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E-Mail: [info@theglobalvoice.net](mailto:info@theglobalvoice.net)

[www.theglobalvoice.net](http://www.theglobalvoice.net)

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



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**Editor in Chief**  
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**Assistant Editor**  
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M. Sultan Qureshi



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## Disclaimer

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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**



Since Pakistan's founding in August 1947, Mr. Jinnah has been the country's sole loyalist lawmaker, which may have contributed to his death. The administrative and accountable pillars of the Pakistani state, such as the court, media, and parliament, have gradually come to represent the massive moral and financial corruption since Jinnah's tragic death. Unfortunately, corruption has crept into the public and governmental institutions from the bottom up, and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan's society has come to terms with it. Because of poverty, destitution, and financial hardship, the lower classes have also crossed the line into corruption, and the ruling class has gone beyond all forms of moral and financial corruption. Every citizen feels he is above the law, which is dreadful.

Pakistan has the worst somewhat apparent religious decay. Religion is often used in the country for hypocrisy, monopoly, business, and politics. Islam as practiced by the Pakistani government is not seen as having anything to do with spirituality or human values. With over six hundred sects and numerous theological divisions, Pakistan has turned into a fervent place for hatred and fanaticism in the name of Islam. Every sect seeks to govern in accordance with its own opinions and evaluates others based on its own convictions. Humanity and religious tolerance have vanished. Because of this, the country's small communities and 5% of non-Muslims feel unsafe and insecure.

Education has become one of the lucrative businesses in Pakistan. Madrasas typically move in the direction of misguidance as well. The only option for the lower and lower middle classes to advance is through education, but at the moment, inflation is preventing the impoverished from attending; almost 3 million children—of whom 50% are between the ages of 5 and 16—are not enrolled in schools. Nearly 30,000 religious madrasas and more than 200 public and private institutions have failed miserably in bettering the nation's educational system. While educated youth are unemployed, key positions are held by retired civil and military officers. This is the main contributory factor of the brain drain. According to projections, 350,000 talented workers and professionals departed Pakistan in the first half of 2025, compared to 5% in the early 2000s.

The number of judges in higher judiciary is around 125, while only in SC the number of pending cases is more than 60,000. On the other hand overall pending cases in Pakistan Courts including lower courts is more than 3 million. Rule of law and transparency is non-existent. Judiciary is the slave of the powerful and ruling elite. Poverty is reaching its pinnacle. Almost half of the population lives below the poverty line. Consumer goods are prohibitively pricey for the average person. Furthermore, the country's disarray and financial suffering are inflicting mental anguish, while the ruling class have complete access to all necessary resources. It appears that 250 million people in this country lack basic human rights in order to feed the governing class. Until the ordinary people fight up for their basic and constitutional rights, the status quo will continue to abuse them, because the common people's problems are not the rulers' and policymakers' problems or priorities.

A photograph of Donald Trump, President of the United States, sitting in a dark leather chair and speaking. He is wearing a dark blue suit, a white shirt, and a red tie with white diagonal stripes. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be the interior of the White House.

## **Trump administration reviews 55 million visa holders for violations**

The Trump administration said Thursday it is reviewing more than 55 million people who have valid U.S. visas for any violations that could lead to deportation, part of a growing crackdown on foreigners who are permitted to be in the United States.

In a written answer to a question from The Associated Press, the State Department said all U.S. visa holders, which can include tourists from many countries, are subject to “continuous vetting,” with an eye toward any indication they could be ineligible for permission to enter or stay in the United States.

Should such information be found, the visa will be revoked, and if the visa holder is in the United States, he or she would be subject to deportation.

Since President Donald Trump took office, his administration has focused on deporting migrants illegally in the United States as well as holders of student and visitor exchange visas. The State Department’s new language suggests that the continual vetting process, which officials acknowledge is time-consuming, is far more widespread and could mean even those approved to be in the U.S. could abruptly see those permissions revoked.

There were 12.8 million green-card holders and 3.6 million people in the U.S. on temporary visas last year, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

The 55 million figure suggests that some people subject to review would currently be outside the United States with multiple-entry tourist visas, said Julia Gelatt, associate director of the U.S. immigration policy program at the Migration Policy Institute. She questioned the value of spending resources on people who may never return to the United States.

The State Department said it was looking for indicators of ineligibility, including people staying past the authorized timeframe outlined in a visa, criminal activity, threats to public safety, engaging in any form of terrorist activity or providing support to a terrorist organization.

“We review all available information as part of our vetting, including law enforcement or immigration records or any other information that comes to light after visa issuance

indicating a potential ineligibility,” the department said.

### **No more worker visas for commercial truck drivers**

The U.S. also will stop issuing worker visas for commercial truck drivers, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Thursday on X. He said the change was effective immediately.

“The increasing number of foreign drivers operating large tractor-trailer trucks on U.S. roads is endangering American lives and undercutting the livelihoods of American truckers,” Rubio posted.

The Trump administration in the past months has taken steps to enforce the requirement that truckers speak and read English proficiently. The Transportation Department said the aim is to improve road safety following incidents in which drivers’ ability to read signs or speak English may have contributed to traffic deaths.

The State Department said later Thursday it was pausing the processing of these work visas to review its “screening and vetting protocols.”

“Ensuring that every driver on our roads meets the highest standards is important to protecting the livelihoods of American truckers and maintaining a secure, resilient supply chain,” the department said.

Edward Alden, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, said foreign workers have helped address a labor shortage of commercial truck drivers.

“This action should be seen as part of a concerted effort by the administration to discourage American companies and other institutions like universities and hospitals from hiring and retaining foreign workers,” Alden wrote in an email.

“The goal here is not to target specific classes of workers, but to send the message to American employers that they are at risk if they are employing foreign workers. The economic consequences will be far larger than just visas being stripped from foreign workers in a few job categories.”

New review of all visa holders is a major expansion

The administration has steadily imposed more restrictions and requirements on visa applicants, including requiring them to submit to in-person interviews. The review of all visa holders appears to be a significant expansion of what had initially been a process focused mainly on students who have been involved in what the government perceives as pro-Palestinian or anti-Israel activity.

Officials say the reviews will include all visa holders’ social media accounts, law enforcement and immigration records in their home countries, along with any actionable violations of U.S. law committed while they were in the United States.

The reviews will include new tools for data collection on past, present and future visa applicants, including a complete scouring of social media sites made possible by new requirements introduced earlier this year. Those make it mandatory for privacy switches on cellphones and other electronic devices or apps to be turned off when an applicant appears for a visa interview.

“As part of the Trump Administration’s commitment to protect U.S. national security and public safety, since Inauguration Day the State Department has revoked more than twice as many visas, including nearly four times as many student visas, as during the same time period last year,” the State Department said.

The vast majority of foreigners seeking to come to the U.S. require visas, especially those who want to study or work for extended periods. Among the exceptions for short-term tourist or business visits are citizens of the 40 mainly European and Asian countries belonging to the Visa Waiver Program, which grants those nationals a stay of up to three months without having to apply for a visa.

But large swaths of the world — including highly populated countries like China, India, Indonesia, Russia and most of Africa — are not part of the program, meaning their citizens must apply for and receive visas to travel to the United States.

Earlier this week, the department said that since Trump returned to the White House, it has revoked more than 6,000 student visas for overstays and violations of local, state and federal law, the vast majority of which were assault, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs and support for terrorism.

It said about 4,000 of those 6,000 were due to actual infractions of laws and that approximately 200 to 300 visas were revoked for terrorism-related issues, including providing support for designated terrorist organizations or state sponsors of terrorism.

Source: <https://www.africanews.com/2025/08/22/trump-administration-reviews-55-million-visa-holders-for-violations/?dicbo=v2-E7rKxp2>

## Pakistan out of Asia Cup 2025 as hockey tournament begins in India

For the first time in history, Pakistan will not participate in the Asia Cup hockey tournament. The event begins on Friday in Rajgir, Bihar, India, featuring eight nations. Pakistan, a three-time champion and founding member of the Asian Hockey Federation, has been replaced by Bangladesh in Group B.

Hockey India President Dilip Kumar Tirkey confirmed that Pakistan withdrew due to concerns over the security of their squad in India. He emphasized that India never refused Pakistan entry and that the decision was taken solely by the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF).

The decision comes three months after a four-day conflict between India and Pakistan in May, their worst standoff since 1999, which resulted in over 70 deaths. While cricket bodies of both nations agreed on neutral venues for global tournaments, no such arrangement exists for hockey.

This withdrawal puts Pakistan in a difficult position. By skipping the Asia Cup, they lose the chance to qualify directly for the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026. The tournament champions gain an automatic berth, while teams finishing second to sixth will play qualifiers. Pakistan, ranked 15th in world hockey, now faces slim chances of making the World Cup.

Meanwhile, host nation India will aim to win the continental title at home and secure qualification. Defending champions South Korea, along with Malaysia, Japan, China, Kazakhstan, and Chinese Taipei, will also compete.

Hockey has long been a shared glory for India and Pakistan. Before the 1947 partition, players from both regions represented India, winning Olympic golds in 1928, 1932, and 1936. Since independence, the two rivals have collectively won 11 Olympic gold medals, five World Cups, and three Champions Trophy titles.

The teams last faced each other at the 2024 Asian Champions Trophy, where India won 2-1 and lifted the title.

Source: Al Jazeera <https://share.google/ezeSDDmcvb7DbNbKf>



## U.S.-South Korea Summit: A special relationship

*By Joseph R. DeTrani*

In December 1952, President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower visited South Korea, during the brutal war with North Korea, for the first presidential summit of the leaders of our two countries. Now, President Trump follows in this tradition, welcoming newly elected President Lee Jae Myung to Washington for an important summit between two allies.

Eisenhower was determined to bring an end to the Korean War, which took the lives of tens of thousands of U.S. and South Korean military personnel and civilians. On July 27, 1953, the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed, halting the fighting, although the war continues till this day. A 2.5-mile buffer zone was created, separating the two Koreas.

The decades that followed the Korean War were tense, with a belligerent North Korea determined to threaten and provoke South Korea. Despite these provocations, South Korea was able to develop into a model liberal democracy with the 13th largest gross domestic product in the world.

The summit of these two recently elected presidents is timely. During the past seven months, Mr. Trump has shown the world that he is a proactive peacemaker, determined to help resolve conflicts afflicting a growing number of countries. We saw this with Pakistan and India, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Thailand and Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, Serbia and Kosovo, and Egypt and Ethiopia. Mr. Trump's efforts to bring an end to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza continue.

Indeed, this will be an opportune time for Mr. Lee to brief Mr. Trump on his vision for South Korea, economically and geopolitically. And now that the tariff issue has been resolved with the U.S., South Korea's second-largest trading partner, there should be sufficient time to address the nuclear threat from North Korea.

The Lee administration has reached out to North Korea, making it clear that the new president wants a good relationship with it. The response from the North has been negative, with the powerful sister of Kim Jong Un, Kim Yo Jung, making it clear that

North Korea views South Korea as the enemy, eschewing peaceful reunification of the two Koreas.

Mr. Trump has a special relationship with Kim Jong-un, with the 2018 and 2019 summits in Singapore and Hanoi — and a symbolic demilitarized zone meeting — under his belt. Discussing the possibility of Mr. Trump reaching out to Mr. Kim no doubt will be discussed. This would also be a good time for Mr. Lee to explain what his administration will do, in addition to recently stopping broadcasts into North Korea and taking down the loudspeakers, to improve relations with North Korea.

North Korea's new strategic relationship with Russia must be of considerable concern. Its mutual defense treaty with Russia and North Korean troops participating in Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine are of concern, as are the ballistic missiles, artillery shells and other weaponry the North is providing to Russia. In return, of course, Russia is providing North Korea with satellite, nuclear, missile and other assistance. Indeed, Mr. Kim is building more nuclear weapons and missiles to deliver them as far as the U.S.

