

The long road to freedom is around the corner

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has outlined his plan for easing England's lockdown - which will start on March 8.

The PM said the coming "seasons of hope, looking and feeling incomparably better for us all."

The four-step plan to ease England's lockdown could see all legal limits on social contact lifted by 21 June, if strict conditions are met.

Mr Johnson's announcements comes as the first data on the UK's coronavirus vaccine rollout suggested it was having a "spectacular" impact on stopping serious illness.

He described the plan as a "one-way road to freedom" but said he could not guarantee it would be irreversible "but the intention is that it should be".

From 17 May, two households might

be allowed to mix in homes, while the rule of six could apply in certain places.

Step one - which will commence on March 8 - is to see the full reopening of schools.

Mr Johnson also confirmed that on March 29, groups of two households, or groups subject to the rule of six, will be able to socialise outside.

Step two - parts of hospitality will reopen outdoors from April 12, as well as non-essential retailers, hairdressers, gyms and outdoor hospitality.

Step three - hospitality will reopen completely from May 17, with the rule of six indoors, as well as sports stadiums.

Step four - provided we continue to pass the four tests; from June 21 we will go to step four and say goodbye to most restrictions.

Places of worship can remain open. However, Madrassah classes for children will not be made available until the 12th of April, on or around when Ramadan could possibly begin.

Advice for communal worship states, "You can leave home to attend or visit a place of worship for communal worship, a funeral or event related to a death, a burial ground or a remembrance garden, or to attend a wedding ceremony.

However, a welcome change in 2021 for all will be the return of Taraweeh prayers.

In addition, Eid in May will certainly be a lot different to Eid in 2020.

Masjids will be able to hold Eid namaz again although the number of worshippers at one given time could be restricted with several Eid sittings expected to take place.

PAIGAAM EDITORIAL

Calm down and carry on: we will beat Covid-19

We have been through several "apocalypses" in recent memory — Srebrenica, 9/11, the 2011 UK Riots, the London Bridge Terror attacks and so much more, yet none of them turned into total anarchy.

All round our neighbourhoods in Batley, IMWS have been rightly praised by the Prime Minister himself for "spreading a sense of positivity about the vaccine," which has ensured the centre has been vaccinating about 600 patients a day since December.

Crisis tends to be met with kindness and IMWS has also been busy helping people during these testing times by delivering food to vulnerable and the elderly people who are living alone.

Most people who get COVID-19 experience only mild symptoms. Getting sick is bad, but the vast majority of people will have long meaningful lives.

But this is not the end of our society or civilisation as we know it.

We will go on and our society will recover as it has not broken down into post-apocalyptic anarchy even though to begin with people did believe we were in the middle of an apocalypse by stockpiling food and even doing the unimaginable: fighting over toilet roll.

Who would have thought we would resort to such actions?

However, the future is brighter than the present and it is only a matter of time until we enjoy our basic freedoms again.

He said that the pandemic has brought out 'the best in humanity' and that the public's 'perseverance' and 'good common sense' will enable the country to 'inch forwards' out of lockdown and towards 'much-missed normality'.

Schools and non-essential shops and retailers will open imminently or with phases if they show that they can implement and follow social distancing guidelines, with government scientific advisors of the opinion that the system must be up and running before restrictions are fully lifted.

Thus far, our enormous sacrifices have paid off. We have seen the number of positive cases plateau and fall.

The coronavirus crisis has shone a light on lots of good and bad things in this country.

It is of course great to see that that key workers, including social care workers and those who work for the NHS, are finally being respected and valued.

In addition, the reality that immigrants and BAME staff are vital to the NHS and we couldn't manage without them are finally facing people.

Hopefully these people should

also be valued in practical ways; pay them enough to be able to live and buy properties in our towns and cities, and recognise, support and welcome immigrant staff who prop this country up.

In 2020, the restrictions of movement and the drastic changes in our lifestyle resulted in the most unusual of Eid's.

However, the joyous memories of turning our homes into mini masjids during Ramadhan and enjoying Eid with our household members are embedded in the inner echelons of our minds.

We have all had the opportunity to demonstrate that through the moral upliftment and spiritual elevation gained during Ramadhan in lockdown we can show compassion, mercy and kindness.

This year, we hope to attend the main mass congregational prayer via the Eidgah or at our local Masjid, partake in the Eid meal with the family, exchange gifts and visit relatives and friends,

We can only bring an end to the virus by praying and by looking out for each other.

In recent weeks we have seen phenomenal bravery, compassion and selflessness as people go above and beyond to protect the lives of others.

Long may this continue!

Kirklees Council approves new Muslim burial plot



IMWS has since been working with Kirklees Council to identify a suitable area of land for Muslim burial space in the local area as cemeteries are running out of space.

A recent report by Kirklees Council's Strategic Planning Committee said the need for Muslim burial space in the district is "urgent" because in less than two years, plots to bury loved ones within the confines of the Muslim cemetery in Batley, which contains a capacity for around 400 graves, will be filled.

Following a public meeting which took place in October 2019 at the Al Hikmah Centre, one of the options presented by the council included a pentagon shaped area of land, situated in the north west corner of Batley cemetery, adjacent to the existing Muslim burial plots.

This was looked upon favourably by IMWS who can now announce that Kirklees Council has approved the planning and financial aspects of the project.

It is envisaged that once mining and drainage checks have also been addressed, the council will begin the tendering process in the next two to three weeks.

Remedial work and development of land is set to commence in April 2021 with the project set to draw to a conclusion in 2022.

Paigaam can also reveal that the new burial plot will be sufficient to accommodate 400 graves providing suitable capacity for the next decade, assuming the average number of deaths is around 40.

Between 100-150 concrete linings, sufficient for around two years, will be made available immediately.

These will also require concrete slabs on all four sides and on the top, however, the body will be laid on the ground, within open bottom rectangular boxes.

This very method is currently on offer at Dewsbury Cemetery, since the allocated burial area is also deemed to be below standard.

Confirming that the use of a rectangular box is permissible for Islamic burial, Mufti Zakaria Akudi told Paigaam: "In the mentioned situation where due to the softness and instability of the ground having the four walls of the grave reinforced by concrete is not a problem Islamically.

"The Sunnah is to lay the body to rest on soil and that aspect is being fulfilled."

Due to contamination and instability of the proposed burial ground there will be an added cost implication due to the protection offered by the concrete boxes.

Mohammed Laher, Chair of the IMWS Burial Committee, confirmed to Paigaam that the anticipated cost of burial on the new plot would be around £2,687.00.

Mr Laher said IMWS will continue to work together with Kirklees Council and help ensure the needs of the community are served.

"We have a good opportunity in the sense that Kirklees Council is investing a great deal of money in the new burial plot," said Mr Laher.

"Therefore, we will work with the council to ensure the project will hopefully be ready by early spring of 2022.

"Our members wish for their loved ones to be buried in Batley and I hope this extension of the burial plot will give them that assurance."



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Chair's Message

The pandemic has been truly tough on all communities.

British Muslim communities have faced also bared the brunt of the pandemic.

Our local communities in Batley and Dewsbury have been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Not only has this terrible virus impacted on jobs and prevented people seeing their family and friends, many have experienced losing loved ones and being away from them in key moments including Ramadan and Eid.

However, the Muslim community has shown that even in adversity, we have certainly made a very positive contribution to British society and long may that continue.

That is why it is so important to have a Covid vaccine when you are offered it, so that we can all play our part in protecting ourselves and getting back to normal.

Vaccination is an essential and effective defence against infectious diseases and the NHS has vast experience of safely delivering mass vaccination programmes - from the yearly flu vaccine to childhood vaccinations.

I want to reassure you that the approved Covid vaccines have gone through rigorous clinical testing to ensure they are safe and that they work, and they will continue to be monitored.

In fact, we can be proud that the UK has some of the highest vaccine safety standards in the world.

The Prime Minister has already lavished praise upon IMWS and the locality in general for being so open to the idea of taking the vaccine and protecting each other.

As we slowly emerge from lockdown remember that the virus is still here, so we should all do our bit to protect our health and that of our community.

I know it isn't easy, especially with Ramadan just around the corner, but we should continue to stay home as much as possible and limit contact with others.

When you go outside make sure to follow government guidance and get tested if you or anyone in your household has symptoms of coronavirus.

With best wishes
Dr Imtiyaz Patel
Chair
IMWS



General Manager's Column

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been to the Al Hikmah centre in order to receive their Covid-19 vaccine.

Despite a poll commissioned by the Royal Society of Public Health in December suggesting that 57 percent of black, Asian and minority ethnic people would be have the coronavirus vaccine, as opposed to 79 percent of white people.

This is certainly not the case here. Even the Prime Minister acknowledged this by

asking why our vaccination figures were so high.

It is fantastic to see so many people from a diverse range of backgrounds visiting us here and having such faith in what we are trying to achieve here, so thank you to everyone who has been.

We are also looking forward to welcoming everyone who is due to visit us in the days, weeks and months ahead.

Because we've been established for so long in this area, people have that trust and faith.

Our affiliated Masjids have also been very helpful and they have played a pivotal part in helping us help us to deal with any disinformation as well.

The local community realises that we need to protect lives and have been absolutely amazing.

Thus far, the signs are certainly looking good!

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Prime Minister Boris Johnson praises IMWS at No 10 press briefing

During a key coronavirus press briefing from Number 10 Downing Street, Prime Minister praised the Indian Muslim Welfare Society for the work they are doing to ensure there is a high take-up of the vaccine amongst the local Muslim community.

Addressing the nation, before taking questions from the public and press, live on BBC News, Sky News, and other TV channels and media publications the Prime Minister told a Downing Street press conference: "I was up at the Al Hikmah Centre in Batley talking to community leaders there who have done an amazing job. I think the vaccination rate for the over 80's in that part of Yorkshire is about 97 percent."

Mr Johnson also urged organisations throughout the country to follow the lead of IMWS and spread a sense of

positivity about the vaccine to help curb the spread of coronavirus, not just in protecting those who received the jab.

"It is a real achievement, and I would urge everybody to follow the example of Yorkshire if you're not already there."

During his visit to the Al Hikmah Centre, Boris Johnson watched vaccinations take place and spoke with people who had been vaccinated.

He said: "I'm seeing a very impressive take-up rate among the Muslim community here, and that is fantastic to see and I thank them for the work that they're doing to dispel some of the nonsense about vaccines.

"I pay tribute to the community here in Batley and across West Yorkshire where they have been fighting the

nonsense of anti-vaccine propaganda and a remarkable effort by local leaders here at the centre in Batley.

"I have seen what they have done and what they are producing is fantastic to see and an incredibly high turnout rate."

Mr Johnson spent a week in St Thomas' Hospital in London, including three nights in intensive care, after being taken into hospital on 5 April 2020 after his symptoms got worse.

After being discharged, he spent some time recovering at Chequers which is located in Buckinghamshire.

He arrived back at Number 10 Downing Street on the evening of Sunday the 26th of April to once again take charge of the UK's response to the Coronavirus outbreak.



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“May the Almighty accept all your efforts in protecting these people from the freezing cold and the risks associated with getting sick during such testing times. It is envisaged that by just providing warm winter clothing to 200 poor, hungry and displaced children, they will be able to smile and not worry about anything.”

In addition, 100 families have received cooking utensils which will help them to prepare their meals and enjoy eating them with their families whilst the gas cylinders will enable them to keep their houses warm.

Beneficiaries expressed their thanks, appreciation and gratitude to IMWS and everyone who donated to help and support the Palestinian orphans, widows and poor people who have all asked the Almighty to reward everyone, except their good deeds and grant them the highest stage of paradise.

Years of conflict has left around 80 per cent of the population dependent on international assistance according to the United Nations Relief and Works agency. Over 1.2 million have registered as refugees with UNHCR.

Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic has ensured that everyone in the Gaza strip is severely at risk of being infected due to the difficult predicaments

Following an appeal for donations, the Indian Muslim Welfare Society has organised and delivered for blankets, winter clothes and gas stoves to be given to needy families and orphans in Gaza.

The project is part of the organization's aim to improve the well-being of vulnerable people in Gaza, who remain trapped in what is often referred to as the world's largest prison.

The initiative was delivered by the society's long-term charity partner, Palestine Welfare House.

Thanks to the IMWS donation of £17,000, PWH ensured that from February the 2nd to February the 8th, 2021, 500 winter blankets weighing 5kg were distributed to 500 needy families. In addition, 200 sets of winter clothing were distributed to 200 children who belong to families who live in abject poverty.

Furthermore, widowed parents, orphaned and needy families, sick people and those with disabilities were some of the families from various areas in and around the Gaza strip who were the recipients of 100 stoves and gas cylinders.

