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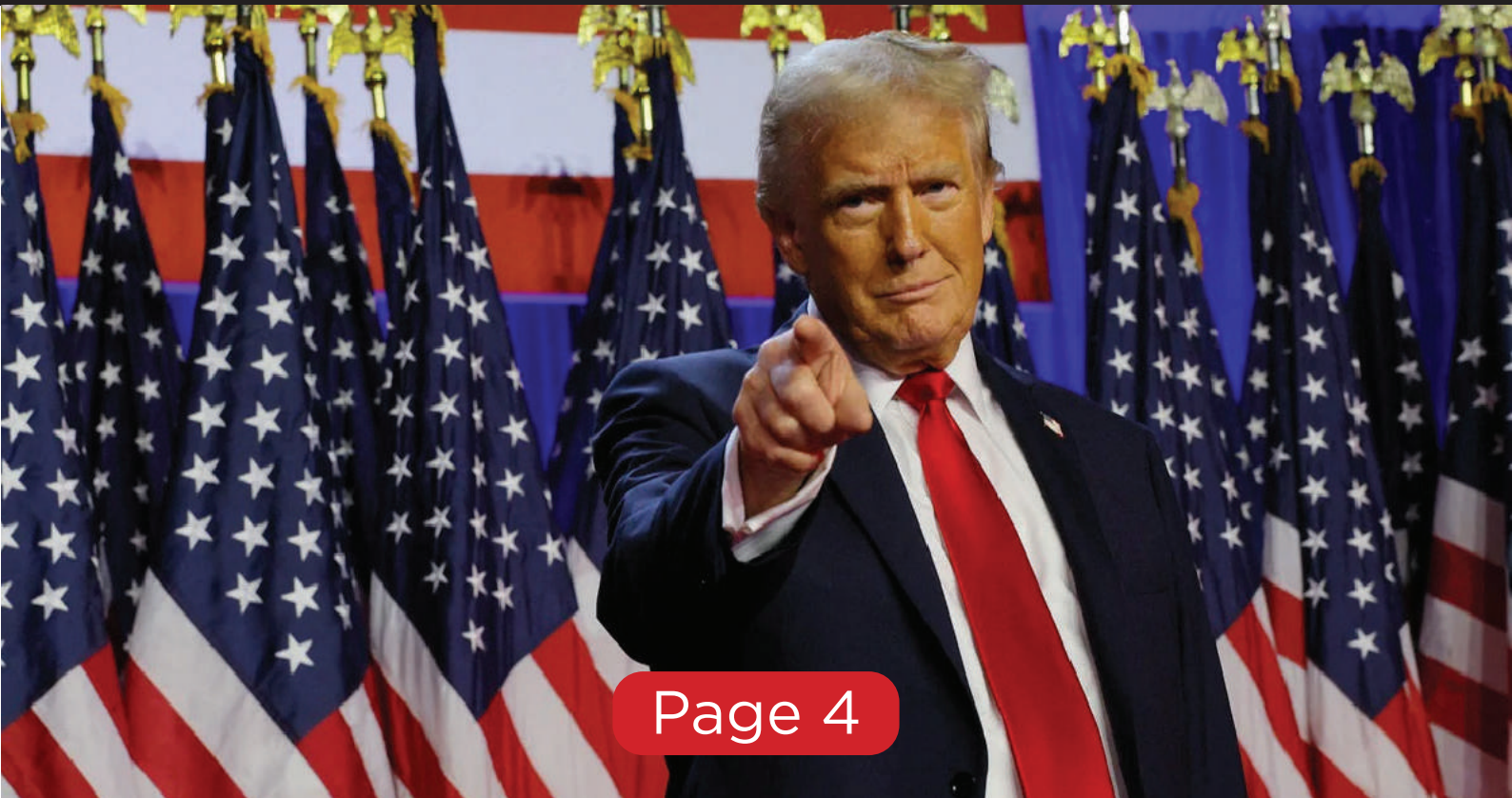
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E-Mail: info@theglobalvoice.net

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



Page 4



Page 17



Editor in Chief
Mohiuddin Abbasi

Editor
Munazza Khan

Assistant Editor
Dr. Busharat Elahi Jamil

Associate Editor
Amina Nuzhat
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Bureau Chief Canada
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Page

3. Editorial
4. Why Is Donald Trump Dismantling His own Legacy on Trade? | Opinion
6. The Cold Civil War Is Over. We Won. | Opinion
8. LILley: Canada needs to change its economic path to stay independent
10. A New London Overground Line Could Soon Be Added To London's Transport Network
11. Drvier Stopeed in Tesla Cybertruck banned in UK
12. Iconic Oxford Street store closes after 25 years ahead of 'rebirth'
13. School and mosques vandalized with anti-Muslim graffiti in London
15. US suspends new funds for aid programmes, excepting Israel and Egypt
17. Syrians are ready to rebuild their country, but they need solidarity
19. Migrants in shackles led on to US military plane - as Mexico refuses to accept deportation flight
22. US President Trump praises Indian - American Second Lady Usha Chilukuri Vance
24. 3 Years since Houthis attacked UAE: why the world needs to do more to tackle 'growing threat'
26. 'Once-in-a-century' discovery reveals spectacular luxury of Pompeii
29. LA fires, climate change and the coming collapse of insurance
30. Replacement of Natural Innocence in Women: A Problem or a Solution?
32. Authorities say at least 30 dead in Kumbh Mela crowd crush
33. Trump's new world
35. Resolving the PECA Act Controversy: A Path Forward for Pakistan
38. Walmart broccoli recall elevated to highest level by FDA over risk of 'death'
40. The Muslim group that worships through work and community
43. Gandhi's lessons

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Send your writeups at
info@theglobalvoice.net
Write to:
Monthly The Global Voice
Phone: +44 794 007 7825



Editorial

Dr. Busharat Elahi Jamil - Assistant Editor



Pakistan is currently experiencing upheaval and serious challenges. Because of the actions of the corrupt political elites and the establishment, the nation is currently going through a very difficult time. The PDM regime's poor management, aided by the purportedly corrupt establishment, is to blame for the alarmingly detrimental impacts on the economy and politics.

Given the current circumstances, the Pakistani army has lost its identity and, as a result of its recent involvement in politics, has taken on a sinister political identity. Regretfully, they consider themselves superior and a privileged elite since the Pakistani army's administrative structure is a holdover from British colonialism, and even after independence, the institution has maintained the attitude of a colonial ruler.

In light of recent and historical events and choices, the army's reality has come to light. Pakistan's disgrace currently stems from the institution that Pakistanis loved and fully trusted, whose honesty and discipline were its defining characteristics. The army's power and influence over particular regions with abundant natural resources, as well as its incapacity to curb terrorism in particular regions that suit its interests. The deployment of retired army leaders to civilian positions and institutions and their attempt to control the nation's economy through their own industries are two other factors contributing to the widespread hatred. For this reason, the PTI continues to use the same political narrative to sustain its political presence in domestic politics.

Defying so-called democracy, the tenth largest army in the world is enforcing its will on 250 million people in the fifth most populous nation in the twenty-first century. Freedom of expression, political affiliation, and numerous other socio-political rights are denied to the people of Pakistan. Without a doubt, the constitution is suspended in its truest sense, and the country is being ruled by a few privileged institutions and classes that are disregarding the facts.

Without a question, Pakistan and Pakistanis take great pride in the Pakistan Army. Although it is an institution that belongs to all of us, some people are abusing it for their own sinister ends, harming the Pakistan Army's reputation and the integrity of the state. For the sake of the nation's integrity and unity, the responsible parties should, in the current situation, take into consideration the will of the people, delegate authority and decision-making to the true representatives of the people, and carry out their actual responsibilities. It is important to remember that Pakistan belongs to all Pakistanis equally and is not owned by any one organization or person.

Why Is Donald Trump Dismantling His Own Legacy on Trade? | Opinion

By David Faris

President Donald Trump, the man who believes his life was spared by God so that he could inflate his net worth by billions of dollars by hawking self-branded meme coins, has a plan to slap tariffs on Canada and Mexico—it's just not ready yet. According to the White House, 25 percent tariffs will be imposed on goods imported from our neighbors to the south and north on Feb. 1. Why not today, you might be wondering? Perhaps they need the extra 10 days to build excitement about unprovoked trade warring with our immediate neighbors to a crescendo, or even to explain coherently to at least one person what this is all about.

After all, it was just over five years ago that Congress approved Trump's treaty revision with both countries, which he insisted on renaming the United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA). The North American Free Trade Agreement was, I'm sure you understand, insufficiently America-centric in its nomenclature. It left people bereft and wondering, "which country in North America is the most important?"

The terms of the new agreement, which is working perfectly fine, run through 2036, but like a ballplayer who wants to tear up his long-term contract and negotiate a new one after a big season, Trump is no longer satisfied with his own handiwork. He wants an opt-out that isn't included in the original deal. He gazes upon the USMCA and smells only the fetid stench of 2019, when his mandate did not include a popular vote victory, he was reeling from his first impeachment in the House of Representatives and making fun of him on late night television was still big business.

Now, after narrowly defeating his hapless opposition and ushering his thoroughly humiliated predecessor out of the White House, Trump regards himself as a colossus astride the Potomac, having reached the towering heights of 49.8 percent of the national popular vote (so close to a majority yet forever so not one), the world's richest men genuflecting pitifully before him, offering him advice, tribute and expensive, unwanted documentaries about his wife. He'll never be riding higher than today, so it's time for Mexico and Canada to pay up.

The trouble is that while officials in both countries, where national governance is still taken at least somewhat seriously, race to put contingency plans into place should Trump wake up on Feb. 1. in the mood to impose across-the-board tariffs on our

friendly and cooperative neighbors, it is not even clear that trade is the issue. “It has nothing to do with that,” Trump snapped at a reporter on Tuesday who asked whether the tariff threats were meant to influence new negotiations over renewing the USMCA, which were already scheduled to happen next year. Instead, according to Trump, it is because the two countries are responsible for allowing “millions and millions of people to come into our country that shouldn’t be here.”

That makes it sound like Trump wants something less tangible from Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum—not concessions on specific trade issues like tomato or dairy imports but an elaborate performance of border-hardening or some other form of ritualized public capitulation. He wants them to play Boar on the Floor for their political lives while he sits back and sneers. He wants them to take him seriously but not literally.

Making them scramble in anticipation of economic doom is the whole point. As he does with Democrats, Trump seems to get an enormous amount of pleasure out of behaving contemptuously, tossing out nonsensical sentence fragments and febrile conspiracy theories and then watching as his fellow world leaders try their best to react normally and pretend that the president of the United States isn’t an erratic geezer with the comportment of a lesser Sopranos lieutenant.

