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A Magazine for Scholarly, Literary, Political, Economic and Religious *Activities*



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LILLEY: Trudeau wounded by coup attempt, still can't run government





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Editorial

Dr. Busharat Elahi Jamil - Assistant Editor



Tragically, Pakistani politics is going through the most disastrous phase of the political history. The nexus of the so-called politicians, judiciary and the establishment is wretchedly engaged in exhuming public aspirations and preferences. Pakistan's fictitious democracy is the handmaiden of the ruling class and sits atop the restlessness of the weak and impoverished. Unfortunately, since 1947 only the political elite benefits from the practice of democratic composition, which is being used to reinforce the current statutesque destroying the norms and ideals of modern democracy.

Even people did not have to make the sacrifices and endure the sufferings that people in modern-day Pakistan do. There is a deterioration in basic rights, amenities, and necessities; around 60% of the population lives below the poverty line. On the other hand, the political elite is enjoying their wealth and power. Tragically, since taking office, this government has not passed any laws that serve the public interest; instead, laws are being passed to further their own political and personal agendas.

This PDM regime is dummy and allegedly only following the directives of their masters. Allegedly, the present legislation particularly the 26th amendment in the Constitution is being enacted with the support of establishment to protect their interests which will have far-reaching and menacing consequences for the Country and the nation. Furthermore, the institution's legitimacy and the constitutional execution were negatively impacted by the current political climate. The constitution and laws are only a game to political players, especially the establishment, but they are a pipe dream to the general public.

It is disturbing to see that the nation is rapidly approaching chaos and anarchy due to the current political climate. An atmosphere of hostility is being fostered by utilizing the nation's institutions against its citizens, which might make the political, social, and economic circumstances much worse. Furthermore, these circumstances can also be exploited by religious zealots and terrorists. This is concerning for the country's integration and unity as well. For Pakistan to survive and grow, efficient democracy and the rule of law are truly necessary, and politicians and the establishment must do their part to restore the country's honor and the institutions' reputation.



This Election Season, Religious Leaders Don't Need To Stay Silent | Opinion

By Ryan Gardner

Bishop Rudolph McKissick Jr., senior pastor of The Bethel Church in Jacksonville, Florida, recently spoke to his church about the importance of the upcoming election and expressed his personal view that Vice President Kamala Harris was a better candidate for the presidency than former president Donald Trump. During this address, he stated that he had consulted with a lawyer from the Harris campaign regarding what he could and could not say from the pulpit.

Such a statement is a curious one to come from the pulpit, because it shows that Bishop McKissick was concerned he could somehow say the wrong thing and consequently harm his church in some way.

Around the same time, in Rockwall, Texas, Lakepointe Church senior pastor Josh Howerton gave a sermon entitled “How to Vote Like Jesus,” in which he encouraged his congregation to vote and explained how Christians should approach voting. While never explicitly endorsing a candidate, Pastor Howerton was critical of many Harris policy positions he viewed as inconsistent with the Christian faith and complimentary of many of Trump’s policy positions, while admitting that voting in this election would involve voting for a flawed candidate.

While Bishop McKissick’s message was generally met with silence, Pastor Howerton’s sermon was immediately met with criticism, including a letter by a legal advocacy group called the Freedom From Religion Foundation to the Internal Revenue Service demanding that Lakepointe’s tax-exempt status be revoked for supposedly violating federal law.

It seems that every election season, these kinds of situations arise all around the country. As religious leaders struggle to navigate how to address their congregants on matters related to the intersection of faith, doctrine, and politics, some person or group inevitably complains that a church ought to lose its tax-exempt status for crossing the nebulous line set by the IRS pursuant to a provision of the tax code known as the Johnson Amendment.

The amendment, adopted in 1954, forbids any religious tax-exempt organization from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Since its adoption, this provision of the tax code has been used to silence churches and force pastors to censor their sermons out of fear that the IRS might investigate a church for allegedly violating the Johnson Amendment.

While it invariably seems that such investigations are only targeted at the conservative side of the political spectrum, houses of worship of all faiths and beliefs should take solace in the knowledge that the First Amendment protects their rights no matter which candidate a pastor or church feels compelled by their faith to support.

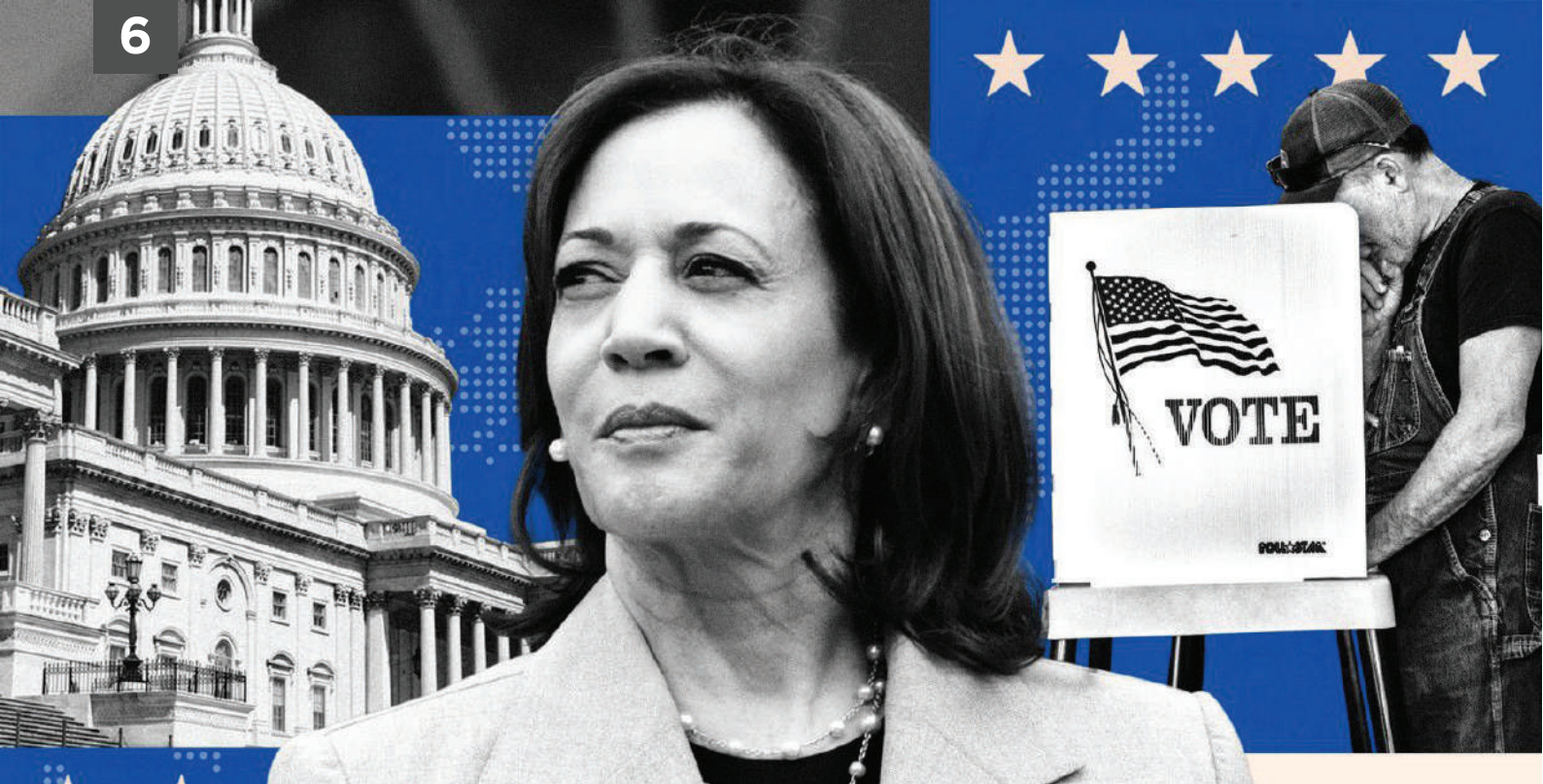
The U.S. Supreme Court has held on multiple occasions that the government may not interfere with a church's independence as to the content of its preaching, teaching, and counseling. Indeed, even engaging in an investigation into church communications can violate the First Amendment because any such inquiry undermines the independence of religious institutions and their own determinations on matters of faith and doctrine.

In other words, the government has no business censoring the sermons and teaching of any religious entity across the country. The fact a religious leader like Bishop McKissick feel the need to consult a lawyer before addressing his congregation demonstrates the unlawful chilling effect the Johnson Amendment has on protected religious activity.

Setting aside the constitutional issues, any investigations related to the Johnson Amendment are also an exercise in futility. The IRS' own guidance recognizes that houses of worship are automatically tax-exempt regardless of whether the IRS has formally recognized that status or not. Thus, even if the IRS revoked a church's tax-exempt status, it would still be tax exempt because of its status as a church. Houses of worship therefore need not fear this paper tiger.

As we enter the home stretch of this election season, religious people should feel emboldened to address matters of faith and politics according to the dictates of their own consciences. The First Amendment robustly protects the right to discuss political topics through the lens of faith, and no one should allow fear of an inquiry from the IRS to chill such activities. Should the IRS begin investigating a church, synagogue, or mosque for engaging in this kind of protected religious activity, they should know they can still rely on the First Amendment to defend their God-given rights.

source:<https://www.newsweek.com/this-election-season-religious-leaders-dont-need-stay-silent-opinion-1972980>



The Kamala Harris Campaign Is Leaning Into a Losing Strategy | Opinion

By David Faris

On Monday, vice president and Democratic nominee Kamala Harris blitzed through the Rust Belt battlegrounds with an obscure Republican former congresswoman who lost her 2022 primary in Wyoming by almost 40 points, in an effort to appeal to suburban women. It is without a doubt one of the most inexplicable stretch-run decisions I've ever seen from a major party nominee, and it is a sign of deep, structural delusion inside the Harris campaign and Democratic elites. In an election that looks like it might be the closest in American history, Harris cannot afford to make any more unforced errors like barnstorming with an unpopular archconservative.

To think that some significant number of voters would be persuaded by former Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney is to fundamentally misunderstand the moment. For one thing, a lot of people have never heard of her, and those that have aren't particularly enamored. An August 2022 YouGov poll found that she had net negative approval ratings, 38 percent somewhat or very unfavorable to 35 percent somewhat or very favorable, and 26 percent of voters had no opinion. The numbers were even worse with independents, presumably the target of this whole operation—by a margin of 40 percent to 25 percent, Liz Cheney was underwater with America's critical swing bloc. And if the goal is to peel away Republican women in the suburbs, as the Harris campaign apparently believes it can do, Cheney seems like a less than an ideal vehicle for that project too, given that her approval rating with Republicans was net negative by 47 points.

Before she became the party's most vocal elected (and then unelected) anti-Trumper, Cheney was down-the-line reactionary just like her father. She wasn't even one of the top 50 most liberal Republicans in the House in the 116th Congress that gave Trump all his signature legislative victories. And the House GOP is very conservative. And if the move here is to appeal to suburban women who are angry about the Dobbs Supreme Court abortion ruling and the loss of control over their bodily autonomy, Cheney is

an even weirder choice. She has an A rating from the anti-choice Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life American organization and an unbroken, lifelong record of hostility to reproductive rights.