North Korea's road-mobile, solid fuel Hwasong-19 is an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the whole of the U.S. This is the North Korea we're dealing with. It's the North Korea that views South Korea as the enemy, previously threatening to use tactical nuclear weapons against the South.

The reality is that North Korea's new relationship with Russia could embolden Mr. Kim and incite him to do something provocative against South Korea, which we've seen in the past. This could escalate quickly.

Given the threat from North Korea, the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea are a trip wire and help to deter North Korea from taking militarily action against the South. North Korea previously acted recklessly — and that was when it didn't have nuclear weapons or a mutual defense treaty with Russia.

U.S. extended nuclear deterrence commitments are a core element of our allied relationship with South Korea. This summit will also permit the U.S. to double down on these nuclear umbrella commitments.

Currently, South Korea spends close to \$1 billion to defray some of the cost for the stationing of U.S. troops in the South. That amount, no doubt, will also be discussed.

The list of issues to discuss between our two presidents is long. But permitting the new Lee government to articulate its approach to developments in the South and East China seas — and possible developments with Taiwan — will ensure clarity on a myriad of issues affecting both our countries.

This should be an excellent summit between two close allies.

Source:<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2025/aug/22/us-south-korea-summit-special-relationship/>

# The Art of the Deal, Russia-Ukraine Style

## | Opinion



*By Josh Hammer*

Two months after the breathtaking Operation Midnight Hammer strikes against Iran’s nuclear facilities and the ceasefire with Israel that soon followed, President Donald Trump has once again upended conventional foreign policy wisdom. After years of escalatory rhetoric, moral posturing and seemingly endless funding packages, Trump’s twin high-profile summits with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and other European leaders in Washington offer the clearest roadmap yet to finally end the tragic war in Ukraine.

And perhaps the toughest part for the foreign policy establishment to swallow: It would come to pass not in spite of Trump’s nationalist “America First” instincts but because of them.

Three and a half years after Putin’s February 2022 invasion, the Russia-Ukraine war is a humanitarian catastrophe and a financial sinkhole. It has often seemed to be an intractable quagmire; the permanent foreign policy class has no idea how to even begin to end it. Ever since Russian tanks first rolled into the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, Western elites have clung to fanciful, idealistic slogans—“as long as it takes,” “until the last square inch,” and so forth—while sending oodles of U.S. taxpayer dollars to a deeply corrupt country at an alarming clip.

No one in former President Joe Biden’s neoliberal blob had any plan to stop the killing. Trump does. And he’s showing us yet again how a sober realism—not liberal internationalist fantasy—can yield results.

It begins with clarity of purpose as it pertains to the American national interest. Trump has never pretended that the precise delineation of the historically disputed Russia-Ukraine border is a question that implicates the United States’ vital interests. Simply put, Ukraine isn’t in NATO. If the invaded country were a NATO country like Estonia or Latvia, this would be a different conversation. But that’s not the case.

Trump also understands the parties well. He knows that Putin is an inveterate autocrat—not a “democrat-in-waiting” who just needs a few more Harvard Kennedy School seminars to fall in line. And he also recognizes that Zelensky, Churchillian cosplay notwithstanding, is the president of a still-fledgling post-Soviet republic mired in venality and a dubious commitment to Western-style liberalism. Putin is a horrific thug, yes, but he is a rational actor; Zelensky

is less barbaric than Putin, but his maximalist ambitions have been overinflated by years of Western ego-stroking.

Enter Dealmaker-in-Chief Trump—the man who has already secured ceasefires or peace deals between Israel and Iran, Armenia and Azerbaijan, India and Pakistan, Cambodia and Thailand, and Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Based on what we can glean from the recent summits with Putin and Zelensky, Trump’s “art of the deal” strategy for a grand Russo-Ukrainian peace accord seems to center on four principles: neutrality for Ukraine, land swaps, reconstruction guarantees, and enforcement mechanisms.

Neutrality means Ukraine doesn’t join NATO—period. There will be no more inching ever-eastward for NATO—the sort of reckless expansionism that helped sparked this conflict in the first place. Ukraine must remain sovereign—a tough but necessary concession from Putin, who harbors Soviet-era “Greater Russia” ambitions. It will become a bridge state not wholly dissimilar to Belarus, minus the repressive dictatorship of Alexander Lukashenko. Zelensky has at times seemed insistent on eventual NATO membership for Ukraine, but he has also equivocated. He will have to compromise; Russia has a legitimate security interest in a buffer zone on its western border.

If there is a peace deal in the offing, land swaps and territorial compromise will be the toughest pill to swallow. This is where Trump, the sober and emotionally detached realist, stands a better chance of succeeding than his ideologically inclined White House predecessor. Crimea will remain with Russia—that is both the historical and the present, on-the-ground reality. The borders of the Donbas region—full of ethnically/linguistically divided Russian/Ukrainian towns—must be redrawn too. The granular cartographic details are beyond the scope of this column, but the general guiding principle should be self-determination and peace over strife and proxy war.

Third, Trump is reportedly working with European partners to create a Marshall Plan-style economic reconstruction package for Ukraine—as long as a peace deal holds. The all-important carrot for Ukraine here is economic revival, not NATO’s Article 5 missiles. The mineral rights deal inked earlier this year between the U.S. and Ukraine provides more in the way of economic inducement.

Finally, enforcement. A Russia-Ukraine deal likely cannot survive on good intentions alone. Trump’s model will require teeth. The enforcement details remain to be seen—and Trump’s MAGA base would rightly resist a NATO-style mutual defense guarantee. Unlike NATO’s tripwires or Biden’s moralistic blank checks, Trump’s enforcement model must be transactional and rooted in the American national self-interest. Getting this part of the deal right will be crucial.

Ending the Russia-Ukraine war would save countless lives, stabilize Europe’s eastern flank, and—perhaps most important—finally permit the U.S. military to focus on deterring its top 21st-century geopolitical threat, Communist China. By already bringing us closer to peace than his predecessor ever did, Trump is again reminding Americans that the purpose of foreign policy is not moral preening but the pursuit of the national interest.

The war in Ukraine has raged far too long. If Trump can bring it to a close, with a deal that both Moscow and Kyiv can live with, then he will have achieved what no Western leader since 2022 has had the courage to even attempt in earnest.

And perhaps, if successful, he’ll finally get that elusive Nobel Peace Prize.

Source:<https://www.newsweek.com/art-deal-russia-ukraine-style-opinion-2117459>

## **GUNTER: Want to cut federal operating expenses? Start with civil service**

**Lorne Gunter**

Here's a staggering statistic for you: Nearly 40 per cent of the federal civil service (147,000 of 373,000 federal bureaucrats) made in excess of \$100,000 in 2024. The average Canadian made just shy of \$68,000.

And that sum doesn't include the bureaucrats' retroactive pay raises paid out last year. Nor does it include their very expensive perks or the generous contributions Ottawa makes to its workers' lavish pensions.

Thanks to some tenacious digging by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF), who came up with the above figures, we know the 147,000 figure is a steep increase from the 111,000 federal civil servants who took in more than \$100,000 in 2023. Indeed, it marks a 32 per cent increase in the number of \$100k+ federal workers in just one year.

Another way to look at it: The last year of the Trudeau government was good — really, really good — for federal bureaucrats.

Indeed, all 10 years of the Trudeau government were richly rewarding for federal bureaucrats. According to the CTF, from 2015 when the Liberals took over until the end of last year, "the number of federal bureaucrats taking six-figure salaries more than tripled."

There was inflation during those years, to be sure. That drove wages in the public and private sectors. So the number of civil servants making in excess of \$100,000 would have gone up in part because inflation pushed wages higher.

But inflation didn't cause a tripling of the 100,000 Club. That was mostly due to overly generous wage increases — increases well above those in the private sector — plus bonuses and generous perks.

During the Trudeau years, the federal civil service grew in size by 40 per cent. Meanwhile the cost of paying all 373,000 civil servants rose by 70 per cent. That means federal government wages were more than keeping up with inflation at a time when taxpayers — the Canadians who fund those wages — were often struggling to keep up.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) estimates the cost of all the add-ons, bonuses, pension contributions and benefits received by federal civil servants adds about 25 per cent above and beyond their salaries. The average in the private sector is about 17 per cent.

It's little wonder that Pierre Poilievre lost his suburban Ottawa riding in April's general election.



The riding of Carleton is home to thousands of bureaucrats and Poilievre was promising to cut the size of the federal civil service at a time when those bureaucrats were on a tax-funded bender.

Recall, too, that many federal office workers now work largely from home and bristle at any suggestion that they should return to their offices and bear the costs of child care and gas, like the rest of Canadians.

Civil servants were told to come into the office at least three days a week starting last fall, but according to Statistics Canada's latest figures on commuting, one in four people in Toronto is still working from home on any given day. One in five in Montreal and Vancouver. One in 10 in Saskatchewan. Meanwhile in Ottawa, the hub of the federal civil service, one in three is working from home.

Could it be that civil servants, with their higher pay, shorter working hours, longer vacations, earlier retirements and richer pensions are also ignoring the government's return-to-the-office directives?

In many ways, federal civil servants have become a privileged economic class all their own.

The most frustrating part of all of this is that despite the massive increase in civil-service employment and the dramatic increase in pay, Canadians are not being any better served by Ottawa. Immigration is still out of control, housing prices are still unaffordable for many, waits for health care are troubling, crime and homelessness are persistent, the country's economy is sluggish and, despite crushing environmental regulations, environmental outcomes have not improved much.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has tasked his ministers with cutting federal operating expenses by 15 per cent over the next three years. Guess where they should start.

Source: [https://torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/lorne-gunter-want-to-cut-federal-operating-expenses-start-with-the-civil-service/wcm/ccc90f5d-937b-4343-9322-2bea8ede13d4?itm\\_source=opinion](https://torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/lorne-gunter-want-to-cut-federal-operating-expenses-start-with-the-civil-service/wcm/ccc90f5d-937b-4343-9322-2bea8ede13d4?itm_source=opinion)

## The Global Voice Magazine



# 80 years after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima, what should be reflected on and pursued?: Global Times editorial



*By Global Times*

On Wednesday, the bell at Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park tolled once again. A solemn memorial ceremony was held in Hiroshima, where attendees reaffirmed their commitment to peace. In his speech, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba called for the establishment of "a world without nuclear war and a world without nuclear weapons." As Wednesday marks the 80th anniversary of the Hiroshima atomic bombing, people should deeply examine the true meaning of the remembrance and explore how to uphold a correct historical perspective on WWII and maintain global common security.

The atomic bombings that struck 80 years ago was undoubtedly one of humanity's greatest tragedies. Hence, "Hiroshima" and "Nagasaki" became powerful symbols driving postwar Japan onto a path of pacifism. Based on this painful memory, Article 9 of Japan's Constitution renounces war as a sovereign right of the nation, and in 1971, the Japanese Diet established the "three non-nuclear principles" - not to possess, produce, or permit the introduction of nuclear weapons - as a national policy. As the only country to have suffered a nuclear attack, Japan has actively positioned itself on the international stage as a "leading advocate" of nuclear disarmament. However, behind this narrative lies a selectively constructed "safe zone" that renders Japan's stance contradictory.

Japan's proclaimed anti-nuclear weapons position stands in sharp contrast to its deep reliance on the US "nuclear umbrella." On one hand, the Japanese government waves the banner of "a world without nuclear weapons." On the other, it firmly anchors its national security to the deterrent power of the US nuclear arsenal. Whether in urging the US to extend its nuclear deterrence or proposing "nuclear sharing," the essence is to pursue a preemptive nuclear deterrent - one that heightens the risks of nuclear proliferation and conflict. This severely undermines Japan's moral standing in advocating for global nuclear disarmament.