As for the actual policy threat, it should go without saying that deliberately torching relations with Canada and Mexico would be both bad politics and even worse economics. The Peterson Institute For International Economics predicts that while the tariffs would disproportionately harm Mexico and Canada (and increase the number of Mexican laborers seeking to cross into the United States) they would also suck \$200 billion a year out of U.S. GDP and single-handedly add close to half a point to the inflation rate. Trump might even inadvertently save the Canadian liberals, who are on the precipice of getting blown out of the water in the upcoming federal election, by rallying Canadians around the flag in defiance of their unruly downstairs neighbors.

There would also be non-material consequences, namely that the close-to-insurmountable obstacles to getting global leaders to believe that the United States will have even minimal policy continuity between administrations will get even higher. Instead of negotiating with an untrustworthy, unpredictable and poorly governed U.S., other countries are going to start looking for ways to minimize contact with and dependence on us. We will have given our allies The Ick.

What Trump will actually do when it is time to make good on his amorphous tariff ultimatum is impossible to predict. This specific threat still feels like it belongs in the “too stupid and politically damaging to possibly be true” category, but that has rarely stopped him in the past. While you wait to see which industry’s prices Trump may or may not capriciously send soaring into the exosphere, you can buy some certainty in these turbulent times by banking your hard-earned money in a \$MELANIA token, a gift so nakedly preposterous that even the crypto potentates that Trump successfully courted believe it “could harm their industry’s reputation.”

Source:<https://www.newsweek.com/trump-targets-his-own-first-term-achievements-no-clear-reason-opinion-2019828>

The Cold Civil War Is Over. We Won. | Opinion



By Josh Hammer

The civilizational inflection point in our cold civil war happened sometime between Donald Trump's second inaugural address on Monday and the end of his new presidency's second day on Tuesday. At some indeterminate moment between Monday's soaring midday speech, in which the first nonconsecutive two-term president in over 130 years artfully took a sledgehammer to the entire Obama-Biden era legacy without so much as uttering the men's names, and Tuesday's epochal executive order coming as close as legally possible to banning wokeism throughout the republic, the war ended. And as with the English capturing New Amsterdam from Peter Stuyvesant and the Dutch centuries prior, it happened without firing a single shot.

The maestro of Mar-a-Lago is known to fancy the Village People hit "Y.M.C.A.," but perhaps the more apropos tune to blast at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue this week is Queen's anthem "We Are the Champions."

Let's take a step back.

Barack Obama, a Chicago radical in the Saul Alinsky/Bill Ayers mold, declared war on America during his 2008 presidential campaign. We know he declared war because he more or less said it: He vowed on Feb. 19, 2008, to "fundamentally transform America," and one does not seek to "fundamentally transform" that which he loves and seeks to conserve. If that Freudian slip was our cold civil war's Fort Sumter, then Obama's presidency that followed was the extended opening campaign. Indeed, Obama did "fundamentally transform" America: He passed the nation's largest new entitlement program since the Great Society, maligned cops and soured race relations, helped constitutionalize same-sex marriage, realigned our Middle East interests toward the fanatical Iranian regime, and more.

The first Trump presidency was, in many ways, the American people's reaction to the rise of the woke Obama-era Democratic Party. The first Trump administration, for all its occasional internal dysfunction, brought a welcome course correction back toward

normalcy and sanity: The economy was revving, the border was secure, and there were no new foreign wars. The tweets may have been a bit “mean,” for the pearl-clutchers who care about such things, but on an objective basis, things were really going quite well. That is, until the Wuhan virus arrived, St. George Floyd the Martyr had his fateful encounter with Derek Chauvin, and the “Great Awakening” kicked into lightspeed.

Joe Biden won a questionable election and proceeded to weaponize COVID-19 vaccines, the Jan. 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol jamboree, race, religion and so much more to finish the job once and for all against the Americans Obama so condescendingly demeaned as “bitter” clingers and Hillary Clinton ridiculed as “deplorables.” The Biden presidency, which saw both a vice president and a Supreme Court justice selected solely due to their status as “women of color,” embodied Peak Woke. And true to their antebellum race-centric partisan forebears, race-centric Biden-era “DEI” Democrats fought hard—a four-year-long Pickett’s Charge.

But it’s now all over. Trump won America’s cold civil war by adapting an old Reaganite mantra from the days of the actual Cold War against the Soviet Union. The Gipper proclaimed his bold Cold War strategy, differentiating himself from Henry Kissinger and the detente crowd, with this memorable line: “We win and they lose.” It is hardly an exaggeration to say that mentality, and that national policy, won the Cold War.

At some point during his four years in the political wilderness—perhaps around the time Biden and Jack Smith tried to incarcerate him, or perhaps around the time an assassin came within millimeters of murdering him on national television—Trump decided to adapt Ronald Reagan’s succinct victory formulation. The result? This astonishing first week of the second Trump term.

The apotheosis—the coup de grace for the woke beast—was Trump’s bombshell Tuesday evening executive order, “Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity.” In one fell swoop, Trump purged the crux of wokeism—the neo-Marxist dichotomy of dueling “oppressed” and “oppressor” classes euphemistically known as so-called “diversity, equity, and inclusion”—from American public and private life. Diversitycrats from the deep state to the Fortune 100 boardroom to the Ivy League all now face the same reality: Get out before it’s too late. Get out before the lawsuits start. Get out before Trump reprises his old “The Apprentice” TV role and yells, “You’re fired!”

And so the mass resignations have commenced. They will only accelerate from here. It’s all over. Hallelujah!

In his 1951 farewell address to Congress, General Douglas MacArthur said that “in war, there is no substitute for victory.” Maybe it’s time for Trump to add a bust of MacArthur in the Oval Office, right next to the recently returned bust of Winston Churchill. Like the 45th and 47th president, those two men know a thing or two about winning.

Source:<https://www.newsweek.com/cold-civil-war-over-we-won-opinion-2020074>

LILLEY: Canada needs to change its economic path to stay independent



By Brian Lilley

If we want to remain the true north strong and free, then we need a drastic course correction in how we run our economy.

Canada has a decision to make. Do we want to radically alter how we conduct business in this country, or do we want to stick with the status quo and let Donald Trump steamroll us until we go bankrupt?

In my view, we need a radical change, and the folks who have done the most to get us into this mess can't be trusted to get us out of it. Whether we are talking about Justin Trudeau, who is on his way out, or his former advisors – Chrystia Freeland and Mark Carney – none of them can be trusted to make the changes needed in this new economic era.

On Thursday, Donald Trump once again threatened Canada. He said we could become the 51st state or we could face tariffs. He was speaking to the World Economic Forum and the rest of the message he laid out is also of great concern to Canada.

Well beyond tariffs, Trump laid out his vision of an American economy where corporate taxes are reduced further but only if you are manufacturing or producing in America. He said regulations will be chipped away at on oil and gas production, liquefied natural gas exports, banking, manufacturing and more.

Basically, he will provide a business case for investing in America over anywhere else.

Snippy Laurentian elites can sit in their cocktail parties and mock measures such as these,

but they will drive investment decisions and, more times than not, those decisions will point south.

Trump talked about the need to double American electrical production to meet increasing demand and said he would fast track approvals for new electrical production, including using natural gas with coal as a back-up.

In Canada, where our electrical grid is already among the greenest in the world, the Trudeau Liberals are fighting any use of cleaner burning natural gas even as back-up for wind or solar.

Do you really think Mark Carney or Chrystia Freeland will change that?

Carney is the man behind net zero banking regulations, which sought to ensure that any business with a carbon footprint couldn't get financing for their project. He openly spoke about using the financial sector to punish oil and gas companies.

Freeland raised the carbon tax each and every year that she was finance minister under Trudeau. She also proposed and championed the increase in the capital gains tax that took effect last year despite still not having passed through Parliament.

These two are walking policy disasters who will chase investment and jobs away.

Far beyond the tariffs, it's Trump's changes in other areas of economic policy that will drive investment into the U.S., securing jobs for Americans. Our current government has spent the last decade doing the opposite with policies that drive away investment and jobs especially in Canada's biggest area of strength, natural resources.

The Trudeau Liberals, which Freeland and Carney must both be considered a part of, have cancelled the Northern Gateway and Energy East pipelines. They have blocked projects such as the Energie Saguenay liquified natural gas export terminal in Quebec. They have put impediments up on LNG projects along the British Columbia coast and instituted a tanker ban even as the Americans seek to expand their exports.

"Canada has vast natural resources and raw materials, and we need to diversify our markets going forward," Trudeau cabinet Minister Anita Anand said the other day at the cabinet retreat.

That's great to hear and the words sound soothing, but Anand and every other fool in and around the Trudeau government, like Freeland, has endorsed policies that have done the opposite. Carney backs policies that will stifle our economy as Trump unleashes the full power of the American economy.

If we value our independence, if we want to stay the true north strong and free and avoid becoming the 51st state, then we need to replace the current government with people who will take Canada to the next level.

Carney and Freeland are more of the same, but Pierre Poilievre and his team will do what it takes to make sure Canada can thrive – even against the Trump tariff threat.

Source:<https://torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/canada-needs-to-change-its-economic-path-to-stay-independent>

A New London Overground Line Could Soon Be Added To London's Transport Network

By Katie Forge



Many more Londoners could have access to a London Overground line if TfL's plans for an extension get the green light.

Ooh, we sure do love a bit of transport talk here at Secret London, don't we? From buses, boats and bikes to trains, trams and tubes; we just can't seem to get enough of those handy little things that whizz us around the city. So, the prospect of a shiny new London Overground line is pretty darn exciting, as far as we're concerned.

The proposed extension of the London Overground would see the likes of Brent, Barnet, Hounslow, Ealing and Camden all connected by one handy train route. The West London Orbital is the name, and speedily linking various boroughs across west and north-west London would be the game. So, passengers travelling between the two areas of the capital would no longer have to do so via central London. A dream come true, right?

If plans go ahead, the West London Orbital would become the seventh branch of the London Overground and would pass through stations including Hendon, Neasdon, South Acton, and Hounslow, using tracks that already exist and serve other routes. Despite the route not requiring a great deal of building works, it would involve bringing a track that hasn't been used for over a century back to life (the Dudding Hill line), and so a rather significant amount upgrade work would need to take place.

As I'm sure you can imagine, an extension of this scale comes with a rather hefty price-tag. Based on 2021 estimations, the project could cost between £430 million and £610 million. Yes, my jaw also dropped at the sheer size of those numbers. However, a 2017 study deemed that the would have a 'high benefit to cost ratio'.

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, referred to the project as a priority of his, and in December 2024 said that 'the current stage of development is now nearing completion'. According to TfL's website, if necessary funding and all approvals can be acquired, the service could be up and running by the early 2030s. Which – if time keeps passing its current alarm rate – will be here faster than you can say 'mind the gap'.

Source:<https://secretldn.com/west-london-orbital/>



By Rumeana Jahangir

Driver stopped in Tesla Cybertruck banned in UK

A Tesla Cybertruck, which is illegal to drive in the UK due to safety concerns, has been seized by police in Greater Manchester.