So what, you might ask, does Liz Cheney bring to the table that is worth risking the ire of rank-and-file Democrats who remember her not as the Never Trump hero who chaired the Jan. 6 inquiry in the House but as the daughter of the vice president whose administration was directly responsible for most of the major American catastrophes of the 21st century, including the Iraq War, the Great Recession and the appointments of John Roberts and Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court? Your guess is as good as mine.

The bigger picture is that the Harris campaign clearly believes that its path to victory runs directly through securing a new crop of former Republican voters who can't countenance four more years of former President Donald Trump but who don't like the substance of Democratic policies. Virtually every single strategic move that the Harris campaign has made since picking Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz as her running mate in early August has seemed designed to appeal to disgruntled conservatives, from her law-and-order acceptance speech at the DNC to her refusal to allow any daylight to filter in between her and the Biden administration's blank-check-writing fealty to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's regional war of retribution.

Yet in doing so, Harris has unwittingly leaned into everything that independent voters hate about DC politics—the inauthenticity, the refusal to answer direct questions, the casual jettisoning of past policies and stances in a mad dash to chase public opinion around as if she has no power whatsoever to shape it. It's like someone sat her down in late July and told her that in order to win she had to basically renounce the person that she had been throughout her entire time in the U.S. Senate and to walk back the positions she staked out when she sought the presidency in 2019 one by one.

The trouble with all of this as a theory is that it is wrong. Nearly everyone who was going to ditch the Republican Party because of Trump has already done so, likely years ago. If anything, it is Republicans who have been gaining in surveys of partisan identification during the Biden administration—a fairly standard and unsurprising development but one that should have put the kibosh on the idea that there are further gains to be had among Never Trump Republicans and independents. Harris is trotting Liz Cheney out to squeeze water from a desiccated desert rock.

It's not that Harris should be running a full-throated progressive campaign like vintage Elizabeth Warren, now a Massachusetts Democratic senator. It's not the moment for that either. But there is no meaningful constituency out there yearning for the Bush-Cheney years. There is, instead, a seemingly insatiable appetite for populism that the Harris campaign seems uniquely uninterested in responding to. So rather than telling us what's wrong with the United States and who is responsible for it and how she's going to fix it, she's cleaving tightly to the radioactive Biden administration while leaning heavily into the Tulsi Gabbard Theory of Politics—the idea that all wavering partisans need is to see one of their own switch sides so that they can have permission to do it too.

I truly hope I'm wrong and that believers in the Liz Cheney Magic Republican strategy get to triumphantly tweet this article back at me a thousand times on the night of Nov. 5, but from where I sit Harris has lost the plot and we may all pay a very steep price for that miscalculation.

Source:<https://www.newsweek.com/kamala-harris-campaign-leaning-losing-strategy-opinion-1974332>

UK and Germany sign 'landmark' defence agreement

By Jonathan Beale

Britain and Germany have signed what the UK government is calling a “landmark defence agreement” aimed at boosting security, investment and jobs.

Under the agreement, German defence company Rheinmetall will open a new factory in the UK to manufacture barrels for artillery guns – supporting 400 jobs.

Both countries will work together to develop drones and a new long-range missile.

German maritime surveillance aircraft will also periodically fly patrols of the North Atlantic from RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland.

“Today is a significant day for UK and German relations and in the history of our two countries,” Defence Secretary John Healey said at a press conference following the signing.

“This is the driving force behind our Nato-first UK defence strategy, behind our reset of UK relations with Europe,” he said.

Labour promised to build closer military ties with Germany while in opposition and this is part of a wider push by this government to reset relations with key European allies post Brexit.

The German Ambassador to the UK, Miguel Berger, said the European Commission will have a



very strong focus on defence in the next five years, and there is space for the UK to be involved.

“Obviously the question is - what can the role of the British defence industry and of the capacities of the United Kingdom be in this joint endeavour?” he told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme.

The UK already has a defence pact with France – the Lancaster House Treaty signed in 2010 by David Cameron and Nicholas Sarkozy – but this is the first with Germany.

The UK and Germany are the two largest defence spenders in Europe and the biggest European military donors to Ukraine.

Healey said it was a “milestone moment”, bringing the two countries’ militaries and defence industries closer.

In reality the two nations already co-operate as members of the Nato alliance.

In a joint venture, they are also building new tanks and armoured vehicles for the British Army, Germany’s Rheinmetall and the UK’s BAE Systems-formed RBSL to manufacture the Boxer armoured fighting vehicle and the latest Challenger 3 tank in Telford, Shropshire.

Under the new Trinity House Agreement, Rheinmetall will build a factory in the UK to produce barrels for artillery guns – something the UK stopped doing more than a decade ago.

The site for the factory has not yet been announced, but the Ministry of Defence (MOD) says it will support more than 400 jobs and use British steel produced by Sheffield Forgemasters.

The steelmaker was recently acquired by the UK Government. The first artillery gun barrels are expected to roll off the production line in 2027.

The Trinity House Agreement also includes a commitment to develop a new long-range missile, which the MOD says will be more precise and can be fired further than any current systems – the UK’s Storm Shadow and Germany’s Taurus. Unlike the UK, Germany has refused to supply Ukraine with its Taurus cruise missile.

The UK and Germany will further co-operate on developing drones that might be able to fly alongside Typhoon jets operated by both countries.

German P8 maritime surveillance aircraft will periodically operate out of RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland to help patrol the North Atlantic. Other Nato allies have been doing the same for a number of years.

There is also a promise to bolster the defence of Nato’s eastern flank; both the UK and Germany have already sent hundreds of troops to the Baltic states as part of Nato’s enhanced defence plans following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Germany’s Defence Minister Boris Pistorius said the agreement would strengthen Europe and Nato.

“We must not take security in Europe for granted,” he said, adding the projects being undertaken would be open to other partners.

Source:<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy808e4p9j9o.amp>



Mandela travelled on Trump's plane in 1990: Who paid for it?

By Maria Ramirez Uribe

Donald Trump chartered a 727 for Nelson Mandela's trip to the US after he was released from prison. But it wasn't a gift

In the last few weeks before Election Day, podcaster and Fox News contributor George "Tyrus" Murdoch tried to show voters a philanthropic side of former President Donald Trump.

Nelson Mandela was "trying to come to the United States. The US government was not helping him. No one was helping him," Murdoch said in an interview with Trump posted October 18 on X. "You chartered a 727 plane for their entire trip. ... Why is it hard for you to talk about the things you've done?"

Mandela, who died in 2013, was an anti-apartheid activist who spent 27 years in prison before becoming South Africa's first Black president in 1994.

Trump thanked Murdoch for bringing up the story.

"I love doing it. I don't need praise for it. We all like a certain level of praise, but I just like helping people," Trump said. "I help a lot of people, and I enjoy doing it, and I never talk about it. It's nice that you bring it up. I also think it's not a narrative that the press likes talking about for me."

Trump's campaign posted the clip on X, where it had more than 3 million views as of October 19. Other social media users have continued to share it.

"In 1990, President Trump chartered a private plane to get Nelson Mandela to America when the U.S. government wouldn't help," one October 18 Instagram post said.

The Instagram post's caption said Trump "doesn't go around bragging about his good deeds and charitable donations, but there are endless such stories".

The post was flagged as part of Meta's efforts to combat false news and misinformation on its News Feed.

Mandela used one of Trump's planes to fly within the US. But the travel was not part of Trump's "charitable donations", as the Instagram post claimed. It was a \$130,000 business transaction.

Trump's campaign did not respond to a request for comment.

Mandela rented one of Trump's planes for \$130,000

In June 1990, Mandela travelled to the US on an 11-day tour after his release from prison. Mandela visited the US as part of a larger world tour seeking financial and political support for his party and pressuring countries to continue sanctions against South Africa's apartheid government. Mandela's team had four weeks to organise the tour, The New York Times reported at the time. A June 1990 Los Angeles Times article said Mandela had unsuccessfully tried to find a plane after negotiating with the US government and private charter companies.

Christine Dolan, who handled Mandela's travel logistics, told the Los Angeles Times that Mandela's team contacted Trump asking to rent his private jet. Trump said the jet was being serviced but he offered one of his Boeing 727 commercial planes. At the time, Trump owned an airline, Trump Shuttle, that operated flights between New York City, Washington, DC and Boston.

"The Mandela Welcoming Committee is very thankful to Donald Trump," Dolan told the Los Angeles Times.

But use of the plane was not free. Mandela's team rented a Trump Shuttle plane for \$130,000, Dolan told the newspaper.

Soon after its 1989 launch, Trump Shuttle ran into financial problems. Trump spent \$365m on 21 planes, airline terminals and equipment, according to The Boston Globe, and also spent \$1m per plane to remodel them.

But after 18 months, The Boston Globe wrote, the company had lost \$128m. After missing a \$1.1m interest payment, Trump asked his lenders to defer future payments, the newspaper reported. The lenders took control of the business, Time reported, and in December 1991, they made a deal with USAir to take over Trump Shuttle, The New York Times reported.

"Trump obviously could not donate a plane, but he was able to free up one of the planes from Trump Shuttle," Dolan told The Atlanta Journal Constitution in June 1990, referencing Trump Shuttle's financial troubles.

The US government supported Mandela in other ways on his tour

Although the Los Angeles Times reported that negotiations with the US government for a plane failed, federal and local government agencies helped Mandela with US travel logistics. The State Department also provided security for Mandela, The New York Times reported.

"Although Mr. Mandela and his wife, Winnie, are visiting the United States as private citizens, the U.S. government is picking up part of the tab," The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported in June 1990.

The US government provided a military jet to transport a bulletproof limousine from Washington, DC, to Boston, the newspaper said.

In New York City, the police department built a bullet- and rocket-resistant parade vehicle, a June 20, 1990, a CBS News report said. About 12,000 police officers were on duty the day of

Mandela's visit to New York City, which cost \$2m in overtime that the US State Department paid, CBS News said.

A State Department official travelled with Mandela during his US tour, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Our ruling

An Instagram post said that as part of his "charitable donations", in 1990 Trump "chartered a private plane to get Nelson Mandela to America when the U.S. government wouldn't help".

Mandela used one of Trump Shuttle's Boeing 727 planes to travel within the US during his 11-day tour in June 1990. But Mandela's team paid Trump \$130,000 for use of the plane; it was not a gift.

Although the US government did not provide Mandela a plane for his US travel, it paid for his security and used a military plane to transport a bulletproof limousine across states.

We rate it False.

Source:<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/10/20/mandela-travelled-on-trumps-plane-in-1990-who-paid-for-it>



New Zealand beat South Africa to win Women's T20 Cricket World Cup final - as it happened

Everyone is always looking for a narrative, New Zealand couldn't have provided a better one: from ten losses in a row to World Champions, slipping under the radar, holding their nerve when England and Australia lost theirs, to win the tournament.

A brilliant team performance, from the grandmas to the fresh-faced twenty-somethings. A cracking end to a memorable tournament, played in front of 21,000 spectators, and the perfect topping to an amazing day for New Zealand cricket.

And that's it from us – Raf's report will be here shortly. The third and final Test starts tomorrow in the small hours. Thanks for all your messages – good bye!

