

2005

July 2005 London bombings occur.

2008

Ram Baran Yadav is declared the first president of Nepal.



2011

NASA's Space Shuttle program ends with the landing of Space Shuttle Atlantis on mission STS-135 at NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

2012

Erden Eruc completes the first solo human-powered circumnavigation of the world.



Mr Erdogan was returned to the presidency, but the AKP under-performed at the polls. One possible explanation was that the party was not in tune with ordinary voters on the refugee issue.

centrated in Idlib, which borders Turkey and is the last province to remain under rebel control. The Assad regime is generally assumed to have won the war militarily. Moreover, Ankara has established a sphere of influence in northern Syria, and areas that have been conquered by militias paid for by, and loyal to, Turkey, are functioning in a relatively stable fashion.

However, the truth is that none of these areas are safe. In April, the Assad regime launched the initial salvo of a campaign to reclaim Idlib. More than three million people – many already displaced – live in Idlib. As the fighting draws nearer, large numbers are moving closer to the border and into areas controlled by the Turkish-backed militias.

In the past two years, almost 2,000 Syrians who returned home have been detained, according to estimates by the Syrian Network for Human Rights. Returnees are also

frequently forced join the Syrian military.

Meanwhile, high inflation and unemployment have created serious tensions in Turkish cities. A report in early 2018 by the International Crisis Group found a rapid increase in inter-communal violence, particularly in Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara. It attributed the trend to competition for low-wage jobs between Syrians and Turks. Now, this problem is only getting worse. There are no easy answers. Steps that would integrate Syrians better into Turkey's economy are political suicide.

There are only two possible solutions. The first is for Europe, other western powers and Arab nations that do not border Syria to shoulder their responsibility for refugee resettlement. It is unconscionable that Turkey hosts four million Syrian refugees and tiny Lebanon a million, while the UK has taken in fewer than 14,000.

Second, Turkey needs to be honest about its strategic objectives in Syria, and push for an inclusive peace settlement that creates genuinely safe conditions for refugees to return to. While Turkish politicians are happy to demonise Syrians at home, they are perfectly happy for Syrians to fight their battles across the border. Syrian rebel fighters have been leading the charge on the ground to oust Kurdish paramilitary forces from the regions abutting the Turkish border. These campaigns have created a de facto partitioned country with no meaningful pathway to peace even being considered.

Locally stable Afghanistan



Afghanistan is in a complex situation. The country will go to presidential polls in September 2019. The timing is pivotal. How the peace process and election will be synchronised is a major challenge.

violence continues all across the country, with civilians the main victims. The Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) continuously attack Taliban targets and the Taliban target the former in return, either in guerrilla-style attacks or suicide bombings. This vicious cycle seems to be never-ending. Mr Khalilzad has repeatedly called for a reduction in the violence, but to no avail. As a confidence-building measure, it is important that both parties in the conflict scale back their attacks, especially when civilians are potentially harmed.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, during his visit to Afghanistan last month, said that his government is aiming for a peace deal in the war-ravaged country by September. If this comes true, Afghans will have a great moment to celebrate, and a chance to begin a new life after four decades of war, conflict and destruction.

rights. and has been addressed neither by the Afghan Government nor other relevant stakeholders so far. Mr Khalilzad has already indicated that peace has priority over the election. Most Afghans also agree that an exercise of democracy

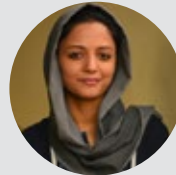
without peace and security across the country will question the credibility of the ballot. However, the government is intent upon holding elections regardless of any parallel peace process.

In spite of ongoing peace talks,



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



This is how lapdog media deflect attention from issues. Now, instead of debating fascism, or the fascist NIA Amendment Bill, we are debating defamation and plagiarism. This might be the only country where media bitterly fights the opposition!!

@Shehla_Rashid

02



Finally met the families of the Ubbha massacre. What they have been through is unimaginably brutal and unjust. Every single Indian should stand with them in the name of humanity.

@priyankagandhi

03



Democrats are outraged about "cages" at border detention facilities. But guess who built EVERY SINGLE ONE: President Obama. Enough of the politics. Let's secure the border and fix the problem.

@Jim_Jordan

04



Called on Union Home Minister @Amit-Shah ji with a Delegation of Hindu refugees, forced to flee from Pakistan! They sought extension of medical VISA and HM assured them every help through even extension of normal VISA! "Felt like my brother is behind me" reacted a woman refugee!

@vinay1011

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

Our beloved Prime Minister gives SMEs a surge of hope



CAPT. MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

That there is a surge of hope among Bahrain's SMEs and small investors can be seen from two very important items of news publicised recently.

The first stated that between January and June this year alone, more than 7,400 commercial registrations were issued to Bahraini and expat investors.

In recent months, more investors have been making Bahrain their base since the Kingdom has opened up more sectors to 100 per cent expat ownership.

The second move that has energised the market is the decision initiated by our wise Prime Minister HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa that 10 per cent of all public tenders awarded must go to SMEs.

This is in addition to a similar quota that facilitates SMEs participating in the national economy through auctions for service facilities at government enterprises.

It will ensure that SMEs will get more access to government deals, creating a cycle of growth and expansion of development channels.

Bahrainis have always shown a strong entrepreneurial trait which later led to the development of giant business houses such as the Kanoos, Almoayyeds, Jalals, Zayanis etc.

By empowering SME entrepreneurs by reserving 10pc of all tenders for them, our Prime Minister has sent out a clear message that he is aware of the need to support them.

Today, Bahraini businesswomen too have etched their footprint in the business environment and besides leading family businesses.

But having the will to work hard and the imagination to start a new business in only part of the story.

By empowering SME entrepreneurs by reserving 10pc of all tenders for them, our Prime Minister has sent out a clear

message that he is aware of the need to support them and help them to upcycle themselves.

Next, Bahrain needs to look seriously at access to finance for SMEs. In the Arab region, SMEs represent 96 per cent of registered companies according to the IMF.

They also employ half the labour force, yet their access to finance is the lowest in the world: lending to SMEs in the region is only seven per cent of bank lending.

Despite the Bahrain Development Bank and Tamkeen support, SMEs struggle to expand their business.

If they are to make the most of the opportunity to seek new business through public tenders, they must also be given new currents of finance and knowhow support.

Closing this financial inclusion gap – with respect to the average of emerging and developing countries – would yield multiple economic benefits.

Given our Prime Minister's keen vision for the future growth of Bahrain, I am sure this will also be a move we shall hear very soon.

(Captain Mahmood Al Mahmood is the Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Tribune and the President of the Arab-African Unity Organisation for Relief, Human Rights and Counterterrorism)