



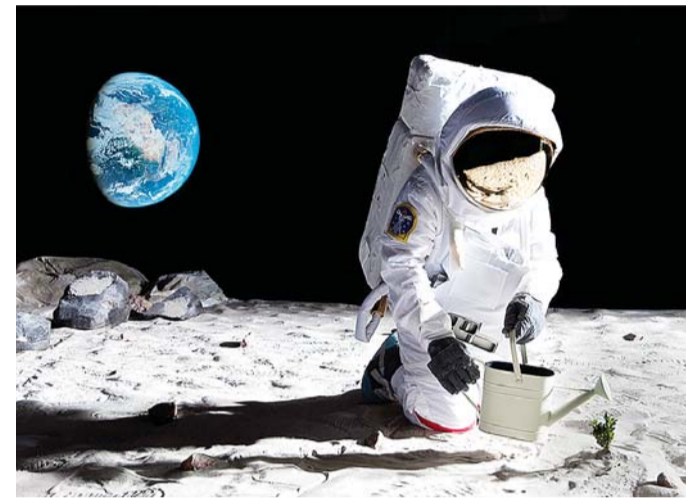
International Networking Week

Networking has now become easier and more efficient with the age of internet technology. For those throughout the business industry, networking can provide a great gateway to new business partnerships and essential business advice. International Networking Week is an excuse to do just that and help expand your business while also learning from the best. Let's learn more about the history of International Networking Week and celebrate it here at Days of the Year!

#SPACE

Food grows better on the Moon than on Mars

Scientists expect the moon to have better soil for growing food than the red planet.



Elon Musk might have his sights set on settling Mars, but recent experiments that utilized extraterrestrial soil suggest that Mars might be more hospitable than it appears, but Martian soil is also dense and clay-like, the researchers realized, restricting the amount of oxygen available to plant roots.

The science team tried growing the crops with Milorganite, a brand of fertilizer made of heat-treated microbes that digest wastewater, which was thought to be a good candidate for producing crops in space settlements. Waste disposal would be a problem for any off-world settlement, and researchers have long wondered if the wastewater from astronauts could be used to fertilize crops and sustain farming without importing fertilizer from Earth, solving two potential problems at the same time.

But although the study has not yet been published, preliminary results suggest that recycling waste from humans on the moon and Mars might not be a straightforward solution. Martian corn, grown with wastewater-digesting bacteria, had a survival rate of 33.3%, whereas corn, grown in pure nitrogen fertilizer, which is more regularly used for crops on Earth, had a survival rate of 58.8%, suggesting that fertilizer might need to be imported to make up for low yields, if we go the human-wastewater-fertilization route.

The researchers are now testing broccoli, squash, beans and alfalfa with different mixes of regolith and fertilizer in both soil types to see if these plants respond better than the corn did.

The researchers are now testing broccoli, squash, beans and alfalfa with different mixes of regolith and fertilizer in both soil types to see if these plants respond better than the corn did.



Charred remains of Syrian ships after Israeli strikes.



Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh VSM (RETD)

Reshaped" can be used for describing West Asia since the fall of Assad in Syria. With Hamas all but decimated, Hezbollah irreparably weakened, and Bashar al-Assad gone, the region has witnessed dramatic change. The main axis running from Iran through Syria to the Hezbollah in Lebanon has now been severed.

The two main beneficiaries of this 'reshaping' are Israel and Turkey. Israel has taken advantage of the flux in Syria by occupying a small buffer zone, capturing Mount Hermon and targeting the Syrian Naval Fleet in Latakia in Syria. Further, it has gained an advantage to operate more freely in Lebanon. Turkey, meanwhile, has established Syria as its de-facto sphere of influence. The groups, which it supported during the Syrian civil war, have swept their way into Damascus and now control most of the country. There is no doubt that Turkey has successfully helped Syria's Sunni majority overthrow Syria's minority Alawites, which were backed by Shia Iran and is now, no doubt, wanting to restore its leadership over the region in continuation of its Ottoman legacy as an Islamic world leader.

Turkey has been a long-term supporter of the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which had early links to the Islamic State, and then to Al Qaeda. Without the HTS,



Gas pipeline between Qatar and Turkey.

ISRAEL-TURKEY COMPETITION



Turkey and Israel have emerged as the main strategic beneficiaries of the collapse of the Syrian regime, which has led to the decline of Iranian influence in the West Asia. But now, these two countries, whose relations have been strained to the breaking point since the war in Gaza began, are, maybe, on a collision course of their own, in Syria.

#GRAND VIEW



Bashar al-Assad gone.

port of South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice. It has suspended trade with Israel and blocked co-operation between Israel and NATO. The Turkish President has even thought about an armed intervention in Gaza. These highlight just how badly relations had deteriorated.