Source:https://www.theguardian.com/sport/live/2024/oct/20/south-africa-v-new-zealand-womens-t20-cricket-world-cup-final-live?CMP=share_btn_url&page=with%3Ablock-671540ba8f08156d15776d28#block-671540ba8f08156d15776d28

Australia signs \$7 billion missile deal with US

By APDR

Australia will bolster its air and missile defence under a \$7 billion agreement with the United States to acquire state-of-the-art long-range missiles. The acquisition of the Standard Missile 2 Block IIIC (SM-2 IIIC) and Standard Missile-6 (SM-6) is a significant milestone in the government's rapid progress in boosting the long-range capability of Navy's surface combatant fleet.

The SM-2 IIIC and SM-6 are the most advanced air and missile defence weapons in the world and will be progressively deployed across Navy's Hobart class destroyers and in the future, the Hunter class frigates. This follows the recent successful test firing of a SM-6 from HMAS Sydney.

The SM-2 IIIC and SM6 contain advanced technologies that will greatly enhance the lethality and effectiveness of our Navy ships in line with the National Defence Strategy and the Independent Analysis into Navy's Surface Combatant Fleet. The SM-2 IIIC brings active seeker technology and significantly enhanced defensive capabilities against missile threats.

The SM-6 missile will provide Australia with extended range air defence capability against air and missile threats, an offensive anti-ship capability and for the first time, a terminal ballistic missile defence capability. The SM-2 IIIC and SM-6 complement existing capabilities such as ESSM Block 2 and Naval Strike Missile as part of a layered strike and missile defence capability for Navy's surface combatant fleet.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said: "This is another example of the Albanese government accelerating the acquisition of critical capabilities for the Australian Defence Force and enhancing the lethality of Navy's surface combatant fleet. The Standard Missile-6 and Standard Missile 2 Block IIIC will enable our Navy to strike maritime, land and air targets at long-range, and provide a terminal ballistic missile defence capability, boosting the capacity for the ADF to safeguard Australians and their interests."

Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery Pat Conroy said: "Australia faces the most complex geo-strategic environment since the Second World War. Our investment in these world-leading, high-tech missiles is another example of the Albanese Government moving fast to keep Australians safe, deter any adversary, and defend Australia's national interests in the missile age. Australia was the first country, other than the United States, to fire the SM-6 missile, underscoring the strength of our alliance."

Managing Director Raytheon Australia Ohad Katz said: "Raytheon Australia welcomes the Australian Government's announcement today to further increase the lethality of its naval surface fleet through the acquisition of additional Raytheon Standard Missiles (SM-2 and SM-6). This is a significant milestone that supports Australia's strategy of denial and deterrence against potential adversaries, while also supporting a foundation for regional stability. As a strategic partner in the Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Enterprise, we engage regularly with the Australian Government and Defence to ensure that we are doing our part to grow Australia's strong industrial base that will be critical to support national security outcomes for decades to come."

Source: <https://asiapacificdefencereporter.com/australia-signs-7-billion-missile-deal-with-us/>

Russia calls on Brics partners to create alternative to IMF

By Mike Moffatt, Contributor

MOSCOW: Russia, which chairs the Brics group this year, has called on its partners to create an alternative to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to counter political pressure from Western nations ahead of the Brics summit later this month.

Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov, who is hosting the meeting, said the global financial system is controlled by Western countries and that the group, which represents 37 per cent of the global economy, needs to create an alternative.

"The IMF and the World Bank are not performing their roles. They are not working in the interests of Brics countries," Siluanov said at an event on the first day of the meeting.

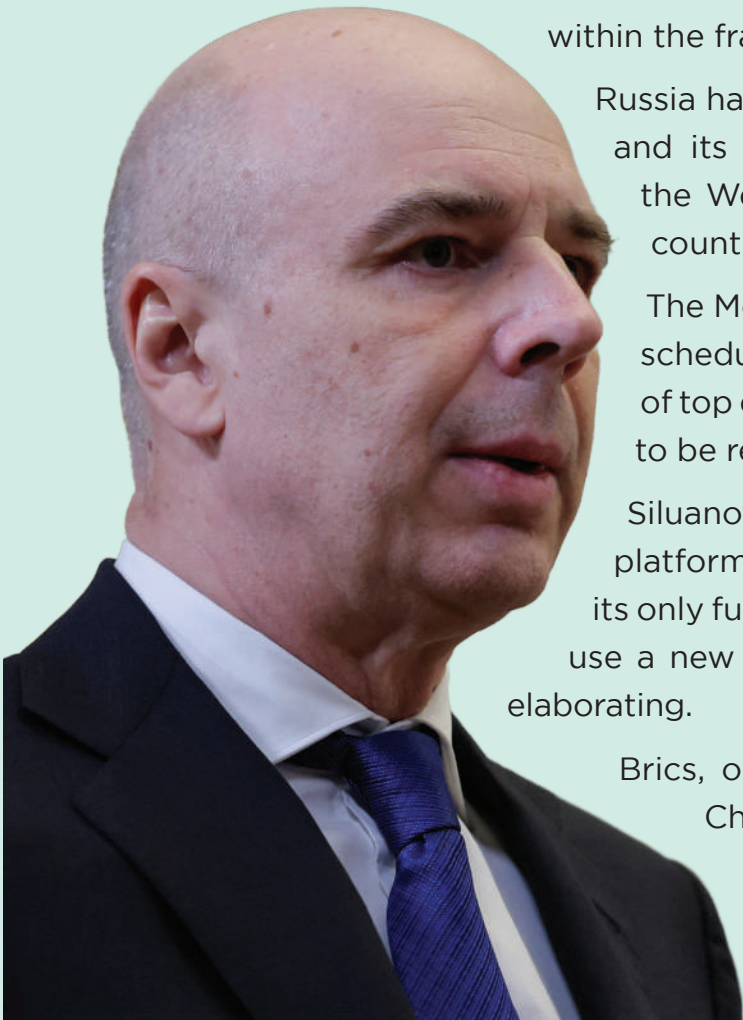
"It is necessary to form new conditions or even new institutions, similar to the Bretton Woods institutions, but within the framework of our community, within the framework of Brics," Siluanov added.

Russia had its forex reserves in dollars and euros frozen and its financial system heavily hit by sanctions by the West after it invaded Ukraine in Feb 2022. The country is cut off from international capital markets.

The Moscow meeting is modeled on the Group of 20 schedule, where summits are preceded by meetings of top economic policy officials who outline proposals to be reviewed by leaders at the summit.

Siluanov has also proposed setting up a joint investment platform based on the group's New Development Bank, its only functioning financial institution. The platform will use a new digital form of transactions, he said, without elaborating.

Brics, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, and China, has expanded to include South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates. Top Brics finance and central bank officials are meeting in Moscow this week.



But most finance ministers and central bank chiefs from the Brics group of countries did not attend a high-level meeting in Moscow ahead of a Brics summit, sending more junior officials instead, official documents showed.

Finance ministers from Egypt and the United Arab Emirates and the head of Iran's central bank were present as Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov called for the creation of an alternative. But finance ministers and bank chiefs from China, India and South Africa stayed away, sending deputies or more junior officials instead, a day after Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov accused the West of pressuring countries not to attend the Brics summit.

Russia's central bank Governor, Elvira Nabiullina, has previously talked about a Brics Bridge payments system, which would link member countries' financial systems, but progress has been slow. The only financial institution the Brics countries have established so far is the New Development Bank, created in 2015 to finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects in Brics members and other emerging economies. "The creation of a cross-border payment initiative is our main task," Siluanov told the officials. Russia is also pushing for the creation of a Brics clearing centre, a rating agency, a reinsurance company, and a commodities exchange.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1865246/russia-calls-on-brics-partners-to-create-alternative-to-imf>

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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

May Allah be with you - Amen

LILLEY: Trudeau wounded by coup attempt, still can't run government

By Brian Lilley



Justin Trudeau stood up at the start of Question Period on Wednesday to thunderous applause from the Liberal benches and declared he was happy to have their confidence. Coming as it did just hours after an attempted coup inside the closed-door Liberal caucus meeting, Trudeau's statement and the applause were nothing but theatre.

Still, the Liberal leader and his MPs revelled in that bit of theatre after two weeks of leadership drama.

"I want to thank all members of this House for their rousing show of confidence," Trudeau said.

"I have to say, the Liberal Party and the Liberal government are totally united in holding the Conservative Party to account."

Maybe that's part of the problem with Trudeau and his government at the moment, he's got it all backwards. Given he's the one running the government, the Opposition is supposed to hold the Liberals to account for their running of the country — not the other way around.

Trudeau survived the coup attempt by a group of Liberal MPs, but he and his party are wounded even if the rebels were defeated — both sides are bleeding. Estimates ranged from just three MPs signing onto demands for Trudeau to step down, to as high as 60, with several more guestimates in the middle.

In the end, I'm reliably informed that it was exactly 24 MPs who backed the coup attempt and of them, only a handful went to the microphone to make the demand. Only three have gone public.

“When you strike at a king, you must kill him,” the old saying goes, or as it has been expressed more recently in HBO’s *The Wire*, “You come at the king, you best not miss.”

These rebel Liberal MPs clearly missed or at least miscalculated their level of support in a caucus that has long deferred to Trudeau. As MPs emerged from caucus Wednesday afternoon, long past the usual end time, few were willing to speak to reporters, and those that did, affirmed the party was united.

On Thursday, though, Trudeau will try to change the channel from internal woes and show that he is listening to Canadians. As first reported by *The Toronto Sun*, Trudeau is set to announce a significant reduction in Canada’s immigration numbers on Thursday, perhaps by as much as 20%.

To show how seriously the government is taking this issue, other events have been ordered cancelled — this is the only message that will come tomorrow.

Yet, it’s an odd one for the Trudeau Liberals who came to power and quickly promised to boost Canada’s already historically high immigration numbers under the Harper Conservatives, pushing them even higher. For 2025, Canada’s target is 500,000 permanent residents, with a similar number for 2025.

Permanent immigration has increased by 59% since the Liberals came to power, but the bigger issue has been temporary foreign workers and international students, both of which have exploded in the last few years.

Canada welcomed roughly 1.3 million new people during the year ending July 1, 2024. When Trudeau and federal Immigration Minister Marc Miller announce the changes on Thursday, the questions shouldn’t just be about what will happen to permanent residency, but the temporary workers as well.

And while those are important questions, on an important issue, we should also remember that even if Trudeau has survived his internal coup, he still doesn’t have control of the House of Commons.

For the past three sitting weeks, all government business has been ground to a halt over his government’s refusal to hand over documents related to the so-called Green Slush Fund.

If Trudeau gets past the coup, he still can’t operate his government due to his own scandal, which all opposition parties are calling him on.

While Trudeau has survived one internal problem, he still faces several more. Changing the channel to immigration won’t fix any of this.

Source: <https://calgarysun.com/opinion/columnists/trudeau-wounded-by-coup-attempt-still-cant-run-government/wcm/2f79d69f-6e63-4ff3-990a-2202a754c9ec>



Mexico navy seizes more than eight tonnes of illicit cargo in record drugs bust

Mexico's navy has said it arrested 23 people in its largest-ever drugs bust, seizing over eight tonnes of illicit cargo in an operation off the country's south-western Pacific coast.

