

1961

United States President **John F. Kennedy** sends 18,000 military advisors to South Vietnam.



1963

The **first push-button** telephone goes into service.

1970

U.S. President **Richard Nixon** asks the U.S. Congress for \$155 million in supplemental aid for the Cambodian government.

1971

Oman declares its independence from United Kingdom.



Place on November 15 in Santa Clarita, California and left two students dead

and had recently undergone a revolution against Great Britain, which was largely fought by homegrown American militias and later aided by the French. Because of the Second Amendment, Americans living in most states today have little trouble buying a gun. In 36 states there are no legal requirements for gun registration, no permit needed and no licence necessary to purchase and own a firearm such as a rifle, shotgun or handgun. It is easy to buy a gun online or at a gun show.

What will it take to curb this gun culture? Stricter background checks and a ban on automatic weapons, for a start. But the National Rifle Association

is far too powerful, far too linked to the Republican Party and has too much money to ever concede.

After the 2012 Sandy Hook shootings in which 27 people died, the Senate blocked the drive for gun control and stricter background checks. That is how powerful the NRA is.

For the many people who thought the massacre at Sandy Hook would fundamentally change the nation's gun politics, the loss felt unbearable. According to the New York Times, the NRA spent \$500,000 in one day alone on an advertising campaign criticising "Obama's gun ban".

Former US President Barack Obama had fought hard for gun

control and made it one of his priorities. He was devastated by the Senate's decision and called it "a pretty shameful day for Washington".

We must reverse that shame. There must be some soul-searching nationwide for a solution.

Arming teachers – which some right-wing television pundits suggest – is not an option. There has to be a national epiphany. According to a recent study in The American Journal of Medicine, the firearms homicide rate is 25 times higher in the US than in other high-income nations. Compared to other nations that are part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, all of which have considerably stricter gun regulations, the US is by far the leader in gun homicides.

The data is shocking. About 38,000 people die a year from gunshot wounds. It is the number one cause of premature death in the US.

The entire incident in Santa Clarita last week took 16 seconds. In that time, Berhow shot five students at random before saving the last bullet for himself. Imagine a different scenario: that a semi-automatic handgun could not have been made available to the shooter. His frustration, his angst, whatever motivated him in that one moment, could have been averted. Perhaps he would have channelled his rage another way; perhaps he would have thrown a punch at a friend or talked to a teacher, or gone for a run.

Whatever might have happened did not. Now there are the dead. Three young lives are cut down; never to grow up, never to even graduate from high school.

ake in next month's polls

ipping, a move seen as hardening Britain's position, while other European countries have declined to take part, fearing that do so might jeopardise their chances of salvaging the deal. Mr Corbyn's political approach in the Middle East, by contrast, appears to be almost the complete opposite of Mr Johnson's. His sympathies have consistently erred towards Tehran, so much that, prior to him becoming Labour leader, he was a regular contributor to Press TV, the Iranian-run propaganda channel, and his appearances – for which he was paid £20,000 – continued until the channel was banned by British regulators for its part in financing the detention and torture of an Iranian journalist. Mr Corbyn ever apologised for his association with the broadcaster, claiming his appearances over three years allowed him to raise a number of important human rights issues".

Another example of Mr Corbyn's apparent pro-Iranian bias can be seen in his frequent public association with members of Hezbollah, a movement widely regarded as a terrorist organisation. In a speech made

Prior to entering Downing Street, Mr Johnson established a warm personal friendship with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and spent a week as a guest on his private yacht last summer.

to the Stop the War Coalition, he called members of Hezbollah and Hamas, both Iranian proxies, "friends". If Mr Corbyn were to succeed in his goal of becoming prime minister at the next election, there is a risk Britain would adopt a far more sympathetic approach to Tehran, with all the implications that would have for Gulf security.

The close links Mr Corbyn enjoys with groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas is another reason why Gulf states should be concerned by the prospect of him winning the

election. As with Hezbollah, Mr Corbyn has been photographed on a number of occasions with leaders of Hamas, which is also designated a terrorist organisation.

Mr Corbyn also has a long track record of openly criticising Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, which enjoy close relations with Britain. During the anti-government protests in Bahrain in 2011, Mr Corbyn concentrated his criticism against the Bahraini government, even though many of the protests were orchestrated by Tehran. And he has consistently called for Britain to discontinue arms sales to Riyadh, even though they are deemed vital to the Saudis' efforts to defend themselves against unprovoked acts of Iranian aggression.

