be more easily executed". It says he intended to meet a hitman in New York City. Instead, he was introduced to an undercover law enforcement officer who said he would carry out the killing for \$100,000. Mr Gupta paid \$15,000 upfront via an associate on 9 June, prosecutors said, and the indictment includes an apparent photograph of this payment. He was arrested later that month in the Czech Republic where he is awaiting extradition to the US. The target was also an associate of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the leader in the Sikh independence movement who was murdered by a masked gunman in Canada in June. Shortly after Mr Nijjar's murder, Mr Gupta allegedly received a video clip from the Indian official that showed Mr Nijjar's "bloody body slumped in his vehicle". The indictment says the Indian official then sent the target's address to Mr Gupta.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-67570007>