

1990

**Crown Prince Akihito** is formally installed as Emperor Akihito of Japan, becoming the 125th Japanese monarch.



1990

**Tim Berners-Lee** publishes a formal proposal for the World Wide Web.

1991

**Santa Cruz massacre:** Indonesian forces open fire on a crowd of student protesters in Dili, East Timor.

1995

**Erdut Agreement** regarding the peaceful resolution to the Croatian War of Independence was reached.



gainst the privatisation of public spaces.

flourishing domestic markets and from commercial opportunities in Egypt, Syria, the Gulf and beyond.

What criminal levels of incompetence does it take to bankrupt such a flourishing nation and reduce it to indebted servitude? Given a healthy business environment and accountable governance, Lebanon will again bestow prosperity upon all its citizens, attracting back a substantial proportion of that diaspora, which still yearns for its motherland.

Lebanon's civil war-era Mafioso factions — including Hezbollah and its Iranian paymasters — are the definition of parasites, voraciously sucking the nation's lifeblood. This is managed parasitism; never seeking to kill the patient, just keeping it weak, passive

and submissive. Believing that they can wait out or suppress the uprising, faction leaders fatally underestimate citizens' awe-inspiring tenacity. Why? Because they always viewed their communities with predatory contempt.

When protesters assembled outside Walid Jumblatt's residence, he instructed his security detail to treat citizens with dignity and respect their right to demonstrate.

When protest organisers indicated their intention to gather outside Nabih Berri's home, his cronies provocatively blustered via social media that demonstrators should bring coffins with them.

With each passing day, the Lebanon uprising's battle of wills is intensifying. We can sympathise with those small businesses saying: "Enough. Let's get back to work."

Lebanon, meanwhile, faces imminent financial collapse, with draconian emergency banking measures being implemented and the World Bank urging the formation of a new Cabinet "within a week" to prevent further deterioration of this heavily indebted nation's finances.

However, for demonstrators to compromise now would be to lose everything; allowing factions to salvage their corrupt sectarian system by cobbling together a government with the same faces sitting in different seats (although Saad Hariiri, to his credit, has rejected this). Worse, it would be a gesture of defeat to Tehran, suggesting that Lebanon is not strong enough to break its stranglehold.

Hezbollah represents a legitimate segment of Lebanon's society. However, it should have the

courage to separate itself from its Iranian overlords and act according to national interests and sovereignty, rather than engaging in actions that guarantee Lebanon's destruction. With their fat Iranian paychecks, Hezbollah's leaders consider themselves insulated from Lebanon's travails. Yet if they and their children desire a future here, they must seek to amicably coexist instead of being a conduit for hostile alien powers.

Meanwhile, Shiite communities in the region are watching developments in Iraq and Lebanon closely and learning about the unsupportable costs of alignment with Iran.

Citizens will not be cowed by threats from Michel Aoun, Birri, Gebran Bassil or Hassan Nasrallah. Escalatory retaliation and attempted crackdowns only reveal the ugly face of Iranian hegemony; just as the assassinations of Rafik Hariiri and other figures in 2005 united Lebanon in kicking out the detested Syrian occupation.

I have never felt more pride in my nation than at this moment. As Martin Luther King once declared: "There is nothing more majestic than the determined courage of individuals willing to suffer and sacrifice for their freedom and dignity."

Before the eyes of the world, the Lebanese and Iraqi nations have taken a stand in defence of their identity, sovereignty and personal freedoms. May they not sit down again until they have won all these, and much more.

(Baria Alamuddin is an award-winning journalist and broadcaster in the Middle East and the UK. She is editor of the Media Services Syndicate and has interviewed numerous heads of state.)

## hout a trigger



making promises without delivering them. Mr Abdul Mahdi's leadership has been marked by a failure to effect any meaningful change.

Despite the abundance of motives for revolt, the mobilisation of the masses has come relatively late. For some, the lack of earlier action was a result of religious and sectarian influence. The absence of a middle-class culture has also been a contributing factor. The people who need to see an immediate change in their situation are mainly Shiite, because the poorest provinces in Iraq are the nine Shiite districts in the centre and south. This has led to conflict between Shiite factions. Division between Shiite parties has long been a reality in Iraq, making it difficult for those parties to enter elections under a single electoral

list. Disagreement has also erupted among parties whose first priority is loyalty to Iran. That conflict between Shiite citizens and parties reached its zenith in the October 1 uprising.

Mass uprisings do not erupt without a trigger. Iraq's protests differ from Lebanon's as there was no single clear trigger, unlike in Beirut, where the proposed taxes on WhatsApp proved a tipping point. Yet even those who called for demonstrations on social media cannot have anticipated the extent of what has transpired in Iraq.

The important thing that has unfolded over the past few weeks is the peaceable and persistent call — even in the face of violence — for the separation of religion and the state, and protecting Iraqi citizenship and soil from sectarian, tribal and regional affiliations.

Although the majority of the protesting masses are Shiite, their demands do not play to sectarian intolerance. The demonstrators have also criticised the presence of armed groups outside the control of the state and Iran's blatant interference in Iraqi affairs.