IMWS Chair of the Charity Committee, Masum Karolia said he was delighted that local people had been so generous and donated wholeheartedly

to support orphans, widows and poor families in the Gaza Strip.

“Thanks to the kind and generous donations of our members, our efforts to support the poor and needy people of Gaza by delivering blankets, winter clothes and gas stoves for poor and orphaned families has been finalised,” said Mr Karolia.

“The fact that we could help in the harsh winter season when many people suffer from freezing poverty and hunger is a testament to our community and I would like to thank everyone who contributed.



A hero who does not wear a cape: meet Adam Patel

Everyone seems to have an opinion on how pharmacists should deal with patients.

However, do we really know about the trials and tribulations that go hand in hand with modern day pharmacy, and what qualities are required to make a real career for one's self as a medical professional.

One major factor in any self-respecting pharmacist's climb up the ladder is simply having courage.

Courage is perseverance, compassion, and honesty. It is a big word fit for very few people. However, it certainly personifies a 48-year-old Batley man.

Adam Patel, a pharmacist and store manager at Boots in Mirfield, has won the hearts and minds of the people of Mirfield by convincing a distressed woman not to take her own life.

A woman called the Mirfield Boots store as Adam literally opened the store one morning, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Adam insists he was in the right place at the right time to help the middle-aged lady who pleaded with him to help her.

"She must have tried to google her nearest store and somehow got through to me," recalls Adam.

"I was on the phone for around forty minutes trying to persuade her not to take her own life. She was hallucinating and was displaying signs of paranoia and felt as if she was about to pass out."

Adam insists he needed to be 20 steps ahead to ensure the woman did not make a tragic mistake.

He told Paigaam: "She didn't want to be a burden to anyone and didn't want to be in a position in which she could catch Covid.

"However, I kept her talking and we convinced her to let the paramedics help and we called them from the store.

"The paramedics took over

and did a great job of helping the woman in her hour of need."

Adam's professional experience along with his infectious demeanour ensures he is open minded and not prone to making judgement about those who seek his advice and help.

He also attributes an online suicide prevention training course as a key factor in ensuring he made the woman feel at ease talking to him.



"We are trained to deal with certain situations, one of which is helping those who are at their lowest ebb and are feeling suicidal.

"In this instance, I was there to take the call. However, suicide is more prevalent in men because they feel as if they cannot talk about their issues and feel as if it is a sign of de-masculinity, and they are afraid to talk about financial issues and being able to feed their families."

Adam, who qualified as a Pharmacist in 1996 after graduating from Bradford University, has been congratulated by his area manager and regional manager and got a special mention at a regional Boots Manager conference call.

He has also been nominated for the prestigious Front Line Hero award at the 2021 Retail Week Magazine awards in June.

He has also been invited to the World Retail Congress in Italy in September where leading Boots executives will showcase how Adam and his team of eight staff have provided exceptional customer service during the pandemic.

However, Adam is almost embarrassed by the recognition and is adamant that he is simply taking his parents' advice and working in a concise and honest manner in order to serve people.

He said: "My parents told me to work honestly and to always work hard. They supported me in everything that I did and instilled a sense of duty to care for those who need help and I just hope I have done whatever I can to help people."

Hundreds of people have left comments on social media congratulating Adam and thanking him for his hard work.

Jools Smith wrote: "Amazing! We all love Adam in our community whilst Andrea Griffith wrote: "You are a hero who does not wear a cape."

When contacted by Paigaam, Boots spokeswoman Bethan Kirk said in a statement: "Adam has taken his usual high duty of care and concern for his customers and patients and stepped it up a level during this unprecedented time.

"In fact, you just need to follow the Mirfield Community Facebook Page to see the glowing messages posted by his customers.

"Whilst doctors surgeries were closed at the height of the lockdowns, he started his days early and kept his doors open late to be available to share professional advice for anyone who needed help.

"Adam has never stopped caring for his customers and he is a true hero."

Muslims lauded for role in the fight against Covid-19

Muslims and masjids have played a vital role in the fight back against the Covid-19 pandemic according to a new report.

An All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims (APPG) report entitled "Rising to the Challenge: A community's response to Covid-19" said British Muslims across the UK, including IMWS and its affiliated masjids have played a pivotal role within their communities and made many sacrifices for the good of their communities.

It covered the challenges Islamic communities across the country have faced during the Covid-19 crisis and highlighted how these obstacles have been overcome.

The report said "British Muslims have stepped up to support their neighbours and local communities in their time of need. Such phenomenal sacrifice is worthy of note and governments, at local and national level, would do well to acknowledge and advance these achievements."

The report detailed the achievements of British Muslims who often found themselves on the front line, responding in every region across all four nations were not often showcased by the media.

"From mosques becoming mortuaries, food banks, makeshift hospitals, to the deaths and sacrifices of Muslim healthcare workers.

However, this was often underrepresented in media and political discourse."

The report says the nation owes a very big debt to Muslims and other faith communities who work quietly and confidently in the service of their communities.

"They should be better supported through finance, infrastructure and policies that are comfortable in dealing



with religion as an equality characteristic and competently faith-literate."

The report contained 194 examples previously reported by the Muslim Charities Forum and showcases 50 case studies of British Muslim contributions across the UK.

From individual shop owners providing PPE to the likes of IMWS delivering food, providing care and essentials to those shielding and Masjids becoming pop-up mortuaries and much, much more.

And despite far right organisations seeking to plant more distrust within communities, the work of IMWS in particular has been praised by Prime Minister Boris Johnson who said he wanted to know why the centre has better figures nationally than many other groups.

He also praised IMWS for the dissemination of crucial information about the vaccine into the local community.

The report also acknowledged the fact that Muslims had to cancel Eid

celebrations at the last minute must have been particularly disheartening.

In addition, the report said that the the Government should have consulted community leaders about the decision beforehand.

"Given the nature of the family celebrations that Eid entails, when families gather together to celebrate and some travel distances to be together on the special occasion, the announcement and in particular its timing was met with considerable disquiet," said the report.

"Some of the mosque leaders we spoke to argued that many local authorities had been aware of the increase in death tolls a week prior and that restrictions could have been implemented earlier to avoid clashing with the night of celebrations marking the festival of Eid ul-Adha.

"The timing of this decision within localities with large Muslim populations gave the misleading impression that these groups were disposed to contravening health regulations."

Are unregistered food sellers putting your health at risk?

Whilst the entire country is in lockdown, many people have been afforded an opportunity to cook and bake a great deal more at home.

However, for some, it is an opportunity to sell home-cooked food to the local community.

Paigaam has been alerted to hundreds of listings for homemade food with unregistered businesses and individuals using social media and WhatsApp to sell everything from Biryani, curries and desserts that have been prepared in home kitchens.

Campaigners who have registered their businesses with Kirklees Council want this lucrative market regulated and subject to council hygiene inspections.

More than 3,000 listings are advertised daily across Instagram, Facebook Market Place and WhatsApp selling Indian desi style food such as chapattis, chicken samosas, Biryani curries and desserts.

One Batley based woman, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said her food business began through "word of mouth" after she decided her family required an extra income, as her husband was the only individual at the time who was able to work.

She takes orders from Monday to Friday, with customers collecting the meals from her home.

"Our customers have been buying from us

for years," she said.

"It is difficult to raise a number of children when your husband is the only one that works. So, I did it as a way to make money and feed my children."

Although she declined to say whether she was registered with Kirklees council to sell homemade food, she believes it is beneficial for councils and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to regulate food sales.

She said: "Food should be made in a clean kitchen. This will make sure customers enjoy the food and come back."

However, the Food Standards Agency and Kirklees Council have issued warnings to unregistered businesses selling cooked food from home that they may be inadvertently putting their health and that of their customers at serious risk by not registering as an official food business.

They believe offending individuals that are operating under the radar remain unnoticed by the council and inspectors who are unable to pencil in any health and safety checks.

Julie Barratt from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health said: "Little food businesses are popping up like mushrooms in lockdown. There are rank outsiders operating off the radar, who think 'Oh, my mum can cook' and confuse cooking with catering."

The Covid-19 Pandemic has

ensured the Food Standards Agency (FSA) cannot even inspect businesses that are registered due to government restrictions.

Therefore, inspections can only be carried out via video call and the 'skeleton staff' that are working, have been asked to only focus on high-risk cases.

Even in circumstances where an in-person inspection is needed, authorities must give 24-hours' notice as the inspection would be carried out at a private address.

The FSA said local authorities can take a range of actions against those who did not comply with food laws, from informal steps such as written warnings, to formal actions such as forcing sellers to close down, and prosecution.

According to official guidance on the Food Standards Agency's website, any food operating business must register with their local authority at least 28 days before opening.

Tellingly, they insist that even if you do not believe you are operating as a business, even if you are providing food on a regular and organised basis, the law states that you are classified as a food business.

One must carry out a risk assessment and receive written permission from your mortgage provider and Kirklees Council.

A spokesperson for Kirklees Council explained that if anyone makes, prepare or handles food that comes from

animals, for example meat or dairy products, other than for direct sale to the consumer, they may need to be inspected or approved by the council.

However, it was also confirmed that small scale operations can take place without registration as long as supply is only sporadic,

"You don't need to be inspected or approved if you sell direct to the public or retailers like caterers and restaurants, as long as food is less than 25 percent of your trade, you do not handle any wild game meat products and you don't sell food outside of the county."

Burial contact numbers

FOR DEATH AND BURIAL RELATED ASSISTANCE PLEASE CONTACT:

EBRAHIMBHAI CHOPDAT

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GULAMBHAI MANIYAR

07801 825691

NAZIR DAUD

07790776012

Please note the Kirklees Council Burial fee is £2164.

Donations towards the running and cost of the funeral van is most appreciated.

Tracy Brabin: It is great to see the Al Hikmah centre is leading the way on the vaccine roll out



As we leave the darkest (and hopefully coldest) depths of winter behind us, I know we're all looking forward to spring and the opportunities that it brings.

Our NHS is doing an incredible job of rolling out the Covid-19 vaccine and at astonishing rate.

At the time of writing over 10 million people have had their first jab. By the time this edition of Paigaam is in your hands it's bound to be much higher.

After an incredibly difficult 12 months combating Covid in hospitals, we owe NHS staff an enormous debt of gratitude.

It is amazing to see that somehow they are actually managing a successful rollout whilst they are under pressure on the wards.

One must not forget that a tragically high number of people are still sadly dying in hospital.

We should also take an enormous amount of pride that Batley & Spen, though our vaccination centre at the Al-Hikmah is leading the way.

So much so that the Secretary of State for Health personally wrote to those

working on the vaccine rollout locally to highlight that they are amongst the highest performing in the country.

While we're all anxious to see our friends and families again, as well as getting kids back in school and businesses returning, we are only going to get there if enough people get the vaccination.

That's why the glut of misinformation that is circulating about the vaccine is very concerning.

The vaccine that you will be invited to take is safe, it has met incredibly high testing standards and is already protecting millions of your fellow Brits.

If you have any concerns about the vaccine, please seek information from sources you know you can trust, such as the NHS website for example.

In amongst the good news, I know that this period is still hard for many.

As I've already mentioned, a horrifyingly high number of people are still dying from Covid-19 and jobs are still being lost.

In the coming weeks the Chancellor will deliver a budget and I'll be urging him to

invest in the North and to redouble efforts to bring investment and employment to the Batley & Spen communities.

For too long the Government has actually overpromised and has certainly underdelivered for areas like ours.

And as we try to rebuild better from Covid-19, that just has to change.

At the budget, we'll find out whether Chancellor Rishi Sunak has the interest of Northern communities at heart.

We will also find out whether he will invest in businesses and local authorities, or if it's another case of all talk and no action.

Constituents like you have been contacting me about business support grants, housing issues and schools this month, if you have similar issues, or anything else, please contact me direct.

If you need help, you can always email my office Tracy.Brabin.MP@parliament.uk

Alternatively, please also feel free to call my office on 01924 900036.

BBC interview with leader of MCB “strikingly hostile”

Over two hundred public personalities have signed an open letter lambasting the BBC for conducting a strikingly hostile interview with the new leader of the Muslim Council of Britain.

The MCB's Zara Mohammed, 29, was a guest on BBC Woman's Hour when presenter Emma Barnett continuously asked her about the number of female imams in the country.

The open letter, which was signed by Tory peer Sayeeda Warsi, the Labour MPs Diane Abbott and Naz Shah, and the comedian Deborah Frances-White, said the tone of the interview was “strikingly hostile” and that most of Mohammed's answers were interrupted, revealing an instinctive urge not to listen to the voice of a Muslim woman.”

The interview was compared to the grilling of a seasoned politician as opposed to “recognising and

engaging with British Muslim women”.

