

U-TURN WITH UK

A Fruitful Idea!



P. UNNIKRISHNAN

“Where are you?”
 “At the New Horizon School... planting trees.”
 “You’re planting trees?”
 There was a pause. Then laughter.
 My wife’s reaction was fair.
 I nodded with full seriousness. Yes, finally—after years of writing articles, giving speeches, and forwarding WhatsApp messages about “Save Trees,” I have officially upgraded... to actually touching soil. For me, this is a historic moment worth preserving.
 Now, to be fair, my wife has been doing this for years. Weekends? Garden shows. Backyard? A mini agriculture department. I think even the soil listens to her.
 Me? I love greenery... as long as someone else grows it. I always believed my role in life was to motivate and inspire.

*“Every time we argue, we plant a tree.”
 She paused, gave me a measured look, and said, “If we had started that on the day we got married, we would be living in a forest by now.”*



But being on that campus raised a simple question: Why can’t we make gardens at every school? A few schools have already started such an initiative under the Green School Project.
 Imagine if every school had its own garden—vegetables, fruits, or even a handful of trees. Take any campus and picture ten mango trees. Shade, fruit, and a quiet lesson in sustainability—all in one. Probably fewer students bunking classes, too.
 If space is a constraint, there are alternatives. Why not allocate land to students interested in farming through the Ministry of Agriculture? Let them cultivate, harvest, and even sell their produce. As the tree grows, the student can place a name marker—leaving a lasting signature of their contribution for years to come.
 The proceeds could support scholarships or assist students in need. It would be education funding itself, rooted—quite literally—in the ground.” My Environmentally Friendly School” competition, which focuses on conserving electricity and water, caring for school gardens and implementing recycling programs, could transform not just campuses, but mindsets.
 My son has been making a more strategic version of this argument for years. His advice is clear: buy land, secure water access, and think long-term. According to him, the future belongs not to those who control technology, but to those who can produce food. It sounds dramatic, but in a world already discussing food security, perhaps not entirely unrealistic.
 Globally, environmental responsibility is no longer optional. ESG compliance is becoming a benchmark rather than a buzzword. The message is clear: the conversation has to move from awareness to action.
 As I was leaving the school, a member of the management team handed me a plant as a token. I carried it home with quiet pride and presented it to my wife.
 “This is a money plant,” I said confidently.
 She examined it briefly and replied, with scientific precision, “This is *Epipremnum aureum*.”
 The debate that followed lasted exactly two minutes. The conclusion was predictable.
 In an attempt to regain some ground, I suggested a new rule: “Every time we argue, we plant a tree.”
 She paused, gave me a measured look, and said, “If we had started that on the day we got married, we would be living in a forest by now.”
 From behind the door, I could see my daughter... silently laughing.
 (P. Unnikrishnan is the Chairperson & Managing Director of The Daily Tribune)



This photograph taken from the northern Israel shows Israeli tanks and military vehicles standing along the road between destroyed houses in southern Lebanon near the border with Israel.

Lebanon president says Israel must fully implement truce

AFP | Beirut, Lebanon

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said yesterday that Israel must fully implement the ceasefire between the two countries before beginning direct talks, after Israeli strikes killed more than 20 people over the last two days.
 Hezbollah drew Lebanon into the Middle East war on March 2, and Israeli and Lebanese representatives have since met twice in Washington, the first such meetings in decades, for discussions that Hezbollah has categorically rejected.
 After the first talks, US President Donald Trump announced a 10-day ceasefire

that began on April 17, and a three-week extension after the second round.
 Trump said he hoped to host Aoun and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu “over the next couple of weeks” as the two countries prepare for direct negotiations.
 Israel “must first fully implement the ceasefire in order to move on to negotiations... Israeli attacks cannot continue as they are,” Aoun said in a statement shared by the presidency.
 “We are now waiting for the United States to set a date to begin direct negotiations” with Israel, he added.

Iran war has cost US military \$25 bn so far: Pentagon

AFP | Washington, United States

The war against Iran has cost the US military \$25 billion since it was launched in late February, a senior Pentagon official said yesterday.
 “We’re spending about \$25 billion on Operation Epic Fury. Most of that is in munitions,” acting Pentagon comptroller Jules Hurst told lawmakers, using the official

name for US operation.
 US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth later told the same congressional hearing that the estimated figure was less than \$25 billion at this point.
 The Pentagon chief pushed back against questions about the war’s cost, saying: “The question I would ask this committee is, what is it worth to ensure that Iran never gets a nuclear weapon?”



An Iranian man rides his motorcycle past a boat at Suru Beach in Bandar Abbas along the Strait of Hormuz.

Accept nuclear deal

‘Get smart soon’

“Iran can’t get their act together... They better get smart soon,” Trump posted on his social media platform, above a mocked-up picture of himself toting a rifle in front of explosions wrecking a desert fortress and the slogan: “No more Mr Nice Guy.”

NO MORE MR. NICE GUY! 🇺🇸



Image: Truth Social/Donald J. Trump

AFP | Tehran, Iran

President Donald Trump warned Tehran yesterday that it should “get smart soon” and capitulate to Washington’s demands for tight controls on its nuclear programme, as a US naval blockade turned the screws on Iran’s economy. US press reports suggested Trump has already decided to reject Iran’s latest proposed deal to

reopen the Strait of Hormuz. According to the Wall Street Journal, Trump intends to pursue the blockade of Iranian ports until Tehran is forced to dismantle its nuclear programme.
 On Wednesday, the Iranian rial fell to historic lows against the dollar, while Tehran residents speaking to AFP journalists in Paris reported a sense of despair.