Women in particular have had an important role to play.

The biggest question for many remains: what can this uprising achieve? Will it be able to realise its demands? The answer to these questions is not easy because the parties that have ruled Iraq since 2003 have managed to enrich themselves by acquiring the best governmental commercial contracts for their own benefit. Financial and

administrative corruption is endemic in all its forms and the deep state, made up of Shiite, Sunni and Kurdish parties benefiting from the country's oil exports, will fight all attempts to disrupt it.

Nor will Iran give up Iraq easily. Iraq represents a political, economic and ideological partner and it will want to tightly control Iraqis willing to do its bidding, as long as it can.

Many of the demands of the uprising cannot be achieved immediately. It will take months and possibly years to undo the ill effects of institutionalised corruption and mismanagement.

It is difficult to predict how the uprising will end. There are a number of scenarios that could take place: an understanding could be reached between the government and the demonstrators by finding a middle ground between their demands and what can be delivered.

This could be the best outcome. Alternatively, the uprising could be met with further force, which will severely isolate the government at a national, regional and international level.

That is not to undo the achievements of the uprising so far: namely, that it has raised awareness among Iraqi citizens, cemented the idea of a homeland and national pride among the Iraqi people, and raised the profile of female campaigners.

Above all, it has destroyed the idea that the government can do as it likes, despite the will of the people.



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



The British people have had enough delay & uncertainty. I want us to #GetBrexitDone and spend next year focusing on the issues that matter - tackling violent crime, investing in our NHS & schools, and strengthening our economy.

@BorisJohnson

02



Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin questioned the legitimacy of the election. No Kentucky election official has corroborated that claim since Bevin made it. Critics and elections specialists are now calling for Bevin to provide evidence of the claim or retract it.

@kylegriffin1

03



Enjoyed a visit to the SulthanBathery Police station that has been listed by the HomeMinistry among the 100 best in India. It's amazing: brilliantly organised & signposted, spotlessly clean & offering services I've never seen in any Indian police station, incl FirstAid&a Library

@ShashiTharoor

04



Will be meeting with representatives of the Vaping industry, together with medical professionals and individual state representatives, to come up with an acceptable solution to the Vaping and E-cigarette dilemma. Children's health & safety, together with jobs, will be a focus!

@realDonaldTrump

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

## Who is next?



YENUS S

The elimination of Abu Baker Al Baghdadi gave the so-called Islamic terrorist group (IS) a staggering blow. Following a series of military defeats and losing territories in both in Syria and Iraq, the group was in disarray due to opinion differences among the leaders, according to some reports. Now with the death of Al Baghdadi, more cleavage among the group is expected but one is likely to replace him.

Another round of hunting the new head of the terror group will commence, with at least US \$25 million bounty on his head and the vicious cycle continues.

From 2003 to 2006, the Bush Jr administration was hunting for Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; the head of A Qaeda in Iraq that gave birth to IS and was eliminated after spotting him in a remote Iraqi village.

Came Obama, he targeted the Al Qaeda terrorist group head, Osama bin Laden who was found comfortably living in a Pakistani town near a major military garrison and killed by US troops.

The Trump administration has recently eliminated Osama bin Laden's son, Hamza bin Laden, killed in air strike in an unknown location and date. Last week, Abu Bakar Al Baghdadi was targeted.

Who will the next President of the US target?

All these campaigns to eliminate terrorist leaders indicate that we are missing the right strategy to fight not only notorious individuals but also the successive terrorist groups that pop-up in every country.

We are fighting a global ideology, the propaganda that continues to infect the minds of innocent people, which neither demands

bombs, drones nor missiles.

Recently, journalists have managed to enter in one of the big detention camps in Syria where IS terrorists are kept. During the interviews, some of them do not show any sense of regret or remorse.

To the surprise of journalists, few of the detainees hope to see to the day they set free from prison to fight for the cause of the 'caliphate'. They consider the current turmoil the group is facing as a natural and temporary event in the long armed struggle and think that in the near future the group will revive.

More than a dozen IS 'affiliates' currently operate in several countries, brainwashed by the caliphate ideology. In countries including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Nigeria, Mali, Egypt, Somalia, Yemen and others, groups operate that claim allegiance to Al Baghdadi's parent IS.

The fight against indoctrination, radicalism and extremism using every available method including social media and awareness campaigns among the public in every country seems the right strategy of eliminating terrorism and their leaders. Governments should force big social media giants including Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, Tweeter and others to deny platforms for terrorists.

The gruesome executions that IS filmed were distributed throughout the social media. This practice has brought the social media giants under spotlight but still terrorist propaganda is disseminated through them. More needs to be done to rein in terrorist entities. The killing of Al Baghdadi is unlikely to end IS operation in Syria, Iraq or any other country throughout the world.

The world needs to invest on counter terrorism propaganda rather than expensive military campaigns involving high tech equipment that kill more innocent people than terrorists, destroy infrastructure, and demolish houses.