The letter notes: “Despite Mohammed's repeated claims that religious adjudication was not within the parameters of her role leading a civil society organisation, Barnett asked the question about female imams four times, each time interrupting Mohammed's answer.

“The framing of the interview and clipping up of the ‘female imam’ segment for social media mirrored the style and tone of an accountability interview with a politician, rather than authentically recognising and engaging in what this represented for British Muslim women.”

A spokesperson for Woman's Hour it was legitimate for the programme to seek to explore some of the issues facing Muslims in the UK.

“Woman's Hour has always been a programme that listens to feedback

and learns from the responses we receive; we will reflect on the issues and concerns you raise in this open letter.

BBC Director General Tim Davie has invited the writers of the letter to “meet with some senior colleagues at the BBC to talk through the issues that you raise in your letter”, in order to understand BBC plans to “improve representation across our programmes and within our teams”.

However, the letter's authors Mariam Khan and Yassmin Abdel-Magied poured scorn on Mr Davie and Woman's Hour's response .

They said it was “frustrating” that the director general had chosen to quote statistics for Muslim employees across the BBC, and that representation in the TV and radio production departments of commercial arm BBC Studios was “negligible and requires urgent addressing both at staff and leadership levels.”

Sri Lanka: Muslim Covid-19 victims cannot be buried!

Sri Lanka's government said they will continue to cremate all their coronavirus victims, rejecting advice from a panel of experts along with strong international condemnation from the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation who repeatedly expressed dismay and concern.

A panel of medical professionals appointed by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Health reversed their original guidance which recommended the compulsory cremation of victims of Covid-19 and asked that the Muslim minority are able to bury their dead in line with Islamic custom.

The government first banned burials in April amid concerns - which experts

say are baseless -- by influential Buddhist monks, who are strong backers of the current government, that burying bodies could contaminate groundwater and spread the virus.

Last month, authorities ordered the forced cremation of at least 19 Muslim Covid-19 victims, including a baby, after their families refused to claim their bodies from a hospital morgue.

The World Health Organisation has said that there is no such risk, recommending both burials and cremations of virus victims.

However, the Sri Lankan government has refused to budge.

“This decision will not be changed for social, religious, political or any other personal reason,” Health Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi said, according to ministry officials.

The Muslim Council of Britain is actively supporting the rights of minority groups in Sri Lanka to bury their deceased.

The MCB's Harun Khan has urged the government to reverse their policy.

They have also instructed leading human rights law firm, Bindmans LLP, to bring this matter to the attention of the United Nations Human Rights Committee for resolution.

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Why is the Indian government oppressing minorities?

The ruling Hindu nationalist government has introduced laws and policies in order to actively discriminate against Muslims and quieten critics of the government, says Human Rights Watch.

The BJP government has also gone to such extremes in order to rubber stamp their agenda, they have actively infiltrated the police and the courts, thus enabling extremists to attack religious minorities without fearing any consequences.

"The BJP's embrace of the Hindu majority at the expense of minorities has seeped into government institutions, undermining equal protection of the law without discrimination," said Meenkashi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

"The government has not only failed to protect Muslims and other minorities from attacks but is providing political patronage and cover for bigotry."

The February 2020 attacks in Delhi had followed months of peaceful protests by Indians of all faiths against the government's intolerant citizenship law.

However, BJP leaders and supporters have been accused of attempting to discredit protesters, particularly Muslims, by accusing them of conspiring against national interests.

Following violent clashes on January 26 between the police and protesting farmers who broke through police barricades to enter Delhi, the authorities filed made up charges against journalists and ordered Twitter to block nearly 1,200 accounts, including those of journalists and news organizations, some of which Twitter later restored.

Human Rights watch said the Indian government is obliged to protect religious and other minority populations, and to fully and fairly prosecute those responsible for discrimination and violence against

them, Human Rights Watch said.

"The BJP government's actions have stoked communal hatred, created deep fissures in society, and led to much fear and mistrust of authorities among minority communities," Ganguly said. "India's standing as a secular democracy is at serious risk unless the government rolls back discriminatory laws and policies and ensures justice for abuses against minorities."

Similarly, after hundreds of thousands of farmers of various faiths began protesting against the government's new farm laws in November 2020.

This has led to senior BJP leaders, their supporters on social media, and pro-government media, accusing Sikhs of having a "Khalistani" "agenda.

This is a reference to a Sikh separatist insurgency in Punjab in the 1980s and 90s.

On February 8, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told parliament that people participating in various peaceful protests were "parasites," and called international criticism of increasing authoritarianism in India a "foreign destructive ideology."

However, months of protests have succeeded in attracting high-profile support that has in turn, angered Modi's government.

Modi and his supporters appeared to be caught off-guard as endorsements of its critics from high profile figures including young climate campaigner Greta Thunberg, and US Vice President Kamala Harris' niece, the lawyer and activist Meena Harris have left them isolated.

The BJP government has condemned "sensationalist social media hashtags and comments, especially when resorted to by celebrities and others."

However, both Harris and Thunberg

have managed to draw wider attention to an economic problem that threatens to weaken Modi and the BJP's grip on power.

In addition, Labour's MP for Slough, Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi has led calls from MPs for Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab to take the Indian government to task over the unrest.

MPs from across the political spectrum have also sent a letter urging him to raise concerns about the farmers' plight with India's High Commission in the UK.

Their cross-party letter showcases a number of stories about how debt-ridden farmers' have committed suicide, warning that the situation was affecting the vast majority of Sikhs in the UK who have ties to agricultural land in India.

Modi's critics are also worried that farmers in India will be left at the mercy of powerful multinationals by the BJP's reforms, adding to the risk of many more farmers being plunged into poverty.

The Sikh Council UK in recent weeks backed the protesting farmers, repeating allegations Modi's government had cut internet, water and electricity to protest sites, fostered paramilitary activity, and arrested journalists.

The council warned the world's eyes were on potential human rights violations in India.

"We urge the Government of India to consider the human impact of the agrarian crisis and act compassionately towards the protesters, many of whom are elderly," leaders said.

Modi's broad argument is that a shift to private enterprise will make the agricultural sector more competitive.

He is telling farmers that cutting out the 'middleman' will stop others from creaming off their profits.

Remembering Malik El Shabbaz: Malcolm X

February 21 2021 was the 56th anniversary of the death of El Hajj Malik El Shabbaz, also known as Malcolm X.

He was born in Nebraska, USA in 1925 and is recognised as one of the greatest African-American leaders of his generation.

When he was six years old, his father was murdered. His mother was detained in a mental institution when he was just 13.

He excelled at school, but his English teacher told him he should become a carpenter instead of a lawyer, because of his skin colour, he lost motivation and stopped studying at the age of 15.

During his teenage years, he associated himself with the wrong crowd and was eventually imprisoned. However, whilst he was in prison he came across a brilliant library that would have been the envy of colleges and universities worldwide.

You can see the divine hand in the education of this man and the fact the one day, he would become a beloved of his Lord.

He struggled with great difficulty to educate himself. He would read until 3 in the morning in prison. He would read with the light of the hall and every 58 minutes he would go because the guard would come by as prisoners were not allowed to be up at that time and he would pretend to be asleep. The guard would leave and he would go back and start reading again.

He read Will Durrant's story of civilization, H.G Wells outline of history, he read Herodotus, Arnold Toynbee, Kant, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and Spinoza.

He once famously said: "I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity."

After his release from prison, he helped to lead the Nation of Islam, helping to increase its membership through his fiery rhetoric from having 400

members in 1952 to 40,000 by 1960.

At the time, Malcolm advocated for the separation of black and white Americans and rejected the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King.

However, he renounced the Nation of Islam in 1964 after he investigated claims that Elijah Muhammad fathered numerous children outside of marriage with six of his personal secretaries.

After travelling to Africa and the Middle East in 1964, where he performed the Muslim pilgrimage of Hajj, he embraced the mainstream Sunni Islam and took the name El-Hajj Malik el-Shabbaz.

On his journey throughout the Middle East and Africa, Malcolm witnessed what he had never seen in the United States: men of all colours and nationalities treating each other as equals. He wrote in 1964: "America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases the race problem from its society."

He wrote in his biography: "During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug) - while praying to the same God - with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white."

On his return to the US, he founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity, which promoted black identity and blamed racism as the greatest opponent of the African American struggle.

On December the 3rd 1963 he gave a speech at the Oxford Union, where they consider it so prestigious, you get a standing ovation just for getting an invitation to give a speech there.

He gave a beautiful speech on extremism and went toe to toe with professors from Oxford. His diction was impeccable, his elocution so

beautiful. He did not speak slang, if he did it was for rhetorical effect.

He had the knack to struggle against himself and overcome laziness, overcome the temptations to go the easy way. This is who Malcolm was - he was a highly disciplined individual.

He was disciplined morally; he was disciplined intellectually and he was disciplined spiritually. He was also a man of prayer, once he was taught how to pray, he used to spend the night in prayer.

One month before he was killed, he was asked what do you think is responsible for race prejudice in the US?

Malcolm said: "Ignorance and greed and a skillfully designed programme of mis-education that goes right along with the American system of exploitation oppression, so it takes education to eliminate it.

"Just because you have colleges and universities it does not mean you have education. The colleges and universities in the American education system are skillfully used to mis-educate."

His words were so powerful, Sheikh Hamza Yusuf once said Malcolm's words are still relevant to this day.

"We have a whole nation of people that can read but don't necessarily understand and if you want proof for that just look at any comments on social media about what people say about each other and you will realize just how illiterate our culture really is."

In February 1965, aged 39, he was shot 21 times and was martyred as he was preparing to deliver a speech. However, even today in 2021, he is remembered for his generosity, his guile and his love for the Almighty. May he be given the highest status of paradise and we will continue to recite surah Ikhlas for him and all our marhumeen.

Why India's triumph was the ultimate love letter to test cricket

Ismail Mulla is a business journalist at The Yorkshire Post and a lifelong cricket fan.

In his first cricket centric column for Paigaam, Ismail writes about his love for the beautiful game and why India's performances against the Aussies at the Gabba were truly special.

Sport is at its best when it becomes relatable to life. Just like in life there are wins and losses. There are triumphs and setbacks. And there is pain and joy.

The recent test series between India and Australia, which concluded in January, had all of this and more.

For a long time, fans have lamented waning interest in the longer format of the game. Younger generations no longer have the attention span to sit through a day of 50-over cricket let alone five days of a test.

This is perhaps best reflected in the dwindling numbers of spectators at test matches in India. All the while people flock to stadiums for the razzmatazz of the Indian Premier League.

But there's no denying that the real test remains test cricket. Five days of hard toil. Battle between bat and ball. On top one minute, in the gutter the next.

Perhaps no encounter has ever summed up the rollercoaster of emotions test cricket provides than the recent Border-Gavaskar series in Australia. In the first test, India dominated the hosts for the best part of the first two days.

Then on the third day over one absurd hour everything unravelled. India were bundled out for 36, their lowest ever total. Batsmen came, batsmen went. Star bowler Mohammed Shami broke his arm.

India conceded a strong position to succumb to Australia. To compound matters further, talisman and captain Virat Kohli would leave the tour to attend the birth of his first child.



Old stereotypes such as 'soft Indians' were dusted down, despite the current team often displaying a fiery attitude in the field - very much in the mould of Kohli.

Enter Ajinkya Rahane and his ragtag collection of net bowlers, drinks carriers and talented but temperamental young prodigies. If Kohli, with his confident swagger, is the face of modern India, then his vice-captain is a throwback to an older age. Quiet, unassuming and diplomatic.

After being written off, the team roared back, minus captain and star pace bowler, in Melbourne.

Then in Sydney just as it looked like they were about to succumb to Australia's fast bowling battery, Rishabh Pant launched an explosive counterpunch that led to the usually self-assured Aussies questioning themselves and resorting to verbal volleys aimed at Indian batters.

In the end India limped to a draw with a team that was depleted through injuries. The walking wounded quite literally put their bodies on the line. Speaking of putting bodies on the line, the rock at the heart of this stunning series fightback was Gujarat's Cheteshwar Pujara.

The younger generation complains of his slow scoring rate. Yet this obdurate batsman with his low maintenance stance

at the crease showed those old age virtues of patience and determination. Copping 11 body blows in that famous test win at the Gabba in Brisbane - a ground at which Australia had not lost a test since 1988.

But as I said earlier, a sporting contest comes to life when it becomes relatable to life. At the centre of this historic series was young Mohammed Siraj. He debuted in the test at Melbourne and was leading the attack by the fourth one at the Gabba.