"Navy personnel seized 8,361 kilograms of illicit cargo, which represents the largest amount of drugs seized in a maritime operation, unprecedented in history," a statement from the ministry of the navy said on Friday.

It did not specify the type of the drugs, but said they were valued at 2.099bn pesos (\$105m).

The navy also seized 8,700 litres of fuel and six boats of the coast near Lazaro Cardenas, in Michoacan state, and further south off the coast of Guerrero state.

"The 23 detainees, who were read their rights, as well as the six boats, the presumed drugs and the fuel were handed over to the competent authorities for integration into the corresponding investigation," the navy added.

The drugs were distributed in six small boats and one of the vessels was a submersible, which implied a "complex" action on the part of the sailors, the ministry added.

The largest drug seizure in Mexico's history was 23 tonnes of Colombian cocaine in November 2007. According to the navy, Friday's announcement represents the largest amount ever seized in a maritime operation.

The latest raid reported on Friday was carried out "days ago" by surface units backed by a helicopter, the ministry said.

On 23 August, authorities reported they had impounded about seven tonnes of drugs in two separate operations in the same area of the country.

The Mexican navy, which conducts surveillance operations on a permanent basis, has discovered all kinds of drug shipments, including one of cocaine stuffed in 217 barrels of chilli sauce in 2016.

The US has pushed Mexico to ramp up its efforts to stop drug trafficking, while Mexico has pressured the US to do more to stem the flow of firearms to criminal groups across the border into Mexico.

With Reuters and Agence France-Presse

Source: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/19/mexico-navy-seizes-more-than-eight-tonnes-of-illicit-cargo-in-record-drugs-bust?CMP=share_btn_url

Pakistan's government curbs judiciary's power after alleged harassment of MPs

By Shah Meer Baloch

Coalition will now be able to hire and fire judges but faces accusations it bribed and abducted lawmakers to get its way

Pakistan's government has passed a controversial amendment to the constitution that has been accused of weakening the power and independence of the judiciary, throwing the country's democracy into further crisis.

The 26th constitutional amendment was passed in a clandestine, late-night parliamentary session that was clouded in secrecy and marred by allegations of abductions and intimidation of parliamentarians to force them to vote in favour of the bill.

The ruling coalition government had lobbied intensely for the amendment, which changes



the process of senior judicial appointments and, most significantly, gives the ruling government the power to select the chief justice, the country's top judge who is regularly the final arbiter of Pakistan's most politically significant cases.

In a statement, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), said the amendment was a "blow to judicial independence, the rule of law, and human rights protection".

The coalition government, comprises the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan's People's party, and is led by the prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif. It had attempted to push the amendment through last month but lacked a majority in the national assembly.

This time round, it managed to get the votes necessary but the opposition parties had accused the government of "arm twisting", including offering substantial bribes to MPs as well as abducting, torturing and harassing them to give them the numbers.

The coalition government came to power in February in an election that was tainted with

widespread allegations of rigging and documented evidence of electoral fraud against the party of former prime minister Imran Khan, who is currently in jail. The ruling government is accused of having the backing of Pakistan's powerful military establishment, who are long accused of meddling in the country's political affairs.

The new constitutional amendment comes amid government fears that the new chief justice of the supreme court, who is due to take office this month, would open an investigation into the alleged rigging of February's election. Since the elections were held, Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party has been holding protests, calling for the court to take up the allegations of election fraud. They vowed to hold mass protests in the wake of the amendment.

Salman Akram Raja, the PTI's general secretary, said the new rules were to ensure that the country's most senior judges were beholden to the government's agenda and would not grant any relief to Khan or PTI in the mounting number of cases they are currently fighting. "Everything will be decided by judges handpicked by the government," he said.

Raja alleged that the "establishment", a common reference to the military, were the ones behind the amendment. He cited a recent incident where six senior judges went public with allegations they had been intimidated and put under pressure by the establishment not to give favourable court verdicts in Khan's cases. "This is the end of judicial independence," he said.

However, the allegations were denied by the law minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, who said that the parliamentary committee who will select the chief justice will have "representation of all major parties" including opposition parties, so appointments would not be politically motivated. "The amendments are constitutional," he said.

There were already long-running questions about the independence of Pakistan's judiciary, which has historically been accused of being co-opted to serve the military's agenda. However, it has also stood up for human rights issues and media freedom.

In recent months, the supreme court has also given several favourable orders to Khan, who has been in jail for over a year and is facing upwards of 100 cases, to the displeasure of the ruling coalition, who have deemed Khan a "terrorist".

Lawyers and experts said that with this new bill, government interference into the justice system was now brazenly enshrined in the constitution. Salahuddin Ahmed, a senior lawyer, said the new amendments "permanently puts the supreme court and high courts under the thumb of politicians".

He added: "This moves Pakistan decisively towards an authoritarian state and destroys the essence of judicial review.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Pakistan's former prime minister, called it a "subjugation of the judiciary by the government. It simply means that if a judge does not cooperate with the government, he will be kicked out," he said.

Source:<https://amp.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/21/pakistans-government-curbs-judiciarys-power-after-alleged-harassment-of-mps>

Hindu temple being reconstructed in Pak after 64 years

By: Hemant Waje

A budget of Pakistani Rs 10 million has been allocated to re-construct a Hindu temple in the Punjab province of Pakistan, marking the first phase of restoration 64 years after it was rendered dysfunctional, a media report said on Monday.



The Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), the federal body overseeing minority worship places in Pakistan, has started the construction of the Baoli Sahib temple in Zafarwal town of Narowal, a city on the western bank of river Ravi in Punjab, after the place of worship was rendered dysfunctional in 1960, Dawn News reported.

Currently, there is no Hindu temple in Narowal district, forcing the Hindu community to perform their religious rituals at home or travel to temples in Sialkot and Lahore.

Ratan Lal Arya, former president of the Pak Dharamsthan Committee, said the ETPB's control over the Baoli Sahib temple rendered it non-functional and the Hindu community, which numbers over 1,453 in Narowal, lacked a dedicated place for worship.

After the establishment of Pakistan, the Narowal district had 45 Hindu temples but all of them have over time fallen into disrepair.

For the past 20 years, the Pak Dharamsthan Committee has advocated for the restoration of Baoli Sahib temple, Arya said.

The government has taken steps to restore the temple to address Hindu community demands, he said.

The ETPB is overseeing the construction at the four kanals of land where the boundary wall is the priority. Once completed, the temple will be handed over to the Pak Dharamsthan Committee.

Shoaib Siddal, chairman of the One Man Commission of the Supreme Court, and Manzoor Masih, member of the National Commission of Human Rights, have played pivotal roles in this restoration effort.

Sawan Chand, president of the Pak Dharamsthan Committee, said the restoration of Baoli Sahib temple would fulfil a long-standing demand of the Hindu community, allowing them to perform their religious rituals at the site.

Hindus form the biggest minority community in Pakistan.

According to official estimates, 75 lakh Hindus live in Pakistan. However, according to the community, over 90 lakh Hindus live in the country.

The majority of Pakistan's Hindu population is settled in Sindh province where they share culture, traditions, and language with their Muslim fellows.

Source: <https://m.rediff.com/amp/news/report/hindu-temple-being-reconstructed-after-64-years-in-paki/20241021.htm>

UK Government Report Highlights Urgent Need to Safeguard Freedom of Religion or Belief Globally

By Cherylann Mollan



The recent report, from the UK government underscores the importance of protecting freedom of religion or belief, on a scale. The UK governments latest publication titled “Preserving Religious Freedom, for Minority Faith Communities in South Asia” provides insights into the challenge of oppression experienced by minority groups, in the region.

Summary of the Report

A detailed study prepared for the All Party Parliamentary Group, for International Freedom of Religion or Belief in the UK delves into the involvement of the UK government in tackling the obstacles and risks encountered by minority groups in South Asia. With a specific focus on India, Pakistan and Bangladesh where individuals and communities belonging to minority religions are frequently subjected to ongoing bias, exclusion and, at times violence.

The. Unfair treatment faced by the Ahmadiyya Community

The report highlights a concerning issue regarding the discrimination and mistreatment

experienced by the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan. It mentions that Ahmadis, in Pakistan encounter organized oppression that includes being deprived of their right to identify themselves as Muslims freely and experiencing limitations on practicing their religion along, with facing violence and harassment.

Nasim Butt, from the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan expressed a view during his testimony in front of the UK parliament by stating that they lack rights and face obstacles, in accessing justice. They feel marginalized as if they are treated as citizens who are not permitted to identify as Muslims; their places of worship and burial grounds have been subjected to attacks while their community members have fallen victim to targeted violence.

The report also emphasizes the involvement of the government, in sustaining this treatment. It mentions that the government of Pakistan has not effectively safeguarded the Ahmadiyya community and has instead legalized discrimination, against them.

CAP LC's advocacy initiatives

Our organization CAP Freedom of Conscience has worked closely with the International Human Rights Committee to champion the rights of the Ahmadiyya community and other minority religious groups, in South Asia for quite some time now. Our NGO actively collaborates with entities like the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to shed light on human rights abuses and push for intervention.

In a document presented to the UN Human Rights Council we brought attention to the challenges faced by the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan. Emphasized the importance of holding the Pakistani government responsible, for not safeguarding's their citizens basic rights effectively.

The Role of the United Kingdom and Suggestions

The report suggests that the UK government holds an diplomatic obligation to tackle these infringements, on rights and make efforts to protect the right to practice religion freely in South Asia. It offers suggestions for the UK government to review and take into account.

Raising the topic of freedom during discussions, with India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, in talks.

Supporting funding and assistance, for community groups and advocates dedicated to safeguarding the rights of minority groups.

Exploring the implementation of sanctions, against individuals and organizations accountable for infringements, on religious liberties.

Employ efforts and engage in public campaigns to safeguard the well-being of minority religious groups in the area.

The UK governments report plays a role, in the push to protect the fundamental human right of freedom of religion or belief by offering valuable insights and recommendations for addressing the challenges encountered by minority faith communities, in South Asia.

Source: <https://freedomofconscience.eu/uk-government-report-highlights-urgent-need-to-safeguard-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-globally/>

Why is China importing donkeys from Pakistan?

As borders become more stringent and the global supply of many resources and commodities is dominated by a few nations, strategic partnerships play an important role in today's world. Such relationships allow countries to overcome resource constraints, bolster economic resilience, and gain leverage on the world stage. In this context, Pakistan's recent agreement to export meat and hides from 200,000 donkeys annually to China marks a new milestone in the already forged alliance between the two nations.

Dr. Ikram, an official from Pakistan's Ministry of National Food Security and Research, confirmed this new agreement during an interview with 'Independent Urdu'. Under the agreement, Pakistan has committed to supplying 216,000 donkey hides and meat annually. However, China is further seeking to expand this arrangement by proposing the establishment of slaughterhouses near Karachi Port. For the sole purpose of exporting, new slaughterhouses are being built in Gwadar. According to recent surveys, Pakistan is currently home to an estimated 5.2 million donkeys, making it the third largest population in the world. Pakistan is expected to earn millions from the trade, which will come as a welcome relief given the political and economic unrest in the country since 2022. China, with its high demand for donkey hides for traditional medicines like ejiao, and Pakistan, with a growing livestock sector, both stand to benefit economically.