While amplifying its "victimhood" narrative, Japan's nuclear materials policy also raises serious concerns. Although Japan is a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it stores large quantities of separated plutonium - sensitive material that can be directly used to manufacture

nuclear weapons - under the pretext of peaceful nuclear energy use. A few years ago, Japan even underreported 640 kilograms of plutonium, a serious violation. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Japan possesses enough separated plutonium to make thousands of nuclear warheads. In addition to its surplus of nuclear material, Japan also has the necessary technical expertise, making it a potential “nuclear threshold state.” Occasional calls by some right-wing politicians to pursue “independent nuclear deterrent” counter to Japan’s ideal of “a world without nuclear weapons” and only add further instability to regional security.

Some people in Japan portray themselves as “victims of nuclear bombings” while simultaneously displaying an intense obsession with building “nuclear deterrence.” As the US now views China as its greatest strategic competitor, Japan’s right-wing forces see an opportunity to break free from the strategic restraints that have bound them for 80 years. In recent years, Japan has repeatedly hyped up the so-called “nuclear threat” posed by China, Russia, and others as a pretext to strengthen its own defense capabilities and bolster the US-Japan alliance. Meanwhile, Washington, driven by geopolitical interests, turns a blind eye to the signs of a resurgence of Japanese militarism. It’s worth noting that if Japan makes a qualitative breakthrough on the nuclear issue, the cage that has contained Japanese militarism will collapse, severely challenging peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, which would backfire on the US.

The so-called “nuclear umbrella” is far from the safe and reliable shield Japan has imagined. On the contrary, it could actually push Japan to the frontline of a nuclear conflict as risks escalate, making it a sacrificial pawn in geopolitics. The US Navy’s nuclear submarines visiting Japanese ports, and the AUKUS alliance deploying nuclear submarines in the Asia-Pacific, are clear signs that “nuclear sharing” among these countries is eroding the global nuclear security order, undermining strategic balance and stability at both regional and global levels, and obstructing the process of international arms control.

The commemoration of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki should begin with a deep reflection on the brutality of war. The tragedy of the atomic bombings was rooted in the war of aggression launched by Japanese militarism. If this historical context is ignored and the victims of the bombings are mourned in isolation, it risks falling into the trap of historical nihilism and blurring Japan’s culpability as a wartime aggressor. Therefore, upholding a correct historical perspective on WWII should be both the premise and the core of the commemoration. This means Japan must confront its history of aggression and wartime atrocities with honest and comprehensive attitude, acknowledging the tremendous suffering it inflicted upon its Asian neighbors. Only then can the commemoration of Hiroshima bombing resonate with moral significance, and only then will its calls for peace carry weight.

Having endured the ravages of war, human society has come to understand the importance of cherishing peace, expanding cooperation, and pursuing common development. Today’s global security challenges, including the risks of nuclear proliferation, cannot be solved by strengthening military alliances or fueling bloc confrontations. Finding answers to prevent the recurrence of past tragedies requires the courage to face history, the wisdom to transcend group rivalry, and above all, the resolve to build a community with a shared future for mankind. This is the true meaning of commemorating the atomic bombings of Hiroshima.

Source: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202508/1340277.shtml>

## Opinions | Israel-Palestine conflict

### In Gaza City, we are saying goodbye



By Sara Awad

Forced expulsion is looming and we know this time we may never see our homes again. To those who still care, this may be the last letter I write from Gaza City.

We are expecting Israel to officially issue its “evacuation orders” any time now. My beloved city, Gaza, stands on the brink of a full military occupation by the Israeli army. Their plan is to force us all to leave our homes and move into tents in the southern part of the Strip. We do not know what will happen to those who resist. We may be living our last days in Gaza City.

Since the beginning of the war, we have heard that Israel wants to occupy our city and take it as a settlement area for its people. At first, we didn’t believe it; we thought this kind of news was psychological warfare. After all, we have had “evacuation orders” before and people were able to return, even if it was to the ruins of their homes.

On October 13, shortly after the genocide started, the Israeli army told everyone in northern Gaza, including Gaza City, to move south. The orders were accompanied by relentless bombardment. Hundreds would sometimes die in a day. Hundreds of thousands of people fled south for their lives.

We didn’t. My father refused to leave our home, so we all stayed. We lived in our home for months in unbearable pain and fear. We witnessed the destruction of our neighbourhood with our eyes.

Then the Israeli army cut off the north from the south. Aid could not reach the north. From January to April 2024, my family and I lived the most suffocating days of the war. We were starved; we spent our days searching for anything to ease our hunger. Sometimes, we were forced to eat animal feed.

In January this year, when a ceasefire took effect, people were allowed to go back to the north. It was an emotional moment that reflected just how much we, Palestinians, are attached to our land.

This time, the atmosphere feels different. It feels that the threat of permanent occupation, of permanent loss, is very real.

“In preparation for the transfer of civilians from the war zone to the south ... a large

number of tents and shelter equipment will be allowed to enter [Gaza]", Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraee posted on Facebook.

People across Gaza read this news with a heavy heart. There are many questions and few answers: Where will we flee? When will this start? Will anyone intervene and stop this catastrophe?

People are overwhelmed – emotionally, mentally, physically, financially; they cannot endure any more suffering.

Since my family and I heard this announcement, we have been looking at each other with confused, fearful eyes.

When I saw images on social media of tents and tarpaulins entering Gaza City, my heart broke into a million pieces. The thought of my future being stuffed into a tent terrified me. My dreams are big; how can I fit them into a small tent?

I told my father I don't want to live in a tent. Tears were rolling down my cheeks. He looked at me with helplessness in his eyes and said, "We do not have another choice, the tent is becoming our new reality."

We do not want to leave, but we feel we do not have a choice. We do not think we can endure the relentless bombardment and shelling once again. The Israelis will likely be even more brutal when they invade this time. It will not be punishment this time; it will be total erasure.

Feeling the end of their city is coming, people are spending what they fear may be their last days in it with their families, having their single meal for the day, together. They are walking around their neighbourhoods, taking pictures of themselves with the places tied to their childhood memories, capturing everything that might be erased.

I write these words, sitting in a shared workspace where many students and writers are trying to fight the fear of what is to come by studying and working. They are hanging on to their work routines, hoping for some normalcy amid the terrifying chaos.

People in Gaza love life, even when life means surviving by the bare minimum. Even in the darkest moments, we always find a way to have hope, joy, and happiness.

I want to have hope, but I am also terrified – not only of the bombs, of forced displacement, of tents and exile. I am terrified of being cut off from the world, of being silenced.

I feel like what Israel is preparing for us in the south is a concentration camp where we will be cut off from the world, our voices muffled, our existence erased.

I do not know how much longer my words will reach the outside world, so I want to take this opportunity to make an appeal.

Do not forget me, Sara Awad, a Palestinian student, whose biggest dream is to finish her degree in English literature and become a professional journalist.

Do not forget the people of Gaza and their 2 million stories of love, heartbreak and perseverance.

Do not forget my city, Gaza – an ancient metropolis, full of history and culture, full of love.

Do not forget how fiercely we resisted and held on to our homes and land, even when the world all but abandoned us.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2025/8/19/in-gaza-city-we-are-saying-goodbye>

# Opinion: Four ambitious steps to move Canada from humility to global leadership

By Apoorv Sinha



Canada has been known mostly for its humility, but this has masked bouts of bold ambition that mark our history, built on transformative projects and resource-driven trade. From the fur trade to timber, and later energy, Canada's history is rooted in seizing opportunities and acting decisively.

Yet today, the country risks losing its edge and falling behind globally. To secure its future, Canada must start acting fast, building big and redefining itself for the 21st century.

We need our leaders to embrace this Canadian ambition once again — particularly with the recurring drum beat of annexation coming from our southern neighbours, threatening our very sovereignty.

We should take inspiration from our past.

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the late 19th century was a defining moment in our history. It wasn't just a railway — it was a nation-building project that united provinces, opened up vast territories for trade and settlement, and cemented Canada's place on the global stage.

Despite financial hurdles and political risks, leaders of the time understood that a bold infrastructure project was essential for growth. The result? A connected Canada with thriving markets and new opportunities.

Nearly a century later, the James Bay Project proved Canada's ability to think big again. This massive hydroelectric development transformed Quebec into an energy powerhouse, generating over 15 gigawatts of electricity — enough to power entire nations.

It required unparalleled engineering feats, thousands of workers and bold leadership willing to take risks. The project not only delivered clean energy but also positioned Canada as a leader in harnessing its natural resources on a global scale, almost 50 years ahead of its time.

Both projects remind us: when Canada acts ambitiously, it changes the game.

But in recent times, Canada has slowed down. Bureaucratic red tape and risk-averse policies have driven away billions in investment. Meanwhile, countries like China and the

U.S. are racing ahead with infrastructure buildouts that will define their economies for decades.

Canada cannot afford to fall further behind.

To reclaim its position as a global leader, we must act boldly. Four ambitious steps will get us there:

First, we need grand challenges — ambitious national goals like building world-class infrastructure for energy production or creating critical mineral supply chains that galvanize public and private sectors alike. These initiatives can position Canada as a solutions leader in global markets.

Second, we need to streamline building approvals and make Canada the fastest place in the world to get permits for major projects. Fast-tracking approvals will attract global investors, innovators and builders who are ready to innovate here.

Third, we must champion immigrant entrepreneurs who have historically driven Canadian growth by highlighting their success stories and creating pathways for ambitious newcomers who can build businesses and drive innovation. While others turn immigrants away, Canada needs to attract the most ambitious to its shores to make it their home.

Finally, we need to pick winners by focusing on industries where scale matters — like scalable infrastructure and critical minerals — and backing companies with the potential to dominate globally.

Success is not about fairness — it's about bold bets that pay off.

The demise of the Hudson's Bay Company — a cornerstone of Canada's early trading economy — marks the end of an era but also signals an opportunity. HBC once defined Canada's trading roots in fur; now it's time to redefine trade and infrastructure for the 21st century.