These are just a few reasons why it behoves pro-western regimes in the Arab world to take a close interest in the outcome of Britain's general election. For while a Johnson victory is likely to herald a new era of closer ties and co-operation, a success for Mr Corbyn could jeopardise Britain's friendly relations with the region.

TOP 4 TWEETS

01

For 73 years, the United States and the Philippines have continued to build a comprehensive alliance. This cooperation plays a vital role in regional peace and security efforts!
@EsperDod

02

The Government of India has decided to extend the Visa-on-arrival facility to nationals of the United Arab Emirates.
@ANI

03

If you're wondering what Trump was doing last night, and I know you are: President Trump had people over for a viewing of "The Joker" movie Saturday night, a White House official tells CNN.
@ShimonPro

04

The visitors to the Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum can witness the exhibition of these paintings from November 19 to 24, 2019 between 0900 hrs and 1600 hrs. Entry will be from Gate Number 30 of Rashtrapati Bhavan.
@rashtrapatibhvn

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

Significance of effective environmental impact assessment



KOTA SRIRAJ

Bahrain has seen rapid economic and industrial development along with a spike in population growth. These conditions have also given rise to spiralling energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions. To understand the exact impact of anthropogenic activities on environment, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes are crucial to address environmental aspects within energy intensive projects such as oil and petrochemical industries. An effective EIA regimen can enable a country fight to climate change better and ensure that the scarce and fast dwindling natural resources are not only conserved better but also used judiciously.

Currently, the EIA reports in Bahrain are more focused on aspects of gas emissions than energy conservation. An effective EIA's hallmark is its ability to facilitate integration of the EIA process, environmental management systems (EMS) and energy management systems (EnMS), all this in the backdrop of efficient enforcement of the available environment legislations. If done effectively, this can play a pivotal role in mitigation of climate change penalties.

The rising trend of both population and urbanization is pushing energy demand all over the world and Bahrain is no exception as it is facing ever rising demand for these non-renewable energy sources. Thanks to these conditions, the green house gas emissions are rising sharply. In fact, the energy sector is considered the main contributor to GHG emissions in the Arabian Gulf countries, which accounts for more than 90% of the emissions. Energy use per capita in the Arabian Gulf countries is considered among the highest in the world as per studies conducted by Alshehry & Belloumi in 2015 and Reiche in 2010.

According to the Bahrain Economic Development Board, though Bahrain has started to diversify its economy over recent decades, the energy sector is still the major contributor to the national economy, where oil and gas, represent 20% of gross domestic product (GDP) and provide about 80% of government income. Thanks to this, the increasing energy demand in Bahrain imposes pressure on the energy resources and contributes to increase in the release of GHG such as CO2. According to the Bahrain Energy Report, the industrial sector has the largest share of Bahrain's total consumption of energy, which ac-

counts for 59% of total consumption. Additionally, around 89% of the total CO2 emissions in the country come from both the energy and industrial sectors.

With situations such as these, only an effective EIA can put facts in perspective and enable taking evasive measures that can protect the environment. A well-researched EIA can establish the direct relationship between energy consumption and CO2 emissions and spell effective strategies to lower energy consumption in order to reduce CO2 emissions, which could be achieved by adopting energy conservation strategies and emission reduction policy in the long term without impeding economic growth.

Bahrain must leverage the full potential of EIA as it is not only considered as one of the management tools to achieve a balance between industrial development and protection of the environment, but EIA is also a powerful

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process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the biophysical, social and other relevant factors of development proposals prior to making major decisions and commitments. A well-drafted and well-implemented EIA has the capacity to minimise or avoid the adverse effects of a proposed development on the environment, by addressing effective designs, alternatives, mitigations, cumulative impacts, and monitoring.

The EIA regime in Bahrain today focused more on matters pertaining to air quality and less on energy sector, this can change in favour of achieving a balance between the two. This can begin by adopting legislation that increases support for energy sector monitoring. Enactment of legislation or setting guidelines for monitoring energy consumption in industrial activities would contribute to better consideration of efficient energy use in EIA studies. Moreover, the EIA's themselves can be further made robust by increasing research on the project, the environment likely to be affected, and the primary environmental impact, and monitoring of the residual impact.

The current EIA practice in Bahrain reveals a strong link between EIA reports and environmental management plans. Although the energy aspects were not translated to management plans, this reflects an area of improvement, where adopting EnMS is an effective measure to properly improve energy management and enhance the conservation of energy within industrial premises. EIA is more of a plan and any climate achievement begins with a good plan. Bahrain needs to ensure that its EIA's are effective on paper this will automatically ensure efficacy in execution.