

1890

The **United Mine Workers of America** is founded in Columbus, Ohio.

1901

**Edward VII** is proclaimed King after the death of his mother, Queen Victoria.



1905

**Bloody Sunday** in Saint Petersburg, beginning of the 1905 revolution.

1906

**ss Valencia** runs aground on rocks on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, killing more than 130.



ell speaks during a press conference.

plus another 200 under Nato command – but the EU has been wary of doing much more than criticising the heavy-handedness of Iraqi security forces.

In Libya, the EU's positioning has been weakened by divisions between the north African nation's former colonial powers, Italy and France, but it has been scrambling lately to regain the diplomatic initiative from Ankara and Moscow. This largely explains the holding of the Berlin conference, and Mr Borrell's bullish cheerleading for a more determined European role.

As for Venezuela, the EU, US and dozens of other nations recognise opposition leader Juan

Guaido, rather than its president Nicolas Maduro, as the rightful head of state. On Monday, Mr Borrell said he would meet Mr Guaido in Brussels and there are whispers that the Dutch, among others, are seeking a harder EU stance against the Maduro regime. But Mr Maduro has already dismissed the threat of European sanctions and travel bans, saying: "I don't care even a little bit about what Europe does".

Israel shares a similar disregard to the EU, particularly in discussions on Palestinian statehood. In 2014, the European Parliament adopted a resolution to recognise Palestinian statehood in principle. But Benjamin Net-

anyahu's government has exploited a lack of European consensus to act decisively on the issue. "We Europeans have been suffering internal divisions, and we have not been united enough," Mr Borrell recently lamented.

EU peacemaking is a distinct quantity compared to some of its constituent parts. Norway, perhaps the biggest peacemaker of the bloc, facilitated the Oslo Accords and Colombia's peace agreement. It has sought to involve itself in many other intractable conflicts, including Haiti, Cyprus, the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. France has traditionally tried to lead Europe on Middle East matters, including peace initiatives. From 1958, Ireland has been the only country to have a continuous presence on UN peacekeeping missions.

So, why is the EU not anywhere near the sum total of its member states' weight in foreign affairs? One explanation, by Christopher Hill, a British expert on European politics, is that Europe suffers a "capability-expectations gap". His eponymous 1993 paper identified the gap's three causes – the inability to agree, allocate resources, or to use instruments at the EU's disposal. For the gap to be closed, the professor argued, European foreign policy must be grounded in demonstrated behaviour, which would require the EU to take decisions quickly, mobilise institutions and command resources. The alternative, he said, is to simply lower expectations.

That would mean recognising the EU is, in the words of a recent Swedish Institute of International Affairs paper, an "unidentified political object" – not quite a state yet more than an international organisation.

## panies can make it happen



**People even fall ill when they have to go onto a toxic workplace day after day. It does not take a degree in economics to figure out that none of this is good for organisations. A toxic culture affects productivity, hits their bottom line, and keeps companies from attaining their objectives.**

areas of building design, including the air and light.

Healthy workplaces are a critical national priority and the UAE has recently announced the Business for Wellbeing Council. This is to encourage well-being in the offices whether through initiatives such as flexible working, access to counselling services or mindfulness sessions.

Headed by the Minister of State for Happiness, Ohood Al Roumi, the council comprises eight of the UAE's largest employers (Majid Al Futtaim Group, Landmark Group, Emirates NBD, Etihad Airways, Aldar Properties, Emirates Airlines, Unilever and Cisco). These companies, between them, employ around a quarter of a million

people, which represents a massive opportunity for social good in the country.

On a personal level, I have been involved in workplace well-being initiatives over the past five years. I have delivered courses on mindfulness-based stress reduction to groups of employees from several organisations. When leading these sessions, it always strikes me how valuable many of the participants find these sessions. I frequently hear reports from the groups about improved sleep, better relationships and an enhanced ability to deal with the psychological rough and tumble of the office.

A workplace well-being agenda that goes beyond balloons and cupcakes can have a substantial and lasting impact on peoples' lives. However, in addition to helping people cope with stress, we should aim to reduce the sources of stress. For example, unrealistic deadlines, job insecurity, lack of autonomy, bullying, or managers with poor interpersonal skills, to list a few.

For sure, promoting employee well-being is good for the bottom line. But this should not be the key driver. We should promote well-being because it is the right thing to do and because humans care about other humans.