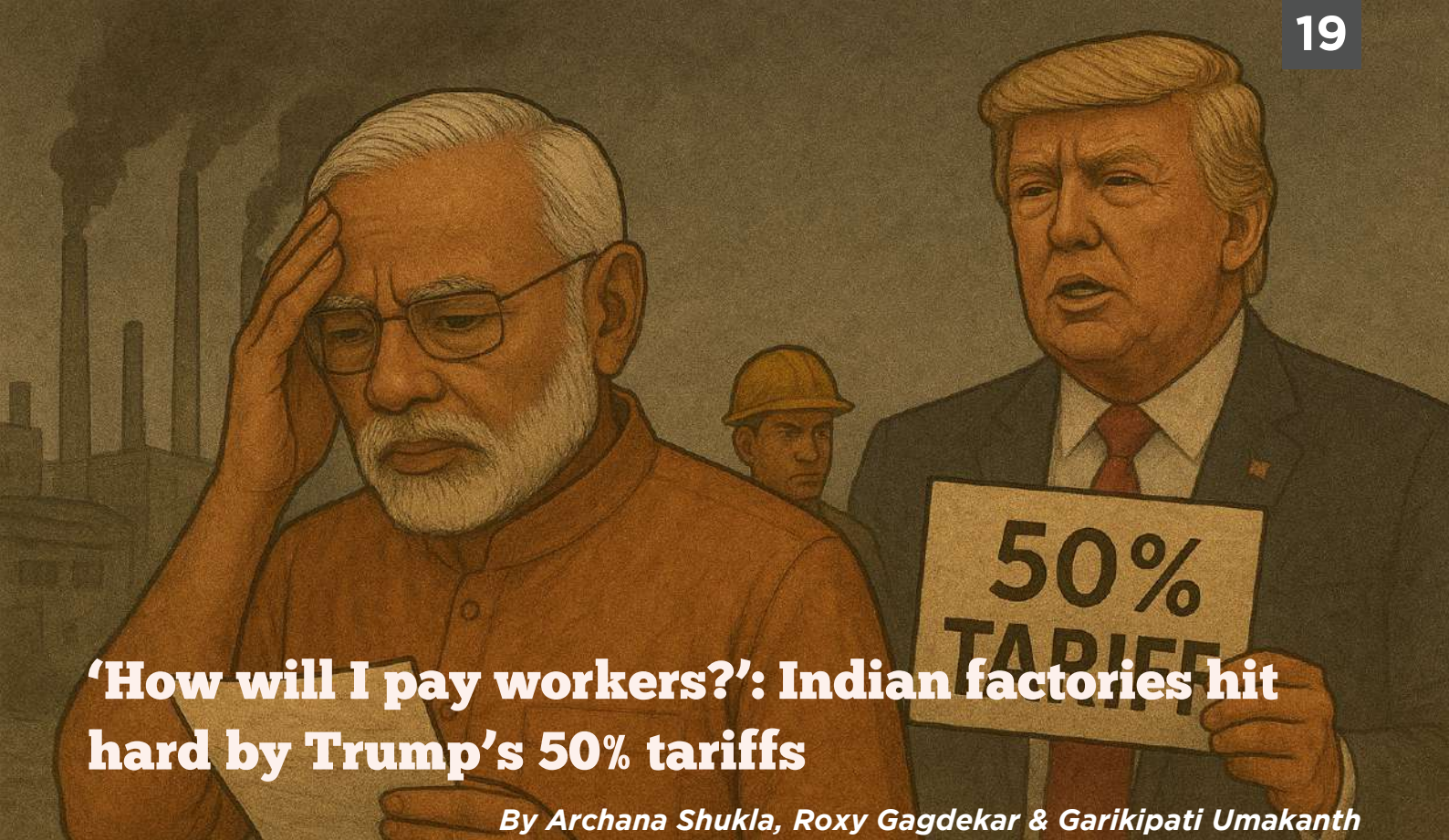
The future lies in building infrastructure that powers tomorrow: energy systems that support renewable grids, supply chains for critical minerals essential for electric vehicles and technologies that position Canada as a global leader in sustainability and innovation.

Canada has everything it needs: abundant resources, innovative talent, and a history of rising to challenges with bold action. But we need urgency. The next 100 years won't wait for polite deliberation — they demand decisive action.

Let Hudson's Bay's decline remind us of our roots while inspiring us to evolve. By acting ambitiously — building fast and building smart — Canada can claim its place as an economic powerhouse and secure prosperity for generations to come.

Canada need not apologize for its ambition and should instead unleash the dynamism of the country — ready to be bigger, bolder and to lead.

Source:[https://windsorstar.com/opinion/columnists/opinion-four-ambitious-steps-to-move-canada-from-humility-to-global-leadership?itm\\_source=opinion](https://windsorstar.com/opinion/columnists/opinion-four-ambitious-steps-to-move-canada-from-humility-to-global-leadership?itm_source=opinion)



## **‘How will I pay workers?’: Indian factories hit hard by Trump’s 50% tariffs**

*By Archana Shukla, Roxy Gagdekar & Garikipati Umakanth*

An eerie silence hangs over N Krishnamurthy’s garment manufacturing unit in Tiruppur, one of India’s largest textile export hubs.

Only a fraction of some 200 industrial sewing machines on the floor are in operation, as workers make the last of the season’s children’s garment orders for some of the biggest US retailers.

At one end of the room, piles of fabric samples for new designs are gathering dust - casualties of US President Donald Trump’s steep 50% tariffs on India, set to kick in from Wednesday.

India is a major exporter of goods, including garments, shrimp and gems and jewellery, to the US. Trade experts say the high tariffs - including a 25% penalty for buying Russian oil and weapons - are akin to an embargo on Indian goods.

BBC correspondents visited key export hubs across India to assess how the trade uncertainties are impacting business owners and livelihoods.

Across Tiruppur - which contributes to a third of India’s \$16bn (£11.93bn) exports of ready-to-wear garments to brands such as Target, Walmart, Gap and Zara - there’s acute anxiety about what the future holds.

“September onwards, there may be nothing left to do,” Krishnamurthy said, as clients have paused all orders.

He recently had to pause his expansion plans and bench nearly 250 new workers who were hired before the tariffs were imposed.

The timing of the announcement has made things worse because nearly half of annual sales for most export businesses are made during this period, in the run-up to Christmas.

Now these units are banking on the domestic market and on the upcoming Diwali season in India, to survive.

At another factory that makes underwear, we saw inventory of nearly \$1m, meant for US stores, piled up with no takers.

“We were hoping India will ink a trade deal with the US. The entire production chain was frozen last month. How will I pay workers if this continues?” Siva Subramaniam, the owner of Raft Garments, told the BBC.

At a 50% tariff rate, an Indian-made shirt that once sold at \$10 will cost US buyers \$16.40 - far costlier than \$14.20 from China, \$13.20 from Bangladesh or \$12 from Vietnam.

Even if duties ease to 25%, India will be less competitive than its Asian peers.

To soften the blow, the government has announced some measures - a suspension of import duties on raw materials, for instance. Trade talks with other countries have also gathered momentum to diversify markets. But many fear this is too little, too late.

“We can expect the diversion of trade, with US buyers moving to Mexico, Vietnam and Bangladesh,” said Ajay Srivastava of the Global Trade Research Initiative.

Some 1,200km (745 miles) away, at an export zone in Mumbai, hundreds of workers are busy polishing and packing diamonds, part of India's \$10bn gems and jewellery exports trade.

But jewellery brands here are nervous about the potential impact of the tariffs on their sales during September and October - when \$3-4bn worth of jewellery gets shipped to the US.

While India's new trade partnerships with the UK and Australia have opened up opportunities, years of effort to build a presence in the US could be undone in months, fears Adil Kotwal of Creation Jewellery, who sells 90% of his diamond-studded jewels in the US.

He works on thin margins of 3-4%, so even a 10% additional tariff rate is difficult to sustain. “Who can absorb these tariffs? Even US retailers will not be able to [do so],” Kotwal told the BBC.

Kotwal sources his stones from Surat city in neighbouring Gujarat state. In Surat, the world's diamond-cutting and polishing hub, a crisis has been brewing long before the tariffs hit due to declining global demand and competition from lab-grown diamonds.

And now the tariffs are a double whammy.

American customers have vanished and factories that sustained nearly five million livelihoods are now operating for barely 15 days every month. Hundreds of contract workers have been sent on indefinite leave.

Inside a dimly lit diamond polishing unit on the city's outskirts, rows of dusty, unused tables stretch out in silence. Nearby, broken CPUs lie scattered.

“This place used to be buzzing,” says a worker. “Many people were fired recently. We



don't know what will happen to us.”

Shailesh Mangukia, who built the unit, says he once employed 300 workers. Now only 70 remain. The number of diamonds polished every month has plunged from 2,000 to barely 300.

Local trade union leaders such as Bhavesh Tank say workers here face “decreasing wages, forced leave and shrinking monthly incomes”.

Many of India's shrimp farmers, meanwhile, are considering switching to other products to survive the blow. India is one of the largest exporters of shrimp to the world - and the US is a major market.

Along with other duties, total tariffs on shrimps now stand to go up above 60% - a body blow for the sector as prices have dropped by \$0.60-0.72 per kilo since the tariffs were first announced and are expected to fall further once the 50% rate comes into effect.



“This is the peak season for US buyers preparing for Christmas and New Year sales. Farmers here are just starting their new cultivation cycle. Trump's tariffs caused great confusion. We're unable to make any decisions,” Thota Jagadeesh, an exporter, told the BBC.

Hatchery operators say they've significantly reduced shrimp larvae production as a result.

“Previously, we produced an average of 100 million shrimp larvae annually. Now, we're not even reaching 60-70 million,” said MS Varma of Srimannarayana Hatcheries in Veeravasaram town.

All of this could affect the livelihoods of half a million shrimp farmers directly and another 2.5 million indirectly, according to estimates.

In a country already reeling from a protracted crisis of job creation, these are worrying figures.

For now, the impasse between India and the US continues. If anything, the environment for further trade negotiations has significantly deteriorated in the weeks gone by.

The latest round of trade talks which were set to begin in Delhi this week were reportedly called off, and US officials have doubled down on their criticism of India, accusing it of “cosying up” to Beijing and being a “laundromat” for Russia.

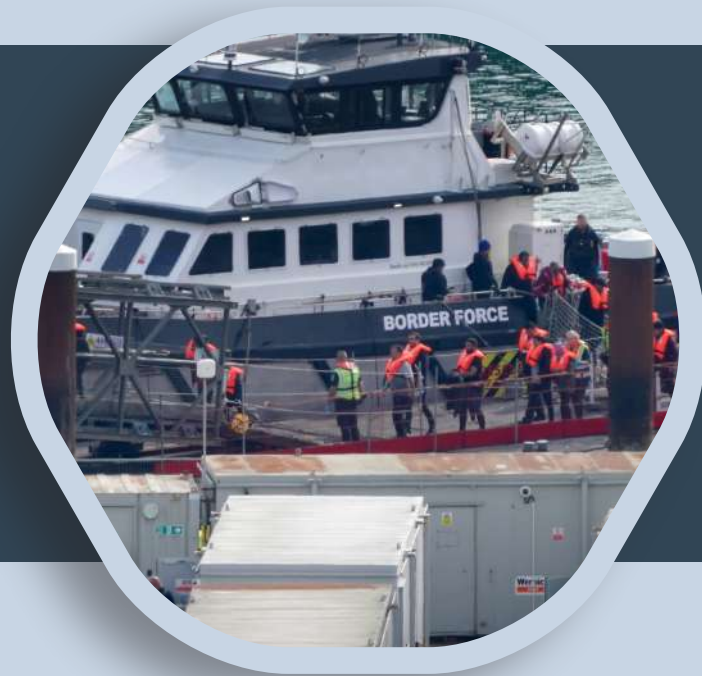
“The future of India-US talks now depends heavily on the Trump administration's priorities, domestic as well as those involving Russia and China, among others,” Gopal Naddur of the Asia Group advisory firm told the BBC.

“For India's policymakers and business leaders alike, the mantra will need to be: increase self-reliance, diversify, and leave no stone unturned.”

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c98lr56mznjo>

# Government plans to overhaul asylum appeals system

*By Iain Watson, Tabby Wilson*



The government is planning an overhaul of the asylum appeals system as it tries to cut the number of migrants staying in hotels while they await a ruling.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said she was taking practical steps to end unacceptable delays, with a new body, staffed by independent adjudicators, to be established.

The government has been under increasing pressure to reduce its reliance on asylum hotels, with demonstrations held across the UK over the weekend being the latest in a series of protests over the policy.

In response, the Refugee Council told BBC the best way of “getting fewer appeals is getting decisions right first time”.

Ministers have pledged to end hotel use in this Parliament - but 32,000 asylum seekers are still housed in them.

Cooper said that, while initial decisions on asylum applications had been sped up, there had been “unacceptable delays” when people who were turned down decided to appeal.

It currently takes on average just over a year for an appeal to be heard and 51,000 cases are still awaiting a decision.

During this time, failed asylum seekers are accommodated at the taxpayer’s expense.