Israel, in turn, blames Turkey for allowing Hamas to use its territory as a base for directing and financing military activities, and for money-laundering. Zaher Jabareen, a senior Hamas Commander-in-charge of operations in the West Bank, lives in Istanbul. Israel has said that Hamas's operations are partly financed by a network of companies based in Istanbul, some of which have been placed under sanctions by the US.

Golan Heights

Israel Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has announced that he had approved a plan to double Israeli settlement in the occupied Golan Heights. "Strengthening the Golan Heights is strengthening the state of Israel," said Netanyahu in a statement on 15 December, "and it is especially important at this time. We will continue to hold on to it, make it flourish and settle it."

In response, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said, "This decision is a new stage in Israel's goal of expanding its borders through occupation. This step by Israel is a source of grave concern, taken

together with Israel's entry into the area of separation, in violation of the 1974 disengagement agreement, its advance into adjacent areas and airstrikes in Syria. The move would seriously undermine efforts to bring stability to Syria under Bashar al-Assad's fall."

Kurds

The 'Kurdish issue' is now going to be in the spotlight. Forces from Syria's Kurdish ethnic minority became the US main local partner in the fight against the Islamic State in Syria, under the banner of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). After the extremist group was largely defeated, the Kurdish-led forces consolidated control over towns in the Northeast, expanding an autonomous region amid the chaos, taking territory it saw as its own. But Kurdish fighters still had to contend with their longtime enemy, Turkey, which regards them linked to its Kurdish separatist insurgency.

The US also maintains a force of about 900 troops in the Kurdish-controlled oil drilling areas in the northeast and a garrison in the southeast.

With a pro-Turkish government in the saddle in Syria, they will be looking at the freedom to operate against the People's Protection Units (YPG) outfit in Northeastern Syria. The YPG spearheads the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), and is considered by Turkey to be part of the PKK, which has fought against the Turkish state for decades.



Syrian naval fleet in Latakia.

Next, Erdogan's threats against Israel, which were seen as rhetorical in the past, will now carry more weight, given Turkey's expanded influence. As it is now present on the borders of Jordan, Lebanon, and Israel, both countries are now de-facto neighbours. Turkish intelligence, military, and civil operations will be active in areas controlled by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), and Turkey's presence near Israel's borders may emerge as new flashpoints.

Turkey and Israel now hold conflicting visions for Syria's future. While Israel appears to favour a fragmented Syria with buffer zones, to provide security against HTS and other actors, in contrast, Turkey opposes any fragmentation of Syria, fearing it could lead to the establishment of a Kurdish state under PKK influence. Even if such fragmentation does not lead to a Kurdish state, it will reduce the effect of Turkey's victory in Syria. Hence, Turkey seeks to consolidate HTS's control over a unified Syria, ensuring that its own strategic interests are safeguarded. If HTS attempts to challenge Israeli-held territories, or if Israel acts to weaken HTS, tensions could escalate. Unlike Israel's war with Hamas and Hezbollah, Turkey is likely to be more involved in a conflict between Israel and HTS.

Lastly, Israel, no longer, depends on Turkey as it once did. The normalization of Israeli relations with Arab states, including Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, and potentially Saudi Arabia, has broadened its regional alliances. But the weakening of Syria's military will leave it vulnerable to resurgent fundamentalists, with a question mark over who will keep the extremist groups in check. The question remains whether Arab nations, wary of an Islamist victory in Syria, which could

reignite the Arab spring movement and Turkey's growing regional influence, remain neutral or even side with the US and Israel, in case of renewed tension.

Conclusion

Turkey and Israel have emerged as the main strategic beneficiaries of the collapse of the Syrian regime, which has led to the decline of Iranian influence in the West Asia. But now, these two countries, whose relations have been strained to the breaking point since the war in Gaza began, are, maybe, on a collision course of their own, in Syria.

Both Israel and Turkey are justifying their actions in Syria on the grounds of national security, are operating largely unchecked, following the collapse of Assad's forces and his allies, the Iranian-led militias and Russian troops.

Western influence in the region will now need to be filtered through these two powers. While the US will want to maintain its influence in Syria by supporting the SDF as well as contain a weakened Iran, it also needs Turkish cooperation to keep a check on resurgent fundamentalism in the region.

In this phase of political upheaval in Syria, countries in the region need to take into account the territorial integrity of Syria and it will be catastrophic if it becomes a battleground between Turkey and Israel. Unfortunately, the risks posed by deterioration of relations and regional escalation have global implications.

The fact is that shaping the aftermath of the Assad regime, without consensus among external players by fragile agreements among Syrian factions, may well be undermined and effective governance frustrated.

rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com



People rally after missile strike in Israel, on October 1, 2024.

#FAREWELL!

ROWDY, CHOTU BHAII, BYE!