This in itself would be remarkable. To do so in a pandemic, away from family is even more impressive. But to do this while losing your father and not being able to attend his funeral, shows unimaginable courage. Siraj could have flown straight back home but his father's wish was for him to play cricket for India so he chose to stay.

Along the way he even encountered racist abuse from the crowd at Sydney, which he stood up to in a dignified way. By reaching deep into the treasure chest of old fashioned values with a little bit of new age flair sprinkled in for good measure.

The team not only triumphed but showed a blueprint for a better modern India.

Did you know?

Did you know that the Persian scholar of medicine, Ibn Sina (980-1037) suspected that some diseases were spread by microorganisms? To prevent human-to-human contamination, he came up with the method of isolating people for 40 days. He called this method al-Arba'iniya ("the forty").

Traders from Venice heard of his successful method and took this knowledge back to contemporary Italy. They called it "quarantena" ("the forty" in Italian). This is where the word "quarantine" comes from. The origin of the methods currently being used in much of the world to fight pandemics have their origins in the Islamic world.

"Who saves one human life, it is as if he has saved all mankind" (5:32). Even today Ibn Sina's method saves thousands, perhaps millions, of lives. that is another legacy filled with barakah!

Note: Ibn Sina's full name was Abu Ali Al-Hussein Ibn Abdullah Ibn Sina. In the west he is also known by the Latin version of his name: Avicenna.



Rufaida Al Aslamiya

Also transliterated as Rufaida Al-Aslamiya or Rufaydah bint Sa`ad, this amazing woman was born in approx. 620 AD; 2 BH, long before Florence Nightingale.

Exactly 1,200 years before to be precise.

She was an Islamic medical and social worker recognized as the first female Muslim nurse and the first female surgeon in Islam.

Amongst the first people in Madina to accept Islam, Rufaida Al-Aslamia was born into the Bani Aslam tribe of the Khazraj tribal confederation in Medina.

She had initially gained recognition for her contribution with her fellow Ansar women who welcomed the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), upon his arrival in Medina.

Rufaida Al-Aslamia was a kind woman as well as an empathetic nurse and a good organiser. Just like Florence Nightingale.

She had learned many medical skills by assisting her father, who was a famous healer.

During the early battles of Islam, she provided first aid to injured soldiers, made

sure they had drinking water, and arranged shelter from the heat and the desert wind for the wounded and dying.

When Saad Ibn Muaath was injured in the Battle of Al-Khandaq (The Trench), The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered that he be placed and treated in her tent.

Rufaida implemented her clinical skills and medical experience into developing the first ever documented mobile care units that were able to meet the medical needs of the community.

Rufaida was interested in disease and its causes

among ordinary people.

She is recorded as having personally worked in poor communities encouraging hygiene and attempting to alleviate social problems which led to poor health.

With her clinical skills, she trained a team of volunteer nurses, leading a group of Muslim women to work with her in the area of health care.

She also worked as a social worker, helping to solve social problems associated with the disease. In addition, she helped children in need and took care of orphans, the disabled and the poor.

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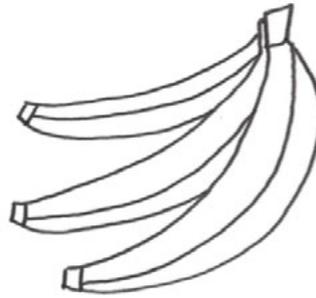
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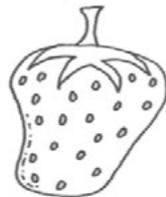
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What are the names of the other three Sacred Books besides the Qur'aan?

What is the Arabic term used for the 'interpretation of the Qur'aan'?

What is the meaning of the Arabic word Qur'an?

What was the first word of the Qur'an that was revealed to Prophet (peace be upon him)

Which Surah of the Qur'an contains orders for the change of Qiblah (direction to face while praying)?

Which Surah of the Qur'aan describes the extraordinary event that happened in the year of the Elephant?

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Disqualified driver took family shopping to Asda in ambulance!

A driver went supermarket shopping with his family in a second-hand ambulance with the emergency lights flashing.

All the family members were said to have nonchalantly got out outside the Asda store in the Harpurhey area

of Manchester when they arrived and proceeded to begin their weekly shop.

Traffic officers tweeted that the group then "promptly went inside to do their shopping".

The ambulance was seized

and a man was later charged with a range of driving offences.

The 32-year-old was due before magistrates in charged with driving while disqualified, without a licence, without insurance, and using a vehicle with unauthorised blue lights.



Uber Eats rider texts student 'sorry love, ate your food'



A student was left dumbfounded after receiving a message from a food delivery driver saying he had eaten two burgers, chips and a chicken wrap that she ordered.

Illy Ilyas, 21, ordered nearly £15 worth of food on Uber Eats to be dropped off at her

house in Ilford, east London.

She then got a message saying her food was on her way but before getting the surprising message from the Uber Eats driver.

The message read: "Sorry love, ate your food."

Despite having to wait even longer for her food, Illy remained rather nonchalant about the entire situation.

She said: 'Maybe the man was actually really hungry. I wouldn't want to be the reason a peckish man gets unemployed in a pandemic'

Doctor claims wearing socks to bed can help you fall asleep quicker

Wearing socks to bed seems to be something people either love or hate - but now a doctor has claimed that keeping your feet covered can actually help you fall asleep quicker.

Doctor Jess Andrade has

gained more than one million followers on TikTok as she shares her advice to help people get a better night's sleep, as well as answering viewers' medical questions.

Her most recent video titled

'Socks to bed?' has racked up a staggering 17 million views as she explained how it can help people improve their sleep.

The doctor said: "So let's talk about people who wear socks to bed. Wearing socks makes

your feet warm and this opens up the blood vessels that cools the body down.

"The body being cool tells the brain that it's time for bed. So actually, people that wear socks tend to fall asleep faster."

Paigaam Legal Column



Low Pay Workers Union Wins in COVID-19 Health and Safety Test Case

Many low paid workers who have an essential role in keeping the nation moving are at particularly high risk from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a ground-breaking decision, the High Court came to their aid in ruling that the Government is obliged under European law to do more to protect their health and safety.

The case was brought by the Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain, which has about 5,000 members predominantly made up of low-paid migrant workers, many of whom make a living in the so-called 'gig economy' as taxi and private hire drivers, chauffeurs, bus and coach drivers, van drivers and couriers.

Many of the union's members are not 'employees' but are categorised as 'workers' within the meaning of Section 230(3) (b) of the Employment Rights Act 2006 (ERA).

The union's main complaint in judicial review proceedings was that EU directives have long required EU member

states to give certain health and safety protections on 'workers' whereas domestic UK legislation, which purported to implement those directives, affords those protections only to employees.

Although that gap in protection was said to have existed since 31 December 1992 – the deadline date by which the UK was required to bring the directives into UK law – the union argued that it had become of particular significance during the pandemic.

The occupations of the union's members exposed them to higher than average risks of death from COVID-19 and they were therefore in particular need of the protections provided by the directives.

The union's case was resisted by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

It was, however, agreed that, under the terms of the European Union (Withdrawals Agreement) Act 2020, the Court retained jurisdiction to rule on the matter as if the UK were still an EU member state.

The Court accepted the union's argument that the term 'worker' – as defined and used in Directive 89/391/EC (the Framework Directive) and Directive 89/656/EC which relates to the use of personal protective equipment (the PPE Directive) – embraces the UK's conception of a 'worker', as defined by the ERA.

The Framework Directive imposes a requirement that workers who take appropriate steps in response to serious and imminent danger are not to be disadvantaged for doing so, unless they act carelessly or negligently.

The Court granted the union formal declarations to the effect that those protections had not been properly implemented in the UK because they had been extended only to employees, not workers.

Buying a House with Your Partner? Legal Advice Today Saves Heartache Later

This case concerned a mother of four who was never formally married to her partner under English law, although they had entered into an Islamic form of marriage.

She was the long-term tenant of a council property which they acquired at a 45 per cent discount under the 'Right to Buy' scheme with the assistance of a mortgage.

Very soon afterwards, he terminated the relationship and left the property. He launched proceedings, seeking a declaration that he owned half the property.

The woman resisted the claim on the basis that he had placed her under pressure to purchase the property and that, had she been aware of his lack of commitment to their relationship, she would never have entered into the transaction.

She would instead have remained a secure tenant of the property. Following a hearing, a judge accepted her evidence and ruled that she was entitled to a 90 per cent beneficial interest in the property and her partner 10 per cent.

In upholding the partner's appeal against that outcome, the High Court noted that the property was conveyed to the couple as joint tenants to be held in equal shares.

Brain Teasers

Riddle 1: A man who was outside in the rain without an umbrella or hat didn't get a single hair on his head wet. Why?

Riddle 2: What gets wet while drying?

Riddle 3: What can you keep after giving to someone?

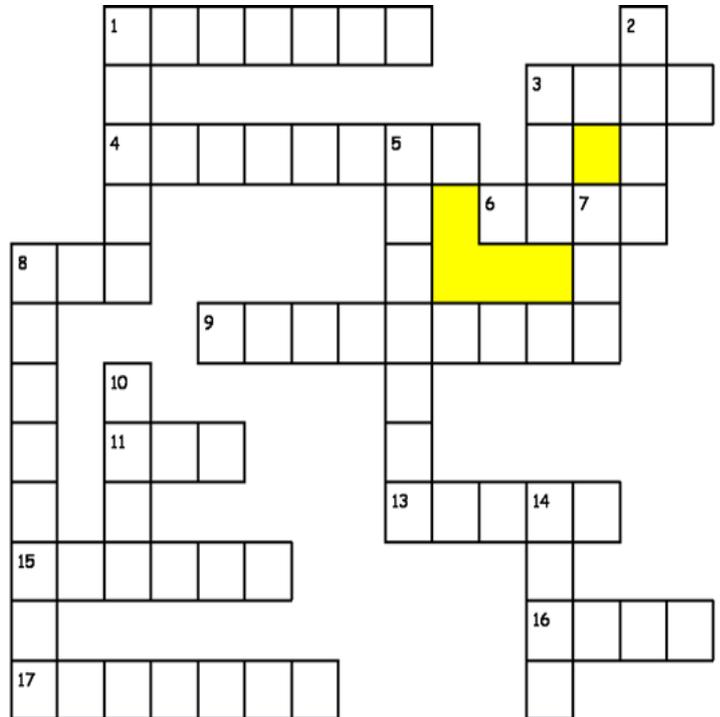
Riddle 4: I shave every day, but my beard stays the same. What am I?

Riddle 5: You see a boat filled with people, yet there isn't a single person on board. How is that possible?

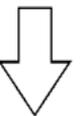
Riddle 6: You walk into a room that contains a match, a kerosene lamp, a candle and a fireplace. What would you light first?

Riddle 7: A man dies of old age on his 25 birthday. How is this possible?

Riddle 8: I have branches, but no fruit, trunk or leaves. What am I?



CROSSWORD CLUES



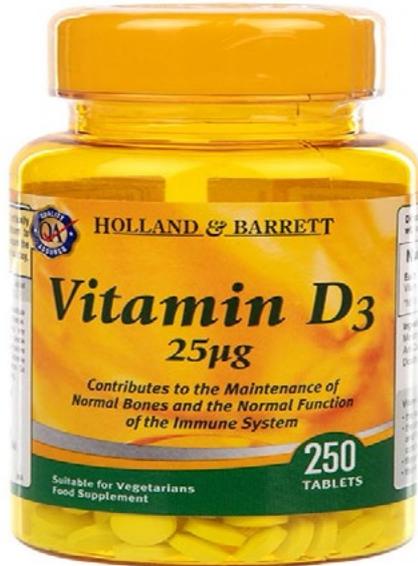
1. The holy Prophet (pbuh) was from this tribe
3. Many mosques have a huge ____.
4. Known as the month of fasting.
6. Almighty commanded the angels to bow down to ____.
8. Almighty created the first ____ out of clay.
9. Ilm is the Arabic word for ____.
11. We have 2 of these every year.
13. Prophet ____ was thrown in a well by his brothers.
15. The Muslims migrated to ____.
16. The second khalif.
17. To ____ your parents is a big sin.

1. The last and final revelation .The word of
2. The ____ leads the prayers.
3. Abdullah was the prophet's ____.
5. Try to the best of your ____.
7. Adam (as) was taken out of Jan-nah because he ____ the fruit.
8. ____ was the final messenger who came to all mankind.
10. We must do as many good ____s and as few bad ____s as possible.
14. Zayd wanted to defend Madina against the enemies at ____.