To tackle this, a new panel of independent adjudicators will be appointed to deal with appeals, something ministers believe will act more swiftly than the courts.

The government has promised to give more details about how it will speed up cases in the autumn.

The Conservatives have said the asylum system is in chaos, while Reform UK has argued for the mass deportation of those who arrive by illegal or irregular routes.

Imran Hussain of the Refugee Council told the BBC that reducing appeals was necessary, but reducing mistakes was “the fastest way of getting the appeals backlog down”.

He claimed that about half of people get their original decision overturned through appeal because “the decision was found to be flawed in some way”.

“It’s really important that, when we’re talking about these life-and-death decisions on asylum, there is judicial oversight, so the courts can intervene if the law isn’t being kept

to,” he said.

The past week has seen rising frustration over where asylum seekers are housed.

On Saturday, demonstrators gathered in parts of England including Bristol, Liverpool and London, as well as in Mold in Wales, Perth in Scotland and County Antrim in Northern Ireland.

Police stepped in to keep opposing groups separated in many places where anti-racism campaigners mounted counter-demonstrations.

There were at least 15 arrests across the UK on Saturday, including a 37-year-old woman arrested on suspicion of assaulting an emergency worker in Bristol. Eleven arrests were made in Liverpool.

Demonstrations continued on Sunday, with protesters gathering outside a Holiday Inn in Birmingham, where they were seen peering through hotel doors and scaling a nearby lamp post.

Police also guarded the entrance to the Britannia Hotel in London’s Canary Wharf, where around 20 protesters congregated.

Epping, in Essex, has been a focal point for protesters since July, with thousands of people demonstrating outside the Bell Hotel after a resident asylum seeker was charged with sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl in the town.

On Tuesday, the High Court granted the council a temporary injunction to block asylum seekers from being housed in the Bell Hotel, after it argued that the hotel had breached local planning controls by changing its use, resulting in events that were a public safety risk.

Those currently in residence must be moved elsewhere by 16:00 on 12 September.

The government is seeking the right to appeal against the High Court ruling.

Cooper said the government was committed to closing all asylum hotels but that it needed to happen in “a properly managed way”.

A number of other councils are reportedly considering taking legal action following the ruling, including Tory-controlled Hillingdon, which currently houses 2,238 asylum seekers.

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch published an open letter urging Conservative council leaders “to take the same steps if your legal advice supports it”, while Reform UK’s Nigel Farage wrote in the Telegraph that councils controlled by his party would do “everything in their power” to follow Epping’s lead.

According to figures published by the Home Office earlier this week, 131 of more than 300 local authorities in the UK currently house asylum seekers in “contingency accommodation”, primarily made up of hotels.

Of those 131 areas, 74 are fully or partially led by Labour, 30 by the Liberal Democrats, 19 by the Conservatives, nine by the Green Party and one by Reform UK.

The Home Office has said it will continue to use Napier Barracks in Kent to house asylum seekers until the end of the year. The site has a maximum occupancy of just 328.

Source:<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cg4xp4ywk47o>

## 'Nicest judge in the world' Frank Caprio dies aged 88

US celebrity judge and social media star Frank Caprio has died aged 88, his family has said.

Over a 40-year career in Rhode Island, he famously used compassion and humour to make judgements that took into consideration the personal circumstances of the people in the dock.

Videos of Judge Caprio presiding over cases on his hit TV show *Caught in Providence* have had billions of views on social media, earning him the title the "nicest judge in the world".

His death following a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer was announced on his official Instagram account, where he was remembered for his "warmth" and "unwavering belief in the goodness of people".

Judge Caprio had presided over thousands of cases in his hometown of Providence, Rhode Island, before embarking on a TV career.

His signature courtroom style produced viral clips ranging from him inviting children to sit with him behind the bench during cases, to announcing a "mini-judge" soft toy of himself. A TikTok video showcasing his morning routine - brushing his teeth, signing his book and watching videos of his own show - has had more than 5m views.

In an 2019 interview, Judge Caprio said his courtroom proceedings "show a slice of life of Rhode Island that is very interesting, and it reflects the same issues people are experiencing nationwide". David Caprio, his son, thanked fans for their love and support and urged people to "spread a little kindness" in his father's memory.

In an Instagram statement to his 3.4 million followers, Judge Caprio was remembered for the "countless acts of kindness he inspired".

"His warmth, humour, and kindness left an indelible mark on all who knew him," the statement said. During its run, *Caught in Providence* was nominated for three Daytime Emmys, with Judge Caprio earning two of his own nominations last year.

The company behind it, Debmar-Mercury, paid tribute to Judge Caprio's "unique brand of compassion and common sense approach".

"We will miss him dearly," co-presidents Mort Marcus and Ira Bernstein said in a statement.

After being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2023, Judge Caprio said he was "fully prepared to fight as hard I can" and thanked followers for their support. In one of his last social media posts, Judge Caprio announced he was back in hospital after suffering a "setback" in his treatment and asked his followers for their prayers.

Judge Caprio is survived by his wife of nearly 60 years, Joyce Caprio, as well as their five children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c87ewp437e2o>



*By Yang Tian*

## Sharia law made **LEGALLY BINDING** in Austria despite warning over ‘incompatible’ values



By James Saunders

***‘Sharia has nothing to do with Austria and the principles of our constitution,’ the country’s Integration Minister vowed***

Islam’s Sharia law is legally binding for civil disputes in Austria, a court in the country’s capital has confirmed.

Two Muslim men had used a Sharia arbitration tribunal to settle a case of one owing the other 320,000 (€277,000).

The “loser” in the case had then appealed to the Vienna Regional Court for Civil Law Matters, arguing that rulings made under Sharia had no standing in Austria.

But the court upheld the tribunal’s decision.

Judges found it was permissible for private individuals to settle civil disputes through any manner they saw fit, including an Islamic tribunal.

And their decision has sparked fury from politicians on the Austrian right.

The Deputy Governor of Upper Austria, Manfred Haimbuchner, said that “Sharia is incompatible with our core values”.

He warned that the case was “another example of how our legal system and our constitutional state have nothing to counter the gradual appropriation of Islam”.

As a result, the country’s Integration Minister, Claudia Plakolm, has vowed to act.

Plakolm had been tasked with reviewing existing laws in May and was to develop proposals by the end of this year to ensure that Sharia law “cannot be applied in the future, for example, in the area of registry offices”.

“Sharia has nothing to do with Austria and the principles of our constitution, and it should remain that way,” Plakolm has now said.

“Sharia rules do not belong in Austria, and therefore I assume that we will soon receive

the relevant proposals.”

The right-wing Freedom Party’s constitutional spokesman Michael Schilchegger added: “If Austrian courts now also recognize arbitration awards based on Sharia law, they will be submitting to the will of fanatical Islamists.”

The Vienna court said that Sharia would only apply to civil matters - and would remain irrelevant in criminal cases.

But the ruling also drew the fire of the Turkish Cultural Community in Austria, which said in a statement: “As Muslims in the EU, or rather in our new homeland of Austria, we must not only respect the constitution and laws, but also consult a lawyer and notary for such an agreement amounting to 320,000.”

It comes a few months after Britain emerged as the “western capital” of sharia courts, with 85 Islamic councils now operating across the country since the first was established in 1982.

These religious bodies have become increasingly influential, drawing Muslims from across Europe and North America who seek religious rulings on marriage and family matters.

The councils, typically consisting of panels of Islamic scholars who are almost always male, serve as informal bodies issuing religious rulings particularly focused on marriages and divorces.

Source: <https://www.gbnews.com/news/world/austria-sharia-law-legally-binding-islam>

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

We are truly grateful to our esteemed readers for their continued interest in **The Global Voice** and **Aabgeenei Magazines** through which we have been able to fulfil our vision of promoting understanding of different sections of society through our informative articles. This has been a non profit organisation running without any financial help from others. We would be very grateful for any monetary contribution you can provide on a monthly basis so we can continue bringing you true and unbiased journalism.

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

May Allah be with you - Amen

# Global plastic talks collapse as countries remain deeply divided

*By Esme Stallard and Mark Poynting*

Global talks to develop a landmark treaty to end plastic pollution have once again failed. The UN negotiations, the sixth round of talks in just under three years, were due to end on Thursday but countries continued to negotiate into the night in the hopes of breaking a deadlock.

There remained a split between a group of about 100 nations calling for curbs on production of plastic, and oil states pushing for a focus on recycling.

Speaking in the early hours, Cuban delegates said that countries had “missed a historic opportunity but we have to keep going”.

“I’m hugely disappointed that an agreement wasn’t reached,” said the UK’s Marine Minister Emma Hardy.

“Plastic pollution is a global crisis that no country can solve alone, and the UK is committed to working with others at home and abroad to protect the environment and pave the way to a circular economy,” she added.

The talks were convened in 2022 in response to the mounting scientific evidence of the risks of plastic pollution to human health and the environment.

Despite the benefits of plastic to almost every sector, scientists are particularly concerned about potentially toxic chemicals they contain, which can leach out as plastics break down into smaller pieces.

Microplastics have been detected in soils, rivers, the air and even organs throughout the human body.

Countries had an original deadline to get a deal over the line at the end of December last year, but failed to meet this.

The collapse of the latest talks means they fall further behind.

Speaking on behalf of the island states, the northern Pacific nation of Palau said on Friday: “We are repeatedly returning home with insufficient progress to show our people.”

"It is unjust for us to face the brunt of yet another global environmental crisis we contribute minimally to," it added.

The core dividing line between countries has remained the same throughout: whether the treaty should tackle plastics at source – by reducing production – or focus on managing the pollution that comes from it.

The largest oil-producing nations view plastics, which are made using fossil fuels, as a vital part of their future economies, particularly as the world begins to move away from petrol and diesel towards electric cars.

The group, which includes Saudi Arabia and Russia, argue that better waste collection and recycling infrastructure is the best way of solving the problem, a view shared by many of the producers themselves.

"Plastics are fundamental for modern life - they go in everything," said Ross Eisenberg, president of America's Plastic Makers, a trade association for the plastic production industry in the United States.

"Focusing on ending plastic pollution should be the priority here, not ending plastic production," he added, warning that attempts to substitute plastics with other materials could lead to "unintended consequences".

But many researchers warn that this approach is fundamentally flawed. Global recycling rates are estimated at only about 10%, with limits on how far that can rise.

"Even if we manage to boost that over the next few decades to 15, 20, 30%, it would remain a substantial amount that is polluting the environment and damaging human health," said Dr Costas Velis, associate professor in Waste and Resource Engineering at Imperial College London.

"Therefore, we do need to improve recycling... but we cannot really hope that this is going to solve all the aspects of plastic," he added.

Plastic production has already risen from two million tonnes in 1950 to about 475 million in 2022 – and it is expected to keep rising without extra measures.

About 100 countries, which include the UK and EU bloc, had been pushing for curbs to production in the treaty and more consistent design globally to make recycling easier.

This could be as simple as requiring plastic bottles to be one colour - when dyes are used the products only fetch half the value of clear bottles.

This approach was supported by major plastic packagers, including Nestle and Unilever, who are part of the Business Coalition headed up by the Ellen McArthur Foundation.

The Coalition also said countries should better align their schemes to add a small levy on plastic products to help pay for recycling efforts, known as extended producer responsibility.

The group estimates that could double revenues for countries to \$576bn (£425bn) between now and 2040.

Talks were due to end on Thursday but countries continued to negotiate into the night in the hopes of breaking a deadlock.





The chair, Luis Vayas from Ecuador, did produce a new text which seemed to align more closely with the request of the UK group.

The text did not call for curbs to plastic production.

