

1911

Dutch physicist **Heike Kamerlingh Onnes** discovers superconductivity.



1913

The **17th Amendment** to the United States Constitution, requiring direct election of Senators, becomes law.

1916

In Corona, California, race car driver **Bob Burman** crashes, killing three (including himself), and badly injuring five spectators.

1918

World War I: Actors Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin sell war bonds on the streets of New York City's financial district.

as front line globally

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to ease years of pressure by consecutive US administrations that have attempted to destroy Cuba's revolution. There has always been an element of defiance of the US in Cuba's medical diplomacy, while its domestic health care system stands diametrically opposed to the American model that neglects those who can't afford to pay for medical insurance.

Cuba's drive to improve the health of the world's underprivileged is complemented by its provision of free training for medical students — including their accommodation and subsistence. Students come from more than 100 countries, chiefly in Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as from disadvantaged neighborhoods in the US. Two years ago, during a visit to a hospital in Santa Clara, I met, among others, two Palestinian medical students, one from Ramallah in the West Bank and one from the Gaza Strip. They had arrived in Cuba with no Spanish but soon became fluent, and were by then preparing to return to the Occupied Territories to serve their people.

Part of the current US campaign to reverse the rapprochement between Washington and Havana that took place during the Obama administration involves vehemently criticizing what the Trump White House calls the "exploitation" of Cuban medical workers by their government. The State Department tweeted

last month that the Cuban government "keeps most of the salary its doctors and nurses earn while serving in its international medical missions while exposing them to egregious labor conditions." It is legitimate to question how much of what the Cuban government receives from its medical missions finds its way into the pockets of the doctors and nurses themselves, but the US tweet reflects both the hypocrisy and the ignorance of an administration that is making a complete shambles of containing the coronavirus in its own country, while doing nothing to help others.

In Cuba, unlike the US, there are no tuition fees for locals at any level of education, and virtually no homelessness, even if living conditions are very modest. And, as for the working conditions, Cuban health workers are certainly prepared to work in the most remote and difficult conditions because that is exactly what Cuba's revolution has taught them. Hence, it was Cuban medical teams that led the relief mission in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, and were later in West Africa dealing with the 2014 Ebola crisis.

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er with Fidel and Raul Castro and his other comrades.

Cuba currently has about 50,000 doctors operating in 67 countries — many in Latin America and Africa. This is a staggering number and means there are more Cuban doctors working abroad than from all G7 nations combined, even though the country's population is only 11.4 million. This comes with a financial reward, which, according to some estimates, is about \$6 billion a year. For a country on the receiving end of harsh punitive sanctions from the US, such an income stream, especially of hard currency, is a lifeline. But it is far from the sole reason for Cuba maintaining its international brigades in white. Moreover, from a diplomatic perspective, providing medical help to the developing world has helped

ature after COVID-19

Businesses are more dependent on nature than previously thought, with over half of the world's GDP moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services. China has the highest absolute amount of GDP in nature-dependent sectors in the world at \$2.7 trillion. China's GDP is 20% highly dependent on nature, 38% medium dependent on nature and 41% low dependent on nature.

go back to old business models with an unsustainable relation with the environment as a mere externality.

Initiatives such China's Grain for Green Programme, National Forest Protection Programme, National Park System and Ecological Function Zoning provide significant learnings as the world looks to adopting clear policies forest protection, restoration and sustainable management.

An equally important measure undertaken by China is to establish a national accounting system of natural capital and ecosystem services. Such continued investment in nature could shift our understanding of nature-relat-

ed risks and opportunities and could serve to prevent future economic, health and environmental crises.

Intact nature can provide business opportunities and cost-effective nature-based solutions to many of society's problems. For example, the Food and Land-use Coalition's recent report found that transitions in the food and land-use sector could provide \$4.5 trillion a year in new business opportunities by 2030 while preventing trillions of dollars' worth of social and environmental harms.

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In this context, it is heartening to see President Xi stress that "the environment itself means the economy. If you protect the environment, you will receive rewards from the environment."

stimulus packages should rightly be focused on human health, livelihoods, resilience and the most vulnerable, we must find a way to invest in new opportunities that are nature-positive and not



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



President @realDonaldTrump just hosted a call w/ CEOs of pharmaceutical & bio-tech companies to discuss developments in therapeutics to fight the #Coronavirus. We are working hard to tear down barriers, cut red tape, & encourage co-operation across private industries & government.