Officers spotted the eye-catching vehicle, which carries a price tag of about £48,000, in Whitefield, Bury, and stopped the driver on Thursday night.

In April 2024, Tesla recalled thousands of its new Cybertrucks, which weigh more than three tonnes, after concerns about its accelerator pedals.

In a social media post, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) said: “Whilst this may seem trivial to some, legitimate concerns exist around the safety of other road users or pedestrians if they were involved in a collision with the Cybertruck.”

It said the vehicle, which was registered and insured abroad, was confiscated and they had reported the driver, who is a UK resident.

It said the vehicle, which was registered and insured abroad, was confiscated and they had reported the driver, who is a UK resident.

Their post added: “The Tesla Cybertruck is not road-legal in the UK and does not hold a certificate of conformity.”

The Cybertruck, which is made of rocket-like, bullet-proof steel materials, was launched in 2019.

The vehicle has been on a promotional tour across the Middle East and Europe, including at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in the UK in 2024.

However, it has not yet passed UK road safety tests.

GMP said the car that was seized had been referred to Operation Wolverine, which was established in 2007 to target drivers without insurance.

The owner will have to prove ownership and correct insurance prior to release.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz0l1dd30xlo>



Iconic Oxford Street store closes after 25 years ahead of 'rebirth'

By Kristina Beanland

As millennials still mourn the loss of big Topshop, another staple of London's Oxford Street is set to close. NikeTown, the sporting brand's huge flagship store, will temporarily shut its doors, as it prepares for a 'rebirth'.

The store first opened in July 1999, meaning it's been a familiar fixture on the iconic shopping street for 25 years. It's not currently clear what this 'grand reopening' will look like – or when it will happen. But in a statement on LinkedIn, director of stores, Charmaine Mason, promised that whatever comes next will be exciting.

Referring to the store with female pronouns, Charmaine said: 'She will return, more magnificent, more daring, and as inspiring as ever. 'Until her grand reopening, I'll be carrying her spirit with me.'

The post was flooded with gushing comments from industry experts and people who had experience working with the brand. 'There is no place like it! Looking forward to the magic when she opens up her doors again,' wrote Ciarà Gay, who works at Nike. While Ivan Rangel said: 'The love I feel for that store and building. I am sure anyone who had to work there feels the same. It's a special place in this universe.'

And retail expert, Ian Scott, said: 'I am keen to see how she will evolve. There have been rumours of this update for several years, it's great to see it finally happening.' Shoppers have also shared their sadness at the loss of the 42,000 sq ft, four storey, store. 'End of an era (for now),' wrote one disappointed user on X, while another said it should be 'bigger news' that the iconic store was leaving, albeit temporarily.

Meanwhile, others are excited about what the reopening may bring. 'It's a good thing they are investing in this store as the new ultimate global flagship,' wrote one forward thinking commenter.

Oxford Street is set for more changes in 2025, as the flagship IKEA store is will finally be opening its doors. Housed in the building that was previously home to 'big Topshop', the opening of the Swedish furniture store has faced delays. Work started on the site in 2022, with initial plans to open in autumn 2023. But the renovation has proved more difficult than planned, and most recently, leaks in the basement of the grade II listed buildings were pushing the timeline even further back. Most recently, IKEA have said the store should open in spring 2025.

Source:<https://metro.co.uk/2025/01/16/iconic-oxford-street-store-closes-25-years-ahead-rebirth-22373910/>

School and mosques vandalised with anti-Muslim graffiti in London



“Several incidents of criminal damage” are being investigated by the Metropolitan Police which is treating them as “shocking” hate crimes.

Anti-Muslim graffiti has been found daubed on seven London buildings this month, including mosques, community centres and a primary school.

The Metropolitan Police said it is investigating “several incidents of criminal damage” and is treating them as “shocking” hate crimes.

The first incident took place on Monday 6 January, with the most recent recorded on Saturday 25 January. The force is looking into whether they are linked, including examining CCTV footage.

The incidents are reported to have been fuelled by a Telegram hate group, which was offering £100 to people who committed acts of vandalism. The Met said its inquiries are continuing.

The force has stepped up reassurance patrols in the affected areas and is in contact with local faith leaders.

Here are the sites that were targeted and when:

- West Norwood Mosque, SE27, on Monday 6 January
- South Norwood Islamic Community Centre, Croydon, SE25, on Monday 6 January
- Thornton Heath Islamic Centre, CR7, on Thursday 16 January
- Stratford mosque, Newham, E15, on Thursday 23 January
- Leyton Jamia Masjid, E10, on Thursday 23 January
- Albirr Foundation mosque, E10, on Thursday 23 January
- Noor Ul Islam Primary School, E10, on Saturday 25 January

‘Hate has no place on our streets’

Worshippers at the Stratford mosque and Leyton Jamia Masjid contacted Sky News saying their buildings had been vandalised with anti-Islamic graffiti.

The Met’s Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jon Savell said: “We understand that Muslim

communities will be feeling particularly concerned for their safety following this series of shocking hate crimes.

"Hate has no place on our streets, and tackling it is at the centre of our efforts to make Londoners from all backgrounds and communities feel safe.

"Our local officers will continue to work with community leaders and ensure that a thorough investigation is being conducted".

'This is not an act of faith - it's an act of cowardice'

A statement from Stratford Islamic Association to Sky News said: "Our mosque has been part of this community since 1993, and in all that time, we've only known kindness and respect from our neighbours.

"We are proud to be an integral part of this community, and today, we've been deeply moved by the overwhelming support from people of all backgrounds."

It added: "The council and the police have stood with us, and we are truly grateful for their swift and compassionate response.

"Those responsible for this act of hate have shamed only themselves. This is not an act of faith - it's an act of cowardice. But they will not intimidate us. We will not live in fear. Together, as a united community, we will stand strong."

Police are urging anyone with information about the incidents to contact them on 101.

No arrests have been made.

Source:<https://news.sky.com/story/school-and-mosques-vandalised-with-anti-muslim-graffiti-in-london-13295911>

From The Past Pages Of Dawn: 1975: Fifty Years Ago: Israeli pullout

There was no issue of the paper on this date on account of a public holiday. The excerpt below is taken from the previous day's edition.

AMMAN: Israel needs to understand that until it withdraws from Arab territories occupied in 1967 there will be no Middle East peace, United States Senator Charles Percy (Republican-Illinois) said here. He told newsmen at the end of a two-day stay in Jordan that Israel could not have peace and at the same time hold on to the occupied territories. Mr. Percy, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, added that everyone should also realise that Israel existed and that its sovereignty and security should be ensured.

[Meanwhile, as reported by our staff reporter from Karachi,] a provision store in Gol Market Nazimabad has started selling eggs by weight — Rs 7 per seer. It has not however stopped selling these by number and quoted it at Rs 4.75 per dozen. ... According to Mr Jamil Akhtar, owner of [the store], price-wise there was not much difference between the two as 16 to 18 eggs equalled a seer. However, the weight method would free the buyer of trying to pick up the biggest and the heaviest, he maintained.

Source:<https://www.dawn.com/news/1887261/from-the-past-pages-of-dawn-1975-fifty-years-ago-israeli-pullout>

US suspends new funds for aid programmes, excepting Israel and Egypt

By George Gaston



Trump administration freezes new funding for anti-HIV programme and other health services, excepts key food programmes.

The administration of United States President Donald Trump has announced a freeze on almost all new funding for foreign assistance programmes, with exceptions for allies Israel and Egypt.

The order from the US State Department on Friday also includes exceptions for emergency food programmes, but not health programmes that supporters say provide vital, life-saving services.

In an accompanying memo, newly confirmed Secretary of State Marco Rubio directed senior officials to “ensure that, to the maximum extent permitted by law, no new obligations shall be made for foreign assistance”.

Humanitarian organisations immediately expressed alarm at the directive, voicing fears that it could contribute to global instability and loss of life.

“By suspending foreign development assistance, the Trump administration is threatening the lives and futures of communities in crisis, and abandoning the United States’ long-held bipartisan approach to foreign assistance which supports people based on need, regardless of politics,” Abby Maxman, head of Oxfam America, said in a statement.

The temporary freeze is slated to last for a period of at least three months. In the first 85 days, Rubio is expected to make “decisions whether to continue, modify, or terminate programs”, according to the memo.

Among the health programmes expected to experience a funding freeze is the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, also known as PEPFAR.

Established in 2003 under the administration of George W Bush, PEPFAR enjoyed broad bipartisan support for two decades, until Congress missed a deadline to renew its funding in 2023. Its funding got a one-year extension through March 2025, but that is set to expire within the three-month window.

Experts estimate that PEPFAR has helped save as many as 25 million lives since it was first started.

Left untouched by the freeze is aid for Israel and Egypt, two of the largest recipients of US military assistance.

Both countries have faced scrutiny over their human rights records and calls to leverage US aid in exchange for substantial reforms.

Friday's memo made special mention of waivers for "foreign military financing for Israel and Egypt and administrative expenses, including salaries, necessary to administer foreign military financing".

There was no indication of a similar exemption for Ukraine, which largely relies on US weapons assistance in its fight to repel a Russian full-scale invasion launched in February 2022.

The US spent more than \$60bn in foreign assistance in 2023, more than any other country overall.

But that sum accounts for about 1 percent of US government spending. In the aftermath of Friday's memo, some aid projects around the world received work-stop orders.

"This is lunacy," said Jeremy Konyndyk, a former official for the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

He shared with the Reuters news agency his outrage. "This will kill people. I mean, if implemented as written in that cable ... a lot of people will die."

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/25/us-suspends-new-funds-for-aid-programmes-excepting-israel-and-egypt>



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SARMAD KHAN | ACA, FCCA

OFFICE 115 LONDON ROAD, MORDEN, SURREY SM4 5HP - UK

CELL +44 (0)7903 416 966

TEL +44 (0)208 646 3666 FAX +44 (0)208 082 5002

EMAIL INFO@SARMADGLOBAL.COM WEB WWW.SARMADGLOBAL.COM



Syrians are ready to rebuild their country, but they need solidarity

By Yarub Asfari

Syria is not ready to welcome back its refugees. It needs international support to get there.

It has been more than a month since Bashar al-Assad's regime collapsed in Syria, marking the end of a 13-year-long revolution. This event brought hope to me and millions of Syrians who have long struggled for justice, freedom and dignity.

In just a few weeks, a lot has changed. After being prevented from having a presence in most of Syria for years, Syria Relief/Action For Humanity, the humanitarian organisation I work for, finally established a formal office in Damascus. A colleague who had spent much of his life in Türkiye is excited to return to his home in the Syrian capital and rebuild his life there.

One of my close friends who hadn't seen his family inside Syria for more than a decade was able to travel to his hometown of Homs and reunite with his loved ones. I, personally, look forward to showing my children – all born in Türkiye – a Syria very different from the one I grew up in.

Amid the overwhelming joy of seeing our country free and at peace, there is also the realisation of the immense challenges that are lying ahead. The realities of Syria's current socioeconomic situation are daunting.

