

1915

President of the **Republic of China, Yuan Shikai**, announces his intention to reinstate the monarchy and proclaim himself Emperor of China.



1917

In Nebraska, Father **Edward J. Flanagan** founds Boys Town as a farm village for wayward boys.

1918

The **Flag of Estonia** is raised atop the Pikk Hermann for the first time.

1935

Lebensborn Project, a Nazi reproduction program, is founded by Heinrich Himmler.

t of truth



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The Yellow Vests have become Macron's midterms, only more brutal. He has been so busy that he forgot to create a new political force to support his agenda. That has left him vulnerable, because his party's Parliament members, elected a few weeks after him, are as inexperienced in politics as he is.

So what if Macron fails? This is not an easy question. In the uncharted environment created by the collapse of the old French political balances, there is no obvious alternative, no opposition leader prepared to win a snap election, no strong political parties. Whatever happens in the next few days, Macron will not be able to govern as he did in his first year. "One cannot govern against the people," his political ally François Bayrou sternly warned him last week.

Most likely, his reform agenda

will need a pause. The hard work still to be done — the reforms of the pension system, of the civil service, of local taxes, of political institutions — will have to wait or be watered down. Curbing public spending will be an even bigger challenge. The Yellow Vests are demanding fewer taxes and more public services. And the crucial equation between ecological transition and social justice will be even harder to solve.

Such a scenario of France reverting to its old woes will do the European Union no good. With Germany absorbed for another year by its domestic political upheavals, the European agenda will be left unattended. This is a cruel dimension of Macron's travails: The only leader bold enough to articulate an attractive vision of a renewed European project, he was hung out to dry by those very leaders who had celebrated him. It is difficult to imagine how the pendulum can now swing back: The last bulwark against nationalism is gone. Trump and Italy's Matteo Salvini may have the last laugh.

Yet, if Macron survives this crisis, something good may come out of it. He, along with French and European elites, could draw the lesson from the revolt of the Yellow Vests and find a way to govern with the people, not against them. That is, after all, what democracy is about.

(Sylvie Kauffmann is the editorial director and a former editor in chief of *Le Monde*, and a contributing opinion writer.)

ensorship?



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tary. The Egyptian singer Shyma was imprisoned in January for making a suggestive music video involving a banana; another singer was also jailed — for joking about the cleanliness of the Nile's waters. This week, an actress was handed a trial date for wearing to the Cairo International Film Festival a fishnet dress revealing her legs.

Many of these works, which earned their creators charges of "blasphemy," "offending public morals," "inciting debauchery" or "contempt of religion," were reported to the prosecutor's office by fellow citizens who questioned their morality. The laws are vague enough to act as

a catchall. The crusade to silence words, images and thoughts is both opaque and arbitrary. What may well escape the state censor might still offend a neighbour — partly because the government has encouraged citizens to report fake news and "forces of evil."

For decades under past presidents, the conservative current in Egyptian society had been kept in check acceptability.

Today, the risks exist regardless of who you are, what platform you write or speak for, what language you choose to use. The bounds of right and wrong now extend beyond the parameters of a political system, to what is deemed to be moral for the culture and conscientious for the nation. This is a moment of crisis, when new forms of expression and resistance must emerge.

A question occupies me today: How to silence the censor inside me when faced with a growing sense of foreboding, even at times fear? How to invent, from this moment and this pressure, something radical, bound-breaking, new?

(Yasmine El Rashidi is the author of "The Battle for Egypt: Dispatches from the Revolution" and "Chronicle of a Last Summer: A Novel of Egypt," and a contributing opinion writer.)



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Wonderful news pouring in from #Elections2018. In the memorable words of @arunjaitley, "Great Day for India. No one who cheats India will go scot free." #EndToJumlas #TimesUpBJP

@ShashiTharoor

02



GOP member Lamar Smith goes on with a lunatic conspiracy theory about Google having an anti-conservative bias. It's clown show time. YouTube is far more favorable to right-wing content and its programmatic ad service is, well... #Google-Hearing

@matthewstoller

03



Some Democrats are salivating over the possibility that the President could be charged with campaign finance illegalities for paying the women off. So the Trump people are pointing out much more serious allegations such as lying to federal judges to get surveillance warrants.

@BillO'Reilly

04



A male, 19, arrested after a video circulated on social media of him physically assaulting a shopkeeper in Jidhafs and intentionally damaging the shop. Legal procedures are being taken to refer the case to the Public Prosecution.

@moi_bahrain

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

Wide Angle

Voyager Interstellar Mission: A feat of human ingenuity



JOEL INDRUPATI

"Your smartphone has 200,000 times more memory than what the Voyager spacecraft had."

This line should be enough to convince us, on why the news of Voyager 2, leaving the heliosphere of the Solar System, is really a big deal for science; and for man's exploration of outer space.

Launched in 1977, some sixteen days apart, both spacecraft Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 have now become the only two man-made objects to have gone the farthest from earth.

They have, effectively left the confines of the solar system, in August 2012 and November 2018 respectively, and are now journeying in interstellar space.

And, in their total journey of 41 years, they have sent back enormous amounts of data, including magnificent pictures of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune from close quarters. And are still sending data!

Voyager 2's position and data can actually be tracked live, at this web link: theskylive.com/voyager2-tracker.

And as I write this, I see that its distance from earth is 17.9 billion kilometres now. Can we even compare that with the distance of sun from earth, which is a minuscule 150 million kilometres?

Voyager 2 is 119 times farther from earth than the sun is from the earth. Which is why data from it reaches earth in 16 to 19 hours.

Today, thanks to this great human ingenuity, we can see that a spacecraft keeps going strong for over 41 years. But then, the same ingenuity is making a mobile phone outdated in six months.



My investigations revealed some incredible facts about these in the 'Voyager Mission' — which, by the way, NASA has now changed to 'Voyager Interstellar Mission'.

Power to the spacecraft is supplied by a mini nuclear reactor that uses heat from Plutonium decay, as an energy generating method; and it is likely to last till 2025.

Software programmers of 1970s, or with that knowledge, are often needed to re-program or revise the programs on the onboard minicomputer that transmits data to earth.

Thrusters onboard are always ensuring that the aircraft is aligned in such a way that one of the main antennas is always pointing to earth, so that the receiving and transmission earth-stations can receive the data.

Three earth stations, located at different points on earth, with high power receivers to capture weak signals, in a continuous uninterrupted seamless stream, with at least one station in a line of sight with the space probe, billions of kilometres away.

Like 'a game of cosmic billiards' — as Carl Sagan has put it in his book 'Cosmos' — the planets' gravitational pulls were used to sling shot the space craft through immense distances, conserving energy, and increasing speed.

So, when we think of this scientific thinking and visionary resourcefulness, does it not boggle our minds? When we think of our curious human minds, and passionate collective endeavour, does it not stun us into a reverent awe?

Today, thanks to this great human ingenuity, we can see that a spacecraft keeps going strong for over 41 years. But then, the same ingenuity is making a mobile phone outdated in six months.