Answers

1. Answer: He was bald
2. Answer: A towel
3. Your word
4. Answer: A barber
5. Answer: All the people on the boat
6. Answer: The are married.
7. Answer: He was born on February 29.
8. Answer: A bank

Vitamin D could cut risk of Covid death by 60 per cent



Vitamin D could cut the risk of death from Covid-19 by 60 per cent, according to new research.

According to researchers from the University of Barcelona, patients hospitalised with coronavirus who were given an intensive dose of vitamin D were significantly less likely to go to intensive care or to die.

The study found that 10 per cent of patients admitted to Hospital del Mar in Barcelona with coronavirus died within 30 days.

But just 6.5 per cent of those treated with an intensive dose of vitamin D - known as calcifediol - died.

The treatment worked if given early. By the time patients were admitted to intensive care it was too late.

They suggested people with sufficient levels of vitamin D in their system could be less likely to catch Covid at all.

The report reads: "Adequate Vitamin D status could also play a role in preventing Covid-19 infection."

Vitamin D is produced inside the body when you are exposed to sunlight, but in the winter people are advised to take supplements.

A number of studies have linked adequate levels of vitamin D to better Covid outcomes.

The debate over whether Vitamin D supplements reduces the risk of Covid-19 has raged for months.

There are some official studies ongoing to track people's exact levels of vitamin D through blood tests and in depth questionnaires.

Last year ministers announced that 2.7 million vulnerable individuals in England will be offered a free winter supply of vitamin D by the Government.

The supplements were offered to boost people's vitamin D levels while they spend more time indoors due to the virus.

But officials also acknowledged that any links between the supplement and Covid-19 are still being researched.

The Zoe Covid Symptom Study asks

participants to input their health status each day.

Early on in the pandemic 1.4 million app users input data about whether or not they use supplements.

Among this group more than 445,000 went on to be diagnosed with Covid-19.

And 126,000 were thought to have the disease based on their symptoms.

After analysing the data and comparing information between those who had, and had not had Covid-19, the researchers concluded that multivitamins, vitamin D, omega-3, and probiotic supplements all had a very small but statistically significant protective effect.

Vitamin C, zinc or garlic supplements had no detectable effect, they added.

The reduction in risk ranged from up to 9% for vitamin D; 14% for probiotics; 13% for multivitamins and 12% for omega 3.

Lead researcher Dr Cristina Menni from King's College London said: "Our research is an observational study and not a clinical trial, so we can't make strong recommendations based on the data we have.

"Until we have further evidence about the role of supplements from randomised controlled trials, we recommend following the NHS guidelines on vitamins usage as part of a healthy balanced diet."

Professor Tim Spector added: "Many people think that taking vitamins and other supplements can help maintain a healthy immune system, but spending your money on supplements in the hope of trying to avoid getting Covid-19 is largely unjustified.

"You're better off focusing on getting a healthy diet with diverse fresh vegetables and fruits, which should give you all the nutrients you need for a healthy immune system."

દુઆનો સંદેશ

-મહંમદ યુસુફ સુફી લાજપુરી, બાટલી.

દુઆનો પરિચય:

આજના નાજુક દોરમાં માનસિક અશાંતિ અને શારીરિક અસ્વસ્થતા ન સર્જાય, દરેક મનુષ્ય કોઈ પણ જાતના તણાવ, મૂંઝવણ, પરેશાની અને પ્રેશર વગેરેથી સુરક્ષિત રહે અને અનેક જાતના વાયરસ કે અન્ય રોગોથી મુક્ત રહે અને તે માટે જેનો સહારો લેવો જરૂરી છે તેને હદીસ શરીફમાં ખાસ ઈબાદતનો મગ્જ (ગુદો) કહેવામાં આવે છે. જેને અપનાવવાથી તકદીરે મોઅલ્લૂકમાં પણ પરિવર્તન આવી શકે છે અને તે છે 'દુઆ'.

બંદાનું પોતાના કૃપાળુ પરવરદિગારથી કનેક્શન સ્થાપિત કરવાની શોર્ટ સિસ્ટમ (ટૂંકી પદ્ધતિ) અને તેની મદદ અને રહમતને ખેંચી લાવનારું શક્તિશાળી લોહચુંબક દુઆ છે. મુસબ્બિબુલ અસ્બાબથી ડાઈરેક્ટ કોન્ટેક્ટ કરવું, આપણા પાલનહારથી સીધો સંપર્ક સાધવું એનું નામ દુઆ છે.

દુઆનો નિર્દેશ:

જ્યારે બંદો પોતાના હકીકી મઅબુદથી દુઆ કરે છે તેનાથી જ્યારે પોતાની જરૂરતનો સવાલ કરે છે. તો જાણે તે પોતાના મઅબુદના સર્વ શક્તિમાન હોવાનો સ્વીકાર કરે છે. અને તેના મુશ્કીલકુશા(વિદનહર્તા) હાજતરવાં(જરૂરતોને પૂરી કરનાર)હોવા પર યકીન ધરાવે છે. જેનાથી તે મઅબુદે બરહકની ગયરત જોશમાં આવે છે અને તે પોતાના બંદાની દરેક પુકાર પર લબ્બયક (હું તારી મદદ માટે હાજર છું) કહે છે. અને પોતાની હિકમત તેમજ મસ્લિહતને નજર સમક્ષ રાખીને ક્યાં તો તેની માંગને તેના માંગવા પ્રમાણે જ પૂરી કરી દે છે અથવા કોઈ મોટી બલા (આફત)થી મુક્તિ આપે છે. અથવા તેની દુઆને આખિરત માટે ભંડોળ, ઝખીરો બનાવી દે છે. મતલબ કે, તેના ધ્વારનો ભિખારી કદી ખાલી હાથ રહેતો નથી.

દર દર ન ફીરો ઈસ દરે રહમત કો છોડ કર
ઈસ દરકા ભિખારી કોઈ મહરૂમ નહીં હૈ.

દુઆની અપાર શક્તિ:

હવે આધુનિક તરક્કીના જમાનામાં વિજ્ઞાનના ચાહકોએ પણ દુઆની તાસીરનો સ્વીકાર કર્યો છે. કારણ કે, અનુભવથી આ વાત સાબિત થઈ ચૂકી છે કે કોઈ મુશ્કિલથી મુક્તિ મેળવવા માટે એક તદબીર (યુક્તિ) કદી સફળ થાય છે. અને કદી તે જ તદબીર નિષ્ફળ થાય છે. એનું રહસ્ય એજ છે કે,

જે તદબીરમાં દુઆ અને તવક્કુલ(અલ્લાહ ઉપર ભરોસો) ની બાતિની (આંતરિક) શક્તિ શામીલ રહી, તે અસરકારક સાબિત થઈ. અને જે તદબીર આ બાતિની શક્તિથી ખાલી રહી તે એક નિરર્થક તદબીર થઈને રહી ગઈ.

એક દવા એક બીમારના માટે તંદુરસ્તીનો સબબ બની પરંતુ બીજાના માટે એજ દવા બિન અસરકારક થઈ ગઈ.

એટલે નિષ્ણાંતોએ માનવું પડ્યું કે દવાની તાસીર દુઆની મોહતાજ હોય છે. દવા ત્યાં સુધી પોતાની અસર દેખાડી શકતી નથી જ્યાં સુધી દવાની અસરોનો સર્જનહાર તેનામાં અસરકારી તાકત શક્તિ પેદા ન કરી દે.

તું જો ચાહે ઝરર, કુછ ન ઝહર કા ભી
તું ન ચાહે દવા કો ભી, બેઅસર કરદે.

દુઆનું રહસ્ય:

આઝમગઢ (ઈન્ડીયા)નો એક બનાવ છે. ત્યાંના એક એરિયામાં એક હકીમ દરેક પ્રકારના રોગીને એક જ દવા આપતા હતા અને બધા દર્દી સારા થઈ જતા હતા. જ્યારે તેને એનું રહસ્ય પૂછવામાં આવ્યું તો તેણે બતાવ્યું કે, શિક્ષા આપનારી ઝાત અલ્લાહતઆલાની છે. દર્દીને શીક્ષા મળે તે માટે હું તેના સમક્ષ રડી, કરગરીને દુઆ કરું છું. તો એક જ દવા બધાના માટે ફાયદાકારક અને અસરકારક સાબિત થઈ જાય છે.

તાસીર તો જરૂર દવા ઓર દુઆમેં હૈ
લેકીન શીક્ષા મરીઝ કી દસ્તે ખુદા મેં હૈ.

દુઆનો મહાન રુકન:

દુઆ એવી હાલતમાં કરવી જોઈએ કે, દુઆની કબુલિયતનું પૂરું યકીન હોય. અને એ વાત યાદ રાખવી જોઈએ કે, ગાફીલ અને બેપરવાહ દિલની દુઆ કબુલ થતી નથી. દુઆની કબુલિયત માટે હુઝુરે કલ્બ (દિલથી ધ્યાન) અને હુસ્ન ઝન (શુભ આશા) અત્યંત જરૂરી છે.

દુઆ અલ્લાહતઆલાની તારીફથી શરૂ કરવી ત્યાર પછી દુરૂદ શરીફ પઢવું અને દુઆના અંતમાં પણ દુરૂદ શરીફ પઢવું કદી ભુલવું ન જોઈએ. કારણ કે, દુરૂદ શરીફ હર હાલમાં કબુલ હોય છે. જ્યારે અવ્વલ-આખિર દુરૂદ શરીફ કબુલ થશે તો તો દરમ્યાન આપણી દુઆ પણ કબુલ થઈ જશે. પાક સાફ દિલ, અલ્લાહપાકથી આઝીઝી, ગુનાહોની તૌબા અને અલ્લાહપાક ઉપર પૂરા યકીનથી દુઆમાં જરૂર કામચાબી મળશે.

અંતમાં દુઆ વિષેનો આ લેખ માગતા જા લેતા જા નામની એક કિતાબ જે હઝરત મૌલાના મુજતબા સાહબ મદ. શેખુલ હદીસ મદ્રેસા હિદાયતુલ ઈસ્લામ, આલીપોરે લખી છે, તેમાંથી લેવામાં આવ્યો છે.

જિંદગી!

દિલ કે ટૂટને પર ભી હસના

શાયદ જિંદાદિલી ઈસીકો કહેતે હય

ઠોકર લગને પર ભી મંઝિલ તક ભટકના

શાયદ તલાશ ઈસીકો કહેતે હય

કીસીકો ચાહકર ભી ન પાના

શાયદ ચાહત ઈસીકો કહેતે હય

ટૂટે ખંડહરમેં બિના તેલ કે દિયા જલાના

શાયદ ઉમ્મીદ ઈસીકો કહેતે હય

ગીર જાને પર ભી ફિરસે ખડા હોના

શાયદ હિમ્મત ઈસીકો કહેતે હય

ઔર યે ઉમ્મીદ, હિમ્મત, ચાહત, તલાશ

શાયદ જિંદગી ઈસીકો કહેતે હય

વિચાર વિનિમય

-અહમદ ગુલ

હમ દેખેંગો....

ઉર્દુના જગ વિખ્યાત શાયર ફૈઝ અહમદ ફૈઝની આ જગ પ્રસિધ્ધ કાન્તિકારી નજમને એક યા બે પાનામાં સમજવી કે સમજાવવી અતિ મુશ્કેલ છે. એને ગહનતાથી સમજવા માટે તો પાનાનું બંધન ન હોય તો જ શક્ય બને. છતાં આ મર્યાદિત પાનામાં એને સમજવાનો યથાર્થ પ્રયાસ કરીએ. જો કે એમા એક ભય સમાયેલો છે. કે, ક્યાંક આ અદ્ભૂત નજમ સાથે નાઈન્સાફી તો ન થઈ જાયને?

ખેર! આ નજમ ધ્વારા ફૈઝ સાહેબે જગતની દબાયેલી, કચડાયેલી, પીડિત પ્રજા માટે એક આશા અને ઉમ્મીદનો સંદેશ આપ્યો છે. આપણે વિગતે જોઈએ,

હમ દેખેંગો, હાં હમ દેખેંગો

લાઝિમ હે કે, હમ ભી દેખેંગો

વો દિન કે, જિસ્કા વાદા હૈ

જો લોહે અઝલ પે લીખા હૈ. હમ દેખેંગો....

અમે એ દિવસને જોઈશું અને જરૂર જોઈશું. જેનો વાયદો કરવામાં આવ્યો છે. જે લોહે અઝલમાં એટલે કે, બુક ઓફ ડેસ્ટીની (Destiny) માં જે સમયે જે થવાનું છે, જેની શરૂઆતથી અંત સુધીનું બધુંજ લખી દેવામાં આવ્યું છે. અને એ જ સનાતન સત્ય પણ છે. જે પ્રમાણે ગરમી પછી ઠંડી, રાત પછી દિવસનું આગમન જેટલું સત્ય છે તેટલો જ આ વાયદો પણ સત્ય છે. અને જે કહેવામાં આવ્યું છે, તે થઈને જ રહેશે. શું થઈને રહેશે તે આપણે જોઈએ.