The past 13 years of untold suffering, destruction and displacement cannot be erased overnight. Critical infrastructure, including roads, the power grid and water pipelines, has been decimated. The economy is in tatters as trade and supply chains remain disrupted.

Syria's education system stands in a state of near collapse in many parts of the country as many schools are either destroyed or still used as shelters for the internally displaced. According to UNICEF, more than 2.4 million children are out of school, and another 1 million are at risk of dropping out. This increases the likelihood of negative coping mechanisms, such as child labour and child marriage.

Education – especially at the primary and secondary levels – is in need of prioritisation to prevent the loss of an entire generation to illiteracy. It is important to also note that universities have been significantly affected with many facilities damaged and students forced to abandon their studies.

Landmines and other explosive remnants of the war are another significant hurdle to Syria's recovery. The danger they pose is dire, especially to children. In the past month alone, at least

80 people – including 12 children – have been killed due to mine-related incidents.

Half of Syria's population now lives in areas contaminated with landmines. As displaced people begin to return home, the hazards posed by these explosives cannot be ignored.

Meanwhile, external interventions and foreign interference continue to fuel instability, and pockets of violence persist.

Given all this, I am deeply troubled by the decision of several countries hosting Syrian refugees to suspend asylum applications. Make no mistake – Syrians want nothing more than to return to their country. It is our home, and we long to be part of rebuilding it.

But Syria is not yet prepared for large-scale returns. Host countries must wait until returns can be safe, dignified and sustainable. In the meantime, they should allow Syrians to return temporarily to assess the situation without fear of being denied re-entry.

For Syria to become suitable for the mass return of refugees, there are a number of areas in which it needs outside support.

First, international donors must mobilise additional resources to meet Syria's urgent humanitarian needs. As of 2024, 16.7 million people were in need of assistance, the highest number since the start of the conflict in 2011.

Funds are needed to address food shortages, support the return of internally displaced people to their homes, and provide essential shelter and health services.

Local and national organisations that have proven their effectiveness on the ground must be prioritised in the distribution of funding with flexible mechanisms that allow for an adaptive response to the constantly changing situation.

Second, the education of Syria's children must be prioritised. Establishing safe learning spaces for children is vital to prevent an entire generation from losing access to education.

Third, Syria needs help in the political rehabilitation process. Hundreds of thousands of people have suffered political violence under the previous regime. Survivors of torture and enforced disappearances must receive specialised care, and reparations must be provided to the families of the disappeared and deceased.

Syria also needs international cooperation to secure justice for the crimes committed by al-Assad's regime, whether through international courts or transitional justice mechanisms. Such efforts are crucial for upholding accountability.

Fourth, an economic recovery cannot proceed while Syria remains under sanctions. There must be diplomatic engagement with the transitional authorities in Damascus and a reassessment of economic restrictions. Sanctions stifle the delivery of humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts.

Fifth, Syria needs assistance in landmine clearance and the removal of unexploded ordnance. This is a crucial step in ensuring the safety of displaced Syrians who want to return to their homes.

It is important for me to emphasise that Syrians do not want to remain in a state of emergency and aid dependency; we are ready for reconstruction and development.

After years of darkness, we can finally see the light. Syria's future is in our hands, but solidarity and cooperation from the global community are essential so we can address urgent challenges. Together, we can help Syria rebuild, so it can emerge stronger, more inclusive and more just than ever before.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2025/1/20/syrians-are-ready-to-rebuild-their-country-but-they-need>

Migrants in shackles led on to US military plane - as Mexico refuses to accept deportation flight

An official said it was the first time in recent memory that American military aircraft were being used to fly migrants out of the US.

US military aircraft have started flying detained migrants out of America on the orders of Donald Trump, as Mexico refused a request from his administration to allow a deportation plane to land in the country.

It comes as the White House released images of men whose hands and ankles were shackled being led on to a plane.

Mr Trump's press secretary Karoline Leavitt posted the photos on X and declared: "Deportation flights have begun."

She said Mr Trump was "sending a strong and clear message to the entire world: if you illegally enter the United States of America, you will face severe consequences".

Two US military aircraft, each carrying around 80 migrants, flew from America to Guatemala on Friday.

One C-17 reportedly took off from Biggs Army Air Field in Texas, while another C-17 departed from Tucson in Arizona.

But a plan to have another C-17 transport aircraft land in Mexico foundered after the country denied permission.

It was unclear why permission to land was denied.

Mexico's foreign ministry said the country had a "very great relationship" with the US and



cooperated on issues such as immigration.

‘Putting an end to illegal migration’

It was the first time in recent memory that American military aircraft were being used to fly migrants out of the US, according to an official.

Such planes have in the past been used to relocate people from one country to another, including in 2021 during the US’s withdrawal from Afghanistan.

“Guatemala and the United States are committed to putting an end to illegal migration and strengthening border security. Starting with two flights today,” the US State Department said.

On Instagram, Guatemalan vice president Karin Herrera's office posted a video of a military plane landing in Guatemala.

A caption said: “The [Guatemalan government] remains committed to protecting the integrity of migrants. The vice presidency will continue to verify that the reception of the returnees is in a dignified and safe manner.”

Some 79 Guatemalans returned, all of whom were adults, including 31 women and 48 men, the Guatemalan Migration Institute wrote.

The Pentagon has said the US military would provide flights for the deportations of more than 5,000 immigrants held by US authorities in El Paso, Texas, and San Diego, California.

On his first day in the Oval Office, Mr Trump declared illegal immigration a national emergency, and tasked his military with helping to boost security at the Mexico border.

The president has promised the biggest deportation operation in US history, with his new border czar, Tom Homan, saying he’ll target “the worst, first”.

His executive order on 20 January told the Pentagon to send as many troops as needed to obtain “complete operational control of the southern border of the United States”.

‘Hundreds of US soldiers to Mexican border’

The Trump administration said earlier this week the US military would be sending 1,500 additional active-duty troops to the Mexican border. A second tranche of troops could be deployed as soon as next week.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people have been arrested across the US by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in places such as Buffalo, New York, Chicago, St Paul, Salt Lake City, San Francisco and Denver.

‘Daily ICE arrests almost double’

Of the 538 arrests on Thursday, 373 were for criminal allegations and 165 were for non-criminal reasons.

According to the most recent data, the 538 figure was almost double ICE’s daily average of 282 in September 2024.

The Trump administration has said its priority is to arrest migrants with criminal backgrounds. The Department of Homeland Security said on Tuesday it would allow ICE to arrest undocumented people at places such as schools and churches, which was barred under previous administrations.

“Criminals will no longer be able to hide in America’s schools and churches to avoid

arrest,” the department said.

Many of the ICE actions were not unusual. Similar deportation flights also took place under the Biden administration, though not using military planes.

NBC News reports that New Jersey officials and immigrant rights supporters have criticised federal immigration authorities for carrying out a workplace raid on a small business in the city of Newark without a warrant.

In a news conference, Mayor Ras Baraka said several agents with ICE entered the back of the business, arrested three undocumented workers, and detained and questioned employees who are US citizens.

“People were fingerprinted. Pictures of their IDs and faces were taken there,” the Democrat mayor said. “I was appalled, upset, angry that this would happen here in this state, in this country, that this would be allowed.”

Source:<https://news.sky.com/story/men-in-shackles-led-on-to-us-military-plane-as-immigration-arrests-on-rise-13295895>

From The Past Pages Of Dawn: 1975: Fifty Years Ago: **Kabul's subversion**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has once again informed the United Nations Secretary-General, Dr. Kurt Waldheim, of Afghanistan's continuous interference in Pakistan's internal affairs and of its designs against this country's integrity and political independence. In a letter addressed to the [UN SG], the [PM] said that under the guise of “emotional attachment” and “defence of political rights”, the Government of Afghanistan “has been actively encouraging ... subversive activities and acts of terrorism and sabotage within Pakistan. ... The President of ... Afghanistan ... has once again taken upon himself to make comments on the domestic situation in Pakistan which are totally unwarranted”.



[Meanwhile, as reported by news agencies from Washington,] President Ford declined comment ... on a report that three US divisions were on their way or being prepared for the Middle East. He said: “I don't think I ought to talk about any particular military contingency plans.” During an interview ... Mr Ford again backed Secretary of State Henry Kissinger who said ... that the [US] would not rule out the use of force to obtain Middle East oil if the [US] faced industrial “strangulation.”

Source:<https://www.dawn.com/news/1887523>

US President Trump praises Indian-American Second Lady Usha Chilukuri Vance

Usha, 39, on Monday, became the first Indian-American and Hindu Second Lady after her husband JD was sworn in as the 50th Vice President of the US.

US President Donald Trump has said that he would have chosen Usha Chilukuri Vance, JD Vance's wife, as his Vice President as "she is smarter but the line of succession did not work that way".

Usha, 39, on Monday, became the first Indian-American and Hindu Second Lady after her husband JD was sworn in as the 50th Vice President of the US.

On Monday, wearing a pink coat, she held the Bible in one hand and their daughter Mirabel Rose in the other, as Vance placed his left hand on the religious text, and raising his right hand took the oath of office.

As a lawyer who is the daughter of Indian immigrants - her parents' ancestral village is Vadluru in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh - Usha is also one of the youngest second ladies assuming the position.

After Trump was sworn in as the 47th President of the United States with JD as his deputy, the 78-year-old Republican addressed a crowd in the overflow room, calling them "beautiful".

Trump praised his team, especially JD, for his successful re-election



bid.

"I watch JD over a period of time. I endorsed him in Ohio. He was a great senator and a very, very smart one," said Trump, but added, "The only one smarter is his wife".

This reference made everyone around the hall laugh.

Trump then looked at JD and said, "I would have chosen her but somehow the line of succession didn't work that way, right?" "She is great and he is great. This a great, beautiful couple and an unbelievable career," he continued.

Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, a mentor to Usha, administered the oath to her husband JD.

Usha had clerked for Supreme Court justices Kavanaugh and John Roberts.

Her rise as second lady comes as Indian Americans have become more politically active during recent election cycles and have stood as candidates on the national stage, including several who ran for president in 2024, the Hill reported.

"My background is very different from JD's," she said at the Republican National Convention in July.

"I grew up in San Diego, in a middle-class community with two loving parents, both immigrants from India, and a wonderful sister. That JD and I could meet at all, let alone fall in love and marry, is a testament to this great country." Usha is Hindu, raised by Indian immigrant parents in California. Her husband credits her with helping him return to his faith.

Vance told the Megyn Kelly Show podcast in 2020: "If I maybe get a little bit too cocky or a little too proud, I just remind myself that she is way more accomplished than I am. People don't realise just how brilliant she is." Usha and Vance met at Yale Law School while studying and later married in 2014 in Kentucky. The ceremony was blessed by a Hindu priest at a different event, according to a New York Times profile.

The Vances have three children: sons Ewan and Vivek, and a daughter named Mirabel.