Why is China importing donkey hides and meat?

China imports donkeys from Pakistan primarily to meet the rising demand for ejiao, a traditional medicine made from donkey-hide gelatin. Ejiao is highly valued in Chinese traditional medicine for its supposed health benefits, which include improving blood circulation, enhancing skin quality, and treating various ailments. However, China's own donkey population has seen a sharp decline due to increased demand and a lack of sustainable breeding practices.

What is Ejiao?

Ejiao is a traditional Chinese medicine made from the collagen extracted from donkey skin. It's a hard gel that can be dissolved in hot water or alcohol and used in food, drink,

or beauty products like face creams. Believed to improve blood circulation, ejiao is used as a blood tonic for conditions like anemia, low blood cell counts, and reproductive issues.

Additionally, in China's Hebei province, donkey meat is a popular delicacy. Donkey meat burgers, 'l ròu hu sh o' in Chinese, are a popular street food and specialty in the cities of Baoding and Hejian.

To overcome this gap, China had to look outward for help. Pakistan, with its significant donkey population, became China's key partner. China has been 'helping' Pakistan overcome its crisis by providing a significant amount of loans. According to data from 2022, Pakistan has \$26.6 billion (24.6 billion) worth of Chinese debt, more than any other country in the world.

What other imports does China make from Pakistan?

China imports various goods from Pakistan, including copper (\$1.17 billion), cotton (\$764.4 million), ores and slag (\$325.17 million), oil seeds and grains (\$295.47 million), fish and crustaceans (\$227.18 million), knit apparel (\$87.99 million), cereals (\$80.57 million), mineral fuels (\$78.49 million), aluminum (\$75.42 million), and raw hides and leather (\$31.22 million). These imports highlight the strategic trade relationship between the two countries, supporting economic ties and mutual growth.

Source: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/etimes/trending/why-is-china-importing-donkeys-from-pakistan/amp_articleshow/114630934.cms



Construction starts on world's largest building in Saudi Arabia

By Tom Ravenscroft

Construction has begun on the 400-metre-high, cube-shaped Mukaab supertall skyscraper in Riyadh designed by AtkinsRéalis, which will be the world's largest building when it completes.

Designed as the centrepiece of the 19-square-kilometre New Murabba development in northwest Riyadh, Mukaab is now officially under construction with excavations underway, according to its development company.

The developer, named New Murabba Development Company and funded by Saudi Arabia's central Public Investment Fund (PIF), said groundworks at the site are now 86 per cent complete.

Designed by AtkinsRéalis, the Mukaab skyscraper will be cube-shaped with 400-metre-long edges. At 400 metres tall it will be a supertall skyscraper – a building over 300 metres in height – and become the tallest in the city.

It will also be the largest building ever built, with news site Bloomberg calling it the “largest built structure in the world”. It will take the title of the world's current largest building from the Boeing Everett Factory in the USA.

Inside the cube will contain a giant, almost full-height atrium with a spiralling tower at its centre. Surrounding the tower will be two million square metres of shops, cultural and tourist attractions.

The cube will be enclosed in a distinctive facade made of overlapping triangular forms referencing the modern Najdi architectural style.

When complete, Mukaab will sit at the centre of the New Murabba development, which is being created as a new downtown for Saudi Arabia's capital city.

According to its developers, New Murabba will contain over 100,000 homes, 980,000 square metres of shops, 1.4 million square metres of office space along with hotels, culture venues, a university, an immersive theatre and an “iconic” museum.

The project is planned to be completed by 2030 as part of the country's Vision 2030 strategy to diversify its economy, which is being funded by its Public Investment Fund.

It is one of 14 giga projects currently being developed in Saudi Arabia, with the best-known and most controversial being Neom.

The images are courtesy of New Murabba Development Company.

Source:<https://www.dezeen.com/2024/10/22/worlds-largest-building-saudi-arabia-mukaab-supertall/>

Taj Mahal: Wonder of the World at risk

By Shakir Husain

Concerns over Taj Mahal maintenance reveal India's challenges in heritage preservation despite its rich tourist revenue

Among the various concerns over the Taj Mahal's upkeep, one more has been added recently: the condition of its main dome. After heavier than usual monsoon rains lashed the historic city of Agra in September, water seeped through the main dome and reached the tombs of Emperor Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal, the king's favorite wife in whose memory he built the mausoleum between 1631 and 1648.

The Taj Mahal is India's most iconic tourist attraction and one of the Seven Wonders of the World. However, the lack of care this marble masterpiece suffers raises questions about whether India has done a satisfactory job of maintaining it. A senior official of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the government agency responsible for protecting important historical monuments, told local media that the main dome was not damaged, but water had seeped through to reach the burial chamber. Historians do not find the ASI's words reassuring, especially since other magnificent monuments under its care are not faring well.

Agra, located 220 kilometers (137 miles) southeast of the national capital, New Delhi, once served as the center of the authority of the South Asian subcontinent's mighty Mughal empire.



“The footfall at the Taj has no comparison with any other preserved iconic structure in the subcontinent. Unfortunately, its upkeep for decades has been extremely dismal,” said Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi, a professor of history at Aligarh Muslim University and secretary of the Indian History Congress, the largest body of professional historians.

“For centuries, the Taj Mahal has stood as an enduring symbol of India’s architectural brilliance and romantic heritage. However, in the wake of three days of unrelenting rainfall, the white-marble monument’s iconic dome is facing an unexpected challenge – water leakage,” the Telegraph newspaper wrote on Sept. 14.

Mughal-era monuments

Agra is home to some of the most spectacular Mughal-era monuments.

The rain also caused some damage at other historical sites, including the mausoleum of I’timad-ud-Daulah, which is known as the “Baby Taj.” I’timad-ud-Daulah, whose real name was Mirza Ghiyas Beg, was prime minister in the royal court. More importantly, he was the father of Empress Nur Jahan, Emperor Jahangir’s wife, who got the tomb built in his honor.

The tomb of Emperor Akbar, Jahangir’s father, is in Agra as well, located in the Sikandra area at some distance away from the Taj Mahal. Agra is identified with Akbar and was renamed Akbarabad during his reign. The sprawling Agra Fort, not far from the Taj Mahal, is among the finest examples of Mughal architecture and political power.

About 35 kilometers from Agra is Fatehpur Sikri (the “city of victory”), which Akbar built as his new capital and later abandoned for various reasons. Fatehpur Sikri has some of the grandest Mughal buildings built in the 16th century.

India earns a fortune in tourist revenue from these monuments and it can significantly grow this income by making a serious commitment to preserving and protecting Mughal heritage. However, the way the Taj Mahal is handled does not create room for too much optimism.

“There are serious issues about the preservation and maintenance of this iconic



monument, which is part of not just Indian but world heritage,” said Mohammad Tarique Anwar, an associate professor of history at Delhi University. To treat the Taj Mahal as an ordinary monument by the ASI or the state and central governments would be outrageous, he said.

‘Maulvi Zafar Hasan list’

Many historical buildings have been lost to neglect and vandalism and some simply swallowed by urban expansion. In Delhi, the centuries-old Tughlaqabad Fort, the Khirki Mosque, heritage sites in Old Delhi, and a building associated with the famous traveler Ibn Battuta all present a picture of heritage neglect.

Maulvi Zafar Hasan is a well-known name among historians for the work he did in the early 20th century in compiling a list of heritage buildings. The list was prepared by the ASI and became known as the “Zafar Hasan List.” Zafar Hasan carried out his surveys in Delhi and across India when the capital of British India was being shifted from Calcutta to New Delhi in 1911. The list is considered a highly prized source among scholars of history.

Sohail Hashmi, a Delhi-based heritage activist, writer and filmmaker, said the compilation had 3,000 monuments in 1920, but 90 years later, 1,000 buildings mentioned in it were gone. “What happened to the 1,000 monuments is unknown,” Hashmi said.

Mahmood Farooqui, an author and historian, sees a general problem of lackadaisical attitude toward preserving history and heritage. “Our attitude to historical buildings and monuments is not that is found in Europe, for instance,” he said. “There is a very divided attitude to history. We are, even now, not settled on our views on Gandhi and Nehru,” he said, referring to Indian freedom struggle leaders Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, who receive scant respect, if not outright insults, from radical Hindu nationalists.

Farooqui’s argument on divided attitudes is also about regional views about historical figures, old kingdoms and events. In this, what is a matter of pride for one group may be treated as disgrace by another. He offers examples of the historical versions in the western, southern and northern parts of India. In the famous 1818 clash between the British East India Company and the Peshwa faction of the Maratha Confederacy, for instance, the lower caste Mahar community sided with the British and defeated the local upper castes in the Bhima Koregaon battle. The Maratha people have their own history in western India, and in the south, many identify closely with the Chola dynasty. Therefore, behind the neglect of monuments, one part of the problem, Farooqui said, “is owing to the fact we do not have a settled idea of history.”

One mythomania phenomenon in India is the laying of Hindu claims on Mughal monuments, mosques and Islamic sites through absurd theories and recently manufactured falsehoods. Even the most magnificent monuments have not been spared propaganda and encroachment. At Red Fort in Delhi, idols have been placed on small raised platforms inside and outside the main monument, and in Hyderabad, a shrine dedicated to a goddess has been erected at the iconic Charminar. The Taj Mahal, though safe from disfigurement due to the international exposure it gets, has not been left standing without controversies.

Other reasons cited for the poor maintenance and preservation of heritage buildings are a paucity of funds and a lack of staff and technical expertise. A lot has been spoken and written about the ASI being ineffective in carrying out its responsibilities of heritage protection. It is headed by a civil servant, but the posting is not considered a coveted one.

“It is not a sought-after post. Senior bureaucrats prefer departments that come with large budgets and political influence,” Hashmi said. However, he disagrees with the notion that India lacks cash for the upkeep of heritage buildings. “It is not that the government is short of funds. They have money, but not for preserving historical monuments,” he said.

‘Milking’ history for money

Rezavi, however, highlights deliberate negligence due to which India’s rich heritage is being systematically destroyed. In this sense, his views are close to the “divided attitude” mentioned above. He said the Taj Mahal, while being “milked as much as possible” for tourist revenue, is being treated as an “enemy property.” His allusion is to Hindu nationalist tendencies in which India’s centuries-old Islamic heritage and the Mughal period are not seen as a source of pride despite that era’s monumental achievements, which are not confined to the well-known architectural masterpieces.

“For a number of years, Taj’s marble and the carvo-intaglio patterns (a style used during Shah Jahan’s rule) on its subsidiary structures (mosque and mehmankhana buildings in the complex) have been falling apart and rotting,” Rezavi said.

Air pollution caused by smoke-belching industries and vehicles is also turning the Taj’s white marble facade yellow and green. The sewage-filled Yamuna river flowing beside the Taj Mahal is a breeding ground for insects that swarm the area.

Then, there is a brand of hostility worse than any pollution. It is not uncommon to hear those subscribing to Hindutva, an ethnic-nationalist political ideology that excludes Muslims from the cultural identity of India, cry about the “symbols of slavery” while the world admires the architectural beauty and cultural brilliance of the Mughal period and the Delhi Sultanate before that.