જબ જુલ્મો સિતમ કે કોહેગરાં

રૂઈ કી તરહ ઉસ જાયેંગો

હમ મહકુમો કે પાંવ તલે

ચે ઘરતી ઘડ ઘડ ઘડકેગી

ઔર એહલે હકમ કે સર ઉપર

જબ બીજલી કડ કડ કડકેગી. હમ દેખેંગો..

અને તે સમયને જોઈશું. જ્યારે જુલ્મ-સિતમના પહાડો (કોહેગરાં) રૂની માફક ઊડી જશે. એટલે કે, જુલ્મનો ખાત્મો થશે. જેના ઉપર સત્તા ચલાવવામાં આવે છે. તે (મહકુમો) ઉઠશે, જેઓ જુલ્મ સિતમ ના ભોગ બનેલાં છે, તેઓ જાગશે. પોતાના હક માટે ઉઠશે, ત્યારે તેમના કદમોથી ઘરતી ઘુજી ઉઠશે અને સત્તાધિશો (એહલે હકમ) પર વિગ્રહની, આંદોલનની વીજળી ત્રાટકશે, અને જાલિમોની બૂરી દશા થશે. તે દિવસ અમે જરૂર જોઈશું.

જબ અર્ઝે ખુદાકે કાબેસે, સબ બુત ઉઠવાચે જાયેંગો

હમ એહલે સફા, મરદુદે હરમ, મસ્નદ પે બિઠાચે જાયેંગો

સબ તાજ ઉઠા લે જાયેંગો

સબ તપ્ત ગિરાચે જાયેંગો. હમ દેખેંગો...

અર્ઝે ખુદા એટલે ખુદાને ભ્રામિક ખુદા હોવાનો દાવો કરનારાઓ લોકો પર જુલ્મ કરી રહ્યા છે, એ બની બેઠેલા ખુદાઓ-જુલ્મગારો હાકેમોનો ભ્રમ તોડી નાંખવામાં આવશે, તેમની સત્તા છીનવી લેવામાં આવશે. તેની જગ્યાએ એ ગાદી (મસ્નદ) પર સાચા અને

ઈમાનદાર (એહલે સફા) પાક અને પવિત્ર લોકોને સત્તા આપવામાં આવશે અને જુલ્મી સત્તાનો અંત આવશે. તેમના તાજો તપ્ત છીનવાઈ જશે. લાયક સેવાભાવિઓ સત્તાધારણ કરશે, ત્યારે ખરા અર્થમાં લોકતંત્રની સ્થાપના થશે. જ્યાં બધાને સમાન ગણવામાં આવશે. કોઈ ઉચ્ચ કે નીચ ન હશે. કોઈ ચઢિયાતું કે, ઉતરતું ન હશે. ત્યારે કચડાયેલી પીડિત પ્રજા માટે સોનેરી દિવસ ઉગશે. જેનો ઈન્તેઝાર છે. તે દિવસ અમે ખચિત જોઈશું. સાહિર લુધ્યાનવીએ પણ કંઈક એવીજ ઝંખના કરી હતી.

વો સુબ્હ કબી તો આચેગી

આ આશા જગાવતી નજમમાં એક એવા લોકરાજની ઝંખના કરવામાં આવી છે. જે ખરા અર્થમાં લોકતંત્ર હશે. કોઈ તાનાશાહ જુલ્મગાર પ્રજાનો માલીક ન બનશે તે દિવસ જરૂર આવશે અને અમે તે જોઈશું.

ભારતના મુસ્લિમો અસુરક્ષા અનુભવી રહ્યા છે.

હાલમાં ભારતના છેલ્લા ઉપ રાષ્ટ્રપતિ હમીદ અન્સારીએ એક ટીવી ચેનલને આપેલ ઈન્ટરવ્યુમાં જણાવ્યું હતું કે, ૨૦૧૪ની સામાન્ય ચૂંટણીની સાથે જ ભારતને કટ્ટર રાષ્ટ્રવાદી દેશ બનાવવાની પ્રક્રિયા શરૂ થઈ ગઈ હતી. ૨૦૧૮ની ચૂંટણી પછી આ પ્રક્રિયા ચરમસીમાએ પહોંચી હતી. મુસ્લિમો પોતાને અસુરક્ષિત અનુભવી રહ્યા છે. રિપોર્ટર કરણ થાપર (ધ વાયર) સાથેના ઈન્ટરવ્યુમાં તેમણે આ વાત જણાવી હતી. કટ્ટર રાષ્ટ્રવાદ ભારતને અસહિષ્ણુ-ધમંડી અને અસુરક્ષિત કરે છે.

હાલમાં પ્રગટ થયેલ હમીદ અન્સારીની આત્મકથા મેની એ હેપ્પી એક્સીડન્ટ, રીકલેકશન્સ ઓફ એ લાઈફ (Many A Happy Accident Recollections of A Life)ના પ્રકાશન પ્રસંગે તેમણે કહ્યું હતું કે, ૨૦૧૮ના પરિણામો આપખુદ રાષ્ટ્રવાદ, બહુમતવાદના આધારે લોકપ્રિયતાની સફળતા દર્શાવે છે. તેમણે જણાવ્યું હતું કે, ૨૦૧૮ ભારત માટે ખરા અર્થમાં એક ટર્નિંગ પોઈન્ટ સમાન છે. જેને કટ્ટર રાષ્ટ્રવાદ કે અક્કડ રાષ્ટ્રવાદ તરીકે પણ ઓળખવામાં આવે છે. એવો આ સાંસ્કૃતિક રાષ્ટ્રવાદ ભારતના સંસ્થાયક પિતામહના નાગરિક રાષ્ટ્રવાદથી અલગ છે, જેમણે ૧૯૪૭માં ભારતને આઝાદી અપાવી હતી. તેમણે વધુમાં જણાવ્યું હતું કે, આપણા બંધારણના સિધ્ધાંતો અને મૂલ્યો પ્રત્યેની આપણી પ્રતિબધ્ધતા નબળી પડી રહી છે અને ઓસરી રહી છે. તેમણે કહ્યું હતું કે, સેક્યુલરીઝમ શબ્દ જ સરકારના સત્તાવાર શબ્દકોષમાંથી અદ્રશ્ય થઈ ગયો છે. તેના સ્થાને હાલ એક ધાર્મિક બહુમતીની પ્રાથમિકતા થોપવા માટેના રાજકીય, વૈચારિક પ્રયાસો ચાલી રહ્યા છે.

આ બધી પરિસ્થિતિની ભારતના લઘુમતિઓ ઉપર કેવી અસર થાય છે તે સમજાવતા હામિદ અન્સારીએ જણાવ્યું હતું કે, ભારતના લઘુમતિઓ ખાસ કરીને વસ્તીના ૧૫૮૬૬ એવા મુસ્લિમો અસુરક્ષા અનુભવી રહ્યા છે. સરકાર પાસેથી ન્યાય મેળવવા માટેનો વિશ્વાસ હવે ખલાસ થયો છે. મુસ્લિમોને સેકન્ડ ક્લાસ સિટીઝન ગણવામાં આવે છે અને આવીજ અનેક પ્રક્રિયાની શરૂઆત થઈ ચૂકી છે. ૨૦૧૪માં જ્યારે બીજેપી સરકાર કેન્દ્રમાં આવી ત્યારે વડા પ્રધાન મોદીના હમીદ અન્સારી સાથેના સંબંધોમાં ખટાશ જોવા મળી રહી હતી. હમીદ અન્સારી ચાર દાયકા સુધી કોર્પોરેટ રહ્યા છે અને મુશ્કેલીના સમયમાં યુએનમાં ફરજ બજાવી ચૂક્યા છે.

(ગુજરાત ૨૩ ન્યૂઝ પેપરમાંથી ટૂંકાવીને)

ભારતની સૌથી મોટી પાંચ મસ્જિદો

એક અંદાજ મુજબ વિશ્વમાં સૌથી વધુ મસ્જિદો ભારતમાં છે. તો ચાલો આજે જાણીએ ભારતની પાંચ સૌથી મોટી મસ્જિદો માટે જેમાં લાખો મુસલમાનો એકી સાથે નમાઝ અદા કરી શકે છે. આ મસ્જિદો સ્થાપત્ય કલાનો અદ્ભૂત નમૂનો પણ છે. ભારતની આ મસ્જિદોને ગિનીસ બુક ઓફ વર્લ્ડ રેકોર્ડમાં સામેલ પણ કરવામાં આવી છે.

ભારતની સૌથી મોટી મસ્જિદમાં **પહેલું** નામ તાજ-ઉલ-મસ્જિદ છે. જે મધ્ય પ્રદેશના ભોપાલ શહેરમાં આવેલી છે. ૪.૫ લાખ સ્કવેર ફૂટમાં ફેલાયેલ આ મસ્જિદ સ્થાપત્ય કલાનો અણમોલ નમૂનો છે. આ મસ્જિદની તામિર મોગલ બાદશાહ બહાદુર શાહ ઝફરે કરાવી હતી. આ મસ્જિદમાં લગભગ અઢી લાખ લોકો નમાઝ પઢી શકે છે. દુનિયાના કિંમતી પથ્થરોનો પ્રયોગ આ મસ્જિદમાં કરવામાં આવ્યો છે. એ એશિયાની બીજા નંબરની સૌથી મોટી મસ્જિદ પણ છે. બે મિનારાના આધાર ઉપર બનાવેલ આ મસ્જિદ બનાવવા માટે કરોડો રૂપિયાનો ખર્ચ થયો હતો. એ વખતની સૌથી મોંઘી મસ્જિદોમાંની એક મસ્જિદ છે.

મોટા ઈમારતવાડાના નામથી મશહુર લખનૌની આસિફી મસ્જિદને ભારતની **બીજા** નંબરની સૌથી મોટી મસ્જિદ માનવામાં આવે છે. હુરોનાબાદમાં સ્થિત આ મસ્જિદની તામિર નવાબ આસિફુદ્દીન દૌલાએ કરાવી હતી. સ.ન ૧૭૮૪માં બનાવેલ આ મસ્જિદને સ્થાપત્ય કલાનો બેહતરીન નમૂનો માનવામાં આવે છે. લાખો સ્કવેર ફૂટમાં ફેલાયેલ આ મસ્જિદમાં ૨ લાખથી વધુ લોકો નમાઝ અદા કરી શકે છે. એ ભારતજ નહીં પરંતુ દુનિયાની પહેલી મસ્જિદ છે જેમાં અન્ડરગ્રાઉન્ડ રસ્તાઓ બનાવવામાં આવ્યા હતા. એક અંદાજ મુજબ એ મારફત હેદ્રાબાદ, દિલ્હી અને ભારતના અનેક મોટા શહેરો સુધી પહોંચી શકાય છે.

કાશ્મીરના શ્રીનગરમાં મૌજુદ જામિયા મસ્જિદ ભારતની **ત્રીજી** મોટી મસ્જિદ છે. જેમાં એકી સાથે ૪૦૬૪૨થી વધુ લોકો નમાઝ પઢી શકે છે. ઈ.સ. ૧૩૮૪માં સુલ્તાન સિકંદર શાહ બુદ સિકંદ મારફત બનાવેલ આ મસ્જિદ ઈસ્લામી દૌરની એક સુનહરી યાદગાર છે. ઈસ્લામી દૌરમાં અહીં એક મદ્રેસો ચાલતો હતો જેમાં પૂરા કાશ્મીરથી તાલિબે ઈલ્મ પઢવા આવતા હતા. ઈ.સ. ૧૬૭૨માં જ્યારે આ મસ્જિદની ઈમારત કમજોર થઈ ગઈ તો ઔરંગઝેબ બાદશાહે પોતાના પૈસાથી એનું ફરી નિર્માણ કરાવ્યું હતું.

ભારતની સૌથી મોટી મસ્જિદની લીસ્ટમાં **ચોથું** નામ જામા મસ્જિદનું આવે છે. દેશની રાજધાની દિલ્હીમાં બનેલ આ મસ્જિદને ઘેનફળ, નિર્માણ, કલા અને સહુલત માટે એક શાહકાર માનવામાં આવે છે. આ મસ્જિદ દેશની એક રીતે રાષ્ટ્રીય મસ્જિદ પણ છે. એનું નિર્માણ મોગલ બાદશાહ શાહજહાંએ ઈ.સ. ૧૬૫૦માં કરાવ્યું હતું. મિલિયન ડોલરની લાગતથી બનેલ આ મસ્જિદમાં એકી સાથે ૩૦૬૪૨ લોકો નમાઝ પઢી શકે છે. આ દિલ્હીની સૌથી મોટી મસ્જિદ પણ છે. આઝાદીની લડાઈમાં આ મસ્જિદનું મોટું યોગદાન રહ્યું છે.