After Vance was chosen as Trump's running mate, Usha's Hindu roots soon became the talk of the town. Vance has said on several occasions that his wife is not a Christian but was "very supportive" of deepening his faith.

Asked about the challenges of an interfaith marriage, Usha said, "There are a lot of things that we just agree on, I think, especially when it comes to family life, how to raise our kids. And so I think the answer really is, we just talk a lot."

Source:<https://indianexpress.com/article/news-today/usha-chilukuri-vance-indian-american-second-lady-9790559/>

3 years since Houthis attacked UAE: Why the world needs to do more to tackle 'growing threat'

The UAE has made significant sacrifices, including the loss of Emirati lives, in support of the Yemeni people, providing ground and air support while actively countering the expansion of the Houthi insurgency

There are moments in a nation's history that are impossible to forget or overlook, as they mark critical turning points in its development. This is particularly true for a country like the UAE, where security and stability are among its defining characteristics. One such moment was January 17, 2022, when the Houthi group launched an unprecedented attack on UAE territory using drones and missiles — the first of its kind since the founding of the nation.

While the UAE successfully thwarted the attack, minimising damage to civilians and infrastructure, these attacks served as an early warning of what the world faces today. Three years later, the Houthis continue to threaten maritime security, recklessly endangering regional and global economies. Their unchecked escalation, in the absence of a unified and effective international response, has only exacerbated the risks they pose to regional stability and global security.

The developments of the Yemeni crisis since 2015 have been a direct consequence of the Houthis' aggressive expansion, after seizing power by force. This led the legitimate Yemeni government to seek assistance from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to protect the Yemeni people from Houthi aggression.

In response, the UAE played a vital role in the Saudi-led Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen, acting in defence of the Yemeni people, responding to the legitimate government's call for assistance, working to end the Houthi militia's control over Yemen, combating terrorism from Al Qaeda and Daesh, and ensuring secure maritime navigation in the Gulf of Aden and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

The UAE has made significant sacrifices, including the loss of Emirati lives, in support of the Yemeni people, providing ground and air support while actively countering the expansion of the Houthi insurgency.

Since the Houthi group's coup against the legitimate Yemeni government in Sana'a, its threat to regional security has extended far beyond Yemen's borders. Its actions, particularly the targeting of civilians, have escalated into a broader regional security crisis. This has become evident through the Houthis' continued aggression, launching missile and drone attacks against both military and commercial vessels belonging to major global and regional powers. These reckless actions have made the Houthis a symbol of the growing security chaos in the Middle East.

Since the January 17 attack, the UAE has responded with transparency, responsibility, diplomacy, and decisiveness in countering the Houthi threat. It has worked to mobilise international support to halt regional destabilisation through proxy forces and prevent further destruction of national economies. The UAE called for a UN Security Council meeting to condemn the attack, rallying broad global support. The international community stood firmly with the UAE's leadership, as the majority of nations worldwide condemned the Houthis' terrorist acts and affirmed the UAE's right to defend its people and territory. Many countries also expressed readiness to cooperate with Abu Dhabi in addressing the wider security threats facing the region. The strong backing from international organisations, major powers such as the US and the European Union, as well as Arab and global nations from both the East and the West, reaffirmed the UAE's global standing and the strength of its diplomatic relationships.

Given the current realities, the international community must move beyond mere condemnation and limited defensive and military cooperation. Instead, it is imperative to criminalise Houthi terrorism at the level of the Arab League and the UN Security Council, formally designating the Houthi militia as a terrorist organisation. Furthermore, regional cooperation must be strengthened through structured and effective mechanisms to curb the proliferation of drones and ballistic missiles in the region. This includes monitoring the movement of weapons and supplies through a comprehensive regional-international security framework that fosters dialogue, collective security efforts, and proactive measures to address shared threats, ensuring long-term regional stability.

The escalation of conflicts, rising regional threats, and attacks on key shipping routes in the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb Strait, along with direct assaults on regional states, constitute clear violations of international law and pose a grave threat to global trade, security, and stability.

A significant part of the current regional crisis, dominated by the Houthi militia's growing threat, is a direct consequence of inconsistent and ambiguous international policies. Despite long-standing international recognition of the Houthis' extremist agenda, global powers have failed to implement a unified and effective strategy to counter their expansion.

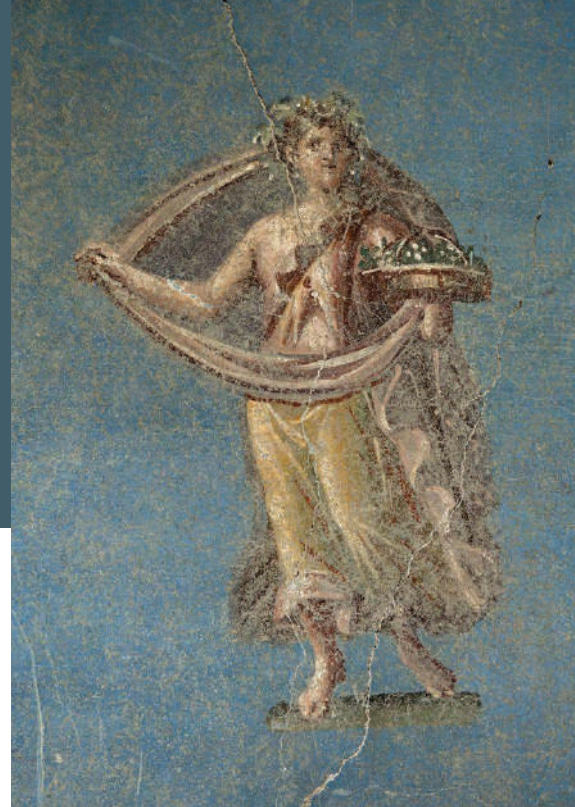
International actors are well aware of the alliances and financial networks that have fuelled Houthi aggression, allowing the group to escalate to the point of directly challenging global powers and launching missile attacks on regional states without fear of accountability. The Houthis continue to perpetrate crimes against humanity and blatant violations of international law with impunity, underscoring the urgent need for a firm and coordinated international response.

Source: <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/opinion/3-years-since-houthis-attacked-uae-why-the-world-needs-to-do-more-to-tackle-growing-threat>

'Once-in-a-century' discovery reveals spectacular luxury of Pompeii

By Rebecca Morelle

After lying hidden beneath metres of volcanic rock and ash for 2,000 years, a "once-in-a-century" find has been unearthed in the ancient Roman city of Pompeii in Italy.



Archaeologists have discovered a sumptuous private bathhouse - potentially the largest ever found there - complete with hot, warm and cold rooms, exquisite artwork, and a huge plunge pool.

The spa-like complex sits at the heart of a grand residence uncovered over the last two years during a major excavation.

"It's these spaces that really are part of the 'Pompeii effect' - it's almost as if the people had only left a minute ago," says Dr Gabriel Zuchtriegel, director of the Archaeological Park of Pompeii, who has revealed the new find exclusively to BBC News.

Analysis of two skeletons discovered in the house also shows the horror faced by Pompeii's inhabitants when Mount Vesuvius erupted in AD79.

The bodies belonged to a woman, aged between 35 and 50, who was clutching jewellery and coins, and a younger man in his teens or early 20s.

They had barricaded themselves into a small room, but were killed as a tsunami of superheated volcanic gas and ash - known as a pyroclastic flow - ripped through the town.

"This is a dramatic place, and everything you find here tells you about the drama," says Pompeii conservator, Dr Ludovica Alesse.

A third of the ancient city still lies hidden beneath volcanic debris from the disaster, but the new excavation - the most extensive in a generation - provides new insights into ancient Roman life.

The archaeologists have been followed by a documentary team from the BBC and Lion TV, for a series called Pompeii: The New Dig.

An entire block of Pompeii has now been uncovered, revealing a laundry and bakery, as well as the large private house. It's thought these were all owned by one wealthy individual, possibly Aulus Rustius Verus, an influential Pompeii politician.

The discovery of the bathhouse is further confirmation of his elite status, says Dr Zuchtriegel.

“There are just a few houses that have a private bath complex, so it was something really for the wealthiest of the wealthy,” he says. “And this is so huge - it’s probably the biggest bath complex in a Pompeiian private home.”

Those lucky enough to use the suite of bathing rooms would have undressed in a changing room with vibrant red walls and a mosaic floor dotted with geometric patterns inlaid with marble from across the Roman Empire.

They would then head to the hot room, taking a dip in a bath and enjoying the sauna-like warmth, provided by a suspended floor that allowed hot air to flow underneath and walls with a cavity where the heat could circulate.

Next they would move to the brightly-painted warm room, where oil would be rubbed into the skin, before being scraped off with a curved instrument called a strigil.

Finally, they would enter the largest and most spectacular room of all - the frigidarium, or cold room. Surrounded by red columns and frescoes of athletes, a visitor could cool off in the plunge pool, which is so large 20-30 people could fit in it.

“In the hot summers, you could sit with your feet in the water, chatting with your friends, maybe enjoying a cup of wine,” says Dr Zuchtriegel.

The bathhouse is the latest find to emerge from this extraordinary house.

A huge banqueting room with jet black walls and breathtaking artwork of classical scenes was found last year. A smaller, more intimate room - painted in pale blue - where residents of the house would go and pray to the gods was also unearthed.

The residence was mid-renovation - tools and building materials have been found throughout. In the blue room a pile of oyster shells lie on the floor, ready to be ground up and applied to the walls to give them an iridescent shimmer.

Next door to this beautiful space, in a cramped room with barely any decoration, a stark discovery was made - the remains of two Pompeiians who failed to escape from the eruption.

The skeleton of a woman was found lying on top of a bed, curled up in a foetal position. The body of a man was in the corner of this small room.

“The pyroclastic flow from Vesuvius came along the street just outside this room, and caused a wall to collapse, and that had basically crushed him to death,” explains Dr Sophie Hay, an archaeologist at Pompeii.

“The woman was still alive while he was dying - imagine the trauma - and then this room filled with the rest of the pyroclastic flow, and that’s how she died.”

Analysis of the male skeleton showed that despite his young age, his bones had signs of wear and tear, suggesting he was of lower status, possibly even a slave.

The woman was older, but her bones and teeth were in good condition.

“She was probably someone higher up in society,” says Dr Hay. “She could have been the wife of the owner of the house - or maybe an assistant looking after the wife, we just don’t know.”

An assortment of items were found on a marble table top in the room - glassware, bronze jugs and pottery - perhaps brought into the room where the pair had tucked themselves away hoping to wait out the eruption.

But it's the items clutched by the victims that are of particular interest. The younger man held some keys, while the older woman was found with gold and silver coins and jewellery.

These are kept in Pompeii's vault, along with the city's other priceless finds, and we were given a chance to see them with archaeologist, Dr Alessandro Russo.

The gold coins still gleam as if they were new, and he shows us delicate gold and natural pearl earrings, necklace pendants and intricately etched semi-precious stones.