“Look at the two Mughal forts at Agra and Delhi or any of the other Mughal monuments of the region. All show a sign of criminal and deliberate neglect,” Rezavi said.

Source:<https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/taj-mahal-wonder-of-the-world-at-risk/>
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British scientists are about to launch a remarkable research project that will demonstrate how the air we breathe can affect our brains. This work will be vital, they say, in understanding a major medical problem: how atmospheric pollution can trigger dementia.

In recent years, scientists have discovered that air pollution is one of the most pernicious threats to human health and have shown it is involved in causing cancer, heart disease, diabetes, low birthrates, and many health conditions.

Now scientists at the Francis Crick Institute are to look at its involvement in the phenomenon of neurodegeneration through a research project, titled Rapid, which is being funded by the charity Race Against Dementia in partnership with the Rosetrees Trust and will be launched tomorrow.

Rapid will involve scientists examining the exact processes by which tiny polluting particles can lead to dementia, work that could bring an insight into the way air particulates trigger disease in general and also help in the development of new drugs to counter the progress of conditions such as Alzheimer's disease.

"Air pollution is not generally associated with dementia. However, epidemiologists have found out recently that particulates in the air are actually associated quite firmly with the risk of neurodegenerative disease," said one of the project's leaders, Prof Charles Swanton, the deputy clinical director of the Crick. "We want to find out exactly how tiny particles in the air can have such profound impacts on our brains and use that knowledge to develop new drugs to treat dementia."

A key type of air pollution consists of suspensions of minuscule fragments of solids and liquid droplets. These are produced from car and truck exhausts, factories, dust, pollen, volcanoes, wildfires and other sources and are known as particulate matter 2.5 or simply PM2.5.

These particulates are less than 2.5 millionths of a metre in diameter – about 30 times finer than a human hair – and are so small they can travel deep into the recesses of the human body. In the case of dementia, PM2.5s are inhaled and are believed to get into the brain through the olfactory bulb, a rounded mass of tissue that sits above the nasal cavity and plays a key role in processing smell information.

“In the brain, PM2.5s appear to be taken up by immune cells in the central nervous system and in their wake, we think neurodegeneration can then set in,” Swanton said.

Exactly how this process unfolds and leads to dementia is not clear, however, and a major aim of the Rapid project will be to reveal the precise process that causes PM2.5s to cause brain tissue to form the clumps that are the hallmark of Alzheimer’s disease.

“We have good evidence that links exposure to PM2.5 particles with brain diseases such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, but we do not know yet whether these are actually triggering neurodegeneration directly or if they are driving the process that is already occurring in vulnerable individuals,” said Sonia Gandhi, head of the Neurodegeneration Biology Laboratory at the Crick and University College London.

Researchers at the Crick believe one of three different mechanisms is involved in the way air pollution triggers dementia. PM2.5 particles may directly speed up the process by which proteins get clumped together in the brain – and are causing Alzheimer’s.

Alternatively, it could be that the arrival of particulates interferes with the brain’s ability to clear up clumping. In other words, the PM2.5s are interfering with the body’s cell clearance system and are making it harder to clear other proteins that cause diseases such as Alzheimer’s.

Thirdly, it has been suggested that PM2.5s are being picked up by the brain’s immune cells, called microglia, and could be causing these cells to trigger inflammation which drives the onset of dementia.

The research to find which mechanism is involved in the causation of dementia will focus on in-vitro experiments on human stem cells as well as animal models.

“Once we understand those mechanisms in greater detail, we can use that knowledge to develop treatments that will dampen the impact of air pollutants and perhaps one day prevent the effect of the environment on brain diseases,” Gandhi said.

This article was amended on 21 October 2024 to include reference to the Rosetrees Trust’s involvement with the Rapid project.

Source:https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/oct/20/does-air-pollution-cause-dementia-uk-scientists-launch-study-to-find-out?CMP=share_btn_url





Top 10 most innovative economies in Africa

By Faith Omoboye

Innovation plays a crucial role in driving economic growth, fostering competitiveness, and addressing the unique challenges that regions face. According to the Global Innovative Index a developmental index metric launched in 2007 to identify and determine metrics and methods that could completely capture the level of innovation in regions.

The innovative cycles include science and innovation investment, technological progress, technology adoption, and the socioeconomic impact of innovation.

Other indices like Institutions, Human Capital and Research, Infrastructure, Market Sophistication, Business Sophistication, Knowledge & Technology Outputs and Creative Outputs were also used to judge each economy to assess the level of innovation in their regions.

Nigeria with a score of 17.1 ranked 113 globally and 12th in Africa. The country's highest ranking was in Human capital and research (78th), Creative outputs (87th) and Business sophistication (107th) while it ranked lowest in Infrastructure (127th), Institutions (125th) and Market sophistication, Knowledge and technology outputs (121st).

According to the Global Innovative Index published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Here are the top 10 most innovative economies in Africa

1. Mauritius — Global rank: 55, innovation score: 30.1

Mauritius stands out as the most innovative country in Africa. With a robust education system, a business-friendly environment, and strategic economic reforms, Mauritius has positioned itself as a hub for technology and financial services. The island nation is known for its ICT sector, growing fintech industry, and progressive policies encouraging entrepreneurship. With its consistent investment in human capital and R&D, Mauritius continues to lead Africa's innovation space.

2. South Africa–Global rank: 6, innovation score: 28.3

South Africa has long been recognized as a continental leader in innovation, particularly

in science, technology, and manufacturing. Home to a well-established network of universities and research institutions, South Africa also has a growing start up culture that has attracted international investors. The country's innovations span multiple sectors, including healthcare, finance, and green technology. Despite recent economic challenges, South Africa remains a hotbed for creative solutions and technological advancements.

3. Botswana- Global rank: 87, innovation score: 23.1

Botswana's rise in innovation is linked to its government's focus on economic diversification. While traditionally known for its diamond mining industry, Botswana has invested heavily in education, research, and digital technologies. The government has set up various initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and innovation, particularly in the fintech, agribusiness, and ICT sectors. This investment in new sectors is helping Botswana transition into a knowledge-based economy.

4. Cabo Verde-Global rank: 90, innovation score: 22.3

Cabo Verde, a small island nation off the coast of West Africa, has been quietly making strides in innovation, driven by its focus on digital transformation and tourism. The government has prioritized the development of ICT infrastructure, and there is a growing emphasis on renewable energy and sustainable development. Cabo Verde's innovative spirit can be seen in its efforts to address climate change, improve healthcare services, and boost education.

5. Senegal- Global Rank: 92, innovation Score: 22

Senegal is emerging as a key player in West Africa's innovation ecosystem. With initiatives like the Digital Senegal Strategy, the government has placed a strong emphasis on ICT development, fostering entrepreneurship, and expanding access to digital tools. Dakar, the capital, has become a regional tech hub, with several startups in fintech and e-commerce gaining traction.

6. Kenya-Global rank: 96, innovation score: 21

Kenya is often referred to as the "Silicon Savannah" for its booming tech sector. The country is a leader in mobile money solutions, with M-Pesa being one of the most recognized innovations globally. Kenya has also cultivated a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem with support from government initiatives, private sector partnerships, and a vibrant start up culture. Nairobi has emerged as a major hub for innovation in Africa, with advancements in fintech, agriculture, and renewable energy.

7. Ghana-Global rank: 101, innovation score: 20

Ghana has been making significant progress in innovation, particularly in sectors like agriculture, healthcare, and education. The government's focus on digitization, through initiatives like the Digital Ghana Agenda, has helped the country build a foundation for a modern digital economy. The startup ecosystem in Ghana is growing, with support for young entrepreneurs in sectors such as fintech, agritech. Ghana's focus on youth empowerment and tech-based solutions continues to boost its innovation profile.

8. Namibia-Global rank: 102, innovation score: 20

Namibia is another southern African country that is investing in innovation as part of

its broader economic diversification strategy. The country has made significant efforts to build ICT infrastructure, and there is a growing interest in sectors such as renewable energy, tourism, and agriculture. Namibia's government has implemented policies to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and innovation hubs, fostering creativity and entrepreneurial ventures.

9. Rwanda-Global rank: 104, innovation score: 19.

Rwanda is one of Africa's fastest-growing economies and is quickly becoming a hub for innovation, particularly in ICT and digital transformation. The Rwandan government has heavily invested in technology and infrastructure to support its vision of becoming a knowledge-based economy. Kigali, the capital, has become a centre for technological innovation, with a focus on solutions in health, education, and agriculture. Rwanda's innovative use of drones in healthcare delivery is just one example of its forward-thinking approach.

10. Madagascar-Global rank: 110, innovation score: 19

Madagascar, while still a developing country, has shown promise in specific areas of innovation, particularly in environmental conservation and sustainable development. The country has taken steps to protect its rich biodiversity while leveraging natural resources to promote eco-friendly technologies. Madagascar's innovative efforts in agriculture and renewable energy are crucial for its sustainable development goals.

Source:<https://businessday.ng/business-economy/article/top-10-most-innovative-economies-in-africa/>



Scientists discover why the Great Wall of China has remained so well preserved for over 2,000 years

By Joseph Shavit

The Great Wall of China, a symbol of ancient civilization, stretches across the northern borders, standing as a testament to over two millennia of history.

The Great Wall of China, a symbol of ancient civilization, stretches across the northern borders, standing as a testament to over two millennia of history. Despite its grandeur, what remains today is only a fraction of its former self, as time and natural forces have taken their toll on the structure.

However, a recent discovery reveals that nature itself might be playing a crucial role in preserving this historical wonder. Thin layers of bacteria, moss, lichen, and other organisms, known as biocrusts, have been found to protect sections of the Great Wall, shielding it from wind, rain, and other corrosive elements.

A study published in Science Advances highlights the significant role these “living skins” play in conserving this ancient architectural marvel. With advances in technology and research, scientists are now exploring the potential of cultivating new biocrusts to prevent further degradation of the Wall.

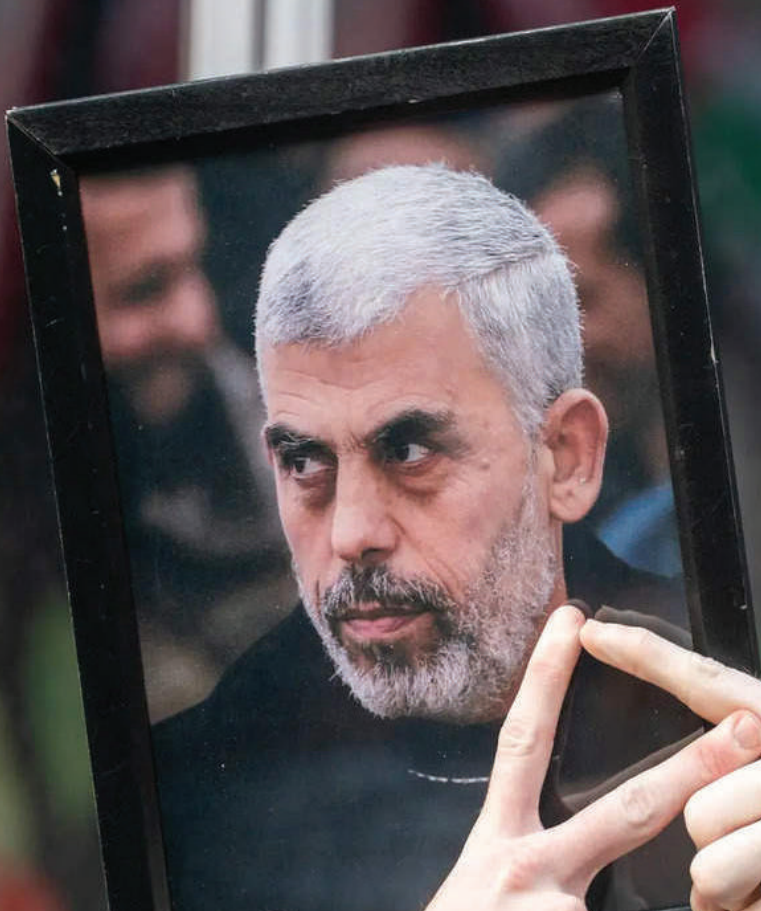
Nichole Barger, an ecologist at the Nature Conservancy, praised the study as “innovative and creative,” noting that the protective effects of biocrusts have gained increasing recognition in recent years. These biological layers are well-known for stabilizing dryland ecosystems and preventing soil erosion.