But it did include reference to nations taking their own steps to tackle other issues like dangerous plastic chemicals and the design of plastics to make them easier to recycle.

Speaking at the final meeting, the EU delegation said: “We see the outcome of this session as a good basis of future negotiations.”

However, the oil states remained deeply unhappy. Saudi Arabia said it found the process of negotiating “problematic” whilst Kuwait said its views were “not reflected”.

But many environmental groups, reacting to the collapse, railed against what they see as prioritisation of profit by oil states over the health of the planet.

Graham Forbes, Greenpeace head of delegation to the Global Plastics Treaty negotiations, said: “The inability to reach an agreement in Geneva must be a wakeup call for the world: ending plastic pollution means confronting fossil fuel interests head on.

“The vast majority of governments want a strong agreement, yet a handful of bad actors were allowed to use process to drive such ambition into the ground.”

The chair announced that the talks will resume at a later date.

Source:<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvgpddpldleo>The text did not call for curbs to plastic production.

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# Judge blocks Trump from cutting funding from 34 cities and counties over 'sanctuary' policies



By SUDHIN THANAWALA

SAN FRANCISCO - A judge ruled late Friday the Trump administration cannot deny funding to Boston, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles and 30 other cities and counties because of policies that limit cooperation with federal immigration efforts.

U.S. District Judge William Orrick in San Francisco extended a preliminary injunction blocking the administration from cutting off or conditioning the use of federal funds for so-called "sanctuary" jurisdictions. His earlier order protected more than a dozen other cities and counties, including San Francisco, Portland and Seattle.

The Trump administration has ratcheted up pressure on those communities as it seeks to make good on President Donald Trump's campaign promise to remove millions of people in the country illegally.

One executive order issued by Trump directs Attorney General Pam Bondi and Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem to withhold federal money from sanctuary jurisdictions. Another order directs every federal agency to ensure that payments to state and local governments do not "abet so-called 'sanctuary' policies that seek to shield illegal aliens from deportation."

The cities and counties that sued said billions of dollars were at risk.

An email to the White House late Friday was not immediately returned.

In May, the Department of Homeland Security published a list of more than 500 "sanctuary jurisdictions," saying each one would receive formal notification that the government had deemed them noncompliant. It also said it would inform them if they were believed to be in violation of any federal criminal statutes.

The list was later removed from the department's website after critics noted it included localities that have actively supported the administration's tough immigration policies.

The Justice Department has sued New York, Los Angeles and other cities over their sanctuary policies.

There is no strict definition for sanctuary cities, but the terms generally describes places that limit cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. ICE enforces immigration laws nationwide but seeks help from state and local authorities to identify immigrants wanted for deportation and hold them for federal officers.

Source: <https://japantoday.com/category/world/judge-blocks-trump-from-cutting-funding-from-34-cities-and-counties-over-%E2%80%98sanctuary%E2%80%99-policies>

A new species of dinosaur that had an “eye-catching sail” along its back has been named after sailor Dame Ellen MacArthur.

The dinosaur, unearthed on the Isle of Wight, has been given the name *Istiorachis macarthurae* with the first word meaning “sail spine” and the second referring to Dame Ellen’s surname.

The record-breaking round-the-world yachtswoman said it was a “huge honour”, adding: “The fact that the *Istiorachis* ‘sail’ could be likened to the sails I have spent so much of my life below was very touching.”

After being analysed it has now been officially named and described by island-based scientist Jeremy Lockwood, and is now on display at Dinosaur Isle Museum in Sandown. The medium-sized herbivore once roamed the floodplains of what is now the island’s south-west coast.

Its remains, which date back 125 million years, were originally discovered by fossil hunter Nick Chase, who died of cancer in 2019. Before Dr Lockwood’s analysis the fossils were assumed to have belonged to one of the two known iguanodontian dinosaur species from the Isle of Wight.

He said: “While the skeleton wasn’t as complete as some of the others that have been found, no-one had really taken a close look at these bones before. “It was thought to be just another specimen of one of the existing species, but this one had particularly long neural spines, which was very unusual.

“It may have been used for display, much like a peacock’s feathers, possibly to attract mates or intimidate rivals.” For the study, researchers compared the fossilised bones with a database of similar dinosaur back bones which allowed them to see how these sail-like formations had evolved.

Dame Ellen, founder and patron of the East Cowes based charity the Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust, said: “It is certainly not an everyday occurrence to be asked if a newly discovered dinosaur could reference your name in its title. “I was somewhat taken aback when this conversation began, but felt hugely privileged to be asked.

“The fact that the *Istiorachis* ‘sail’ could be a-likened to the sails I have spent so much of my life below was very touching. “It is both extraordinary and a huge honour that a creature living 125 million years ago could possibly be linked to my family name.”

She became the fastest person to sail solo non-stop around the world in 2005.

## **New dinosaur named after record-breaking sailor**



# Exploring Nandana Fort: Al-Biruni's Legacy And The Lost Golden Age Of Muslim Science

*Journey to Nandana Fort recalls Al-Biruni's scientific legacy, the Golden Age of Islam, and a prayer for the revival of Muslim intellectual excellence*

Got up early (6:00 am) for my adventurous trip to Nandana Fort in Pind Dadan Khan, Pakistan. I was excited about the visit, Al-Biruni, the 11th-century Persian scholar, who lived and travelled in India, attracted my attention for two reasons: firstly, it is the same place which is believed to be Abu-Rayhan al-Biruni's observatory where he quantified the radius and circumference of the Earth. Secondly, in the context of Al-Biruni's treatise, Kitab al-Hind, a crucial historical source, where he noted Jewish presence in Kashmir.

With prayers, we darted off in my bulletproof wagon, accompanied by my guard Saqib and driver Jalal, onto the motorway.

It was a pleasant, somewhat cloudy morning, hot and humid. The drive was enjoyable. On my way, I scrolled through the internet getting information about the great polymath and Nandana Fort. Midway through our journey we stopped by the Monal Restaurant for breakfast. It was a pleasant break and I ordered paratha omelette for all three. I had cappuccino coffee and my colleagues had tea. Soon we sped off to Pind Dadan Khan where Malik Riaz (historian, archaeologist) along with two others greeted us. The onward journey was to Nandana Fort in the Baghawalla village. It is famous for its historical and scientific significance. Here Al-Biruni, an 11th-century Muslim scholar, measured the Earth's circumference. He utilised trigonometric calculations, measuring the angle of the dip of the horizon from the fort's hilltop.

The Fort had a rich history, having been ruled by several kings before being conquered by Mahmood of Ghazni.

Nandana Fort's location on the south range made it a crucial defensive position, controlling the routes connecting India and Central Asia. This was the same pass used by Alexander the Great in his epic clash with Raja Porus.

We stopped by the foothills of the Salt Mountains in Pakistan. Abu Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad Al-Biruni, nicknamed Al-Biruni, was born on September 9, 973. He was a great scholar, born in a village on the outskirts of Khwarazm.

Furthermore, he specialised in mathematics, astronomy, history, geography, and medicine.

Located in the Jhelum district and surrounded by beautiful mountains, Fort Nandana is a 1,500-year-old hidden gem.

We then moved on a bumpy road near the base of the mountain. Al-Biruni's observatory was visible.

While tracking my way up to the Nandana Fort, I was overawed by the genius of Al-Biruni when, from this very observatory, he calculated the radius and circumference of the Earth. During his

time, countless Muslim scientists, philosophers and intellectuals left an indelible mark on humanity in the cause of human knowledge and understanding. Their pioneering efforts brought about an unremarkable evolution in the world, and their research and discoveries continue to be the basis for modern science. They utilised their God-given talents and faculties, whilst seeking help from Allah the Almighty and reflecting upon His creation, and as a result, have been recognised through history and continue to be acknowledged and reflected today.

Al-Biruni lived here at Nandana Fort for many years, and the rest of India (between 1017-1020). Here, he found the diameter of the Earth very close to today's value (99%).

Al-Biruni developed many instruments for astronomy and geography measurements. He put forward the first ideas on the theory of gravity, which was mathematically proven by Newton 700 years later. As a result of his observations with the telescope he developed, 600 years before Galileo, who confirmed that the planets revolved around the Sun, Al-Biruni defended the idea that the "Earth rotates". To the query of why plants and stones don't shoot up if the Earth is spinning, he answered that there is an attraction at the centre and that everything is in the centre of the Earth's surface. He predicted that North, South, East and West would connect at a point, and there was a land behind the seas (today's America).

Al-Biruni died at the age of 75. He inspired scientists such as Copernicus and Galileo, Newton and Torricelli. The UNESCO Courier (1974) introduced Al-Biruni as "the universal genius who lived a thousand years ago in Central Asia."

According to Al-Biruni, the pleasure of knowledge, that is, the pleasure of teaching for truth and reality, is among the highest pleasures. In this regard, he states: "What is necessary and unavoidable for the men of knowledge, that's the servant of knowledge, is not to make a distinction between the sciences, even if he is not at a sufficient level in all fields of knowledge, but to give each of them its due. Because knowledge is beautiful and its flavour is permanent. The flavour lasts throughout this research. When the research ends, the flavour ends."

He continues:

"The scholar should not look down on the scholars who came before him, he should approach their works with modesty and benefit from them. In this way, he will reach the most accurate and solid information and will stay away from flawed and erroneous information."

While having my tour of Al-Biruni's Nandana Hill observatory, my thoughts wandered as to how Allah inspired the generations of Muslim inventors in the Middle Ages. As I looked back more than a millennium, I realised how Muslim scientists and inventors played a fundamental role in advancing knowledge and developing technologies, which transformed the world as we see it today.

In my field of medicine, many Muslim physicians and scientists made great discoveries and pioneered many inventions that remain in use today. Many of the surgical instruments were pioneered by Muslim physicians in Al-Zahrawi's and Al-Biruni.

In the 17th century, an English physician, William Harvey, famously carried out what we consider as groundbreaking research regarding blood circulation and the functioning of the heart. However, it was later discovered that more than 400 years before Harvey's research, Ibn Nafees, an Arab physician, had already detailed the basics of pulmonary circulation.

In an article published by the National Geographic in 2016, "How Early Islamic Science Advanced Medicine", the contributions of Muslim scientists in the early period of Islam are identified:

"Physicians from Islamic countries during the late Middle Ages enjoyed great respect. Their reputation was well deserved for the study and practice of medicine was then led by Muslim societies across their immense territory, which extended from modern-day southern Spain to Iran."

It further states:

“By the 900s, drawing from a growing body of Greek, Persian and Sanskrit works translated into Arabic, Islamic medicine quickly became the most sophisticated in the world. Christians, Jews, Hindus and scholars from many other traditions looked to Arabic as a language of science. Doctors of different faiths worked together, debating and studying with Arabic as the common tongue.”

The article continues:

“The brightest star in the Baghdad firmament was undoubtedly the extraordinary Ibn Sina (a close contemporary of Al-Biruni) ... his great volume *Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb* – Canon of Medicine – became one of the most famous medical works of all time... (Ibn Sina’s) attempts to harmonise the medical practices of the Greek thinker Galen with the philosophy of Aristotle reveal the multiple nature of the debt owed to Muslim scholarship, which did not merely revive Greek authors but stimulated new patterns of thought for centuries ahead. The reconciling of practical science, thought and religion ensured Canon was studied by European medicine until the 18th century.”

Moreover, the National Geographic article labels the period of Muslim rule in Spain as a “period of scholarly development” and describes Cordoba in the 10th century as the “most cultured city in Europe and a great centre of study and exploration”.

As stated by the great reformer: “Continued study of physics, astronomy and the sciences will always lead a righteous person towards the Almighty. The more they learn about God’s creation and the world around them, the more they will appreciate the beauty of Allah the Almighty through the wonder of the universe.”

