

1975

Laotian Civil War: The Pathet Lao seizes the Laotian capital of Vientiane, forces the abdication of King Sisavang Vatthana, and proclaims the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

1976

Fidel Castro becomes President of Cuba, replacing Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado.



1980

Salvadoran Civil War: Four American missionaries are raped and murdered by a death squad.

1982

At the University of Utah, Barney Clark becomes the first person to receive a permanent artificial heart.

gely regained control

never been more crucial



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impunity, continues to govern over his blood-soaked country. Investigations have proven that his regime has used torture and targeted and bombed civilians, including doctors, hospitals and schools.

Does the regime really need to sit down to talks? After all, it is winning. And so its strategy seems to be to stall the talks. Most Syria insiders wonder whether Mr Al Assad will be willing to cede much in any negotiations when he already has so much of the country under his control. "There doesn't seem to be the seriousness or the commitment to really work on a new constitution," says Bassma Kodmani, a lawyer and a member of the opposition.

Meanwhile here is what the military face of war looks like in Syria: another winter coming, endless bombing, displacement in the Idlib

region and millions of refugees outside the country who want to go home.

Of all the wars I have reported, I have always resisted attending peace talks. To me, they meant little and had nothing to do with what was happening on the ground. The UN officials, the diplomats and lawyers representing the people were far removed from the soldiers, housewives, fathers, mothers and students I met who were actually living through war. How could people sitting in Geneva – many of whom have lived in exile from Syria for years – know what someone being bombed in Idlib needs?

And yet, the urgency to end Syria's agony has never been more crucial. We are entering the ninth winter. Nine years is too long for a country to be torn apart.

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The implications of what Mr Pedersen does now are huge and he must persevere. He must pressure the regime to stop thwarting the peace process. What happens next in the region and indeed in the future of ending wars is being scrutinised in Geneva. It is time for all parties to lay down their egos and do what is necessary for their bleeding country.

its survival

Iraq, the situation is more complex

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by attempts by French President Emmanuel Macron to ingratiate himself as mediator with Tehran while suggesting lifting sanctions. The source said: A US source said the administration was willing to talk but negotiations would not be conditional on lifting or easing sanctions.

The Trump administration will continue using sanctions as a tool to tame, isolate, contain and punish the regime in Iran. If European pressures on the regime increase, its isolation and financial hardship will only deepen. But the question is: what will its leaders then do?

In Iraq, the situation looks extremely complex and difficult for Iran, with no light at the end of the tunnel as protests continue and the death toll rises. Iranians are hurting themselves and their neighbour by refusing to allow Iraq to become a normal country. The regime's logic does not allow for a withdrawal from Iraq or the disbanding of the Popular Mobilisation Forces. The bloodshed will continue and the risk of a US-Iranian military confrontation will increase, either because of deliberate provocation by the Iranians to draw Mr Trump into conflict or as a result of an

incident involving US forces in Iraq.

In Lebanon, the Iranian leadership thinks the crisis will not last longer than another month due to fatigue and the impasse that protests have reached. The Iranian leadership is betting protesters' endurance will decrease as the ruling class plays a waiting game.

So far Washington has succeeded in ensuring European support for the demands of the uprising, led by the need to form a government of technocrats rather than politicians affiliated to traditional parties under the dominance of Hizbollah and the IRGC.

The situation is now very delicate. If Iran succeeds in suppressing the Lebanese uprising, the ruling class will return with a vengeance and retaliate against those who dared to question them and call for them to be held accountable.

Western powers are waking up to the fact the key to protecting Lebanon from chaos and total collapse is to pressure and punish Iran and its proxies. But accountability will take time. It is therefore necessary to be patient and think pragmatically and strategically if the uprising is to achieve its lofty goals.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



"The Commission has sent out questionnaires as part of a preliminary investigation into Google's practices relating to Google's collection and use of data. The preliminary investigation is ongoing," the EU regulator told Reuters in an email.

@fabiochiusi

02



JOURNALISTS! Whenever Boris Johnson uses the "They all said we couldn't get a deal, and we got a deal" line, remind him that the deal he got is one that he had previously said "No Conservative PM could or should ever agree to" and which May rejected.

@Femi_Sorry

03



We will end the automatic early release system for serious and violent offenders so they serve their full term in prison.