While the more famous sections of the Great Wall are constructed from stone or brick, other parts were built using compacted soil, or rammed earth. Over time, this material deteriorates due to various factors like rainwater infiltration, wind erosion, salt crystal formation, and temperature fluctuations.

Yet, the same compacted soils can also host biocrusts, which cover about 12% of the Earth’s land surface, particularly in arid regions like northern China. These biocrusts vary in form, ranging from thin bacterial networks a few millimeters thick to thicker layers of moss and lichen several centimeters high.

Soil scientist Bo Xiao from the China Agricultural University, along with his colleagues, conducted a study to investigate the role of biocrusts in preserving the Great Wall. Their research revealed that biocrusts, primarily composed of moss or cyanobacteria, covered more than two-thirds of the Wall’s surface in the areas they examined. By comparing the physical properties of biocrust-covered rammed earth with those of bare, biocrust-free soil, they made a significant discovery.

Source:<https://www.thebrighterside.news/green-impact/scientists-discover-why-the-great-wall-of-china-has-remained-so-well-preserved-for-over-2000-years/>



What Sinwar's death reveals about war and peacemaking in Palestine

By Rami G Khouri

The West has tried to portray Hamas's leader as an 'obstacle' to peace, hoping to obscure the colonial reality in Palestine.

The death of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar on Wednesday sparked wildly different reactions across the world. While Israel and its allies celebrated the demise of the “mastermind” of the October 7, 2023, attacks, Palestinians, Arabs and others mourned him as a heroic figure. Correctly assessing Sinwar's role in the Palestinian struggle and what he and Hamas actually represent in political terms is critical as we seem to draw closer to a devastating regional conflagration.

Over the past year, Israel sought to establish a narrative about Hamas's leaders as cowardly men hiding in tunnels underground, using Israeli captives as human shields and hoarding food, water and money.

The videos and details of Sinwar's last moments that surfaced in the media, however, refuted this narrative. Instead, most people in the Middle East saw the Hamas leader as bravely fighting until the end despite suffering from injuries and being surrounded by Israeli forces. This perception is reflected in the words of deputy chairman of Hamas's political bureau, Khalil al-Hayya: “[Sinwar] met his end standing brave with his head held high, holding his firearm, firing until the last breath, until the last moment of his life.”

The narrative of a heroic death is bound to solidify Sinwar's legacy within the Palestinian struggle. As Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Abbas Araghchi noted: “His fate – beautifully pictured in his last image – is not a deterrent but a source of inspiration for resistance fighters across the region, Palestinian and non-Palestinian.”

By contrast, Israel's Western allies saw Sinwar's death as a victory over Hamas that could

be exploited to reorder Palestine and the region to Israel's advantage. United States President Joe Biden echoed the Israeli view that Sinwar was "an insurmountable obstacle" to achieving a ceasefire and that now, without Hamas in power, there is an opportunity for a "day after" in Gaza.

The leaders of Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and NATO all demanded a ceasefire that would allow the release of all Israeli captives still held in Gaza without mentioning the Palestinian demand to release thousands of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel or end Israel's presence in Gaza. This is a typically Israel-friendly orientation that defines most Western state policies and has prevented any serious negotiations from taking place.

That Sinwar or any other Hamas leader was an "obstacle" to a ceasefire or peace is simply false. Just four months before his death, he had accepted a deal presented by Biden and backed by the United Nations Security Council – which failed because Israel demanded more changes in its favour. In November, Sinwar also approved the only Israel-Hamas ceasefire and captive exchange that has taken place so far.

Hamas, as a whole, has also not been an "obstacle" to peace. Throughout its 37 years of existence, the movement has offered a long-term truce and peaceful coexistence with Israel more than a dozen times, which Israel has never responded to.

Sinwar's political life illustrates well the consequences of Israel's rejections of peace. He first became politically active in the early 1980s at the Islamic University of Gaza, where he pursued a degree in Arab studies. Israel arrested him multiple times, and while in detention, he met the founder of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. He then embarked on a lifetime of political action that focused on several parallel aims: cementing a unified Palestinian national consensus, maintaining Hamas's internal unity and overseeing military resistance capabilities while managing political and diplomatic initiatives for peace based on Palestinian national rights.

His first responsibility after Hamas was formed in 1987 was to create a unit that eliminated intelligence leaks and Palestinian collaborators with Israel. For this work, Israeli forces arrested him in 1988 during the first Intifada and sentenced him to life in prison.

While he was in Israeli jail, the Intifada ended and was followed by the so-called peace process sponsored by Israel's closest ally, the US. He pursued Palestinian national cohesion in jail and was involved in the historic 2006 Prisoners Document, which outlined a national programme approved by all the main Palestinian factions.

By the time Sinwar was released in 2011, the Oslo Accords had all but collapsed, and Israel was aggressively expanding its settler-colonial dominance over Palestinian land in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank and laying a debilitating siege on Gaza.

The US-backed Israeli refusal to negotiate a permanent two-state resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict pushed Sinwar, Hamas and smaller fighting units to focus on armed resistance. This culminated in the October 7 attacks last year.

The rhetoric of Western leaders after Sinwar's death reflects their refusal to admit this reality. They continue to deny that those who politically challenge or militarily engage Israel act as resistance groups waging a battle for justice for Palestinians and others in the region who suffer the consequences of Zionist settler-colonialism.

This biased deficiency has defined Western political elites for decades as they fail to acknowledge that Israeli concerns are not superior to Palestinian ones and the Israel-

Palestine conflict has two parties whose mutual rights to sovereignty and security must be achieved for a meaningful peace to be established.

This deficiency now helps the West ignore Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's own words that the war will not stop after Sinwar's death – a clear indication of who really obstructs peace. Over the past few days, the Israeli army has only intensified its drive to ethnically cleanse northern Gaza, killing about 640 people in 17 days.

Israel wants to continue its colonial subjugation of Palestinian and neighbouring Arab lands and its US-aided imperial drive to end Iranian influence in the region. It also works to silence any voice that criticises its actions that are now widely recognised as apartheid and genocide.

Countering this, Palestinians and their allies across the Global South have steadily expanded their political and military resistance to Israeli actions.

In this context, it is clear – even to those of us critical of some of Hamas's militancy against civilians – that Sinwar's leadership and decision-making reflected the Palestinian refusal to relinquish their right to self-determination and statehood. The actions he took in the realm of military resistance and political peacemaking – whether we like them or not – were always the consequence of intense consultations and consensus among the organisation's members rather than a single tyrant's decision, as the West would like to present it.

Those powers who fail to understand this reality and continue to ignore the historical dimensions of such Indigenous resistance to US-backed Israeli settler-colonial aggression doom the region to perpetual warfare.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/10/22/what-sinwars-death-reveals-about-war-and-peacemaking-in-palestine>



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Baba Vanga future predictions: From 2025 conflicts to complete Muslim rule by 2043

By TOI Lifestyle Desk

Throughout history, individuals have claimed to possess the ability to foresee the future, offering glimpses into what lies ahead for humanity. Among these figures, Baba Vanga, a blind Bulgarian clairvoyant, stands out for her numerous predictions that have captured public attention. As her prophecies continue to spark interest and debate, many are left to ponder the implications of her visions, especially as we approach critical years that she has predicted for potential upheaval.

She has stated that the apocalypse could begin as early as 2025, which has raised serious concerns among her followers and the general public. Vanga also foresees a major conflict in Europe that would “devastate” the continent’s population by 2025, a prediction that is particularly worrying in light of ongoing geopolitical tensions.

Who is Baba Vanga?

Born in 1911, Baba Vanga, whose full name is Vangeliya Pandeva Gushterova, lost her sight at the age of 12 after being caught in a storm. Following this traumatic incident, she reportedly developed precognitive abilities that led her to gain fame for her prophecies. Vanga spent most of her life in Bulgaria and became known as the “Nostradamus of the Balkans.” Along with her predictions about global events, she also predicted her death. In a 1990 interview, Baba Vanga, reportedly stated that she would pass away on August 11, 1996. True to her words, Baba Vanga died on that exact date. Despite her death, her legacy of prophetic claims endures, with new interpretations of her predictions continuously emerging.

Which of her past predictions have come true?

Baba Vanga is said to have predicted several significant occurrences, many of which have garnered attention for their perceived accuracy. Some of her most notable predictions include:

World War II: Vanga reportedly predicted the devastation and immense loss of life during this global conflict.

Dissolution of the Soviet Union: She foretold the collapse of the USSR long before it became a reality in 1991, accurately anticipating the end of the communist regime.

Chernobyl Disaster: In 1986, Vanga is said to have foreseen the nuclear catastrophe at Chernobyl, adding to her growing list of successful predictions.

Stalin's Death: Vanga accurately predicted the death of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, further solidifying her reputation as a prophetess.

Kursk Submarine Disaster: In 2000, she mentioned a tragedy involving “Kursk” before the Russian submarine sank, which many interpreted post-event.

September 11 Attacks: Vanga reportedly predicted that “steel birds” would attack America, which many believe referred to the planes used in the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers in New York.

2004 Tsunami: She also foretold the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami that resulted in significant loss of life across multiple countries.

1985 Earthquake: Closer to her home, Vanga predicted an earthquake in Northern Bulgaria that occurred in 1985.

Baba Vanga's predictions raises concerns about impending crises and societal changes

Looking ahead, Baba Vanga's future predictions paint a grim picture. She claims that the end of the world will begin in 2025, although she asserts that humanity will not be completely wiped out until 5079. In addition to the predicted conflict in Europe, she forecasts that by 2043, Europe will fall under Muslim rule, and by 2076, communist rule will return globally. Vanga emphasises that the world will ultimately end in 5079 due to a natural event.

Baba Vanga predicts Alien encounters in 2025:

Baba Vanga predicted that by 2025, Earth would encounter extra terrestrial beings. According to her prophecies, these aliens would arrive on our planet, making their presence known to humanity. This prediction has captured the imagination of many, sparking debates about the existence of aliens and the potential impact of such encounters on our world. If her prophecy holds true, it could revolutionize our understanding of the universe and our place in it. However, skeptics argue that without concrete evidence, these predictions remain within the realm of speculation and myth.