"When we find this kind of object, the distance from ancient times and modern times disappears," Dr Russo says, "and we can touch a small piece of the life of these people who died in the eruption."

Dr Sophie Hay describes the private bathhouse complex as a once-in-a-century discovery, which also sheds more light on a darker side of Roman life.

Just behind the hot room is a boiler room. A pipe brought water in from the street - with some syphoned off into the cold plunge pool - and the rest was heated in a lead boiler destined for the hot room. The valves that regulated the flow look so modern it's as if you could turn them on and off even today.

With a furnace sitting beneath, the conditions in this room would have been unbearably hot for the slaves who had to keep the whole system going.

"The most powerful thing from these excavations is that stark contrast between the lives of the slaves and the very, very rich. And here we see it," says Dr Sophie Hay.

"The difference between the sumptuous life of the bathhouse, compared to the furnace room, where the slaves would be feeding the fire toiling all day.

"A wall is all that could divide you between two different worlds."

The excavation is in its final weeks - but new discoveries continue to emerge from the ash. Limited numbers of visitors are allowed to visit the dig while it's ongoing, but eventually it will be fully opened to the public.

"Every day here is a surprise," says Dr Anna Onesti, director of the excavation.

"Sometimes in the morning I come to work thinking that it's a normal working day - and then I discover we found something exceptional.

"It's a magic moment for the life of Pompeii, and this excavation work offers us the possibility to share this with the public."

Source:<https://www.aol.com/once-century-discovery-reveals-spectacular-072305206.html>





LA fires, climate change and the coming collapse of insurance

by Gary W Yohe

Los Angeles inferno shows insurance providers can't keep actuarial pace with fast-rising climate risks

The devastating wildfires in Los Angeles have made one threat very clear: Climate change is undermining the insurance systems American homeowners rely on to protect themselves from catastrophes. This breakdown is starting to become painfully clear as families and communities struggle to rebuild.

But another threat remains less recognized: This collapse could pose a threat to the stability of financial markets well beyond the scope of the fires.

It's been widely accepted for more than a decade that humanity has three choices when it comes to responding to climate risks: adapt, abate or suffer. As an expert in economics and the environment, I know that some degree of suffering is inevitable — after all, humans have already raised the average global temperature by 1.6 degrees Celsius, or 2.9 degrees Fahrenheit. That's why it's so important to have functioning insurance markets.

While insurance companies are often cast as villains, when the system works well, insurers play an important role in improving social welfare. When an insurer sets premiums that accurately reflect and communicate risk — what economists call “actuarially fair insurance” — that helps people share risk efficiently, leaving every individual safer and society better off.

But the scale and intensity of the Southern California fires — linked in part to climate change, including record-high global temperatures in 2023 and again in 2024 — has brought a big problem into focus: In a world impacted by increasing climate risk, traditional insurance models no longer apply.

Source:<https://asiatimes.com/2025/01/la-fires-climate-change-and-the-coming-collapse-of-insurance/>

Replacement of Natural Innocence in Women : A Problem or a Solution?



By: Muhammad Shahbaz Ali Advocate



Traditionally, innocence and femaleness encompass qualities such as shyness, innocence, refinement, beauty, nurturing, compassion, and chastity. These are not just characteristics but constitute basic elements of the societal fabric, which has glorified women for being the keepers of the hearth and heart for so long. Yet as women enter the larger world of modernity, many are redefining this image, provoking a deep and abiding question: Is this a loss to be mourned or a step on the way to empowerment?

Imagine the female as an ethereal melody, with notes resonating in shyness, rhythms beating with compassion, and harmonies forged from purity and nurturing. These qualities transcend superficial beauty, embodying ideals of peace, gentleness, and relational harmony. Like an ancient artifact of great value, they represent virtues that have allowed women to create sanctuaries of warmth and safety within homes, relationships, and communities.

Yet, the modern woman stands at a crossroads where the echoes of historical femininity intersect with the vibrant tempo of contemporary life. This juncture compels women to ponder whether preserving these qualities is a duty or a constraint—and whether abandoning them signifies liberation or a profound loss.

Several forces propel the evolution of femaleness, each reflecting the changing landscape of womanhood.

Expanding educational horizons, much like a torch illuminating new paths, have opened avenues beyond traditional domestic roles. Careers in science, law, and the arts demand assertiveness, ambition, and resilience, which often replace the once-celebrated innocence and passivity.

Fluidity in gender roles is dissolving rigid family and societal dynamics. Women are no longer defined by their nurturing roles. The distinctions between male and female qualities get blurred, giving room for both to embody so-called male qualities like being empathetic, having the strength, and being resilient, among others.

The feminist movement has been promoting equality, independence, and justice, questioning all social constructs that are created by society, like shyness or submissiveness.

Feminism advocates that women should express compassion with strength and challenge these outdated stereotypes through autonomy and confidence.

Last but not least, digital platforms have broadened the archetypes of femininity, with empowering narratives celebrating agency, courage, and intellect. Social media has redefined beauty and strength and enabled women to reimagine and reconstruct their identities on their own terms.

For some, the decline of traditional innocence and femaleness represents a melancholic loss. Nurturing, patience, and gentleness have long been the adhesive binding families and communities. Without these virtues, society risks becoming colder, fragmented, and overly individualistic—a world deprived of gentleness and compassion.

However, reducing femaleness to softness or docility does an injustice to its complexity. These traditional virtues have played the important role of providing emotional havens and moral guidance against the rougher edges of society. Detractors say that if people abandon these roles, it will upset the balance of society, change family, workplace, and community life, and lead to a less warm, less human world.

Contrarily, such a transformation is viewed by most as an empowering evolution—a cure to outdated limitations that confined women to one-dimensional roles. The modern woman balances intellectual rigor, courage, and innovation alongside nurturing traits. The enhancement does not deny compassion or patience but rather redefines these aspects within a wider spectrum of leadership, strength, and self-expression.

Today's woman does not carry the singular stamp of a hero, but represents an orchestra of roles: that of a leader, nurturer, visionary, and supporter, when the situation requires it, tenderness or strength. This plasticity answers a complex world's growing needs better than rigid clichés can serve in solving complex questions. Dynamic femininity opens roads for a community where empathy coexists with resilience.

Grief over the passing of traditional femaleness can be perhaps misplaced because it seems women's identity hasn't decreased but rather expanded into something richer, more inclusive than the old notion of self. Newer femininity introduces a harmony between compassion and strength, between grace and resolve, and between tenderness and intellectual autonomy.

Rather than bemoaning this change as a "problem," it should be welcomed as an opportunity to redefine roles in society in a world that needs versatile, empathetic voices. In the process of forming their identities, women are not leaving history behind but writing a vibrant new chapter in the collective narrative of humanity. As we stand at the threshold of this transformative era, let us embrace this change not as a loss but as a dawn heralding the limitless promise of feminine potential.



Authorities say at least 30 dead in Kumbh Mela crowd crush

By Neha Gohil and Tinsui Yeung

At least 30 people have died during India's Kumbh Mela festival.

Held every 12 years, the Kumbh Mela, which lasts over six weeks, is thought to be the largest religious gathering in the world, attracting tens of millions of people globally.

The incident took place between 01:00 and 02:00 local time on Wednesday (19:30-20:30 GMT on Tuesday) when a group of pilgrims broke through barricades, trampling devotees waiting to take the dip in the river. Devotees believe bathing there cleanses sins and leads to salvation.

The death toll remained unconfirmed by government officials for over 12 hours after the incident, until a news conference held by officials confirmed that at least 30 people had been killed and 60 injured.

Despite last night's chaos, some devotees say they are determined to continue with their rituals and take a holy dip. At least 50 million people had bathed on Wednesday, bringing the total since the festival began to 249.8 million.

We'll be wrapping up our live coverage soon but you can access more material including full details of the incident, BBC correspondents reporting from the scene and more about the Kumbh Mela festival via BBC News.

This page was brought to you by Vikas Pandey, Anahita Sachdev, Antariksha Pathania, Geeta Pandey, Zoya Mateen, Cherylann Mollan, Meryl Sebastian, Neyaz Farooquee, Nikita Yadav, Soutik Biswas, Nikita Mandhani, Samira Hussain, Ankit Srinivas, Neha Sharma, Andrew Clarence, Mohit Aggarwal, Thomas Mackintosh, Asya Robins, Yaroslav Lukov, Neha Gohil and Tinsui Yeung.

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/cgq07z0yexvt>

Trump's new world

IT has probably been the busiest week President Donald Trump has ever had, and it has the whole world worried.



By Rafia Zakaria

The Indians are worried about what the imminent slashing of H-1B visas and the elimination of birthright citizenship will have on their middle class, which exports tech talent to America.

The Chinese are worried about the 10 per cent tariffs that Trump is promising to impose on them. Canada is worried about strident statements about how Canadian goods will face tariffs to bring down the trade deficit with them.

Mexico is worried about the same thing, as well as Trump's labelling the country as being "run by drug cartels" and the imminent deportation of millions of undocumented Mexicans from the United States.

The EU is worried about Trump's statements regarding trade deficits, trade restrictions on European goods to match EU restrictions on US goods and Trump's lack of enthusiasm for sustaining Nato or its defence promises.

Denmark is worried about losing Greenland and Panama is worried about losing the Panama Canal; both of which Trump has announced the US would like to take over (without ruling out the use of military force).

It is undoubtedly going to be a new world under Donald Trump. First among all of this are likely to be the enormous changes that will come about to US immigration policy. Indians have good cause to be worried.

Trump is not only promising to crack down on illegal immigration but also slowing down legal immigration to a trickle — something which will likely impact Indians, as India sends the most immigrants and workers to America from Asia. Indian newspapers have been dominated by coverage of the issue over the past week.

Many commentators have even expressed alarm regarding the change in the rule regarding birthright citizenship. Constitutionally, any child born in the territorial US automatically gets American citizenship.

However, an executive order signed by Trump this week wants to change this saying that it will not apply to children of those on non-immigrant visas (including student visas and work visas) or children of undocumented workers.

According to discussions in Indian newspapers, this would change the calculations of many in the Indian middle class who choose to avail these visas and then try to have children while they are in the US so that they will be American citizens.

Trump's order changing the grounds for citizenship has been challenged in US federal court, with a judge temporarily blocking the order. In the meantime, even if the rule is

not immediately implemented, it likely augurs a period of uncertainty concerning the measure.

Indians have good cause to be worried as India sends the most immigrants to the US from Asia.

Those who are in the US illegally face a difficult time ahead as well. This is true regardless of where they have immigrated from. This would include Pakistani citizens who are currently in the US.

Immigration raids that are supposed to begin this weekend are likely to be used to round up people in areas with heavy immigrant populations. Those who may fit this category should know that they do not have to answer any questions if they are approached by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers if they are not near or at the US border.

There is no duty to provide identification or documentation when approached in places that are not US border checkpoints unless there is probable cause that has led the agent to suspect that the person may be illegal.