ભારતની સૌથી મોટી મસ્જિદની લીસ્ટમાં **પાંચમું** સ્થાન મક્કા મસ્જિદનું આવે છે. ભારતના તેલંગાણા રાજ્યના હૈદરાબાદ શહેરમાં આવેલ આ મસ્જિદમાં દુનિયાની બેહતરીન આર્કિટેકચરીનો ઈસ્તેમાલ કરવામાં આવ્યો હતો. આ મસ્જિદને બનાવવા સઉદી અરેબિયાના મક્કા શહેરથી મટોડી લાવવામાં આવી હતી અને તેના કારણે આ મસ્જિદ મક્કા મસ્જિદના નામથી ઓળખવામાં આવે છે. મક્કા મસ્જિદનું તામિરી કામ હૈદરાબાદના સુલ્તાન મોહમ્મદ કુલીદ કુતુબશાહે કરાવ્યું હતું. આ મસ્જિદના બાંધકામ માટે પ્રતિદિન ૮૬૪૨ મજૂરો કામ કરતા હતા.

આ સિવાય ભારતમાં આજે હજારો મસ્જિદો છે જેમાં લાખો મુસલમાનો ઈબાદત કરે છે. મુસલમાનો ધ્વારા બનાવવામાં આવેલ આ મસ્જિદોના કારણે વિશ્વમાં ભારતની એક પહેરાન બની છે.

કોવિડ મહામારી દરમિયાન મુસ્લિમોની અવગણના

યુ.કે. ખાતે કોરોના મહામારી દરમિયાન મીડિયા અને રાજકીયક્ષેત્રે મુસ્લિમોના યોગદાનની અવગણના કરવામાં આવી છે અને તેને યોગ્ય રીતે દર્શાવવામાં તેઓ નિષ્ફળ રહ્યા છે. ઓલ પાર્ટી પાર્લામેન્ટરી ગ્રૂપ (APPG)ના મુસ્લિમોના રિપોર્ટ ઉપર હાલમાં આ વાતને નિર્દેષ કરવામાં આવી છે. રિપોર્ટમાં જોવા મળે છે કે, કોવિડ-૧૯ના રીસ્પોન્સમાં મુસ્લિમો મુખ્યત્વે ફ્રન્ટલાઈનમાં રહ્યા છે.

મહામારી દરમિયાન મુસ્લિમોને જાગૃતિ આપવામાં ફેઈથ ગ્રૂપ, મસ્જિદો અને મુસ્લિમ ઓર્ગનાઈજેશનોએ મૂખ્ય ભૂમિકા ભજવી છે. ઉપરાંત આ નવી મહામારીના કારણે પ્રભાવિત મૃત્યુને લીધે મુસ્લિમોએ મરનારાઓની દફનવિધિ અને સરકારના આદેશો નું પાલન કરી તેને ખબૂજ સારી રીતે અંજામ આપ્યો છે. જરૂરતમંદોને તેમની જરૂરિયાત મુજબની સામગ્રી પહોંચાડવામાં અને ફૂડ પાર્સલ વગેરેમાં કોઈ પણ જાતના ભેદભાવ વગર તમામ જાતિને ચેરિટી પ્રોગ્રામ માટેહત મદદ પૂરી પાડી છે અને તેમાં મસ્જિદો, ઓર્ગનાઈજેશનો વગેરેએ આગળપડતો ભાગ ભજવ્યો છે. પીપીઈ સાધનોથી લઈ જરૂરિયાતી વસ્તુઓને ટૂકાનદારોએ નિયમિત રીતે પૂરી પાડી છે. ઉપરાંત કોવિડની સમજ માટે જુદા જુદા માધ્યમ ધ્વારા અને પાત્રકાઓ ધ્વારા ઈન્ફોરમેશન પણ પૂરૂ પાડવામાં આવ્યું છે.

૨૦૨૦ના વર્ષમાં પ્રથમ લોકડાઉનથીજ મસ્જિદો બંધ કરવામાં આ સમાજ આગળ રહ્યો છે અને તેના કારણે પવિત્ર રમજાન માસ, બે ઈદો, હજ ઉપર પ્રતિબંધ, જરૂરિયાત વિનાની મુસાફરી, શાદી મૈથ્યતમાં ભેગા થવા ઉપર સરકારના નિયંત્રિત વિવિધ પ્રતિબંધોથી આ વર્ષ મુસ્લિમો માટે એક કઠણ અને વિપરીત સાબિત થયું છે. છતાં મુસ્લિમોએ અનેક કુરબાની આપી છે તેની નોંધ લેવામાં આવી નથી. મુસલમાનોની પરેશાની અને તેમને થયેલ આર્થિક, સામાજિક નુકસાનોને ધ્યાનમાં લઈ સરકાર તરફથી જોઈએ તેવો સહકાર મળ્યો નથી એમ કહેવું અયોગ્ય નથી. ફાર રાઈટ ગ્રૂપોએ મહામારીના સંદર્ભે મુસ્લિમોને નિશાન બનાવવામાં અને બદનામ(આગળના પાના ઉપર)

કરવાના અનેક ઉદાહરણો જોવા મળ્યા પરંતુ તેના ઉપર જરૂરી પગલા ભરાતા જોવા મળ્યા નથી. કન્ઝર્વેટીવ એમ.પી. માર્ક ઈસ્ટવુડ (ડ્યુઝબરી) co-chair of the APPG ઓન બ્રિટીશ મુસ્લિમ ક્લબ હાઉસિંગ, આ રિપોર્ટ મુસ્લિમોની કામગીરીને હાઈલાઈટ કરી ઉત્તમ કામ કર્યું છે. મુસલમાનોએ આ મહામારીમાં જે ઉદાહરણ પૂરું પાડ્યું છે તે અજોડ છે.

ભારતમાં કિસાન આંદોલન

ભારત ખાતે રાજધાની દિલ્હીની આસપાસની બોર્ડર ઉપર આ લખાય છે ત્યારે ત્રણ માસ કરતા વધુ સમયથી કિસાનો (ખેડૂતો)નું આંદોલન ચાલી રહ્યું છે. જેમાં દેશના પંજાબ, હરિયાણા રાજ્યો સિવાય અલગ અલગ પ્રાંતોના લગભગ ત્રણ લાખથી વધુ કિસાનો જોડાયેલા છે. આંદોલનમાં ઓરતો નવયુવાનો અને વૃદ્ધોનો પણ સમાવેશ છે. ગયા વર્ષે સપ્ટેમ્બર મહિનામાં ભારતની સંસદમાં કોઈ પણ જાતની ચર્ચા કે વોટીંગ વિના હાલની બીજેપી સરકારે કુલ ત્રણ કૃષિ કાનૂન પાસ કરી દીધા હતા. વિરોધપક્ષોની સંશોધન અને ચર્ચાની માંગણી વગેરેને ફગાવી દઈ સરકારે તેને કાયદાનું રૂપ આપી દીધું હતું. જેને લીધે નાના અને મધ્યમ ખેડૂતોને મોટું નુકસાન થતું દેખાય રહ્યું છે. જેના વિરોધમાં ઓક્ટોબર-૨૦ થીજ પંજાબમાં કિસાન આંદોલન શરૂ થયું હતું. સરકાર આંખ આડા કાન કરતા મોટા પાયા ઉપર આ આંદોલન નવેમ્બર-૨૦માં શરૂ થયું અને કિસાનોએ દિલ્હીની ચારે તરફની બોર્ડરો ઉપર ધામા નાંખ્યા છે.

આ આંદોલન ખૂબજ શાંતિપૂર્વક ચાલી રહ્યું છે. અને તેમની ફક્ત એકજ માંગ છે કે આ ત્રણે કાનૂનોને પાછા ખેંચવામાં આવે, તેને નાબૂદ કરવામાં આવે. આ દરમિયાન સરકારના મંત્રીઓ સાથે ૧૧ જેટલી બેઠકો થઈ છે, પરંતુ સરકાર કોઈ પણ જાતની બાંધછોડ કરવા માંગતી નથી. પરિણામે કોઈ હલ નીકળતો જોવા મળતો નથી. આ આંદોલન દરમિયાન ૨૨૦ થી વધુ ખેડૂતોના મૃત્યુ થયા છે. સરકાર જે કાયદા લાવી રહી છે તેમાં કોર્પોરેટરો કે ઉદ્યોગપતિઓના ફાયદાની જ વાત આવે છે. સરકારની નીતિ સ્પષ્ટ દેખાય છે કે, તે અમીરોને વધુ અમીર અને ગરીબોને વધુ ગરીબ બનાવવા માંગે છે. અને આ રીતે સત્તાની ખુશી ઉપર ચોટી રહેવા માંગે છે.

૨૬મી જાન્યુઆરીના પ્રજાસત્તાક દિવસ પછી દિલ્હીના બોર્ડર ઉપર સરકારે કોંક્રેટ બેરીકેટ અને કાંટાળી વાડ બનાવી છે અને કિસાનોને દિલ્હી રાજધાનીમાં ધૂસતા રોકવાની કોશિશ કરી છે. જ્યાં સુધી તેમની માંગોને સ્વીકારવામાં ન આવે ત્યાં સુધી કિસાનો કોઈ પણ ભોગે પાછા વળવા માંગતા નથી. તેમનું આ આંદોલન શાંતિપૂર્કનું છે અને તેઓ એમાં કોઈ પણ રાજકીય પક્ષને પણ પ્લેટફોર્મ આપતા નથી. છતાં સરકાર તેમને આતંકવાદી, નકસલવાદી, ખાલીસ્તાનોની સંડોવણી વગેરે કહી બદનામ કરી રહી છે. ભારતની આઝાદી પછીના ઈતિહાસમાં આ સૌથી મોટું આંદોલન છે અને તેની નોંધ વિદેશી મિડીયા, ટીવી ચેનલોએ પણ લીધી છે, અને વિદેશોમાં પણ આ આંદોલનને સમર્થન મળી રહ્યું છે. હવે જોવું રહ્યું આ આંદોલન શું રંગ લાવે છે.

પૂર્વ રાષ્ટ્રપતિ ડોનલ્ડ ટ્રમ્પ મહાભિયોગમાં નિર્દોષ

૬ જાન્યુઆરી ૨૦૨૧ના અમેરિકાના કેપીટલ હીલમાં થયેલી હિંસા અંગે ટ્રમ્પ વિરૂધ્ધ મહાભિયોગ લાવવામાં આવ્યો હતો. ૪ દિવસ ચાલેલ ચર્ચા પછી સેનેટરોએ મતદાન કર્યું હતું. જેનું પરિણામ ૧૩મી ફેબ્રુઆરીના આવ્યું હતું. જેમાં ૫૭ સેનેટરોએ ટ્રમ્પને હિંસા ભડકાવવા માટે ઉશ્કેરવાના પક્ષમાં દોષિત તરીકે મતદાન કર્યું હતું. જ્યારે ૪૩ સેનેટરોએ ટ્રમ્પના તરફેણમાં નિર્દોષ તરીકે મતદાન કર્યું હતું. ટ્રમ્પને દોષી જાહેર કરવા ૨/૩ એટલે કે ૬૭ મતોની જરૂર હતી પરંતુ તેમાં ૧૦ મતો ઓછા મળતા તેઓ નિર્દોષ જાહેર થયા હતા. સંસદમાં હાલના સત્તા પક્ષ ડેમોક્રેટના ૫૦ સેનેટરો છે અને ટ્રમ્પના પક્ષના ૭ સેનેટરોએ ટ્રમ્પના વિરોધમાં મત આપ્યા હતા.

ગયા વર્ષે પણ ટ્રમ્પ વિરૂધ્ધ મહાભિયોગ ચલાવવામાં આવ્યો હતો પરંતુ હાઉસ ઓફ રીપ્રેઝન્ટેટીવમાં ડેમોક્રેટની બહુમતિ હોવાના કારણે તે પાસ થયો હતો જ્યારે સેનેટમાં રિબ્લીકની મેજોરિટી હોવાના કારણે પ્રસ્તાવ પડી ભાંગ્યો હતો. આમ બે વખત ટ્રમ્પ ઉપર ગેરવર્તણૂક માટે ચલાવેલ કેસમાં તેઓ બચી જવા પામ્યા હતા.