It was in this way, reflecting upon the universe, that Professor Dr Abdus Salam spent his life and he used whatever insight he gained as evidence to prove the existence of God.

As I descended slowly but carefully from Nandana Hill – the place of Al-Biruni – I lamented: “Although the historic contributions of Muslim scholars like Al-Biruni are unquestionable, the recent intellectual and scientific state of much of the Muslim world is most regrettable.”

Over time, as Muslims moved away from God Almighty and the qualities associated with a believer diminished rapidly amongst them, the Muslims, who had previously led the world in science, medicine, and research, gradually moved to an age of intellectual ignorance that persists to this day. Instead of continuing to be leaders of innovation and discovery, the period of Muslim academic enlightenment drew to an end. Instead of being those who gave to the world, the Muslims became those who only took. As a result, when the world recognises the outstanding historic contribution of Muslims to science and learning, like Al-Biruni, it considers the intellectual status of the modern-day Muslim world to be woeful. The truth is that, generally speaking, the Muslim world has lost its passion for education and for pushing the boundaries of human knowledge. Muslim nations have immersed themselves in the luxuries and comforts of the world and so, they no longer have the drive or motivation to toil in the pursuit of knowledge or to reflect upon the universe.

Thus, in intellectual and scientific terms, Muslims and the Islamic nations have gone from leading the world to being treated with scorn and derision.

As I travelled back to my place, the sun was setting. I leaned back and had a last look at Nandana Fort and prayed with tears in my eyes:

“May Allah the Almighty enable us to flourish, and to achieve great success in our fields of expertise. Working with diligence, passion, and above all, constantly seeking the help of Allah the Almighty at every step of our academic journey and keep His Majesty at the forefront of our minds. Amen.”

Source: <https://thefridaytimes.com/09-Aug-2025/exploring-nandana-fort-al-biruni-s-legacy-and-the-lost-golden-age-of-muslim-science>



## Pakistan lake formed by mountain mudslide threatens 'catastrophic' floods

PESHAWAR: A 7-km (4-mile) lake in northern Pakistan, created by a mountain mudslide, is threatening to burst and unleash potentially "catastrophic" floods downstream, officials warned on Saturday.

The mud flow descended into the main Ghizer River channel and blocked it completely on Friday, creating the lake in GilgitBaltistan province, the National Disaster Management Authority said.

The blockage created a "dam-like structure" that poses a significant threat of bursting, it said in a situation report by its provincial office.

The new lake "can cause a catastrophic flood", said Zakir Hussain, director general of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority.

Four downstream districts - Ghizer, Gilgit, Astore and Diamer - face a serious threat, he told Reuters.

Ghizer is north of the mountain districts in northwest Pakistan where floods triggered by the worst of this year's monsoon rains and cloudbursts have killed nearly 400 people since August 15.

A video shared by the national authority on a WhatsApp group where it issues statements shows black mud sliding down the mountain before landing in the river. Reuters could not independently verify the video, which an official at the authority said was shot by residents.

Similar mud flows landed in the river from different mountainsides, said provincial government spokesperson Faizullah Faraq.

A shepherd on higher ground, the first to spot the mud flow crashing down, alerted villagers and local authorities, he said. As a result of the warning, he said, nearly 200 people in dozens of scattered houses tucked in the mountainsides and the river's surroundings were rescued.

The lake has started discharging water, meaning the threat of a burst is receding, but flash floods in downstream districts cannot be ruled out until the lake is completely cleared, Faraq said.

The communities downstream have been directed to stay on high alert and vacate areas along the river, he said.

Floods across Pakistan have killed 785 since the monsoon started in late June, the national authority said, warning of two more rain spells by September 10.

Source:<https://www.brecorder.com/news/40379327/pakistan-lake-formed-by-mountain-mudslide-threatens-catastrophic-floods>

# The Destination Belongs to Those Who Are Travelers of Light



**By Arshad Ahmad Shahbaz**

Vice Chairman, Foreign Advisory Council, Darmstadt – Germany

Life is a boundless, mysterious ocean. At times, it caresses the shore with gentle waves; at other times, its storms stir fear and unrest in the heart. We all sail our vessels upon this sea, carrying dreams, hopes, and resolve. Yet the journey is not always smooth. Obstacles and despair often rise along the way, sending ripples of unease through the soul. But there are navigators whose hearts guard a flame of hope that never dims. They keep their vessel steady through tempests, illuminating the darkness with their unwavering light, breaking through walls of difficulty, and moving toward the horizon with faith, labour, and steadfast determination.

On this sea of life—where at one moment the waves bring serenity to the heart and at another they rise in turbulent unrest—we must keep our vessel bound with the ropes of wisdom, patience, and hard work. After every hardship comes the fragrance of relief; after every storm, a soft light appears on the horizon. In such moments, knowledge and skill become invaluable—especially for the middle class, for whom they can serve as the ark of hope.

History bears witness that inflation, unemployment, and economic crises have broken the backbone of the middle class. Many have bowed before circumstances, but these are not times to surrender. In moments of trial, the only rescue lies in honing one's skills, making diligence a habit, and reshaping one's abilities to meet the demands of a changing world. The state and social institutions too must play their role—providing training to the youth, creating opportunities for work, and paving the road toward the light of a better future.

The sea of life has two faces. Sometimes it brings peace and tranquillity; sometimes it swells into a storm that tests the heart. The ebb and flow of success and failure are its true colours. In such times, the greatest wisdom is to bind one's vessel firmly with the ropes of patience, effort, and reason. The Qur'an assures us:

"Indeed, with hardship comes ease." (Surah Al-Sharh 7)

This verse whispers to the heart that even in the darkest despair, there are islands of light—waiting only for the courage and resolve to find them.

In our society, the absence of financial discipline has deepened the middle class's struggles. The pillars of financial stability are simple yet powerful: budgeting, controlling expenses, encouraging savings, and investing wisely. By embracing these principles, one can escape temporary crises and secure lasting peace. The true key to success lies within the heart and mind. Negative thinking, envy, and despair are the heaviest chains, while self-belief, optimism, and perseverance unlock the doors to achievement.

It is the duty of the state to address the middle class's hardships with sincerity: to deliver justice, ease the tax burden, make housing accessible, provide healthcare, curb hoarding, and bring down the storm of inflation. Empowering farmers and industrialists can raise national productivity, while awakening civic consciousness can ensure that citizens understand their responsibilities and never remain silent in matters of their rights.

Those who succeed see life as a burning torch—not only lighting their own path but also becoming a beacon for others. Their hearts overflow with love, gratitude, and respect. Failure, to them, is not defeat but a lesson—a renewal of resolve. Steering the vessel of the heart across this sea is never easy; yet, with strong sails, a pure heart, and an unshaken will, one can remain steadfast through any tempest.

The true essence of success is to become the light itself. That light is not found in wealth or position but in the purity of the heart, noble deeds, and the embrace of love. Those who remain content in all circumstances, learn from their failures, and keep moving forward—these are the true travellers of light. Such travellers never grow weary, for the lamp of hope forever burns within their hearts.

This light, in its highest and purest form, is bound to the blessed and noble person of the Messenger of Mercy ﷺ, and to the radiant manifestation of divine light in the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him), whose spiritual grace will endure until the end of time. Without the light of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the scenes of this world are but a mirage. Just as the moon borrows its glow from the sun to brighten the night, the Promised Messiah (as) took his radiance from his beloved ﷺ, becoming the manifestation of light and a guide to the caravan of hope and guidance.

The Prophet's ﷺ light is like the sun to the believers—one ray enough to illuminate the deepest recesses of the soul. To be deprived of this light is to be engulfed in a darkness that swallows the spirit. Thus, our sails must be bound with courage and certainty, our hearts filled with sincerity and love for the Messenger ﷺ, and every breath lived as a traveller of light.

Guard this sacred lamp within your heart as a parched soul guards a drop of water in the desert. Let your destination be more than personal triumph—let it be a lighthouse that guides the lost, gives hope to the despairing, and shines as a lantern for those stumbling in the dark. This is the trust passed down to us through the Messenger of Mercy ﷺ and his true guide, the Manifestation of Light, the Promised Messiah (as). To keep it alive is our truest success and our eternal inheritance.

# BANGLADESH: HOPING AGAINST HOPE



By Ather Rehman Khan

During 2006/2007, while visiting Dhaka, in a lighter vein, I passed a remark to a Bengali senior officer: Why don't you take over the government in Bangladesh to put right the country? He politely replied, Bangladesh is not Punjab. Here 5 lac mob in small cities and 10 lac in Dhaka is a matter of hours. Khaleda Zia is the wife of Major Zia, who killed his own CO, Col. Janjua (5 Baluch), while in command of an EB Regiment in East Pakistan during 1971. Later, Pakistan always supported Khaleda Zia against Hasina Wajid—the enemy of the enemy.

Today, the possible departure of Sheikh Hasina's government is far more than a domestic crisis. It is a geopolitical event that could reshape the subcontinent's balance of power. Hasina's firm hand brought stability to Bangladesh and ensured a close alignment with India, keeping Pakistan at bay. Her exit, however, opens the door to new uncertainties where India and Pakistan may once again clash indirectly on Bengali soil.

For India, Hasina was the ideal partner. She secured the eastern flank, denied space to anti-India elements, and deepened cooperation on trade, energy, and security. Her personal hostility to Pakistan over 1971 made her a natural ally. Without her, Delhi fears a vacuum that Pakistan—or its proxies—might exploit.

For Pakistan, turmoil in Dhaka presents opportunity. Long sidelined, Islamabad could attempt to re-engage through soft power, religious affinity, or diplomatic outreach to opposition forces. Even symbolic gestures of goodwill would complicate India's strategic calculus and force Delhi to divert attention from other fronts.

Yet the risks are severe. Any perception of Pakistani meddling could trigger a sharp Indian reaction. Within Bangladesh, a pivot toward Pakistan would inflame old divisions between those who revere the spirit of 1971 and those who resent India's dominance.

Bangladesh's path now lies between two scenarios. One is continuity: a government that, while less tied to Delhi than Hasina, still preserves cooperation with India and avoids Pakistan. The other is change: a weak or fractured leadership that asserts independence by turning to China and cautiously engaging Islamabad. The first outcome secures India's interests; the second threatens a new two-front challenge and the specter of an encirclement by a Beijing-Islamabad-Dhaka axis.

India must now broaden its approach. Reliance on one leader has proven shortsighted. To safeguard its position, Delhi must engage across the Bangladeshi spectrum and, most importantly, with the people. Only a partnership based on mutual respect and tangible benefits—not dependency—will ensure Bangladesh's stability.

The end of Hasina's rule could become South Asia's newest tinderbox. The India-Pakistan rivalry may once again converge in the delta of Bengal. And Bangladesh—born of the rupture between the two in 1971—now risks becoming the epicenter of their renewed conflict. Its stability is not just its own concern, but the key to peace and security for over a billion and a half people.



## 2026 World Cup draw will be held at Washington's Kennedy Center, Trump says

By WILL WEISSERT

WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump said Friday that the draw for the 2026 World Cup will take place on Dec 5 at the Kennedy Center in Washington, and didn't rule out that he himself might oversee the event.

"It's the biggest, probably the biggest event in sports, I guess," said Trump, who made the announcement in an Oval Office event where he was joined by FIFA president Gianni Infantino and Vice President JD Vance.

The U.S. is co-hosting next year's tournament — which for the first time will feature 48 national teams up from 32 — with Canada and Mexico. The draw event will determine the World Cup's groups, and the games each team plays in the opening round.