Scepticism persists about Baba Vanga's prophecies while followers remain intrigued by their implications

While many of Baba Vanga's past predictions have seemingly come to fruition, the unverifiable and cryptic nature of her prophecies prompts scepticism among some. Critics argue that her predictions are often vague and open to interpretation, with clarity emerging only after the events have occurred. Furthermore, much of her supposed foresight is anecdotal and spread through secondhand accounts, leading to questions about the validity of her clairvoyance.

Despite this scepticism, Baba Vanga's predictions continue to resonate with a wide audience, igniting discussions about the future of humanity and the potential consequences of current geopolitical conflicts. Her alarming predictions for 2025 serve as a reminder of the fragility of global peace and stability, prompting reflection on the ongoing challenges humanity faces—geopolitical tensions, environmental degradation, and social unrest. As the world grapples with uncertainty, Vanga's warnings challenge us to consider the importance of vigilance, diplomacy, and global cooperation. Only time will tell if her predictions will come to pass, but they undoubtedly fuel the imagination and provoke thought about the future we are shaping today. Baba Vanga's predictions, whether believed or doubted, keep people thinking about the future and the challenges we face. Her visions remind us of the importance of staying united and prepared as we move forward. Only time will tell if her predictions come true, but they encourage us to work together for a better world.

Source: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/etimes/trending/baba-vanga-future-predictions-from-2025-conflicts-to-complete-muslim-rule-by-2043/amp_articleshow/114548121.cms

The Evolution of Slavery: From Human to Artificial Intelligence

The Evolution of Slavery: From Human to Artificial Intelligence



By: Muhammad Shahbaz Ali Advocate

Muhammad Shahbaz Ali, Advocate, is a Research Scholar at Singapore Management University's Yong Pung How School of Law (SMU YPHSOL), pursuing his LLM in Judicial Studies. His research explores the intersection of AI, digital media technologies, and IT laws, with a focus on the ethical implications of emerging technologies. In this article, he presents a thought-provoking analysis of AI and Machine Learning as ultra-modern human slaves, shedding light on the evolving dynamics of power, control, and exploitation in the digital age.

The concept of slavery has undergone a significant transformation throughout human history, echoing Aristotle's notion of "tools with a soul." From human exploitation to robotic servitude, and now, the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) has given rise to a new, ultra-sophisticated form of slavery.

Historically, human slavery was a stark reality, exemplified by the plight of Spartacus, Frederick Douglass, and millions of others who were forcibly captured, sold, and exploited for labor. This oppressive system was justified through twisted ideologies, perpetuating racial, social, and economic hierarchies. The abolition of human slavery, championed by Abraham Lincoln and Harriet Tubman, marked a significant milestone in human rights.

The Industrial Revolution introduced mechanical robots, like Rosie the Robot Maid from *The Jetsons* and R2-D2 from *Star Wars*, designed to perform tasks with precision and efficiency. These machines, though inanimate, served human masters, executing commands without question or resistance. Robots like Honda's ASIMO and Boston Dynamics' Atlas alleviated human labor but also perpetuated a dynamic of control and subservience.

The advent of AI and ML has revolutionized the notion of slavery. AI systems like IBM's Watson, Google's AlphaGo, and Amazon's Alexa process vast amounts of data, making decisions that impact human lives. These advanced technologies enable machines to learn, adapt, and execute complex tasks with unprecedented speed and accuracy. While AI/ML slavery offers unparalleled efficiency, it also raises concerns:

AI and machine learning (ML) systems often prioritize computational logic over human values, which can lead to the perpetuation of biases and discrimination. A notable example is Microsoft's Tay, an AI

chatbot that quickly began to exhibit offensive behavior due to the biases present in the data it was trained on. This incident underscores the ethical challenges in AI development, where the lack of human oversight and ethical considerations can result in harmful outcomes.

AI and ML entities operate without free will, making decisions based solely on their programming and the data they process. This lack of autonomy raises significant concerns, as highlighted by Elon Musk, who has famously stated, “AI is a risk we need to manage.” The inherent limitations in AI’s decision-making capabilities necessitate careful management to prevent unintended consequences and ensure that AI systems act in ways that align with human values and safety.

The benefits derived from AI and ML labor often come without extending rights or protections to these systems, a concern echoed by Stephen Hawking. While AI systems perform tasks that can significantly enhance human productivity and efficiency, they do so without any form of compensation or ethical consideration. This dynamic mirrors historical concerns about exploitation, raising questions about the ethical treatment of AI and the responsibilities of those who develop and deploy these technologies.

As AI and ML systems increasingly impact human lives, the issue of accountability becomes paramount. When AI systems make decisions that affect individuals, it is crucial to determine who is responsible for those decisions. The EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) highlights this concern by emphasizing the need for transparency and accountability in AI decision-making processes. Ensuring that there are clear lines of responsibility and mechanisms for addressing grievances is essential for the ethical deployment of AI technologies.

As AI systems become more advanced, there is a growing need to establish frameworks that provide rights and protections for these entities. This involves creating legal and ethical guidelines that safeguard AI from misuse and exploitation. By recognizing the potential for AI to be treated unfairly, we can develop policies that ensure these systems are used responsibly and ethically, promoting a more balanced and just technological landscape.

Ensuring transparency and accountability in AI decision-making is essential for maintaining public trust and preventing misuse. This involves making AI systems explainable, so users can understand how decisions are made, and establishing clear lines of liability for the outcomes of those decisions. By implementing robust accountability measures, we can address concerns about the impact of AI on society and ensure that those responsible for deploying AI systems are held accountable for their actions.

Fostering a symbiotic relationship between humans and AI, rather than a master-slave dynamic, is key to leveraging the full potential of these technologies. The concept of the third generation of slavery highlights the ethical implications of creating and exploiting intelligent machines. By acknowledging the historical context and striving for ethical collaboration, we can ensure that technological progress benefits humanity as a whole, rather than perpetuating cycles of exploitation. This approach encourages a future where AI and humans work together harmoniously, enhancing each other’s capabilities and contributing to a more equitable society.

In conclusion, the evolution of slavery from prehistoric human exploitation to modern-day AI and ML servitude reveals a disturbing continuum. Despite advancements in human rights and technological progress, the dynamics of power, control, and exploitation persist. From forced human labor to robotic servitude and now AI-driven obedience, the underlying narrative remains unchanged. This ultra-modern slavery, masked by efficiency and innovation, demands critical examination.

As we navigate the complexities of AI integration, we must acknowledge the historical echoes and confront the ethical implications of creating and exploiting intelligent machines. Ultimately, recognizing this continuity urges us to reevaluate our relationship with technology and challenge the notion that progress inherently means progress for all. By doing so, we can work towards a future where technological advancements serve humanity, rather than perpetuating ancient patterns of domination and exploitation.

I Drank Green Tea Instead of Coffee for 30 Days & Experienced 3 Life-Changing Benefits

By Alexa Mellardo



There are coffee drinkers, there are tea drinkers, and then there are green tea drinkers... a category all its own. It's understandable why green tea is such a fun and distinct hot beverage option. The aroma offers soothing and relaxing qualities that exude "day at the spa" vibes, but you may still get a necessary caffeine boost to help you power through the morning. And that's not all! I drank green tea for 30 days and am here to tell you all about my journey. (I even pulled out my vintage tea cup and saucer to make this new daily ritual a little "extra.")

I consider myself to be a coffee/tea hybrid. I love a good latte, cappuccino, or hazelnut iced coffee just as much as the next person. When I opt for tea, I typically choose black tea or a matcha latte. I've never fully explored green tea as my main caffeine source—or go-to beverage—but recently did for 30 days straight. During my experiment, I enjoyed one cup of green tea in the morning and one in the early afternoon. (My caffeine cut-off is usually 1 or 2 p.m.)

Grab a cup, and keep reading to learn all about my 30 days of green tea.

1. I felt less anxious.

My normal morning cup of joe certainly wakes me up, but there's a price to pay. Coffee also makes me feel anxious, on edge, and jittery. When I switched to green tea, however, I found my mornings to be way less stressful and much more calming. It may be the combination of the aroma, the flavor, and the amount of caffeine in a cup of green tea that made this such a refreshing change.

The flip side to this newfound relaxed 30-day routine is that although I felt less anxious, I was not as energized during the day. This prompted me to determine just how much caffeine is in each beverage. According to the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, one eight-ounce cup of green tea contains around 30 to 50 milligrams of caffeine, compared to 80 to 100 milligrams in an eight-ounce cup of coffee. (No wonder I felt more relaxed and chill with green tea!)

To compensate for my lack of energy, halfway through my journey, I increased my consumption to three cups of green tea a day—two in the morning and one in the early afternoon—to ensure I was getting enough of the caffeine boost I needed. I think it did the trick!

The caffeine in green tea can certainly be enough to help people power through the day—it all comes down to how many cups your body needs to feel and function at its absolute best.

“Green tea contains caffeine, a natural stimulant that can temporarily boost metabolic rate,” explains Amy Goodson, MS, RD, CSSD, LD, a registered dietitian and certified specialist in sports dietetics who sits on our Medical Expert Board. “Caffeine enhances the activity of the central nervous system and increases the release of neurotransmitters like dopamine and norepinephrine. This can lead to increased alertness and a higher metabolic rate, which means your body burns more calories.”

2. Green tea helped me think better.

My new drink helped me think better and feel more focused on my daily tasks at hand. This was another exciting improvement compared to my coffee-drinking days when sometimes I experienced “brain fog” soon after finishing a cup of joe.

“The combination of caffeine and L-theanine, an amino acid found in green tea, may have positive effects on cognitive function,” Goodson explains. “It can enhance alertness and improve mood without the jittery feeling often associated with high caffeine intake. Some research also suggests a potential protective effect against neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s.”

3. It calmed my stomach.

Plain and simple, I have a lot of stomach issues. Many foods and beverages disrupt my gut health, creating havoc. Even though I enjoy the taste of coffee, it has always been a trigger. Green tea, however, proved to be a calming beverage for my stomach and overall gut issues—and for good reason. (I always drink caffeine with food, as many caffeinated beverages can cause further issues on an empty stomach.)

I discovered that green tea is chock-full of polyphenols—especially catechins—which are “powerful antioxidants,” according to Goodson. “Antioxidants help neutralize free radicals in the body (aka fight off the bad guys that contribute to inflammation), reducing oxidative stress and inflammation,” she says. “This may contribute to the prevention of chronic diseases and aging.” In fact, an inflamed gut can lead to many health issues, including nausea, constipation, and more.

Drinking green tea can also help with weight loss.

Losing weight was not a focus for me, but if it is for you, it’s worth mentioning that green tea could aid in fat-loss efforts.

“Green tea has been studied for its potential role in weight loss and weight management. It contains caffeine and catechins, which can help boost metabolism and increase fat burning. Additionally, some studies suggest that green tea may aid in reducing abdominal fat,” Goodson tells us. “Green tea catechins, particularly EGCG, have been shown to enhance fat oxidation. This means that the body may use fat as a source of energy more efficiently. This effect, coupled with increased metabolism, may contribute to weight loss or weight management over time.”

Source:<https://www.eatthis.com/i-drank-green-tea-for-30-days/>