Racial profiling of people is not an adequate basis for probable cause. Not offering up identification or answering questions is not in itself grounds for detaining any person who appears to be an immigrant.

Those who run businesses that employ people who may be undocumented can ask ICE officers for a judicial warrant if their place of business is targeted for a raid. They can also instruct their employees to refuse to show identification or proof of legal residence unless such a warrant has been produced.

It is not just that the US is shutting its borders to the world and to American citizenship but also to products. In a speech telecast at the Davos summit, Trump announced that he will reduce the corporate tax rate from 40pc under Biden to 15pc if businesses choose to manufacture their product in the US.

Interest rates are also likely to be slashed under Trump which may provide Americans — who listed inflation as one of their major reasons for dissatisfaction with the Biden administration — with some hope.

The focus on rejuvenating American manufacturing is geared to increasing job opportunities for Americans, particularly in the rust belt states that have experienced a downturn ever since manufacturing in the US began to be outsourced.

The US is the richest and largest economy in the world. The Trump administration is seeking to harness this power to bully other countries out of territory and resources.

Of course, the US has been doing this in places like the Middle East and South Asia since the beginning of this new millennium, but now it appears it is Western countries, like the EU states and others, who will face the brunt of American bullying. These countries were happy to look away from US overreach when it came to the 'war on terror', Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now a new kind of US war has been launched, and its targets are countries who were spared in the last age of US power. It is these nations that are the targets of this new age of American overreach. They didn't speak up when America did this to others and so the already bullied by America will have little to say now it is someone else's turn.

Source:<https://www.dawn.com/news/1887527>

Resolving the PECA Act Controversy: A Path Forward for Pakistan

By Syed Nayyar Uddin



The recent amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) have sparked widespread protests from media organizations, civil society, and digital rights activists in Pakistan. Concerns primarily revolve around the act's perceived draconian curbs on freedom of expression, stricter penalties for online speech, and its potential misuse to stifle dissent. While the government argues that these amendments are necessary to curb misinformation and online harassment, critics fear they will lead to authoritarian control over digital spaces.

To resolve this standoff, a balanced and inclusive approach is required—one that protects national security and public interest while upholding constitutional freedoms. Below is a framework for addressing the concerns of all stakeholders and fostering an environment conducive to free speech and responsible digital governance.

Key Issues with the PECA Act

1. Criminalisation of Defamation and Free Speech

- The amendments make defamation a non-bailable offence with stricter penalties, which critics argue could be used to silence dissent and investigative journalism.
- The vague definition of “fake news” in the law increases the risk of arbitrary arrests and selective enforcement.

2. Lack of Consultation with Stakeholders

- The law was passed without meaningful dialogue with journalists, digital rights activists, and media bodies, leading to concerns about transparency and undue haste.

3. Expansion of Government Control Over Digital Content

- The increased powers granted to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) raise fears of mass surveillance and suppression of political opposition.
- The law lacks clear safeguards against abuse, making it vulnerable to politically motivated crackdowns.

4. Impact on Press Freedom and Digital Rights

- The threat of long jail sentences and heavy fines may lead to self-censorship among

journalists and social media users.

- The law could undermine Pakistan's commitments to international human rights standards on free speech and democratic governance.

Steps to Resolve the PECA Crisis

1. Formation of an Independent Review Committee

The government should establish a joint committee comprising members of Parliament, media representatives, human rights activists, and legal experts to review the PECA amendments. This committee should:

- Assess whether the law aligns with Article 19 of the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech.
- Recommend changes that balance cybersecurity needs with democratic values.
- Suggest clear definitions of "fake news" and defamation to prevent misuse.

2. Decriminalization of Defamation

- Defamation should remain a civil offence rather than a criminal one, in line with global best practices.
- Heavy-handed penalties should be revised to prevent abuse of power against journalists and ordinary citizens.

3. Ensuring Judicial Oversight Over FIA Actions

- The FIA's expanded authority should be subjected to judicial oversight, ensuring that digital policing does not become a tool for political victimization.
- Any action taken under PECA should require prior court approval to avoid arbitrary arrests.

4. Protecting Journalistic and Whistleblower Rights

- Journalists should be exempt from harsh penalties under PECA when reporting in good faith.

Whistleblowers exposing corruption and public interest matters should have legal protections under separate legislation.

5. Public Consultation and Media Dialogue

- The government should hold open discussions with media bodies such as the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and the Digital Rights Foundation to address their concerns.
- Regular roundtable conferences should be institutionalized to ensure future digital laws are framed with input from all stakeholders.

6. Revisiting Vague and Overbroad Provisions

- The law should clearly define "fake news" and "cybercrime" to avoid selective interpretation.

- A clause should be added to prevent retrospective application of the law to avoid punishing past actions unfairly.

7. Strengthening Pakistan's Commitment to International Standards

- Any amendments should be aligned with UN conventions on freedom of expression, ensuring that Pakistan meets its obligations under global human rights frameworks.
- The government should consult international digital rights organizations to benchmark PECA against global best practices.

Conclusion

The PECA controversy presents an opportunity for reform, ensuring digital governance is both effective and democratic. The government must acknowledge the genuine concerns of media organizations and civil society while also upholding the need for responsible online discourse. A transparent review process, legal refinements, and stakeholder engagement will be key to restoring trust, safeguarding fundamental rights, and preventing future conflicts over digital regulations in Pakistan. By adopting a balanced and inclusive approach, Pakistan can move towards a framework that protects both security and freedom, rather than sacrificing one for the other.

Source: <https://www.snayyar.com/resolving-the-peca-act-controversy-a-path-forward-for-pakistan.html>

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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May Allah be with you - Amen

Walmart broccoli recall elevated to highest level by FDA over risk of 'death'

By Brittany Miller

The FDA notes that there haven't been any reported illnesses linked to the recalled broccoli

Broccoli packages sold at Walmart stores in 20 states have received an elevated recall status over a *Listeria* contamination that has potentially fatal consequences.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) raised the recall on Braga Fresh's ready-to-eat 12oz Marketside Broccoli Florets to Class 1, which is "a situation in which there is a reasonable probability that the use of, or exposure to, a violative product will cause serious adverse health consequences or death," according to the organization.

The FDA first announced on December 31 that Braga Fresh was issuing a voluntary recall on the product "due to the possibility of contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*."

Listeria is a bacteria that can contaminate many foods. Although symptoms can vary, a *listeria* infection "can cause invasive illness and intestinal illness," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The possible *listeria* contamination of Braga Fresh's broccoli "was discovered during random sampling by Texas Health & Human Services from a Texas store location where one of multiple samples yielded a positive test result," the FDA reported.

The recalled product was sold in Walmart stores with the UPC code 6 81131 32884 5 on the back of the bag and the Lot Code: BFFG327A6 on the front of the bag.

It also has a best-if-used-by date of December 10, 2024. The FDA notes that while the product is no longer being sold in stores, consumers "may have frozen the item for later use." Any consumers who have the product in their freezers should not eat it and discard it.

The 12-ounce bags of broccoli were sold at Walmart stores in 20 states: Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

According to the FDA, there haven't been any reported illnesses connected to the recalled broccoli.

The agency also noted in its release that *Listeria monocytogenes* "can cause serious

and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems.” Meanwhile, people with healthier immune systems may “suffer only short-term symptoms such as high fever, severe headache, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain, and diarrhea.”

They added: “The health and safety of our customers is always a top priority. While the expiration date for the potentially impacted Marketside Broccoli Florets has past and the product is no longer in stores, we encourage customers who may still have this product in their homes, such as stored in freezers, to not consume and to discard the product.

“At this time, there have been no reported illnesses associated with this advisory, and we are working with the supplier to investigate.”

The updated recall comes just days after six different brands of eggs were recalled in Canada due to the possibility of salmonella contamination.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) recalled Golden Valley, Compliments, Foremost, IGA, No Name, and Western Family eggs on January 18. The recall applies to different packages and sizes of eggs.

Only specific lot numbers of the eggs have been affected. A list of lot numbers is available on the CFIA website.

Source: <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/walmart-broccoli-recall-braga-fresh-b2688105.html>

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As dusk settles over Mbacke Kadior, a village in central Senegal, the rhythmic chants of the Muslim worshippers dressed in patchwork garments fill the air. Gathered in a tight circle outside a mosque, the Baye Fall followers sway and sing at the top of their lungs, their voices rising and falling in unison. The flames of a small fire flicker in the background, casting dancing shadows on their multi-coloured clothes.

Their dreadlocks swing as they move, and their faces shine with sweat and fervour during this sacred ritual, known as the “saam fall” - both a celebration and an act of devotion.

Participants often appear to be in a trance during the chanting that can last for two hours - and takes place twice a week.

The Baye Fall, a subgroup of Senegal’s large Mouride brotherhood, are unlike any other Muslim group.

They make up a tiny fraction of the 17 million population in Senegal, a mainly Muslim country in West Africa.

But their striking appearance makes them stand out, and their unorthodox practices are believed by some to stray too far from Islamic norms.

For Baye Fall devotees faith is expressed through hard work and community service. In their eyes, heaven is not merely a destination but a reward for those who toil.

They are often misunderstood by other Muslims - and there is also a misconception in the West that some drink alcohol and smoke marijuana, which is not part of their ethos.

“The philosophy of the Baye Fall community is focused on work. It’s a mystical kind of working, where labour itself becomes devotion to God,” Maam Samba, a leader of a Baye Fall group in Mbacke Kadior, tells the BBC.