@PressSec

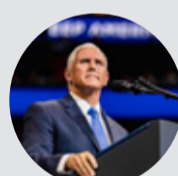
02



Everyone seems upset that Stephanie Grisham never briefed the press. But everyone also seems upset that Trump is briefing the press every single day. So make up your minds, people.

@benshapiro

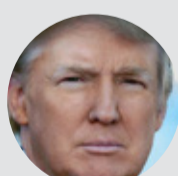
03



By this evening, there will be 2,179 medical military personnel in New York City ready to assist. We are here for you and we will continue to work with states so they have the resources they need to combat the Coronavirus.

@MikePence

04



The WHO really blew it. For some reason, funded largely by the United States, yet very China centric. We will be giving that a good look. Fortunately I rejected their advice on keeping our borders open to China early on. Why did they give us such a faulty recommendation?

@realDonaldTrump

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

Wide Angle

The Brunels: A Tribute to the British Engineering Duo



JOEL INDRUPATI

On this day, April 8, exactly 182 years ago, a new service began across the Atlantic, with a new ship.

The 'SS Great Western', was a wooden-hulled paddle-wheel steamship built for the primary purpose of ferrying passengers across the Atlantic Ocean at high-speed.

She was not only the first 'steam ship' of this type - even though she had had four masts for sails - but was also the world's largest passenger ship from 1837 to 1839.

"On its maiden voyage, the Great Western left Bristol, England, on April 8, 1838, and arrived in New York City 15 days later (half the time that sailing ships usually took)", according to Encyclopaedia Britannica.

It was in fact 74 years later that the RMS Titanic began its maiden voyage in the same direction, in 1912. Unfortunately, we know, it had also become her last, after she hit that iceberg.

The engineering marvels of that time must have included, on the top of the list, the skills of 'ship building'.

The field of Shipbuilding then must have been like today's scientific fields of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence. And a man called Isambard Kingdom Brunel then, must have been a technology-icon people looked up to, like how one would look up to Elon Musk today.

It is on this engineer, who designed the 'Great Western', that I wanted to focus on, in this column today.

He and his father are counted among some of the greatest engineers in history. And it is perhaps appropriate to look at their contributions to Britain's progress; and, indirectly, to the world's.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel had also designed another British steamship 'Great Eastern', for the India trade -- which held the distinction of being the world's largest ship afloat, at its launching in 1858.

Earlier to that he was an engineer at Bristol Docks, and a chief engineer in the Great Western Railway.

In fact, this man - the Encyclopaedia Britannica tells me - was responsible for building more than 1,000 miles (1,600 km) of railway in the West Country, the Midlands, South Wales, and Ireland. But, that's only in the British Isles.

He had also constructed two railway lines in Italy. And he was an adviser on the construction of the Victorian lines in Australia, and the Eastern Bengal Railway in India.

But then, what else can you expect from a man whose father, Sir Marc Isambard Brunel, was the first engineer who audaciously suggested, in 1820s, to drill a tunnel under London's River Thames.

This senior Brunel had left the French Navy to flee to United States in the aftermath of French Revolution. But he rose to hold the post of chief engineer of New York City. He had built many buildings, improved the defences of the channel between Staten Island and Long Island, and constructed an arsenal and a cannon foundry. In fact, his design for the Washington DC's Capitol building was short-listed, but somehow not accepted due to US government's economic considerations.

I remember going under the River Thames a couple of times, when using the London Underground, but it is only recently that I got to know more about these pioneering engineers who made it possible.

When we consider the advantages that today's civil engineers have, with their draft-board work and lathe-machine cutting aided by high-precision computer modelling, and with their project planning and scheduling aided by the latest Project Management software, we must look, with awe and respect, at what those engineers had achieved back then, almost 200 years ago.

This father-son duo had worked on buildings, bridges, tunnels, docks, railroads, ships and a host of other civil engineering marvels.

And naming a university as Brunel, is just not enough.

(The writer's twitter handle: @joelindrupati)