@BorisJohnson

04



The Tories want to judge Labour on the record of the last Labour government nearly ten years ago, but Boris Johnson doesn't want to want to be judged for the last three Tory governments for the last nine years

@jonoread

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

Bahrain's ecosystem diversity needs protection



KOTA SRIRAJ

As an island nation, Bahrain hosts a number of valuable ecosystems, all of which have contributed towards defining Bahrain's identity. Many of these are of great cultural significance as they have influenced the roots of what is known today as Bahrain's cultural and natural heritage. The marine ecosystem too is one of the most unique and rich aspects of Bahrain, which has enabled the nation to be the guardian of some of the most interesting and diverse life forms ever seen on the planet. But today Bahrain's precious ecosystems are facing a real time threat thanks to climate change and various anthropogenic impacts. The nation will need to have future proof strategies that account for intensive impact of global warming and climate change on these valued natural assets.

Terrestrial ecosystems such as wetlands, agricultural lands and fresh water springs are invaluable in their contribution to ensure that the nation is endowed with the very best that nature has to offer. Wetlands for instance are a major part of the foundation of water resources, which are vital to the health of water pathways and downstream communities. Wetlands are home to various fish and wildlife species in addition to playing a huge role in trapping floodwaters, recharging groundwater supplies and removing pollution. But thanks to the increasing demand for land and rising pollution these wetlands now face pressures of urbanisation.

Similarly, fresh water springs comprising of the most biologically diverse inland water ecosystem have historically played a significant role in the development of Bahrain. These springs played host to unique class of aquatic ecosystems, which are known to have watered the northern and western areas of the island of Bahrain for centuries. Freshwater ecosystems known for the good quality of their waters provided the basis for a diverse assemblage of aquatic flora and fauna. But due to pollution from refineries and over exploitation of the ground water has led to the near extinction of these springs. In fact, the biological status of Bahrain's famous freshwater springs condition has been classified as critical. The freshwater springs within the sea are said to have become extinct whilst the few remaining inland springs no longer have the ability to pump their water naturally.

Agricultural lands popularly known as palm groves too are facing the adverse impacts of man-made

activities. Once known to be the island of a million palm trees with the local saying that one can see a palm tree from where ever a person stands on the island, the northern and western coastal areas are known for their fertile soil. For thousands of years, agricultural lands have been heavily cultivated with date palms and alfalfa plantations. Date palm farms are considered to be the most diverse terrestrial habitat on the island as it supports a variety of introduced and native species besides migratory birds.

However the negative vibes of climate change have started to create ripples in what was once a flourishing palm grove ecology. A sharp decline in the total area of date palm farms has been noted due to the rapid urbanization of the northern part of the main island. Freshwater springs are recorded to have been highly productive whereby they irrigated the palms groves through flooding, however since freshwater springs have now dwindled down massively, these groves require surface irrigation whereas in areas suffering from water scarcity, these groves are now desiccated.

The marine ecosystems are also not faring well either. The coral reefs are one of the most diverse ecosystems on the planet and are said to home about one-third of all marine fish species. Coral reefs are made up of corals, which secrete calcium carbonate thereby creating the reef's structures. Coral reefs are said to have been very abundant in Bahrain covering many areas near and offshore. However, due to extreme conditions such as high salinity and temperature levels accompanied by intensive dredging and reclamation, coral reefs have been facing massive pressures. In 1998, Bahrain lost more than 90% of its coral as a result of a bleaching event, which affected most of Bahrain's reefs.

The anthropogenic causes, climate change and rising ambient temperatures due to global warming are playing havoc with Bahrain's ecological assets. Fresh water springs; coral reefs and palm groves are either declining or already decimated. In order to ensure that the other assets do not meet the same fate it is crucial to immediately ramp up the mitigation measures and identify the precipitating factors contributing to the rapid downfall of the eco assets and neutralize these causal factors. Increasing the usage of renewable energy, decreasing the carbon footprint by reducing fossil fuel usage and increasing the green cover can give immense progress in the protection of ecological assets.

Bahrain has a very strong ability and track record for environmental protection and the same resolve can really help in ensuring that the health and prosperity of Bahrain's ecological assets is restored for the benefit of future generations.