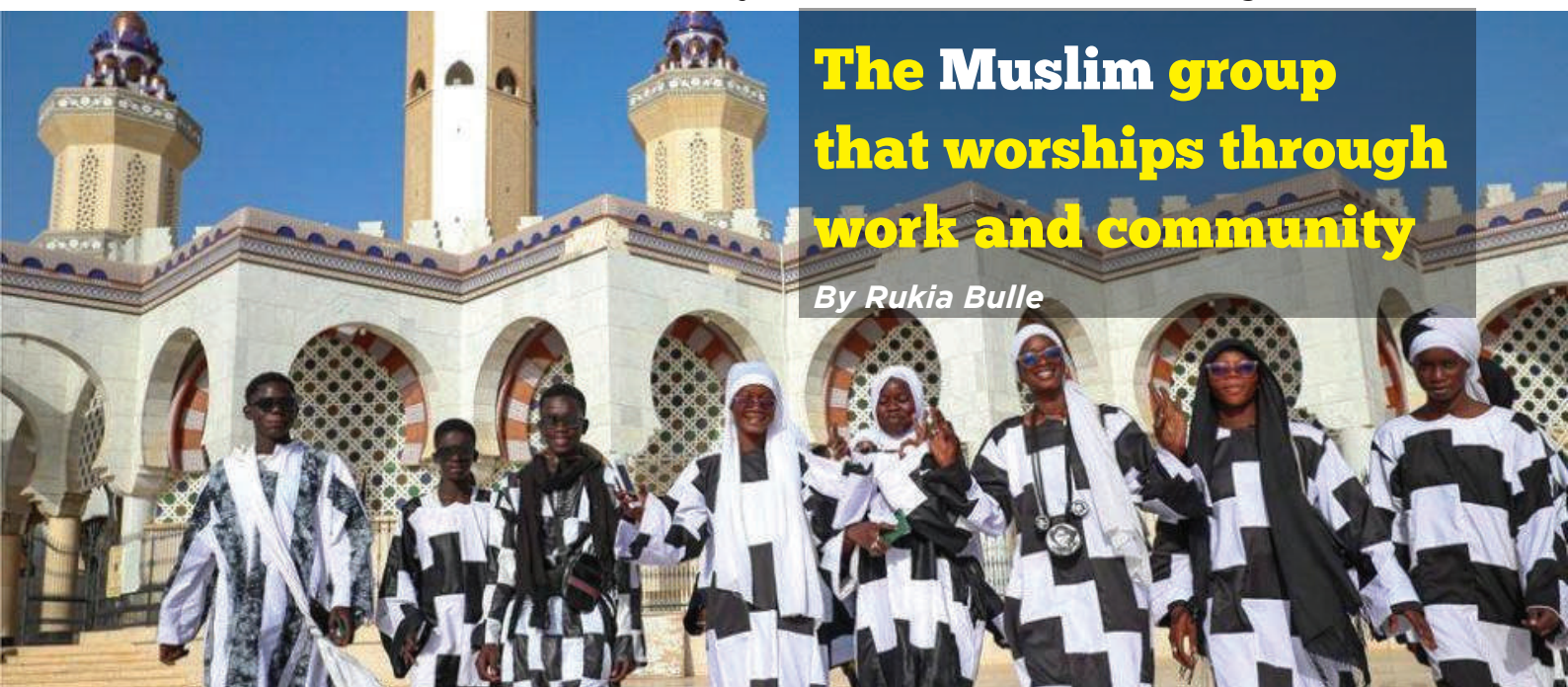
They feel each task - whether ploughing fields under the relentless sun, building schools, or crafting goods - is imbued with spiritual significance. Work is not merely a duty; it is a meditative act, a form of prayer in motion.

It is here in the village of Mbacke Kadior that the community believes their founder, Ibrahima Fall, first met Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba, who in the 19th Century established the Mouride brotherhood, a branch of Sufi Islam, that plays an influential role in Senegal.

Fall is said to have dedicated himself entirely to Bamba’s service and often neglected his own

The Muslim group that worships through work and community

By Rukia Bulle



needs, including eating, fasting, praying and taking care of himself.

His followers recount that over time his clothes became worn and patched, reflecting his selfless devotion. This is how the Baye Fall philosophy and tradition of patchwork clothing originated.

This kind of loyalty to a religious leader is what his followers now practise - a concept known as “ndiguel” - many Baye Fall even include the word in their children’s names.

Fall’s work ethic is also reflected in the heart of Mbacke Kadior at a workshop where collaboration and creativity thrive to create beautiful patchwork clothing.

Women work with quiet focus, dipping plain fabrics into vats of vibrant dyes. With each dip, the cloth absorbs layers of rich, bold colours, gradually transforming into striking textiles.

The men, equally meticulous, take the dyed fabrics and skilfully sew them into garments that are both practical and expressive of the Baye Fall’s distinct identity.

The air buzzes with purpose as the clothing takes shape, a blend of artistry and labour that mirrors their dedication. These finished pieces are then distributed to markets across Senegal, where they sustain livelihoods and share the community’s philosophy far and wide.

“The Baye Fall style is original,” explains Mr Samba, whose late father was a respected Baye Fall sheikh, or marabout as religious leaders are known in Senegal.

“The patchwork clothing symbolises universality - you can be Muslim and still maintain your culture. But not everyone understands this. We say if you don’t accept criticism, you can’t progress.”

While other Muslims are fasting from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan, it is the Baye Fall who dedicate themselves to preparing food for the evening iftar meal when the fast is broken at mosques.

This devotion is not limited to manual tasks.

The Baye Fall have established co-operatives, social businesses, and non-governmental organisations aimed at fostering sustainable development in rural Senegal. For them, work is not just a means of survival but an expression of spirituality.

“We have schools, health centres and social enterprises to create work,” Mr Samba explains. “In our philosophy of life, everything must be done with respect, love, and attention to nature. Ecology is central to our sustainable development model.”

But the group has also received criticism for its practice of begging on the streets.

While asking for money is not against the Baye Fall belief system, it is traditionally done with the intention of taking the contributions back to the leader, who redistributes them for the benefit of the community.

“There are real Baye Fall and what we call ‘Baye Faux’- false Baye Fall,” Cheikh Senne, a former vice-chancellor of Alioune Diop University in the town of Bambey and expert on the Mouride brotherhood, tells the BBC.

In urban centres like the capital, Dakar, the presence of these “Baye Faux” has become pervasive.

“These are people who dress like us and beg in the streets but do not contribute to the community. It’s a serious issue that harms our reputation,” says Mr Senne.

The Baye Fall’s emphasis on hard work and community has resonated beyond Senegal’s borders.

Among their followers is Keaton Sawyer Scanlon, an American who joined a community after a visit in 2019. She has since been given the Senegalese name Fatima Batouly Bah and describes her first encounter with a marabout as a life-changing moment.

“It felt like his body was emitting light,” she tells the BBC. “My heart recognised a truth. This was a profound spiritual awakening for me.”



Ms Bah now lives among the Baye Fall, participating in their projects and embodying their ethos of service. She is part of a small but growing number of international adherents who have embraced the group's unique path.

The Baye Fall play a vital role in Senegalese society and their involvement in a wide range of agricultural activities is important for the economy.

Each year they swear allegiance to the current Mouride leader, known as the caliph or grand marabout, by donating money, cattle and crops to the brotherhood to show their loyalty.

They are also instrumental in maintaining the Grande Mosque in Senegal's holy city of Touba, the epicentre of Mouridism - and are in charge of its upkeep.

In Touba they serve as unofficial security guards at the Grande Mosque during big events, like the annual Magal pilgrimage when hundreds of thousands of people come to the city.

For example, they make sure people are dressed modestly, no drugs are sold in the area and that the caliph is not disrespected.

“The Baye Fall have always guaranteed the security of the caliph and the city,” says Mr Senne. “Nobody dares act improperly when a Baye Fall is around.”

Despite disapproval from some, the Baye Fall's impact on Senegal's cultural and religious landscape is growing - though they do face challenges in balancing tradition with modernity.

Limited resources hinder their ambitious plans.

Yet their vision remains clear: sustainable development, rooted in faith and service, that could also help some of the huge numbers of unemployed young people in Senegal who despair of finding a livelihood.

Many of the thousands of migrants making dangerous sea crossings to Europe come from Senegal.

“We want to do more,” says Mr Samba. “We want to create more employment - because young people need it here in Senegal.

“We need collaboration with governments and international organisations. This is our hope for the future.”

For them, hard work is the answer to both the country's economic and spiritual needs.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c360pd0k7e3o>



Gandhi's lessons

By Sara Malkani

SEVENTY-seven years ago on Jan 30, 1948, a right-wing militant assassinated M.K. Gandhi in retaliation for his solidarity with Muslim victims of post-partition riots. A few days earlier, Gandhi broke his last fast after obtaining commitments from religious community leaders that India's Muslims would be protected and those forced to leave their homes allowed to return.

He paid for his commitment to religious co-existence in independent India with his life. One would think that his support for Muslims would give him a high stature in Pakistan, but this is not the case. During riots in 1950, his statue opposite the Sindh High Court in Karachi was pulled down. Gandhi's role as leader of Congress and his opposition to partition have meant that his teachings have no place in our history books.

This is a pity because there is much we can learn from the unique South Asian leader. Many aspects of his outlook were problematic, and some of his great contemporaries such as the Dalit leader B.R. Ambedkar and progressive writer Rabindranath Tagore disagreed with many of his views. But Gandhi's insights into the effects of Western imperialism, the role of spiritual morality in public life and the dark sides of modernity continue to have relevance, not only for South Asians, but for a world that is becoming increasingly difficult to theorise using well-worn paradigms of social analysis in the left or the right.

We can learn from the unique South Asian leader.

I discuss three of these insights: first, Gandhi's approach to accommodating radical diversities within society, second his rejection of Western models of economic growth, and finally his commitment to non-violent political resistance.

How should the many layers of religious and cultural diversities in India be accommodated? This was a major challenge to pre-1947 Indian politics and it remains an existential one in South Asia today. Gandhi believed that radical diversities could coexist in independent India as they had for millennia prior to European colonisation. In *Hind Swaraj*, he writes that the essence of India's national identity and the basis for its continuity is its "faculty for assimilation". For Gandhi, removal of religion from public life was neither possible nor desirable given the deeply religious ethos of India's people. He believed in drawing from the spiritual ethics of all religions to shape a shared political morality.

Second, Gandhi believed Western models of economic growth could not be sustained

by the planet. He understood that rapid large-scale industrialisation in the Global South would intensify inequalities and deplete natural resources. He advocated for localised growth driven by self-sustaining villages organised on a cooperative basis, and led campaigns boycotting Western industrial goods.

Gandhi's rejection of the West had its critics. Tagore wrote that such rejection amounted to parochialism and called for a "true meeting of the East and the West". After independence, India did not adopt Gandhi's economic vision and moved towards industrialisation and centralisation. Even though Gandhi's prescriptions may seem quaint, in this era of climate catastrophe it is striking to see how contemporary calls for environmentally sustainable economies and a return to smaller-scale, localised production echo his proposals.

Finally, his commitment to non-violent resistance inspired activists everywhere. He advocated non-violence for its own sake, as a principle consistent with respect for life, while demonstrating that non-violence is also an effective tactical tool. European imperialism justifies itself as a 'civilising' mission. Discrediting this façade was crucial to end its dominance. The Dandi March led by Gandhi in 1930 to retrieve salt from the seashore in defiance of the salt tax became a world-famous example of non-violent resistance through direct action.

Sharp criticism of Gandhian non-violence comes from Arundhati Roy who notes that the performative power of non-violent resistance is unavailable to marginalised people without an audience. While we should consider perspectives from different struggles, it is clear that Gandhi's message of non-violence inspired movements as diverse as Bacha Khan's Khudai Khidmatgars and the 1960s civil rights movement in the US. Martin Luther King Jr said that Gandhi's non-violent resistance was the "only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom".

Gandhi predicted perhaps better than any other major 20th-century leader the climate crisis, the destructive capacities of powerful states with large armies, and the anti-democratic tendencies in economic and political systems geared to satisfy material greed. We in Pakistan should critically engage with his thoughts to develop the intellectual and ethical resources we need to build a national identity that still eludes us.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1888348/gandhis-lessons>

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