TOP  
4  
TWEETS

01



Hillary Clinton is not committing to endorsing and campaigning for Sen. Bernie Sanders if he's the Democratic 2020 presidential nominee, saying "nobody likes him" and labeling him a career politician in an explosive new interview in The Hollywood Reporter @CNN

02



Friendship depends on trust and trust depends on having a strong sense of concern for the welfare of others. Be honest, truthful and warm-hearted. Make compassion the basis of your determination. Think of what the future can be, not what happened in the past.

@DalaiLama

03



President Trump is the best. This man is down to earth, normal, fun & real. I'm a guy that grew up in foster care. Lived in a children shelters, been in so many homes and now look at me with The Greatest President of the United States of America. The American Dream is real.

@w\_terrence

04



One year from today, the next president will begin her first full day of work. She'll inherit a government in crisis, infected by corruption, and will need the expertise and drive to rebuild it and ensure it works for the people. I've got a plan for that.

@ewarren

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

## Bahrain must conserve and enrich its precious topsoil



KOTA SRIRAJ

The agricultural sector in Bahrain is facing daunting challenges mainly due to oppressive weather conditions which requires the farmers to tend to their farms even when the temperatures touch 45 degree Celsius. The falling water levels and increasing costs of farming is making the going even tougher for the farmers leading to a rise in loan liabilities and inability to spend on key farming equipment such as the sunshade nets that provide the much-required shade to the crops. These conditions are increasingly contributing to two situations, firstly the farmer is reaching the end of the road as far as agriculture is concerned and selling his land to real estate developers, this in turn is causing the rise of urbanization. Secondly, the farmer himself is moving to the cities after disposing the land causing migration related problems, as the cities struggle with meagre resources in supporting the influx of migratory population.

These conditions are triggered mainly because the state of affairs on the agricultural front are steadily declining as the farmers battle critical conditions arising due to anthropogenic and climate change related reasons leading difficult economic conditions. The changing climate, rising pollution levels and falling viability in agriculture is forcing the farming community world-wide to urgently look for alternative means of livelihood. This is also causing the food security conditions of various nations to be in trouble as the main food producers – farmers are going out of business. This trend needs to be arrested before the cumulative global food scarcity crisis gets out of control and puts the human existence in risk. There are many factors contributing to the difficulties of the Agri-sector, but the main challenges are in the form of falling water levels and deterioration of the soil quality. These issues alone are sufficient to bring the sector to its knees. Bahrain too has been a witness to these problems plaguing the farmers as the topsoil in the kingdom has rapidly worsened in its quality due to pollution, urbanization and salinization.

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The water related woes of the farmers are still manageable as in today's technologically advanced times it is possible to ensure research and development on crops that have high nutrition and fiber content and that can ensure high crop yield with less water commitment. But soil conditions cannot be negotiated or "managed". An acceptably good quality of soil is a non-negotiable requirement or to be more specific, a fertile topsoil is a must if the crops were to even survive. This requirement becomes even more essential in an arid geographic location such as that of Bahrain. Topsoil contains all the required nutrients that plants need to survive and be productive and in order to protect this natural asset,

the leaching of the salt is critical. This can be possible only with an effective drainage mechanism. Additionally, the region wise tabulation and indexing of land quality is crucial as this can not only create a baseline data but also help in keeping a tab on the improving or deteriorating quality of the land. There is also an urgent need to declare the topsoil as a protected natural resource and hence must have stringent laws governing its conservation, this will dissuade the erosion of this asset. The authorities can also engage the farming community and general population on the importance of the topsoil and create awareness, this can aid immensely in conserving the same. These measures can script a turnaround for the Agri-sector and ensure that the difficulties of the farming community and conservation of the topsoil are both attended to in one go.

The topsoil is the essence of agriculture and backbone to food security. In fact, the formation of an inch of topsoil requires nearly 500 years as topsoil mainly derives from rock that needs to be broken into small fragments through a long process of chemical weathering which eventually enables the plants to get a hold in the rock fissures and start growing and add organic matter. Given the unique value of this natural resource every effort must be made to protect the same, moreover in these challenging economic times that are witnessing fluctuating oil prices, investing on the well-being of agriculture and its constituent elements will be in the best interests of Bahrain as a robust Agri-sector will not only reduce the import bill for food items which will not only have a cascading effect in increasing public confidence and improving food security, but will also help in developing agriculture as a much needed alternative to an oil based economy.