Infantino said the 48 teams will play "104 matches in one month" and likened it to "104 Super Bowls." Trump picked up on that theme, saying, "It's like having many Super Bowls in a short period of time, because each one of these games, essentially, is a Super Bowl. Some of them are bigger than Super Bowls, actually."

He said that the Kennedy Center "will give a phenomenal kickoff and we'll be involved." Asked if he'd be the one actually drawing the team names, Trump didn't answer directly but deferred to Infantino, saying the FIFA chief "was the boss."

Infantino said, "It's a very interesting proposal," and he indicated that he and Trump would discuss the matter further.

The choice of venue is interesting because Trump has taken over the Kennedy Center, installing himself as chair and replacing the board of trustees with loyalists. He's also hinted he'd like to see the venue renamed the Trump/Kennedy Center.

The president also used Friday's FIFA announcement to boast about his deploying the

National Guard and federalizing Washington's police force.

"So now, when we have this beautiful event in December, it's going to be very safe," Trump said. He added that the FIFA chief "can walk down the street with your beautiful wife. You can take her to dinner, if you can get a reservation."

Asked about fans overseas obtaining U.S. visas to come watch their teams in the World Cup, Trump at first said the process would be a smooth one, but then added, "Certain countries are going to be very, very easy, and other countries are going to be obviously a little bit more difficult."

In an unusual move, Infantino also brought the World Cup trophy with him to the Oval Office.

It's a superstition nearly as old as the World Cup itself: players on national teams around the globe believe that touching the trophy before their team actually wins the tournament on the field can spark bad luck.

Even Infantino noted that the trophy is "for winners only," but then he added to Trump, "And, since you are a winner, of course you can as well."

The president did just that, calling the trophy "a beautiful piece of gold" and joking about keeping it and displaying it in the Oval Office, which Trump has redone in a gaudy, gold-hued decor.

"It fits very well right on the wall over there," Trump said.

Source: <https://japantoday.com/category/sports/2026-world-cup-draw-will-be-held-at-washington's-kennedy-center-trump-says>

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# WWE? Hollywood? Rugby? What megastar Maher might do next



*By Mike Henson*

Ilona Maher says she is contemplating an offer to enter professional wrestling with the WWE after playing for the United States at the Women's Rugby World Cup.

The 29-year-old social media sensation, who has nearly nine million followers across her Instagram, TikTok and X channels, has previously appeared on *Dancing with the Stars* and was named as 2025's best breakthrough athlete at US broadcaster ESPN's prestigious Espy award show.

"I've been approached before by the WWE," she told BBC Sport, joking that her ring name would be 'Maher-vellous'.

"I don't know if I would [go into wrestling]. I should think about it, there is great money in it."

Maher says that if she did get into wrestling it would be with the aim of progressing into Hollywood.

"I would love to get into the acting space and the scripted space. I think a Dwayne 'the Rock' Johnson, John Cena progression - I would love to do that," she added.

"It would be exciting to see my body type on the screen. I'll start off small - probably like a hot assassin or something, let's not get too crazy!

"I'm not going to be in a rom-com just yet.

"We'll see. The world is open, but I do see myself coming back to rugby."

Johnson has starred in the *Fast and Furious* franchise and Disney blockbuster *Moana* since leaving WWE, while Cena's acting career includes a cameo in 2023 hit *Barbie*.

Maher would not be the first sports star to appear in WWE.

Boxers Mike Tyson, Floyd Mayweather and Tyson Fury have all made cameos, while Olympic medallists Kurt Angle and Ronda Rousey have been key ongoing characters in the promotion.

Maher, who has been named at outside centre for Friday evening's World Cup opener against England in Sunderland, says she remains a rugby player first, despite her phenomenal success on social media and clutch of new ventures.

Having won a bronze medal with the US sevens team at Paris 2024, she joined Premiership Women's Rugby side Bristol Bears on a three-month contract in January to help her acclimatise to the 15-a-side game.

Her debut against Gloucester-Hartpury set a new attendance crowd for the league of 9,240 after the fixture was switched to Ashton Gate to accommodate more spectators, while her team's social media footprint also grew significantly.

"So many times people forget, but I am a rugby player first," Maher added.

"I do the social media because I have to because it is not sustainable to be a women's rugby player - I am not going to make money doing it.

"It does irk me at times when people forget that. One comment once was: 'Are you going to watch the Instagrammer play?'

"I was like, 'no, I have won a bronze medal, I've been to two Olympics, I am a good rugby player who loves the sport'.

"I am proud to do both but I do want to be known as a rugby player."

The US are distinct underdogs against runaway world number ones and tournament favourites England on Friday.

However, Maher believes the absence of expectation frees up her and her team-mates against the hosts.

"I am going into it with the mindset not that we have something to lose, but something to gain from this. We have an opportunity here to have some fun.

"The Red Roses not having lost a game for more than 1,000 days - that is having something to lose. I don't think we do.

"They will be very tough opponents. For us to beat them, we would have to be on our A-game every single minute of that game.

"But I am just excited to play in front of 40,000 people. Whether we win or lose I want to be able to say that I enjoyed it."

The US take on Australia and Samoa in their remaining Pool A games. Two teams from each of the four pools advance to the quarter-finals.

Source:<https://www.bbc.com/sport/rugby-union/articles/cy40w4xd9mlo>

# Echoes of Silent Voices - the Overlooked Truth



**By Sayam Kosar**

***“Where others didn’t even speak, one man stood alone and changed history.”***

## **The Illuminated Chapter of Early Struggles**

Raja Imran Hussain’s journey began in 2002, when he consistently raised his voice on political platforms to advocate for the political rights of persons with disabilities in Pakistan. At that time, there was neither a dedicated desk nor a specific wing for persons with disabilities in the Election Commission, and political parties did not regard disability as a significant issue, and people had less awareness about the word disability. During this period, he also presented a comprehensive legal draft to then-President General Pervez Musharraf, recommending constitutional recognition of the political, social, and economic rights of persons with disabilities. Later, he held a significant meeting with the late Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, urging her to establish a comprehensive national policy for persons with disabilities. and after 2010, he also met with all the provincial chief ministers, as all provinces functioned as independent bodies following the Eighth Amendment.

Raja Imran remained actively engaged with the Election Commission of Pakistan, where he contributed to the establishment of a dedicated group focusing on persons with disabilities and other marginalized communities. He is still a member of this group. Notably, he became the first disability rights advocate whose image was displayed on banners and posters as a “Chief Supporter.” He was seriously injured in the 2008 Karsaz and Liaquat Bagh bombing. He was also injured in the subsequent attack on Benazir Bhutto. Yet despite these personal sacrifices and unwavering efforts, no reserved seats were granted in either the National Assembly or the Punjab Assembly for persons with disabilities. Nor was any significant progress made on the disability rights bill. He will also participate in the 2014 dharna with 200 people with disabilities. Imran Khan also promised a ticket and a special seat bill,

## **The First and Only Disabled Candidate**

A Mark in History: Raja Imran Hussain became Pakistan’s first political candidate

with a disability and participated in the electoral process without any political or governmental backing. He not only revealed systemic weaknesses but also faced political indifference and ridicule with bravery. He stood up at a time when the idea of “inclusive politics” was virtually nonexistent in Pakistan. Whichever political party Raja Imran Hussain approached, they would readily seek his support, but when it came to representing persons with disabilities, they neither offered a reserved seat nor seriously considered his request for a party ticket. In 2013–14, he submitted nomination papers to contest the elections, but his candidacy was rejected solely based on his disability, and the documents were returned. Despite this unjust treatment, he continued his advocacy and shared a comprehensive legislative draft with relevant stakeholders during the newly formed Nawaz Sharif government. The draft was also presented as a private member’s bill in the National Assembly through various ministers and members of parliament.

Today’s self-proclaimed “rights warriors” have never addressed this fundamental human rights issue on any platform. When this lone voice was raised, it faced apathy from political circles, along with mockery, ridicule, and sarcasm. Yet Raja Imran Hussain faced all these challenges with resilience and never wavered in his stance. His leadership, steadfastness, and vision have made it possible for the political rights of persons with disabilities to now be a subject of national discourse.

### **Election 2018 and 2023: The Only Comprehensive and Inclusive Electoral Campaigns**

The years 2018 and 2023 mark the moments in Pakistani electoral history when Raja Imran Hussain led fully inclusive election campaigns. These campaigns not only addressed all types of disabilities but also developed targeted visual, electronic, and sign language-based content for diverse segments of society. Materials in sign language were created for individuals who are hearing and speech impaired, while informative posters in Braille were developed for those who are visually impaired. The observers of the European Union recognized his efforts and added his suggestion to their election report.

Political Parties’ Apathy and Insensitivity while Raja Imran Hussain continued to convert his disability into motivation and progress, political parties in Pakistan largely viewed persons with disabilities as mere vote banks. Whenever a party was approached for a ticket, disability was used as the reason for denial. Although parties have included slogans about welfare for persons with disabilities in their manifestos, they have never taken concrete actions. Even today, major political parties—including PML-N, PPP, PTI, and others—do not prioritize.

### **Persistent Efforts Toward Electoral Reforms:**

He submitted formal written recommendations to the Election Commission of Pakistan, demanding a separate wing for persons with disabilities in political parties, as well as special election facilities. Both were accepted; however, a quota system similar to the reserved seats for women and nomination fee waivers is

still pending. He proposed that persons with disabilities be given representation in both national and provincial assemblies, Inclusive voting rights, inclusive polling stations, and inclusive parties' manifestos. Even for the first time, in 2018, political parties included the phrase People with disabilities in the party manifestos, Legislative Efforts, and MQM's Objection. Raja Imran Hussain also presented a comprehensive bill on the rights of persons with disabilities in the National Assembly, which was finalized in legal language during the PTI government in 2020. However, due to objections raised by MQM, the bill remains pending. This reflects how political parties often treat disability rights as political tools rather than genuine human rights concerns. However, in 2023, this bill was also presented to the Speaker of the National Assembly, Raja Pervez Ashraf, of the Coalition Government to be formed in 2023. A Lone Warrior — Leader, Activist, and Conscience Keeper

Today, Raja Imran Hussain's leadership stands as both an example and a challenge to all so-called "human rights defenders" who confine themselves to rhetoric. He remains the only leader who has taken practical steps on issues where most NGOs, rights organizations, and politicians still hesitate to act.



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**SARMAD KHAN | ACA, FCCA**

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

 **CELL +44 (0)7903 416 966**

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## Growing concerns in West Africa about health risks from use of unregulated sexual stimulants



*By Rédaction Africanews*

As West Africa continues to be flooded by unregulated sexual stimulants, there are growing concerns about the health risks faced by the men who use them.

A New York Times report has found that products claiming to be 100 natural herbal remedies to improve virility, are resulting in serious consequences.

These artisanal drugs are leaving men drooling uncontrollably, suffering from migraines and life-threatening erections, and facing a higher risk of heart attacks.

Public health officials in Ivory Coast found that so-called sexual stimulants, like the beverage Attoté, contains a drug commonly known as Viagra, but at levels eight times higher than the recommended dose.

The pills are manufactured in India and smuggled into country, where they are crushed and mixed with other ingredients to form a drink which is sold for \$1.50 domestically.

Available on Amazon and even Walmart, it is sold for \$15 in France, and \$20 in the United States, where they are advertised as “100 percent natural”, though the ingredients are not listed on the bottle.

The United Nations says up to half of the drugs in West Africa are unregulated, and resulting in an estimated half a million deaths a year, with sexual stimulants like Attoté the most frequently reported.

While Ivory Coast suspended its production a few months ago, citing misleading advertising and health risks, including death, demand remains high.

Source:<https://www.africanews.com/2025/08/21/growing-concerns-in-west-africa-about-health-risks-from-use-of-unregulated-sexual-stimulan/>