કતરના ખાડી દેશો સાથે વેપારીક સંબંધો ફરી શરૂ

જુન ૨૦૧૭માં સઉદી અરબ, બેહરીન, ઈજીપ્ત, સંયુક્ત અરબ અમીરાતે આતંકવાદી સમુહોને સમર્થન કરવાનો આરોપ લગાવી કતર સાથે આર્થિક અને રાજધ્વારી સંબંધો તોડી નાખી પ્રતિબંધો લાદી દીધા હતા. પરિણામે કતરને આ ચારે દેશો સાથે વેપારીક અને રાજકીય સંબંધો ઉપર મોટી અસર પડી હતી અને તમામ વ્યવહાર બંધ થયો હતો. ગયા જાન્યુઆરી માસમાં કતરે વિવાદને સમાપ્ત કરવા ચારે દેશો સાથે સમજૂતી ઉપર હસ્તાક્ષર કર્યા હતા. જેના પરિણામે ફેબ્રુઆરી માસમાં સઉદી અરબ સાથે સરહદના માધ્યમથી વેપાર માટે સઉદીના સલવા બોર્ડર પોર્ટથી કતરના અબુ સમરા બોર્ડર પર ટ્રાફિક અવર જવર શરૂ થઈ હતી. અને ટૂંક સમયમાં આ દેશો સાથે કતરની હવાઈ સેવા પણ શરૂ થશે.

મુસ્લિમ કાઉન્સિલ ઓફ બ્રિટનના જનરલ સેક્રેટરી પદે પ્રથમ મહિલાની નીમણૂક

ઈંગલેન્ડનું સૌથી મોટું મુસ્લિમ ઓર્ગોનાઈજેશન, મુસ્લિમ કાઉન્સિલ ઓફ બ્રિટનના જ. સેક્રેટરી તરીકે ઝારા મોહંમદ ગયા માસમાં સૌથી વધુ મતો મેળવી ચૂંટાય આવ્યા છે. આ ઓર્ગોનાઈજેશનના તેઓ પ્રથમ મહિલા અને નવયુવાન જ. સેક્રેટરી છે. તેણી હ્યુમન રાઈટ્સના કાયદામાં માસ્ટર ગ્રેજ્યુએટ છે અને ટ્રેનીંગ એન્ડ ડેવલપમેન્ટ કન્સલ્ટન્ટ કરીકે ફરજ બજાવે છે. તેઓ મુસ્લિમ કાઉન્સિલ ઓફ બ્રિટનના આસિ. સેક્રેટરી તરીકે પણ ફરજ બજાવી ચૂક્યા છે. તેમણે કહ્યું હતું કે, બ્રિટીશ મુસ્લિમોની જરૂરિયાત, હક્કો અને તેમની ભલાઈના માટે તેઓ કામ કરશે. ઉપરાંત વધુ ને વધુ ઓરતો અને નવયુવાનોને આગળ આવવા અને અને લીડરશીપ લેવા પ્રોત્સાહનના કાર્યો કરવા પ્રયત્નો કરશે. આ અગાઉ આ પદે હાડન રશીદ ખાન સેવા બજાવતા હતા.

’ہم یہاں پھنس چکے ہیں‘: بنگلہ دیش کے دور دراز جزیرے پر پھنسے ہوئے

روہنگیا مسلمان وہاں سے نکلنا چاہتے ہیں

بھاسن چار کے جزیرے پر پہنچنے کے ایک دن بعد تقریباً آدھی رات کے وقت حاملہ حلیمہ کو دروزہ شروع ہو گیا۔ وہ اور ان کا خاندان روہنگیا پناہ گزینوں کے اس گروہ میں شامل ہیں جنہیں حال ہی میں بنگلہ دیش کی حکومت کے ایک پروگرام کے تحت نئی زندگی گزارنے کے لیے اس جزیرے پر لایا ہے۔ انھوں نے بی بی سی کو بتایا کہ وہ خوفزدہ تھیں اور بہت بے یارو مددگار محسوس کر رہی تھیں۔ ’میں نے اللہ سے رحم کی بھیک مانگی۔‘

بنگلہ دیشی حکومت بین الاقوامی امدادی ایجنسیوں، انسانی حقوق کے گروہوں اور صحافیوں کو اس جزیرے تک رسائی نہیں دیتی ہے۔ لیکن بی بی سی نے بنگلہ دیش کے ساحل سے کچھ پرے، اس جزیرے پر بنائے گئے نئے کیمپ کے کچھ پناہ گزینوں کے ساتھ فون کے ذریعے بات کی۔ ان انٹرویوز میں جزیرے پر بنیادی ضرورتوں کے فقدان اور ملازمتوں کے مواقع نہ ہونے پر ان پناہ گزینوں میں بڑھتا ہوا غصہ صاف محسوس ہوتا ہے۔ جب حلیمہ یہاں پہنچی تو بھاسن چار جزیرے میں بہت سردی تھی۔ انہیں پتہ تھا کہ یہاں کسی ڈاکٹریازس کو تلاش کرنا ممکن نہیں ہو گا۔ مجھے پہلے بھی بچوں کی پیدائش کا تجربہ ہے، لیکن اس مرتبہ یہ بہت برا تھا۔ میں آپ کو بتانا نہیں سکتی کہ وہ کتنی تکلیف دہ تھی۔ ان کے شوہر، عنایت، اسی بلاک میں رہنے والی ایک روہنگیا خاتون کو لینے کے لیے بھاگے، جس کے پاس دائی کا کام کرنے کا کچھ تجربہ اور تربیت تھی۔ حلیمہ کہتی ہیں کہ ’خدا نے میری مدد کی۔ ان کے ہاں ایک بچی کی ولادت ہوئی جس کا نام انھوں نے فاطمہ رکھا۔‘

میانمار میں ظلم و ستم

روہنگیا مسلمانوں کو زبردستی میانمار سے اس وقت نکالا گیا تھا جب وہاں کی فوج نے رخائن سٹیٹ میں گھس کر ان کے کئی گاؤں جلا دیے تھے۔ تقریباً دس لاکھ روہنگیا مسلمانوں نے جان بچانے کے لیے بنگلہ دیش میں پناہ لی۔ ان میں سے اکثریت کو کس بازار ڈسٹرکٹ کے پرجوم کوٹوپالونگ کیمپ میں گئی۔ بنگلہ دیش نے روہنگیا کو واپس بھیجنے کی ناکام کوششیں بھی کیں۔ اب اس کا منصوبہ تقریباً ایک لاکھ لوگوں کو بھاسن چار کیمپ میں منتقل کرنے کا ہے تا کہ دوسرے کیمپوں میں رش کم کیا جاسکے۔ حلیمہ کہتی ہیں کہ ’ہمیں نہیں پتہ کہ ہم یہاں کیسے بچیں گے۔‘ یہ بہت ویران جگہ تھی۔ ہمارے علاوہ، یہاں کوئی نہیں تھا۔‘

ان کے شوہر نے انھیں بتائے بغیر چپ چاپ ہی بھاسن چار جانے کے لیے اندراج کروالیا تھا۔ عنایت کہتے ہیں کہ انھوں نے بہتر زندگی کی امید میں اپنے خاندان کو یہاں منتقل کرنے کے لیے دستخط کیے تھے۔ انھوں نے بی بی سی کو بتایا کہ انھوں (بنگلہ دیش کے عہدیداروں) نے ہم سے بہت سی چیزوں کا وعدہ کیا تھا کہ ہر خاندان کو زمین کا ایک ٹکڑا، گائے، بھینسیں اور کاروبار شروع کرنے کے لیے قرضے دیے جائیں گے

کیا تجارت مشرق وسطیٰ میں امن کا راستہ ہے؟

ابھی واشنگٹن ڈی سی میں ہونے والے متحدہ عرب امارات اور بنیامین نیتن یاہو کے اسرائیل کے درمیان معاہدے کو چھ ماہ بھی نہیں ہوئے ہیں کہ وائٹ ہاؤس میں ایک نیا

صدر آگیا ہے اور اسرائیل میں انتخابات دوبارہ سر پر آکھڑے ہوئے ہیں۔ تاہم متحدہ عرب امارات اور اسرائیل کے تعلقات بحال کرنے والے اس ’ابراہم کارڈز‘ نامی اس معاہدے کا مستقبل مستحکم معلوم ہوتا ہے۔ نہ صرف مراکش اور سوڈان نے ایسے ہی معاہدوں پر دستخط کر لیے ہیں، بلکہ ان ممالک کے درمیان لاکھوں ڈالروں کی کاروباری ڈیلز بھی طے پا چکی ہیں۔ ایک اندازے کے مطابق صرف دسمبر میں ہی 60000 اسرائیلی سیاح دہی گئے اور ان میں وہ وفد شامل نہیں ہیں جو کاروباری مقاصد کے لیے گئے تھے۔ پوائے ای اسرائیل بزنس کونسل کے بانیوں میں سے ایک اور یروشلم کی نائب میئر فلورنسا حسن ناہوم کا کہنا ہے کہ ’ہم دونوں میں بہت کچھ مشترک ہے۔‘ جیسے ہی امن کا اعلان ہوا، لوگ ایک دوسرے کو جاننے کے لیے اچھل رہے تھے گ، ہم نے وٹس ایپ فورمز اور زوم میٹنگز سے شروعات کی اور اس سب کی اپنی ایک رفتار تھی۔ دونوں ممالک کے درمیان بینکاری، فوٹال، سائبر سیکیورٹی، اور نوڈ ٹیکنالوجی میں کاروباری معاہدے ہوئے ہیں۔ اب دہی میں کوشش رہسٹورانٹوں کی تشہیر کی جا رہی ہے اور ذاتی دفاعی کی اسرائیلی ٹیکنیک کرواواگا کی تربیت کے لیے دو جم کھول لیے گئے ہیں۔ کچھ اندازوں کے مطابق ان معاہدوں سے چار ارب ڈالر مالیت کا کاروبار ہو گا۔ ان کاروباری معاہدوں میں سے سب سے پہلے طے ہونے والوں میں سے ایک معاہدہ اسرائیلی واٹر سسٹم فلورنس اور دہی کی کمپنی ایشیواری گروپ کے درمیان ہوا تھا۔ اس کمپنی کے مالکان میں سے ایک ثانی ایشیواری کہتے ہیں کہ یہ معاہدہ ایک انتہائی شاندار ڈیل تھی۔ بی بی سی کے پروگرام ٹانگ بزنس سے بات کرتے ہوئے ان کا کہنا تھا کہ ’ہم ایک ہی زبان بولتے تھے۔ ہمارے عزائم ایک جیسے تھے اور ہم دونوں ترقی چاہتے تھے۔‘ اسرائیل کے پاس ٹیکنالوجی تھی، جہاں تک پانی کی صنعت کا تعلق ہے تو ہم سے تھوڑا آگے تھے۔ ادر فلورنس کے سربراہ بھی اتنے ہی خوش معلوم ہوتے ہیں۔ اور وہ نہ صرف اس معاہدے بلکہ خطے میں امن سے بھی خوش ہیں۔ کاروبار امن کی طرف ایک راستہ ہو سکتا ہے اور امن ہی کاروبار کی طرف کا راستہ ہے۔ بطور ایک اسرائیلی اور بطور ایک تاجر مجھے فخر ہے کہ میری ایشیا امن کا راستہ ہموار کر رہی ہیں۔ مگر یہ امن معاہدہ ہر کسی کو پسند نہیں آیا۔

برفانی طوفان اور سردی کی شدید ترین لہر: امریکی ریاست ٹیکساس کو آفت

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امریکہ کے صدر جو بائیڈن ٹیکساس کی ریاست کو آفت زدہ علاقہ قرار دینے پر غور کر رہے ہیں تاکہ وہاں امدادی کاموں کے لیے وفاق کی طرف سے مالی امداد فراہم کرنے کے لیے راستہ ہموار کیا جاسکے۔ ٹیکساس کی ریاست جو حالیہ دنوں میں شدید برفانی طوفان اور سردی کی شدید ترین لہر سے بری طرح متاثر ہوئی تھی وہاں اب بجلی کی بحالی شروع ہو گئی اور موسم بھی بہتر ہو رہا ہے لیکن ریاست میں بسنے والے ایک کروڑ تیس لاکھ افراد کو پانی کی سپلائی بحال نہیں ہو سکی ہے اور انھیں پینے کے صاف پانی کے حصول میں دشواریاں پیش آرہی۔ صدر بائیڈن نے کہا ہے کہ اگر ان کے جانے سے ریاست میں جاری امدادی سرگرمیوں پر کوئی اثر نہ پڑے تو وہ ٹیکساس کا دورہ کریں گے۔ امریکہ بھر میں سردی کی شدید لہر سے اب تک ساٹھ افراد ہلاک ہو چکے ہیں۔

APEX

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