Rowdy was as good as his name, playful and mischievous, but strong-willed and a trifle aggressive to those he disliked or felt threatened by. Our Rowdy has bitten everyone from his canine and human menagerie. Compulsory vaccination for Rowdy as well as preventive injections, personally for me, was de rigueur. For the rest of my clan, complete trust in Rowdy's goodness meant only the annual poke for the blighter.



CHOTU, Ears perked up, is he hearing a biscuit wrapper unpeeling?

● Mohan Sundar Rajan

Both came in from the cold. Rowdy, the ebony indie with contrasting white lines on his forehead and paws, christened white 'socks' by some. Fondly fetched from a litter in Mumbai's Western Suburb of Goregaon, he entered our lives on the second day of the inauguration of the Worli-Bandra Sea Link. Can never forget the rainy day, Wednesday, July 1, 2009!

Then, Chotu, indie number 2, auburn, the Autumn leaves, given a lifelong pass to our period-styled bungalow in Jayalaxmiapuram, Mysore, the city of lip-smacking delectable fare, manna for our gourmet man's best friend.

You may ask who came first in our scheme of things. My loyalties are torn. Chotu, by far the younger, Rowdy, the sagacious, with age on his side. Each was special, gave generously, took frugally. Rowdy lived up to a blessed 15 years and Chotu, who passed away in the prime of his youth, at 4, due to complications past a last fatal seizure, God knows why!

This is their story as both coincidentally lie in Umesh's Bow Bow Pet Cemetery, Udupur, Sindhuvalli



The author, Mohan Sundar Rajan, in happier times.



And last but not least, the bench at the Bow Bow Pet Resort, where close by dear Rowdy and Chotu lie together in eternal rest.



ROWDY, Wise but wild, don't be deceived by his mournful eyes trying to capture your hearts.



Happy pets being lovingly cared for at Bow Bow Pet Resort by Umesh of Mysore, hence, hardly missing their parents who are away on brief visits.



In happy times, Umesh, the author, Manveeth and Tirupati, school-going kids at the author's Platinum Jubilee at Kailash Parbat Fine Dine Restaurant, Vani Vilas Road, Mysore.



Mohan with family friend Sarita Tamang, with Jaya, Choti (Vixy) and Jenny.

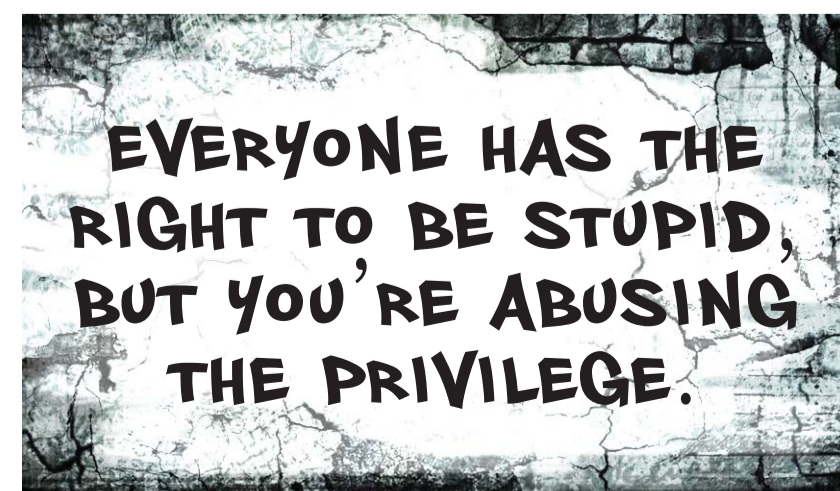
span of under 30 days of each other. Rowdy was as good as his name, playful and mischievous, but strong-willed and a trifle aggressive to those he disliked or felt threatened by. Our Rowdy has bitten everyone from his canine and human menagerie. Compulsory vaccination for Rowdy as well as preventive injections, personally for me, was de rigueur. For the rest of my clan, complete trust in Rowdy's goodness meant only the annual poke for the blighter.

For Chotu, whose ears would perk up every time when a biscuit wrapper was even mildly ruffled, it was food, glorious food, hot sausage and mustard! Willing and able anytime of the day, and, if available, at night, too. I think he would even dream of food going by his swash-buckling legs during gastronomic slumbers. Slim and trim, nevertheless, pineapple and tangy treats were the only ones he would give a miss.

When Chotu came, Rowdy threw a cordon of protection around him. Chotu was not so forgiving and gnarled and gnashed his teeth threateningly at Rowdy. Trying to separate them at that point would be dangerous.

But now, for me, like in the lyrics of Engelbert Humperdinck's "The Last Waltz," "It's all over now, nothing left to say. Just my tears and the orchestra playing. I had the last waltz with you. Two lonely people together. I fell in love with you. The last waltz should last forever."

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



ZITS



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman